

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

ISIHILONIPHO SABAFAZI -
THE XHOSA WOMEN'S LANGUAGE OF RESPECT

A SOCIOLINGUISTIC EXPLORATION

TERESA DOWLING

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Isihlonipho Sabafazi

The Xhosa Women's Language of Respect

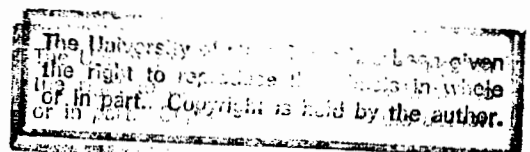
A Sociolinguistic Exploration

By

Teresa Dowling

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degree of Master of Arts in African Languages and Literatures,
University of Cape Town.

Cape Town 1988



ABSTRACT

Isihlonipha Sabafazi (the Xhosa women's language of respect) is a language in which syllables occurring in the names of menfolk are avoided by women. This thesis attempts to place the practice in its social context by applying both descriptive and analytical methodologies.

The thesis includes a literature survey and a critique on the dynamics of gender and language. The results of interviews conducted in three areas, one urban and two rural, are analysed and tabulated. A glossary of substitute words is included.

The word uku-hlonipha - to respect, to reverence, to be bashful, is used in connection with these various renderings, according to the circumstances of the case. It is usually applied to the custom whereby a married woman is debarred from using the name of her father-in-law - u-sondoda, and must avoid all words, whose initial syllable is the same as the initial syllable of her father-in-law's name; or indeed, any word that includes the whole or part of the father-in-law's name.

- J H Soga (The Ama-Xosa: Life and Customs, 1931:208)

HLONIPHANI BAFAZI!

Bafondini, nith' aba bafazi bathini na?
Bafondini, nith' aba bafazi banani na?
Yini ukuba basuke bashwantshwathe
Batshe ngesintscempho sentethw' emxalenye?
Phofu olu lwimi lumxulumene neelwimi
ZakwaNtu ziphela njengakwisizulu
NesiSwazi, kwisiSuthu nakwisiTswana.
KwisiVenda nakwisiNyembane nesikhithara,
NesiGanda nesingonde nesinyuba
Noko ke, bafondini, isishanti esi sitenxile;
Makube ke ziimpembelelo zesiKhongo!

Bafondini, ndith' ezi lwimi mna zimxulumene:
Olunye luthi tata, olunye luthi baba.
Olunye luthi ntate, olunye luthi tate.
Olunye luthi papo, olunye luthi bava -
Kambe singabala sithini na, bafondini?
Mna ndithi kwanele masiphos' ingca!
Ndith' abafazi banentlonipho kwaXhosa,
Ingaba kambe ziintloni phofu kwazi bona.

Umolokazana kaNjengan' uth'inja yikhanka;
Ndivel' abafazi bakwaYeza basebeza.
Kwathi kwakuthethwa ngeyeza bathi bona lichiza;
Wathi yen' uMamGiqw' ibhokwe ziitsokhwe;
Sithe sakuth' umhlaba wale ntsim' utyebile,
Wath' uMamQhineb' umgangath' ufehlile;
UMamQwath' ebeye kwagqira kodwa yaqin' inqawa;
Nank' umolokazana kaMkhul' etheth' isimanga,
Kub' uth' incentsa yakhe inkamangela ityhalit'
etyinzi,
Esith' iintambo ziimfahlelo, irewu liyalule.
Nanz' inombe phay' emva kwenkatheko.
UmaMazimba yen' uth' ukutya kukumunda.
Bafondin', uthini na lo mfaz' utheth' isityiki-tyiki?
Abandywana bakhe babini, ziingema zombini?
Ityhagi yakwakh' ibanjiw' isentolongweni?

Awu, bayahloniph' abafazi basemaNzothweni,
Kuba bade bathi bona kratya nakuninazala!
Hloniphani, bafazi, sakhwa njal' isizwe,
Hloniphani, bafazi, lotyeba jal' ulwimi;
Ngeze bulunge ubomi xa bunguvula-zibhuqe,
Maxa wambi ulungil' uhayi nalapho,
Sazi mhlophe akuzukonakala lutho;
Ikakade nesiseko sehlabathi silutshaba
Lwedamsesi nomnebase nofele-fele;
Hloniphani, bafaz' izithethe zigcinwa ziintloni,
Hloniphani, mzi wasetyhin', isidima sakhwa ziintloni.

WOMEN, RESPECT!

Chaps, what do these women say?
Chaps, what is wrong with these women?
Why are they just mumbling
with their speech in a chaos?
Both this language is not different from other Bantu
languages
like Zulu, Swazi, Sotho and Tswana,
In Venda, Nyembane, Khithara, Ganda, Ngonde and Nyuba
But chaps, Shanti language is too different
It might be Sikhongo influences.
Chaps, I say these languages are nearly the same:
The one says tata (Xhosa) and the other says baba (Zulu)
The one says ntate (Sotho) and the other says tate (Herero)
The one says papo (Lango) and the other says bava (Lenge)
In any case how can we count
To myself I say it is enough
I say Xhosa women have respect
It is their respect, only they know.

Njengani's daughter-in-law says a dog (inja) is ikhanka;
I overheard Yeza wives whispering.
When they talk about medicine (iyeza) they say ichiza
MamGiqwa says a goat (ibhokhwe) is itsokhwe
When we said "The soil of this field is fertile"
MamQhinebe said "Ungangath' ufehlile"
The trouble came when MamQwathi went to a doctor
Mkhulu's daughter-in-law was talking in surprises
For she says "Incenta yakhe inkamangela ityaliti etyinzi"¹
Calling ropes (intambo) infahlelo; and sorghum beer
(amarhewu) iyalule
There are the cattle (inombe) behind the house (inkaatheko)
Maximba's wife says food is ukumunda
Hey, chaps is this woman talking nonsense?
"Abandywana bakhe babini, zingema zombini?"²
"Ityhagi yakwakh' ibanjiw' isentolongweni?"³

Manzothweni women are respectful
For they are even more than their mother-in-laws
You must respect, women, for that is how a nation is built,
You need to respect women to enrich your language
Nothing will ever be right in life when things are done by
free will
In some cases it is right to say "no"
We clearly know that nothing will go wrong
Even the world's foundation is an enemy
Unauthorized, everybody is free and everything's free
You need to respect, dear women, traditions are kept through
respect
You must respect, ladies, dignity comes from respect.
(translated by Vuyani Tsuluka)

Notes

1. Her husband earns a lot of money
2. She has two children both girls
3. Is your son arrested and in jail?

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positions of power and influence. The increase of migrant labour has forced women to take on more responsibility, a factor which, however, is not given recognition by the patriarchal hierarchy. Patterns of linguistic conservatism are likely to be influenced by such situations but men are still considered to control the most important institutions of society, including language.

Section 2.3 (Isihlonipho Sabafazi and the Xhosa speaking Speech Community) considers the term "speech community" and a workable definition is adopted for the purposes of understanding how hlonipha functions within such a community.

The second section comprises an analysis of field work and is primarily concerned with the documentation of first hand accounts of attitudes to and perceptions of hlonipha. Research work was conducted in three areas - Tsolo, Mqanduli (maps and statistical data relating to rural areas are included) and Cape Town. Tsolo and Mqanduli were selected as being representative of the many areas that can be classed as traditional in terms of cultural practice but are nevertheless undergoing a certain degree of social change. The method of questioning was similar for all three cases, with the exception of the technique employed to establish the hlonipha vocabulary which was characteristic of each region.

I intended that the technique favoured by the women would be indicative of their attitudes to hlonipha - of their intimacy with it as an important variety of Xhosa and, moreover, the

extent of their internalization of and identification with the words they were using. Thus in Tsolo, where the prevalence of hlonipha was relatively high, the women were eager to produce for me what they considered to be some of the most widely used substitutes. In Mqanduli, while some substitute words were procured in the process of asking who was hloniphaed, the women were interested to learn about Finlayson's core vocabulary, and I therefore considered it a viable approach to test their responses to it via direct questioning. This method also enabled me to ascertain the extent to which Finlayson's or any other core was being used and the frequency of syllable substitute "alloforms" (see Tables A and B in Appendix).

The women living in Cape Town were clearly not in the habit of using hlonipha vocabulary frequently - what I wanted to ascertain was what words, if any, they could still remember. These were elicited by direct questioning and by the writing down of "hlonipha sentences".

In all three cases, being aware of the implications of social change on speech communities, I was hoping to acquire those words that were circulating in the communities concerned and those that might continue to circulate even when the full implications of the origins of these words were not fully comprehended by the speakers. The fact that all three communities indicated some doubt as to the continued existence of the custom demonstrates the likelihood of such a situation developing.

In the Conclusion I shall be looking at those factors that are precipitating a radically changed interpretation of the hlonipha custom. Issues such as orality and literacy, patriarchy, communality and individualism will be discussed in relation to this metamorphosis.

It is hoped that the study will provide a broad sociolinguistic understanding of the meaning and performance of this language of respect.

FOOTNOTE

- 1 Although the term hlonipha can be used to denote respect in the broad sense of the word, in this thesis it is used, except when indicated otherwise, to refer specifically to the linguistic forms of respect used by Xhosa women. In the English text, the term has been treated throughout as an English verb and noun.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 WOMEN, MEN AND LANGUAGE

Observations about the different ways in which men and women speak, not only in traditional, non-industrialized societies, but also in contemporary, modern, industrialized communities, indicate that there is a definite link or correspondence between language use and the sex of the speaker. Such differences have been of particular interest to feminist linguists and sociolinguists, who are determined to explode the myth of the "naturalness" of these varieties and the sexual stereotypes they consequently imply. Men, they argue, have attempted to "marginalize" women in order to gain control over them and to entrench those power structures which they have formally institutionalized in society. As Deborah Cameron, a feminist linguist, has observed:

... the institutions that regulate language use in our own society, and indeed those of most societies, are deliberately oppressive to women. Men control them ... simply because it is the prerogative of those with economic and political power to set up and regulate important social institutions. (Cameron, 1985:145)

Thus, in order to understand the relationship of women to language, or to any other cultural phenomenon, it will be necessary to examine how, in different societies, those with power have "tailored" customs and institutions in order to maintain male hegemony. In fact, as far back as 1762 Jean Jacques Rousseau, an important French philosopher, commented on this need to stitch women unobtrusively, but effectively, into the great tapestry of male dominated life:

... women's entire education should be planned in relation to men. To please men, to be useful to them, to win their love and respect, to raise them as children, care for them as adults, counsel and console them, make their lives sweet and pleasant: these are women's duties in all ages and these are what they should be taught from childhood on. (in Cameron, 1985:156)

On reading of and about many different kinds of manifestations of women's languages throughout the world, from Jespersen's explanation of Caribbean Indians (Jespersen, 1922:239) to Lakoff's wry comments in Language and Woman's Place (Lakoff, 1975), I have a suspicion that perhaps Rousseau's thinking was, and still is, fairly representative. Thus although I intend looking at a few of the more remarkably different language varieties used by women (because of their relationship to hlonipha, the particular language I have chosen to study), it will nevertheless be imperative to keep in mind the fact that it is not only in such "exotic" societies that differences exist. In this way I hope to demythologize the notion of "tribal" societies being the only quaintly (formally) sexist ones, and to suggest that perhaps they are being more honest about what they conceive to be the role and nature of women.

My argument is thus that at least in these societies there was an overt, unashamed acknowledgement that women were the weaker, inferior sex. This is not meant to suggest that I applaud such sexism, but rather that I find it easier to critique than the more subtle linguistic sins committed in my own culture.

Therefore folk linguistics - "the collection of beliefs about language which are accepted as common sense within a society" (see Cameron, 1985:31) - concerning women in smaller, less modernized societies, are in fact given exposure in the very structuring of society, while in Westernized societies, where the sexes are nominally equal, such sexism is revealed in smoke-filled bars where men still talk about their "gossipy, prattling" wives and their empty-headed, garrulous blonde secretaries. These preconceptions about women do, unfortunately, exist in all societies, so that even when all particularly "women's" languages have died out, critics will still be needed to expose the extent of male subversion of women through language.

In my analysis of women's languages I will be examining the dialectic of the difference-dominance approaches - the former emphasising the ideal that women and men belong to different (but not necessarily unequal) sub-cultures, and the latter interpreting linguistic differences in women's and men's speech as a reflection of the inequality of the sexes (Coates, 1986:12). I have chosen to do my analysis in this

particular way because of the fact that chauvinistic misconceptions of women, such as "A woman's place is in the home" and "Umfazi sisihombo sekhaya, indoda yintsika yekhaya" (The woman is the decoration of the home, the man is the pillar) probably arose from the belief that, because women are biologically different, their role must be centred around nurturing and housekeeping. It has even been suggested that the symbol of the womb interiorizes the woman (into the home), while the penis of the man reflects his innate aggression and exteriority (out of the home, and into the world of power and control). (Erikson, E quoted in Yorburg, B, 1974:36)

The following languages demonstrate, to some extent, the complicity of language with such loose thinking.

Madagascar

In Madagascar there exists a highly stylized ceremonial form of speaking known as kabary. In her explanation of the differences between kabary and resaka (everyday speaking)

Keenan observes that in Madagascar:

Particular uses of speech by a villager are constrained to some extent by notions of what is expected behaviour in particular situations. (in Bauman & Sherzer, 1974:127)

As with hlonipha, disobedience and a violation of these expectations are met with censure and opprobrium by the other villagers. However, unlike hlonipha, this particular

language variety is reserved exclusively for men. Men and women in Madagascar agree that women have lavalela, a long tongue, and are considered unable to conduct themselves with the discretion and subtlety needed for kabary:

To speak indirectly is to speak with great skill. Men and women alike consider indirect speech to be more difficult to produce than direct speech. (in Bauman & Sherzer, 1974:139)

Women, however, being able to speak directly and confront others with unpleasant information, are often used by men when they themselves want to avoid such antagonistic situations.

Although this behaviour contrasts sharply with that of women in Xhosa speaking societies, there is nevertheless a parallel. Men in Xhosa society wish themselves and their ancestors to be respected. The requirement that women should avoid the syllables occurring in the names of their ancestors as well as their older male relatives is, in fact, their way of demonstrating their respect - through the control of women. In Malagasy society men will take on this responsibility (of respect), indirectness being considered to be fomba' ny ntaolo - the way of the ancestors - but will nevertheless use women for other more mundane, non-ritualistic, unceremonial communications.

In both societies, however, there appears to be a concept that transcends, or at least runs parallel to, sex differentiation, and that is the concept of harmony:

The use of teny miolaka (winding speech) represents to the villager a set of social attitudes held in the past, where respect and love for one another were always displayed. The use of direct speech ... is associated with a loss of tradition ... it is felt that today people speak directly because they do not value interpersonal relationships. (in Bauman & Sherzer, 1974:142)

Similarly in Xhosa society there existed, and in some areas still does exist, a rigid structuring of society, with various levels of respect, for the purpose of creating group harmony and co-operation:

... an ordered group life, with reciprocal rights and duties, privileges and obligations of members ... (Hoernle, in Schapera, 1962:67)

In both Xhosa and Malagasy societies there is thus justification for Cameron's observation that:

... men control language, just as they control all other resources in a patriarchal society. It is men who decide what words will mean and who will have a right to use them. That is why language enshrines a male (and misogynist) view of the world. (Cameron, 1985:93)

In Malagasy society women are considered to have given up the traditional language (that men still speak), while in Xhosa (mostly rural) society women are required to respect the names of their husbands' relations.

In Madagascar one can see that both the difference and the dominance approaches are applicable. Men and women see themselves as different, as occupying different positions in society and of speaking in different ways. They interpret the outcome of these differences as evidence of the superior position of men in society, but probably do not regard this

as indicating male dominance over women. In our terms, the fact that women are allowed to haggle, boss, harangue, scold and be utterly forthright and direct would reflect their relatively powerful position in society, as opposed to the men, whose constant recourse to circumvention and indirectness would suggest a certain impotency. The fact remains, however, that women, within the confines of that society, still regard themselves as less important than men.

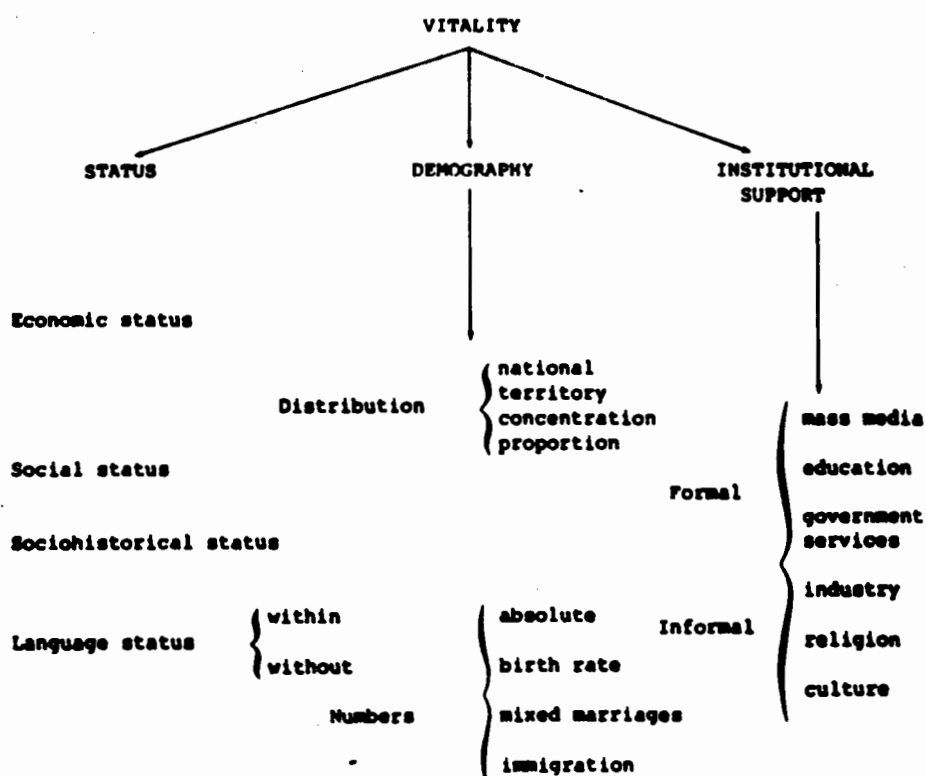
Further reports of male/female differences in language usage are quoted by Coates (1986:36). She cites Sapir's observations on the Yana (in California) where there is a difference in morphology between the language used by men and women in particular situations (that is, men to women, women to men, women to women). The fact that the men's language seems to preserve historically older forms leads Sapir to suggest that the reduced female forms symbolize women's lower status, the men's fuller forms being associated with ceremony and formality. Although this reflects attitudes similar to those held in Malagasy, it would appear to be the exception rather than the rule:

This is an interesting case of male speech being associated with conservatism and linguistic purity, characteristics now conventionally associated with women's language. (Coates, 1986:36)

The particular characteristics of "women's speech" do not lend themselves to definition as easily as one would imagine. Janet Shibamoto remarks that such "particular"

characteristics of women's speech have to be regarded within the wider context of her situation in society (Shibamoto, 1985:21-22). Shibamoto endorses the speech styles approach which, she maintains, takes account of the many extra-linguistic factors that determine the solidarity and vitality of the two linguistic groups constituted by women and men. She also holds that such an approach would be able to address those complexities of gender, class and dominance, and in order to illustrate her thesis she reproduces the following diagram:

Figure 1 A Taxonomy of the Structural Variables Affecting Linguistic Vitality of Groups (Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor 1977:309 and cited in Kramaræ 1981:94)



(Reproduced in Shibamoto, 1985:22)

It is interesting to note that these two societies - Mongolian and Xhosa - although geographically thousands of miles apart, must be culturally and conceptually close, as is demonstrated by their women's language. Therefore an overemphasis on the specifically "tribal" aspects of hlonipha, overlooks the argument that many societies all over the world are, in some way or another, echoing the precepts of their cultures in their languages, and that these cultures are not as separate or isolated as we would at first believe. One might argue that the language varieties encountered in Mongolia and Southern Africa are hardly representative of all the world's languages, but while this may be the case, one cannot ignore the fact that being, as they are, elements of micro-political structures (see Henley, 1973:15), all languages help maintain the larger political and economic structures. Thus the situation in Mongolia and Southern Africa might be similar because of name avoidance, in other parts of the world one could find similar morphological and syntactical shifts, and in others pronunciation would be an important gender specifying factor, but all (apart from some very rare matriarchal societies) are united by the fact that:

...male dominance (is) built into the economic, family, political and legal structures of society. (Henley, 1973:15)

This structuring of society is more decisive than other factors in determining women's languages, and is seminal to the issue of language, speech and gender.

Although I have only highlighted a few instances of sex-differentiated languages, there have been numerous other studies across the globe. Bodine's summary and table of sources serve to illustrate the world wide occurrence of sex-exclusive "sub-languages" or varieties.

Figure 2

CROSS-CULTURAL SUMMARY OF SEX DIFFERENTIATION IN LANGUAGE

DIFFERENCE IN:	BASED ON SEX OF:			
	A. SPEAKER	B. SPOKEN TO	C. SPEAKER PLUS SPOKEN TO	D. SPOKEN ABOUT
1. PRONUNCIATION	1A Bengali, Caraya, Cham, Chukchee, Cree, Eskimo, Gros Ventre (2A), Hitchiti, Kossati, Zuni (2A).	1B	1C Yana.	1D
2. FORM: INTERJECTIONS	2A Gros Ventre (1A), Zuni (1A). Also, according to Flannery, Cree, Algonkin, Innuquait, Ojibwa, Sioux, Fox, Yokuts.	2B ONLY IN DIRECT ADDRESS	2C	2D
PARTICLES	Japanese (2B), Thai.			
PERSONAL PRONOUNS	Japanese (2B), Thai, Yuchi* (See discussion).	Tunika, Semitic languages, pre-modern Japanese (2A).	Chiquita-affixes and a few stems.	Widespread, but far from universal. Chiquita-only in M-M speech.
TITLES		Bengali.		Widespread, but far from universal.
KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY	Many languages of Amer. Indians, Asia, Africa, according to Dixon and Kroeber.	*See below.	Carib-stems, Chiquita-usually stems, probably Yana-affixes.	Generally used in all kinship terminologies for at least some relatives.

NOUNS	Many of these also differ on basis of sex of spoken about. Yuchi* (See discussion).	*See below.	Carib-stems, Chiquita-affixes, probably Yana-affixes.	Probably all languages have sex differentiation in some nouns. Different affix in some languages, as in gender, different stem in other languages. Chiquita-gender only in M-M version.
VERBS		Semitic languages-affixes.	Probably Yana-affixes, Bhozi-only in direct address.	Gender concord often manifested in verbs.
NOUN MODIFIERS		*See below.	Yana-affixes.	Gender concord often manifested in noun modifiers.
		*Differentiation in any part of language (titles, kinship, nouns, verbs, etc.) based on sex of spoken about automatically implies differentiation when these forms are used in direct address.		

Figure 3**SOURCES FOR CROSS-CULTURAL SURVEY**

LANGUAGE	INVESTIGATORS & DATES
Bengali	Chatterji (pronunciation) 1921 Das (terms of reference and address, titles) 1968
Biloxi (N. Amer. Ind.)	Dorsey and Swanton 1912
Caraya (S. Amer. Ind.)	Ehrenreich and Krause 1912, as reported by Chamberlain 1912
Carib	Jespersen 1922, Frazer 1900, and others
Cham (SE Asia)	Blood 1962
Chiquita (S. Amer. Ind.)	Adam and Henry 1880
Chukchee (NE Siberia)	Bogoras 1922
Creek (N. Amer. Ind.)	Haas 1944
Eskimo	Boas' editorial notes to Eskimo section of <i>Handbook of American Indian Languages</i> 1911-38, Egede 1818, as reported by Frazer 1900
Gros Ventre (N. Amer. Ind.)	Flannery 1946
Hebrew and Other Semitic	Brunswick 1973
Hitchiti (N. Amer. Ind.)	Haas 1944
Indo-European (reconstructed)	Meillet 1923
Japanese	Own knowledge and information supplied by several native speakers
Koasati (N. Amer. Ind.)	Haas 1944
Muskogean (Creek, Hitchiti, Koasati)	Haas 1944
Nootka (N. Amer. Ind.)	Sapir 1915
Thai	Haas 1944
Tunica (N. Amer. Ind.)	Haas 1944
Yana (N. Amer. Ind.)	Sapir 1929; Dixon and Kroeber 1903
Yuchi (N. Amer. Ind.)	Wagner 1933-38
Zuñi (N. Amer. Ind.)	Bunzel 1933-38

A similar observation about the changing nature of women's languages has been made by Mary Haas who in her discussion of men's and women's speech in Koasati notes:

+ ... at the present time only middle-aged and elderly women use the women's forms, while younger women are using the forms now characteristic of men's speech. (Haas, 1964:229)

As so often happens, however, there is an unwillingness on the part of men to let go of their myth of the soft, idealized, submissive woman. One of Haas' older men informants thought that:

...the speech of women is better than that of men ... women talk "easy, slow and soft. It sounds pretty." (Haas, 1964:229)

This statement is indicative, not of any objection on the part of men to the fact that the language is changing, but rather of their reluctance to accept women's rejection of the logic that commits them to a life of dominance by men. Gender differences will, however, continue to be highlighted and distorted, but more often in the world of fiction and fantasy. Thus although men and women who speak Koasati are now allowed to use each other's forms, parents traditionally used to train their children to use the forms appropriate to their sex. Deviations from these forms were permitted in storytelling where a man telling a tale:

... will use women's forms when quoting a female character; similarly if a woman is telling a tale she will use men's forms when quoting a male character. (Haas, 1964:230)

This kind of gender identification is likely to occur more in literature and storytelling than in real life, for it is in such creative works that the artefacts of sexual inequality will remain for some time. These stereotypes can generate the idea of sexual differences, but are usually not strong enough to survive without a firm foundation of sexual discrimination being endorsed by a society.

In Xhosa literature this kind of stereotypical characterization is fairly obvious; a few examples will be sufficiently illustrative:

From: Wrath of the Ancestors (Ingqumbo Yeminyanya) - Jordan, A.C.

"Noko lo mntwana ngathi unobuLungu kakhulu." Apathe kuthi, "Kuthe ni le nto angasoyikiyo singooyise, suke ancokole ahleke kuvele nelomhlathi, ngathi uncokola neentanga zakhe?" (Jordan, 1940:140)

"There's too much of the White woman in the manner of this girl" he said, "Why is she not overawed by us who are her fathers? Why does she laugh so freely as if she were chatting with her equals?" (Jordan, 1980:148)

Le ntombi nitha phithi bubuhle bayo nakuzakana nayo xa se ilapha, ingasazi mntu, ingasahloneli nalinye isiko kula nasiko akwaMajola. (Jordan, 1940:142)

This girl whose beauty has turned your heads, will embarrass you all here when she fails to give respect where it is due and violates every one of the sacred customs of the House of Majola. (Jordan, 1980:150)

From: Umzali Wolahleko - Sinxo, G.B.

Kvesi sithuba unqenelele uNojaji esithi, "Hayi, mama, zusa ukuba nochuku kangaka!"

"Uthi ke kulungile ukuba kuthiwe ndingumadya-makhulu?" ubuzile uMakhulu apha kuNojaji."

"Hayi, andithethi ..."

"Hlonipha, Nojaji, ungumfazi." (Sinxo, 1976:3)

At that moment Nojaji interjected saying, "No mother, don't be so irritable!"
 Is it right that I should be called "broad shoulders"?"
 grandmother asked Nojaji
 "I am not saying..."
 "Watch your manners, Nojaji, you are a woman."

These examples furthermore illustrate how adroitly Xhosa authors were able to exploit the "respectful woman" stereotype, often using it as a literary device to accelerate the development of plot and theme. The "prodigal parent" in Unzali Wolahleko is Nojaji, a woman portrayed as a disrespectful harridan, whose extravagant indulgence of her son Ndopho eventually leads to his downfall while the son she disfavours becomes extremely successful.

In Inqumbo Yeminyanya (Wrath of the Ancestors) Zwelinzima's wife, Thembeke, shows disrespect for the snake of the House of Majola, an event which precipitates both her and her husband's tragic end. Even Jordan's favourable portrayal of Thembeke as an individual is painted against the backdrop of die-hard traditionalists who still remain powerful within the political hierarchy.

The field for examining sexual differences in language (and literature) is not closing as the extreme versions of such differences are phased out. Much sociolinguistic work needs to be done with those societies that are undergoing radical social and economic change to investigate the relationship between sexism and language.

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This survey attempts to contextualize the various descriptions of hlonipha by concentrating on four major areas of preoccupation:

They are, briefly, hlonipha:

interpreted as a strange, inexplicable superstition (see Jespersen, 1923; Frazer, 1954; Mncube, 1949)

as empirical evidence for the theory of the interconnectedness of myth and language (Cassirer, 1946; Mncube, 1949);

explained in the context of other anthropological and sociological data which set out to describe the behavioural functionings of particular societies (West, 1976; Schapera, 1962; Raum, 1972; Shepherd, 1947; Coates, 1986; Cameron, 1985; Rosaldo et al, 1974)

analysed linguistically within the larger framework of the more standard variety (Finlayson, 1982; 1984(c); 1985; Mncube, 1949; Mayaba, 1972; Zungu, 1984; 1986; Kunene, 1958)

It will be necessary to deal with each of these categories separately in order more effectively to highlight and test the various arguments and hypotheses.

1.2.1 Hlonipha as Superstition

Frazer (1954), Jespersen (1922) and to some extent, Mncube (1949), in their discussions of language avoidance, and particularly women's languages, have tended to emphasise concepts such as "tribe", "taboo" and "totemism". Their paradigmatical stances reflect certain historical preconceptions, particularly in relation to "tribal religion" and the understanding of the behaviour patterns of "primitive peoples".

After dealing with the women's language in the Caribbean, Jespersen describes verbal "tabu" as operating:

under certain circumstances, at certain times, in certain places ... (Jespersen, 1922:239)

Frazer, likewise, is unwilling to untangle the web of preconceptions surrounding the practice of verbal taboo, and concludes:

The reluctance to mention the names or even syllables of the names of persons connected with the speaker by marriage can hardly be separated from the reluctance evinced by so many people to utter their own names or the names of the dead or of chiefs and kings; and if the reticence as to these latter names springs mainly from superstition, we may infer that the reticence as to the former has no better foundation. (Frazer, 1954:251)

Frazer's account includes examples of verbal taboo as it occurs among various people such as the Sea Dyaks, the Alfoors of Menahassa, the Nufoors of Dutch New Guinea and makes specific mention of the "Caffres" and their "women's speech". By indiscriminately grouping all these peoples together as being essentially inscrutable and illogical, Frazer succeeds in mystifying this "language" by removing it from the realm of description, interpretation and analysis, claiming that as a language it is far too complex and irregular in its composition:

The interpretation of this "women's speech" is naturally very difficult, for no definite rules can be given for the formation of these substituted words, nor is it possible to form a dictionary of them, their number being so great ... (Frazer, 1954:249)

The implication is that as long as a custom is unclassifiable or unanalysable in terms of Western precedents, it must necessarily follow that it falls into the realm of superstition, since there appears to be "no better foundation". (Frazer, 1954:251) This assumption discredits the linguistic comprehension of hlonipha which has, in fact, been given credibility by recent analyses.

Although the main part of Mncube's thesis deals with a linguistic analysis of hlonipha (refuting Frazer's hypothesis that it is unclassifiable), he also makes reference to the connection between fear and a language of avoidance. The emotions of fear and respect are, according to Mncube, instrumental in the creation of an avoidance language,

and this delusion will only diminish with an increase in scientific knowledge:

... fear is strongest where there is a minimum of scientific training and the Nguni are not exempt from this. (Mncube, 1949:51)

Mncube seems to be confusing the ordinary fear that people experience daily (of snakes, accidents and pain) with piety which is the fear of God, or godly fear, and would include the veneration of the ancestors. Thus when he notes that the emotion of fear is often reflected in the language people do not use¹ and discusses the fear the Nguni have of diseases and their subsequent avoidance of certain names of illnesses² he fails to elaborate on the nature of this kind of "fear", which should be seen in the context of respect, dutifulness and loyalty, and of the desire to maintain harmonious relationships.

All of these accounts emphasise the authors' concern with the inscrutability of hlonipha and have in common certain arguments that assume that hlonipha is solely a verbal taboo, while ignoring any social variants. The logic adopted is thus that because verbal taboo is linguistically inexplicable, it must be described as a superstition, superstition being prompted by the emotions of fear and respect, fear playing the dominant part.

Still within the field of philosophical debate, Cassirer's formulations help provide a better understanding of "superstition" and its connection with myth and language.

1.2.2 Hlonipha Seen in the Context of Language and Myth

In the translator's preface to Myth and Language the author underlines Cassirer's desire to accord to myth a new philosophical status. Cassirer's thinking, he observes:

... was helped by a stroke of insight: the realization that language, man's prime instrument of reason, reflects his mythmaking tendency more than his rationalizing tendency. Language, the symbolization of thought, exhibits two entirely different modes of thought. Yet in both modes the mind is powerful and creative. It expresses itself in different forms, one of which is discursive logic, the other creative imagination. (Cassirer, 1953:viii-ix)

Cassirer's thesis is thus that the:

... philosophy of mind involves much more than a theory of knowledge; it involves a theory of prelogical conception and expression, and their final culmination in reason and factual knowledge. (Cassirer, 1953:x)

The practice of hlonipha, or any other language of avoidance, is thus upgraded from the level of primitive superstition, to the field of philosophical interest. Cassirer remarks that in mythic thinking:

... a person's ego, his very self and personality, is indissolubly linked ... with his name. (Cassirer, 1953:49-50)

He reflects further that

... the name is never a mere symbol, but it is part of the personal property of its bearer, property which must be carefully protected and the use of which is exclusively and jealously reserved to him. (Cassirer, 1953:53)

He notes that this kind of "protection" of the name will have a modifying influence on vocabularies and he makes an allusion to hlonipha by citing a communication with Meinhof who informed him that:

... name taboos play a vital part, especially in Africa; among many Bantu tribes, for instance, women are not allowed to speak the names of their husbands or their fathers, so they are compelled to invent new words. (Cassirer, 1953:53 - footnote:39)

The fact that Cassirer illustrates his thesis with the example of hlonipha is important, in that while still viewing it as a taboo, he nevertheless posits a spiritual or mythical explanation for it, and refers to it within the paradigm of mythic conception. This kind of philosophical description can, however, be viewed as a further mystification of the practice - emphasizing the "pre-logical" nature of hlonipha, while underplaying its logical coherency in a particular social system.

By way of summarizing this section one can conclude that unlike the arguments of Frazer and Jespersen, who credit the custom of hlonipha with little more than primitive superstition and fear, that of Cassirer redefines the terrain of taboo, attributing to it both religious and creative properties. This exegesis is, however, misleading, when

to maintain harmony and co-operation in "traditional", polygynous and three generation households (Raum, 1972:22,26)

to secure inheritance of the home:

Informants offered an interesting legitimation for a wife's restraints in the presence of her parents-in-law, namely, because the home is to be inherited from them. (Raum, 1972:35)

to prescribe correct behaviour to the new wife so that "initiation into her new home is successful". (Raum, 1972: 78)

to teach the new bride that she has entered a new "family" and that she must learn to respect and honour a different set of ancestors. (West, 1976:17; Hoernle, 1962:77)

to maintain a certain amount of distance and formality between the new bride and her husband's male relatives. (Raum, 1972:47,77; West, 1976:17; Shepherd, 1947:29; Hoernle, 1962:77)

These reasons serve to highlight the passivity of the woman, but gloss over the woman's ability to control and manipulate her relationships by her own interpretation of the tradition. There is thus a tendency to make reasonably general comments about the way women behave, while underplaying the significance of the individual in influencing the whole network of society.

Little reference is made to attitudes to hlonipha (i.e. those influenced by altered living environments, status and education), although Raum does note that in nuclear families there is a falling away of hlonipha practices:

... because the wife and mother-in-law live apart quarrels are not prevalent between them. In addition, the husband's separation from his parents assists in releasing the wife from the cattle pen taboo and the hlonipha behaviour expected of her towards other symbols of the agnatic structure. (Raum, 1972:24)

Even here, though, a blanket description of nuclear families is insufficient, since while a woman may be released geographically from her husband's parents, she may still be required to hlonipha them when she has occasion to visit them (for celebrations, weddings, holidays, funerals and other religious or social festivities).

Raum's informants themselves seem to reflect an ambiguous position towards hlonipha:

Although a few informants asserted that in the nuclear family the wife's regimen of avoidances had been abandoned, the majority were convinced that it is still observed. (Raum, 1972:24)

Mention is also made of the continuance of the hlonipha tradition by Christians who had not been forced to abandon the custom:

Even among Christians they may still be insisted upon, and we actually came across this in a Methodist home. (Raum, 1972:35)

Raum also notes that the practice of linguistic avoidances was considered one of the most important of the hlonipha

"regimen" and was unlikely to be relinquished lightly. (Raum, 1972:79) His analysis indirectly conveys the extreme diversity and unpredictability of hlonipha usage, creating an overall impression of considerable variety in its present frequency and adoption.

Hlonipha is viewed as an important custom in so far as it persists into a woman's old age when she will have gained much more status within the community. (see West, 1976:17; Hoernle, 1962:77) Its particular symbolic significance to people who do not adhere to its rules is not, however, afforded sufficient attention. There are people, living in both rural and urban areas, who give up the custom for a number of reasons, but who will nevertheless endorse it as being essentially desirable and correct.³

Anthropological and sociological commentaries tend to highlight the behavioural and societal aspects of hlonipha, which seen in conjunction with purely linguistic analyses, can produce a more complex and integrated overall understanding of this particular convention. A further dimension can be gained by an examination of feminist critiques. Once again these commentaries tend to stress the societal element of the custom, while overlooking the dynamics involved in the transformation of the meaning of tradition to the people who practise it.

Hlonipha and the Feminist

The interpretation of the meaning of this custom is given particular attention by certain feminist analyses which attempt to highlight the domination of men over tradition, and the way in which they have been allowed, chauvinistically, to manipulate it in order to suit their own needs and desires.

Deborah Cameron (1985:46) questions the validity of talking about separate "women's languages", and implies that this misconception arose in order to explain male-female differences. She illustrates her argument by taking Jespersen's own example of the Carib Indians, whose women spoke a different language from that of the men. This separate language had been explained historically as being a result of the extermination of the male Caribs by the Arawak tribe, both sexes retaining their original languages.

Cameron views Jespersen's attempt to explain the different lexicons by describing the different roles adopted by men and women in "primitive" societies, as being essentially valid but typically chauvinistic. As Brown and Levison (1979:328) point out, most:

... linguistic markers of sex derive from one of two sources ... Either they are markers indicating the hierarchical relationship between the sexes, and so are indirectly markers of sex per se (and directly markers of deference or power); or they stem from the different social networks or activities in which members of the two sexes are involved ...

In an attempt to clarify the particular issue of "separate" languages, Cameron also makes reference to the social marker theory which distinguishes between two types of sex marker:

... the sex exclusive (where certain features are used only by one sex, as in the Carib case) and the sex-preferential (where features are common to both sexes but are more likely to be used by one sex than the other. (Cameron, 1985:47)

She classifies hlonipha as being sex-exclusive, reflecting the "operation of taboos on speech". (Cameron, 1985:47). Although this approach is illuminating and clarifies certain issues, making assumptions and preconceptions overt, it is nevertheless unable to resolve the issue of taboo nor its relationship to the way in which some women speak. The fact that it is confined to a particular sex is self-evident, and unless other factors are taken into account the possibility of a language such as hlonipha being described as a "separate" language still exists. Cameron's analysis also neglects to mention that men also use a version of "taboo" language while undergoing initiation (isikhwetha). (see Finlayson, 1984(a)) The problem with defining hlonipha as sex-exclusive is that it discredits its implications and importance to the study and compilation of the demotic varieties of Xhosa, which need to address all the issues of dialect, idiolect and non-standard varieties, in order to be most effectively formulated.

To sum up: feminists suspect any philosophy that claims there are intrinsic differences between men and women,

arguing instead that these differences arose in order to assign certain duties or roles to each sex. Hlonipha then, is one manifestation of this chauvinistic desire to exclude and separate sections of the population, not only in the area of occupation, but also communication. The fact, however, that women have endorsed and actively contributed to the continuation of this linguistic practice, is obviously not important to the feminist debate, which tends to oversimplify the dialectic of apparent male-female differences.

1.2.4 Hlonipha Analysed as a Variety within the Field of African Languages

Moving away from a detailed philosophical debate on this "language", academics in the field of African Languages tend to analyse hlonipha within the broader framework of the standard variety of Xhosa. Their research usually falls into two sections: the theoretical section, dealing with hlonipha as a behavioural phenomenon, and the linguistic section, including discussions of the phonology and morphology of lexical data collected during field research, together with comprehensive lists of hlonipha vocabulary.

Mncube, F S M

Mncube (1949), after discussing possible reasons for the development of such a "taboo" language, analyses what he refers to as an "elaborate system of substitutions" by arranging Xhosa and Zulu words alphabetically, giving them their hlonipha equivalents. He classifies the various processes used by Nguni women to create substitutes as follows:

- sound substitution
 - consonant elision
 - deverbative substitutes
 - deideophonic substitutes
 - substitute words with no traceable associations
 - nominal transposition and nominal association
 - substitutions made up of unmeaning vocables
 - words from other languages
- (Mncube, 1949:53-57)

In a further elaboration of these categories, a distinction is made between irregular and regular substitutions. (Mncube, 1949:55) A regular substitution, according to Mncube, is one in which only the initial consonant of the first syllable of the stem of a word will be affected. Irregular substitutes he regards as affecting not only the first syllable of the stem, but as inflicting a further change on the whole word. This kind of categorization is helpful, particularly when attempting to ascertain the etymology of certain words.

Mncube also explores extra-linguistic influencing factors such as religion, political deconstruction, the destabilization of society and the role of women, as well as economic and social practicalities. (Mncube, 1949:248-258)

He offers a doubtful explanation as to why Christianity was more acceptable to women than to men, linking conversion to the rejection of hlonipha:

Because the new religion promised the equality of the sexes in the eyes of uMvelinqangi and uQamata, it became readily acceptable to those who had been given a humble status - the women - and repugnant to those who would lose their superior status by its acceptance - the menfolk. (Mncube, 1949:251)

He describes the significance of this acceptance as being primarily the liberation of women from the "tutelage of the patriarch" (Mncube, 1949:252) and as allowing women to feel responsible for their own, individual salvations.

Mncube's thesis tends to contradict Raum's findings (Raum, 1972) which affirm the compatibility of Christianity with the custom (see Raum, 1972:112) . As an explanation, it does little to clarify the relationship of religious beliefs and custom, and in fact serves only to confuse these issues further. Mncube's comments on the impact of Christianity, do, however, underline the essential durability of, if not the custom, then at least the need for it, particularly by men. This supports Cameron's thesis, discussed above, in which she suggests that language is yet another tool used by men to subordinate women. The fact that in many instances

women do not feel subordinate, but in contrast superior because of this custom⁴, is overlooked by both Cameron and Mncube, who equate status with what men do, and never with what women do.

Mncube's conclusion, however, intimates that the new religion and its moral prescriptions did not act as successful surrogates to the more archaic customs. Later studies (Raum, 1972; West, 1976) suggest that a certain workable syncretism has developed, in which the Christian world view is not considered to be incompatible with the world view of the Nguni people.

With reference to economic matters, the necessity of obtaining material goods is cited by Mncube as an influencing factor:

... hlonipha words had a meaning in the tribal circles only and not to the trader. Words otherwise avoided, were used freely when speaking to the trader. (Mncube, 1949:253)

He ascribes the general decrease in traditional practices and the invidious increase of delinquency to the missionary and the trader who:

... failed to fathom the importance of ... the institutions they undermined. The individualism that was ushered in by Western culture meant a selfish consideration of ones own interests above those of others ... it gave nothing in the place of the collective responsibility it thus destroyed. (Mncube, 1949:256)

This assessment of the state of affairs of the "traditional culture" seems to contradict Mncube's previous statement about the inequality of men and women and the "tutelage of the patriarch". (see Mncube, 1949:252) What is apparent from his argument however, is his concession to the unavoidability of change bringing both favourable and unfavourable consequences. Nguni society was greatly influenced by the missionary presence, but also by certain Western values, and was further destabilized by an increasing lack of political representation. Society necessarily adapted to these influences, challenging and re-interpreting them in order to render them more meaningful. Mncube correctly hints at the possibility of a further reaction, based on a desire to reclaim from the past those aspects that enhanced the ordering of society. However, he oversimplifies this process of the redefinition or re-evaluation of certain aspects of culture, by making bald statements about Western culture, tending to mythologize the notion of a pre-colonial, Nguni ideal. This categorization of culture is made to the detriment of a proper understanding of hlonipha as a dynamic and constantly changing linguistic phenomenon. This could be due to the fact that the thesis was written over thirty years ago, before certain developments and trends had been sufficiently documented and analysed.

Mayaba, P.N.

Mayaba's dissertation, A Discussion of Hlonipha Language among the Xhosa (Mayaba, 1972), includes an analysis of some hlonipha words such as isiqhusheko (isonka); inyathelo (indlela); impakama (ilanga) and ihlongozo (iqanda) in which possible explanations for the coining of these words are discussed. (Mayaba, 1972:4-6) In addition, some reference is made to the use of borrowed words, consonant changes, and terms based on passives, diminutives and locatives, as well as other devices dealt with by Mncube. (Mayaba, 1972:5-13) A glossary is also given at the end of the dissertation. (Mayaba, 1972:18-22) The fact that most of Mayaba's information was extracted from two very old informants (94 and 83 yrs) suggests a slight imbalance in material, the "language" being arrested at a particular stage in its development. This might, however, have been the author's main intention, in order to allow for a more detailed analysis of word origin and derivation. Mayaba's explanation of the origin of certain hlonipha words is moreover sociologically important, in that it makes it possible to detect the contexts from which these words evolved and became popularised. The words she chooses to describe are very common hlonipha substitutes, and their particular appeal can thus be related to both their functionality and etymology.

Perhaps in future this influence will be more felt than at present. The fear is clear that it might dominate and result in serious repercussions which might be detrimental to the Xhosa language, unless stringent measures are taken to curb the women folk from coining more hlonipha terms which may confuse many ... who have the welfare of the Bantu languages at heart. (Mayaba, 1972:17)

Furthermore, Mayaba gives no guidelines as to how one would go about stopping women from coining hlonipha words - it seems as improbable an event as an execution of Zungu's recommendation that it should be introduced in schools.

Zungu's argument has validity, however, if her belief that it is a language variety that "is an unfailing source of enrichment of the Zulu language" (Zungu, 1984:53) is given widespread support.

Zungu obviously believes that hlonipha is already being given historical and contemporary support by the Buthelezi clan. Thus, in addition to a family tree (Zungu, 1984:24; 1986:3) she gives a brief outline of the history of this clan, commenting that:

Chief Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi has also to be hlonipha'd by his Buthelezi subjects as well as by all the Zulus because he is the chief Minister of KwaZulu. This is not something new. Instead of uttering the word myama (black) in the case of Mnyama (the first chief Minister), the Zulus and the Buthelezis have to say Mpisholo. Thus for the descriptive phrase "Black People" we say Abantu abampisholo. For the word igatsha (a branch), the Zulus and the Buthelezis have to say iziko (branch), or they normally use the name Umntwana wakwaPhindagena when referring to chief M.G. Buthelezi. (Zungu, 1984:23; 1986:3)

"the phonological structure is easier to learn than the lexical strategy, because you learn one rule and apply it to hundreds of words" (Zungu, 1986:12)

"because it is not a normal language its rules must not be expected to be like the rules of an ordinary language." (Zungu, 1986:12)

This analysis, while necessary for an understanding of the phonological processes involved in substitution, hints at the peculiarly random way in which sound changes are adopted. Her fourth point is moreover contestable, since it appears that it is actually the lexical strategy and not the phonological strategy that is evolving as the most reliable and acceptable means of substitution. (see Finlayson, 1984:143)

While Zungu's dichotomous strategy is helpful in understanding the language as it operates on two theoretically separate levels, it has been demonstrated (by socio-and psycho-linguists) that these aspects should not be viewed in isolation from other data. Hudson points out the essential interconnectedness of language and society, noting that "language can be deliberately manipulated by society". (Hudson, 1980:34) This seems to be the case with hlonipha, which is the product of a desire to ensure a certain amount of familial cooperation fitting to a paternalistically structured society.

Kunene, D P

Kunene's "Notes on Hlonipha among the Southern Sotho" (1958), although dealing with a different language group, is nevertheless included in this survey because of his concentration on five areas particularly affecting hlonipha use, this having direct relevance to hlonipha among Xhosa speaking people. The five areas are:

What difficulties a hloniphaing woman may experience in her attempt to avoid taboo words;
 how she can overcome these difficulties;
 to what extent hlonipha terms are "universal" or "restricted";
 the reason for such distribution; and
 how a woman adjusts to her new linguistic environment (Kunene, 1958:159).

With reference to the importance of idiolects, Kunene's comment that

... it must not be imagined that a hlonipha-ing woman allows herself to be hemmed in and hampered by all sorts of rules of grammar ... some of her criteria of avoidance defy classification as they are based on individual, rather than generally accepted standards. (Kunene, 1958:162)

echoes Zungu's statement concerning the inability of hlonipha to standardize (see Zungu, 1984:53) and Mncube's classification of words with "no traceable associations." (Mncube, 1949:55).

Finlayson, R

This aspect of "change" is discussed by Finlayson, who focuses on the element of diffusion that occurs when customs and beliefs are handed down from one generation to the next:

The socially accepted way of acting in a community and the customs and beliefs being handed down from one generation to the next have become blurred as the many forces being exerted upon the traditional family life style take effect. (Finlayson, 1984(c):137)

Finlayson identifies three distinct categories of hlonipha users:

The older group who still hlonipha and strictly uphold all the customs, the middle group, who have a partial retention of the hlonipha vocabulary and the younger set who hardly hlonipha at all. (Finlayson, 1985:17)

Of seminal importance to any discussion of hlonipha is the fact, brought out by Finlayson in numerous papers, that the actual "nature" of hlonipha is undergoing a metamorphosis as the members of the society are themselves being subjected to change. Thus she notes:

Over a period of some eight years it has become apparent that more and more English and Afrikaans words are being used in order to avoid the tabooed syllables ... the rural communities have become increasingly exposed to English and Afrikaans through the media, mobile shops and most important, through education. (Finlayson, 1984(c):143-144)

Finlayson (1984(c):140) includes a description of how hlonipha is presently operating in urban areas, noting that interviews with women in these locations revealed a "random" use of "words of hlonipha origin" while not consciously

avoiding the syllables occurring in their husband's family's names. This fact prompted Finlayson to pioneer a "core" vocabulary, which, she claims, "stretches across the entire Xhosa-speaking area where hlonipha had been investigated" (Finlayson, 1984(c):140). Because this core can be viewed as separate to the linguistic behaviour of "true" hlonipha, there is the suggestion that it is moving away from the realm of anthropology and the behavioural sciences, and is establishing itself rather as a limited vocabulary of what can be considered to be euphemistic synonyms. Frazer's and Jespersen's analyses of hlonipha as manifesting unsophisticated superstition and irrationality lose further credibility as the language itself becomes merely a remnant of its previous existence.

In her article, Hlonipha - The Women's Language of Avoidance among the Xhosa (1982:35), Finlayson stresses the importance of familial relations to an understanding of hlonipha. Thus by taking one family as an example she is able to illustrate the various linguistic constraints imposed on the daughter-in-law. After a discussion of the method of substitution adopted by her informant who "had a wide hlonipha vocabulary" (1982:43), Finlayson nevertheless notes that even in such a situation "the complexity of avoidance rules are facilitated by ... the core vocabulary" (1982:46). The existence of a core vocabulary, according to Finlayson, indicates that although hlonipha is largely familial, there

is also a sharing of "the knowledge and rules of hlonipha" within the wider community (1982:46). This community aspect is important because, as Labov has noted:

... the speech community is not defined by any marked agreement in the use of language elements so much as by participation in a set of shared norms. (my emphasis) (Labov, 1972:120)

Finlayson (1982:56) also notes the influence of Afrikaans and English words. This occurrence can also be viewed as being determined largely by familial relationships, since:

... the use of borrowings from English and Afrikaans depends largely on the amount of contact the hlonipha speakers have with these languages. It has been found that when a member of the family returns from employment in the urban areas his "urbanized" form of language is communicated to the women who therefore employ a word without being aware of the origin of the word.

This phenomenon once again illustrates that hlonipha, like the standard variety of Xhosa, is subjected to similar processes of change and assimilation and does not remain archaic either in its function or form.

FOOTNOTES:

1. This is indeed evident in the education of hlonipha, when the newly married young woman is told by her mother or sisters-in-law what syllables and names she should not call.
2. He gives for an example the substitution umvundla for isithuthwane - epilepsy.
3. See 3.3 Nomaxabiso Tsuluka - An Urban Case Study.
4. See own research (3.2.2.5, 3.2.2.12).
5. This relates to Mncube's regular substitution.
6. The validity of this argument was tested in the course of my fieldwork, by using Finlayson's "core" vocabulary as the "standard". Women would be asked to respond to each of the 53 Xhosa words and their responses were then noted down. When occasionally prompted (usually by interested onlookers) women would admit to a knowledge of the "core" substitute, but would still maintain "Yes, I know some people say it, but I don't."

Education is carried on within the family with a strict dichotomy of sex. (Krige, 1962:98)

This dichotomy was carried on into that liminal stage of life which exists between puberty and adulthood, commonly known as the initiation period. The boy would be ushered into manhood with a great deal of ceremony and ritual (see West, 1976, Krige, 1962, Raum, 1972) while the girl would experience a more modest and less ceremonial "rite of passage". (see Raum, 1972:137 for comparison). Rosaldo also comments on this kind of differentiation, citing it as yet another indication of male-female inequality (Rosaldo, 1974:28).

In addition, any young girl viewing her male counterpart undergoing an elaborate and complex initiation could interpret this as evidence of his greater importance in the social structure. She would also be aware at this time that marriage would be her only opportunity of reaching the full status of womanhood, and she would look forward to her childbearing days as another symbol of her changed role and status. Positions of power and authority are usually reserved for men.

It is interesting to note that this "traditionalist" attitude to women still remains fairly entrenched although women have succeeded in many fields previously reserved for men. Thus in a newspaper article entitled The scramble for Transkei power begins in earnest (Weekly Mail, Oct 2 1987:3) Kholisile

Nota, minister of posts and telegraphs, and a favourite for the position of prime minister after the ousting of George Mantanzima, referring to the chances of his opponent, Stella Sigcau, as being hampered because of her gender:

His opponent, Sigcau, would have problems because of her gender. He said he could not see his house governed by a woman as it was "against our culture and no woman dominates over men in our way of life".

The fact that Sigcau, contrary to Nota's expectations, found enough support to be elected Prime Minister is indicative of the dichotomy between patriarchal idealism and actual feminine achievement in Xhosa society. This trend away from gender specific duties will inevitably lead to the erosion of gender specific customs and practices.



Twenty cows? Make it 50.
You might be marrying a
future prime minister.

(T Grogan, in Cape Times, Oct 7 1987:1)

Although this "domination" is entrenched in the very structure of society, the prohibitions and restrictions a woman will encounter in her new home will nevertheless paradoxically inform her that she is important, that her status is gained from being a married woman. In addition,

the lobola her husband has brought her parents is evidence of her value and continued worth, both to her new home, and to the one she has left. This concept of a woman's new home is important in that it relates to the issue of the nature of social groups (see West, 1976:9).

The strongly patriarchal nature of Xhosa-speaking society meant that descent was traced through the male line, this forming the basis of the social order. Lineages with a common ancestor combined to form clans and thus marriage between people of the same clan was forbidden. A man was therefore compelled to "find" his wife in a different clan, and this fact further emphasised the woman's status as a novice, a probationer, in her husband's household. She was considered a "stranger" who had to treat her parents-in-law with absolute deference and to respect the other members of her husband's clan. The man was in turn expected to treat his wife respectfully, but obviously not in exactly the same self-effacing way.

The man was expected to respect his wife as the weaker vessel, as the mother of his children and the mistress of his house. (my emphasis) (Shepherd, 1947:29)

The husband's role was to maintain and ensure the smooth running of his household, economically, spiritually and socially, while his wife was expected to promote the education of the children and harmonious family relations.

Hoernle notes that children normally showed "respect, deference and awe" towards their father, while between the mother and her children there grew "the deepest bonds of affection" (Hoernle, 1962:71).

As in most societies, this distinct separation of the sexes has concerned feminists who view it as a means by which one sex can exert its hegemony over another:

Male as opposed to female activities are always recognized as predominantly important, and cultural systems give authority and value to the roles and activities of men. (Rosaldo, 1974:19)

In order to contest Rosaldo's statement, one could argue that "inkosi yinkosi ngabantu" (a chief is a chief by the people - Xhosa proverb), and that women, forming more than half the rural population, and operating as they traditionally did, in semi-autonomous matricells (Raum, 1972:20) had to be reckoned with as a powerful, influential force. The fact remains, however, that women in rural areas lack the resources to be economically independent from men, and moreover the concept of a strong body of self-governing matricells is unfeasible, since very few men could afford to be polygynous. "Abantu" in the sense that it occurs in the above saying, refers to influential groups or bodies of kinsmen.

Hoernle mentions the fact that the parity of economic preoccupations amongst the various tribes encouraged the strengthening of kinship bonds:

Economic interdependence is not one of the main principles of linking different households together. Instead kinship bonds link with those who claim common descent from an ancestor. (Hoernle, 1962:69)

Kinship bonds will only be successfully strengthened if people adhere to the appropriate behavioural and linguistic rules that support the system. Thus people in such a

society, able to claim common descent from an ancestor, would be inclined to encourage those traditions and customs that would perpetuate group solidarity. A woman coming from a traditional household would be able to contextualize her new environment and identify the role that would be expected of her. Her point of reference for respect would now be her husband's ancestors, and for the first time in her life she would be required to practise the rules of avoidance. In other words, relationships defined by co-operation, consideration and respect are transferred from the father's home to that of the father-in-law. Respect for one's father is never forgotten, although it will be of a slightly different kind, since it is no longer his ancestors who are to be considered.

In summarising this section it would appear that the rigid structures of traditional Xhosa society, while providing stability and order, marginalize women, in that their allotted role demands that they should be relatively submissive and uninfluential.

2.2 The Role of Women in Present Day Rural Communities

"The village is full of women and old people, like a country at war." (Blondel and Lamb, 1985:18)

The role and position of women in present day rural communities has been affected not only by Western influences - churches, mission schools and the concept of individualism - but also by the actual composition of the society. The migration of men to urban areas has resulted in a decreased proportion of men to women (and sometimes of younger women to older women) (see 3.1.3) altering the quality of the existing speech communities. This transformation has not fundamentally influenced the status of women in the society, but it has meant a redetermination of kinship relationships and a reappraisal of the division of labour. Raum notes that in her husband's absence, a woman's relationships with the remaining male members of her husband's and her father's households will be strengthened and areas of co-operation and responsibility further defined (Raum, 1972:100).

A woman will at times find herself dependent on her father, father-in-law or husband's brother for economic and other domestic help. At the same time her vulnerable position in the absence of her husband will require her to compromise some of her ritual observances and taboos in order to maintain her children's security. Raum also notes that in the absence of her husband it was unusual for parents-in-law to become stricter towards their daughters-in-law, and the majority were not more exacting or severe about avoidances (Raum, 1972:105).

This ability to re-adapt to changed circumstances does reveal a fair amount of flexibility within the network of relationships, especially when they have to accommodate practical arrangements. The legal, political and social position of the woman left behind does not essentially change, however, and she may find that the respect she continues to show to her husband's household and ancestors is not always reciprocated. Her husband might "find another woman" in the towns, he might "forget" to send money and even her own male relatives at home could exploit her weakened position. Blondell and Lamb vividly describe the desolation of such a situation:

Her husband never came back from the city and, because she had no son, her uncle was allowed to claim her hut and her field. Now she lives with her old mother. The husband is the owner of the land, the hut, the livestock. (Blondell and Lamb, 1985:6)

At this stage it would be unusual for a woman to continue to hlonipha since she has been forced to return to the home of her father's ancestors. Language is as vulnerable to change as people are, and when the very situation (ie that of a mutually supportive kinship system) that necessitated its evolution in order to maintain harmonious relationships is invalidated by circumstance, it is likely to lose some of its raison d'etre. In addition, the lack of customary respect afforded to women, can further weaken the morale of the society in the absence of its menfolk:

Apart from such signs of structural breakdown of the headless family, informants were in agreement that the father's absence is an economic necessity, from which there appears to be no escape. (Raum, 1972:30)

As a custom however, hlonipha will persist because of its historical authority and legitimacy. Research that has been conducted in both the Ciskei and the Transkei indicates that for many people its survival is desirable and important. Apart from what people desire and consider important, however, there are other considerations involving factors such as political change, imported values and syncretism, the implications and effects of which being as yet not entirely predictable.

2.3 Isihlonipho Sabafazi and the Xhosa Speaking Speech

Community

The role of women in Xhosa society having been examined, it is now imperative for the purposes of this study that an understanding be gained of how this group functions linguistically within its speech communities.

An analysis of the sociolinguistic phenomenon or "sub-language" known as Isihlonipho Sabafazi (The Women's Language of Respect) within the broader category of isiXhosa requires a description of the relationship of these two distinct varieties to the actual speech communities concerned. An explanation of how the term "speech community" is to be used in the context of this type of analysis, and the fact that a certain definition might be favoured, are in no way intended to discredit or exclude other definitions or interpretations, but merely provide a workable paradigm in which to view the most important issues under discussion.

The definition that has proven to be the most viable, and one that has been approved by Hudson is that of Robert Le Page (1968:189-212), who by carefully avoiding the problematic term "speech community", is able to formulate the following description of the individual's relation to language:

Each individual creates the systems for his verbal behaviour so that they shall resemble those of the group or groups with which, from time to time, he may wish to be identified, to the extent that (a) he can identify the groups; (b) he has both the opportunity and the ability to observe and analyse their behavioural systems; (c) his motivation is sufficiently strong to impel him to choose and to adapt his behaviour accordingly. (Le Page, quoted in Hudson, 1980:27)

Hlonipha is specifically limited to women who are married, and research has shown that one of its main functions as a language variety is to identify an individual as belonging to this group (see 3.2.1.2 and 3.2.2.2). In addition, while identifying herself as a member of the group of married women, the individual will have to identify herself with her new family, eventually learning how to substitute the particular names of this household. She is encouraged to do this by the other female members of her husband's family, thus causing an individualisation of the "behavioural system" referred to by Le Page.

The next point of Le Page's definition could give clarification as to why and how women hlonipha only in certain contexts, and with certain people. When asked whether they used hlonipha in towns, the majority of women replied negatively, indicating that they found it necessary to "adapt (their) behaviour accordingly". In these circumstances, a woman could be said to be adapting her verbal behaviour to resemble that of the group who speak the more standard variety of Xhosa. This phenomenon can further be explained in terms of the multi-dimensional nature of society, which, according to Hudson, includes those

dimensions of "age, region of origin, social class ... and sex" (Hudson, 1980:13). A Xhosa speaking woman, living in a rural area, may want her status and position in her society to be made known by her linguistic practices, but she will nevertheless be forced to recognise the nature of her role as perceived by her urban counterparts. Her role, in these circumstances, will change from being one of a respectful, married woman, to being that of a consumer. As a consumer (and private citizen) she is required to communicate efficiently within the commercial (shops, banks, transport services) bureaucratic (administrative offices), legal (courts) or medical (doctors, hospitals) milieux. A woman will thus admit that when a doctor, clerk or lawyer asks her for her surname, she will give it to him, while acknowledging that she would never call this name at home. In this (urban) context, she will use a variety of Xhosa that is specifically identifiable as non-personal, practical "town talk".

The "women's language of respect" can be understood to be operating in different dimensions for different social groups. The "traditional" woman, living in close, intimate, meaningful relationship with the symbolic world of ritual and custom, views this "language" as an integral and unquestionable given in her world. When she is required to move away from the family network her speech habits will adapt in order to accommodate those groups of speakers with whom she has to communicate efficiently. By contrast, the

urban woman, who at best regards hlonipha as a custom relevant only for rural dwellers, may, if she marries into a strict, traditionalist family, be forced to adapt her speech behaviour in order to maintain good relationships with her husband's people (This is especially relevant to those women whose in-laws still reside outside of the metropolitan areas).

According to individual and group perceptions, then, hlonipha is a language the character of which is determined not merely by simple, internal cohesion, but also by external, widely diverse and complex attitudes towards it and its continued existence as a meaningful and necessary practice. In summing up, one should bear in mind Edwards' observations on the link between attitudes and language varieties:

... attitudes cannot reasonably be said to reflect any inherent linguistic or aesthetic inferiorities in the the varieties concerned. Rather they represent social judgements, ones of taste, preference and convention. (Edwards, 1982:30)

CHAPTER THREE

3.1 Statistical Data relating to the Transkei Region

Before analysing and commenting on data collected in Transkei with regard to attitudes to and the prevalence of hlonipha, it will be necessary to examine factors contributing to the general infrastructure of this area. This information is of seminal importance to the study since it allows some predictions and hypotheses to be made as to the nature and content of the population of this area, and the rate at which standards of living and levels of education are (or are not) increasing, thus affecting levels of literacy, economic growth, migrant labour and urbanization; all of these factors being instrumental in socio-cultural change.

3.1.1 National Context of Transkei

The Transkei region covers an area of some 43 798 km² in the south-east coastal region of South Africa. Its location is therefore peripheral to the major developed urban-industrial cores of the South African space economy: Umtata is 895 km from Johannesburg and 425 km from the Durban-Pinetown area. It also lies off the major national road and rail networks which interconnect the main metropolitan areas with each other. (Dewar, Todes, Watson, 1984:5)

A major distinguishing characteristic of the Transkei (and of the homelands) is the overwhelming predominance of dependents in the de facto population. In 1982 42,8% of the population were less than 15 years old and 17,1% were over 45 years of age. There is also a predominance of women over men. (Dewar, Todes and Watson, 1984:29)

The following table illustrates the extent of this predominance:

Figure 4: Age-Sex Structure of 1980 Population of Transkei

Age Groups	Grand Total	URBAN				Total	RURAL				Total	MIGRANTS (Male only)	
		Male %	No.	Female %	No.		Male %	No.	Female %	No.		%	No.
< 15	1 131 501	47.10	13 160	39.40	15 251	68 411	56.00	519 850	43.60	543 240	1 063 090	-	-
15-64	1 398 710	50.60	15 422	57.40	51 432	87 054	38.00	352 272	51.60	641 974	994 246	99.20	307 410
65+	124 735	2.32	1 633	3.24	2 902	4 535	5.98	55 480	4.98	62 130	117 610	0.84	2 590
TOTAL	2 644 946	100.00	70,415	100.00	84 585	160 000	100.00	927 602	100.00	1 247 344	2 174 946	100.00	310,000

Source: TDR, Vol 1, No 2, October 1981
(reproduced in Dewar, Todes and Watson, 1984:29)

Calculations based on provisional 1980 census data, 1979 BMR survey data for age-sex structure, 1980 labour survey for migrant total, and IMDS estimate of rural-urban breakdown.

The fact that in the 15-64 age category, women comprise 64% of the de facto population indicates that speech communities in Transkeian villages are likely to be more linguistically conservative (if one agrees with Trudgill's hypothesis that women are linguistically more conservative than men: Trudgill, 1974:90) and more cautious in abandoning older linguistic practices such as hlonipha. The situation is, however, rendered more complex in that, in the absence of male relatives, the custom loses some of its meaning and a certain amount of linguistic laxity and compromise is more likely to develop.

3.1.4 Education

Dewar notes that according to the 1970 Hawkins report over 50% of the de facto population of the Transkei had received little or no education, this fact being instrumental in the very low levels of literacy (Dewar, Todes and Watson, 1984:35). He notes that if semi-literacy is taken as Std 2, in 1970 22% of the population was semi-literate (See figure 5 below).

Figure 5: Education Levels of School-Leavers (1981)

Level	Transkei		S.A. as a Whole	
	No.	%	No.	%
Illiterate (without Sub-A)	76 436	54,96	175 764	28,2
Semi-Literate (obtain Sub-A - Std. 2)	26 433	19	160 551	25,8
Literate (obtain Std. 3 - Std. 8)	14 321	10,29	125 402	20,1
Junior Secondary (Std. 6 - Std. 8)	15 406	11,00	108 432	17,5
Senior Secondary (Std. 9 - Std. 10)	6 472	4,65	52 415	8,4
TOTAL	139 068	100	622 564	100

Source: SAIRR, 1982:475-476

(Reproduced in Dewar, Todes and Watson, 1984:36)

This high degree of illiteracy would thus suggest that hlonipha, being an oral phenomenon, is likely to be retained until there is a radical change in the Transkeian educational system. A high level of illiteracy encourages the preservation of a typically "oral" way of thinking and retards any major break with the hlonipha custom. As Ong notes:

Heavy patterning and communal fixed formulas in oral cultures serve some of the purposes of writing in chirographic cultures, but in doing so they of course determine the kind of thinking that can be done, the way experience is intellectually organized. (Ong, 1982:36)

In terms of Ong's argument, therefore, the legitimacy of the language of respect is less likely to be challenged in a predominantly illiterate society.

3.1.5 Trade

In the pre-colonial period the economy of the Transkei region had been based on pastoralism, agriculture, hunting and gathering. (Dewar, Todes and Watson, 1984:10)

This kind of life style would tend to enhance a general community based interaction and an affirmation of those customs that would benefit networks of co-operation and respect, thus providing fertile ground for hlonipha to flourish and gain legitimacy. The situation has changed somewhat from this pattern, however, since:

As European traders moved into the area, increasing quantities of agricultural surplus were channelled into the colonial markets in exchange for blankets and farm implements. Peasants became increasingly dependent on the traders for the sale of manufactured goods, provision of credit, and purchase of their produce. (Dewar, Todes and Watson, 1984:10)

This kind of commercialism has important linguistic side-effects in that areas of co-operation and interaction are redefined as people are forced into wider and less familiar circles of communication in order to survive (see 2.3).

My intention in presenting these statistical data has been to demonstrate that the poverty of the region and its retarded economic growth have substantially inhibited social development and encouraged a certain linguistic conservatism. At the same time, however, these factors have meant that many members of rural communities are forced to seek work in urban areas, leading them to adopt certain "urban" speech habits which are subsequently brought back and assimilated.

3.2 Categories and Analysis of Interviews/Fieldwork

Attitudes as to the nature of hlonipha as it exists as an important custom and how it is influenced by, and exerts its own influence on, the present rural and urban world views, were ascertained by examining responses to the following variables:

- 1 Age of Interviewees
- 2 Reasons given for Hloniphaing
- 3 Self-identification
- 4 Education
- 5 Hlonipha as an Important Custom
- 6 Belief in the Presence of the Ancestors
- 7 How Hlonipha is Learnt
- 8 People Hloniphaed
- 9 Duration of Hlonipha
- 10 Punishment for Not Hloniphaing
- 11 Hlonipha in Towns
- 12 How Hlonipha is Liked
- 13 Future Generations
- 14 Man vs Woman - Status
- 15 Examples of Hlonipha Substitutes

3.2.1 Case 1 : TSOLO DISTRICT

(8 interviews - 2 of which were done with groups of women)

3.2.1.1 Age of Interviewees

60+	2 interviewees
40-60	2 interviewees
20-30	2 interviewees
30-40	1 group
20-30	1 group

3.2.1.2 Reasons given for Hloniphaing

When asked why they hloniphaed, there were two main points upon which all of the women agreed, regardless of their age or education. The one point was that by hloniphaing they knew, and made it known, that they were married. The other was to respect the people of the homestead and the ancestors of that homestead:

Ndiyahlonipha kuba ndiyabazi ukuba basekhona aba bantu nangona baswelekayo.

I 'hlonipha because I know they are still with us although they are dead.

These facts seem to indicate that language is used as a badge or sign of a changed status, as well as a custom used to encourage a certain type of respectful, deferential behaviour:

Ibonisa ukuba ngoku uguqukile kwintlalo yobuntombi - uyinkosikazi. Kufuneka uzigcine izihlonipho ukuze uhlonitshwe nawe.

It shows that you have changed now from being a young girl - you are a married woman. You must keep hloniphaing so that you too are respected.

One woman intimated that, once married, a woman had to be trained to hlonipha:

Nathi ke, sitshatile, sihloniphe siqeqeshwe.

And we, then, we are married, we must hlonipha, we must be trained.

This allusion to training is important in that it indicates that hlonipha, while being primarily an imposed discipline, is at the same time regarded as a verbal skill.

3.2.1.3 Self-Identification

In the Tsolo district, people identified themselves as Xhosa people and hlonipha as a custom of the Xhosa speaking people. Unlike the people in Mqanduli (see 3.2.2.3), they did not appear to want to make a correlation between uneducated, amaBomvu and an adherence to this particular custom. Only in the Khohlopong area was an identification of the hlonipha speech community made, and then only indirectly:

SingabeSuthu - asihloniphi.

We are Sotho - we don't hlonipha.

While the truth value of this statement is highly questionable, the attitude it reveals is interesting - "real"

Xhosa speaking people are perceived as being more "traditional", more conservative about this particular linguistic custom. It also indicates that the tighter the cohesion of the group, the greater the possibility for certain speech habits to be perpetuated.

3.2.1.4 Education

The average educational level of the women interviewed was std 4. The group of women in Mahoyane were attending literacy classes but were as yet unable to read or write anything more than their names. They demonstrated a difference in attitude to hlonipha only insofar as they tended to show less objectivity in discussing the subject than did their more educated counterparts in Lotana. Ong suggests that in a primary culture:

Knowledge is hard to come by and precious, and society regards highly those wise old men and women who specialize in conserving it, who know and can tell the stories of the days of old. By storing knowledge outside the mind, writing and, even more, print downgrade the figures of the wise old man and the wise old woman, repeaters of the past, in favor of younger discoverers of something new. (Ong, 1982:41)

Thus, while hlonipha might in the past have been indicative of wisdom, mental agility and civilization, because of the onset of literacy it is beginning to lose some of its primacy. However, the specifically "oral" aspect of hlonipha, which is still (apart from the work of academics) not considered literate, is important:

For an oral culture learning or knowing means achieving close, empathetic, communal identification with the known (Havelock 1963, pp 145-6), "getting with it". Writing separates the knower from the known and thus sets up conditions for "objectivity", in the sense of personal disengagement or distancing. (Ong, 1982:45-46)

At a suggestion that learning hlonipha could have helped them to learn another language, such as English, the women of Lotana were adamant that:

Isingesi sisifundo sasesikolweni. Isihlonipho lulwimi lwekhaya.

English is a school subject, hlonipha is a language of the home.

For illiterate women there is the additional problem of not being able to write down their surnames when trying to avoid uttering them. Most of these women admitted that they would just call the name if they were asked it in the towns:

Long after a culture has begun to use writing, it may still not give writing high ratings. (Ong, 1982:96)

3.2.1.5 Hlonipha as an Important Custom

Hlonipha was identified as an important custom by the following terminology:

Yimbeko yakwaXhosa ukuba uhloniphe izinyanya.

It is Xhosa respect to hlonipha the ancestors.

Lisiko lesiXhosa.

It is the custom of the Xhosa.

Sisithethe sakwantu.

It is the convention of the African tradition.

Moreover, in answer to the question:

Kutheni nisahlonipha, nina, nje?

Why are you still hloniphaing?

the Lotana women replied:

Sihamba ngemithetho yemizi yethu.

We are bound by the laws of our homestead.

Hlonipha is thus given definite status as a custom, a convention, and a law.

3.2.1.6 Belief in the Presence of the Ancestors

A belief and experience of the omnipresence of the ancestors was exhibited by most informants, although some appeared more sincere than others. The older women were more succinct and confident in their explanations:

Ndiyabazi ukuba basekhona aba bantu nangona baswelekayo.

I know that they are still here although they are dead.

Xa ilanga litshonile, umfazi akanakho ukuphuma phandle ngenayithi. Kufuneka anxibe ilokhwe athwale nasentloko. Izinyanya ziyayibona yonke into oyenzayo zikuxelele ukuba aziyithandi loo nto. Mhlawumbi zikuxelela ephupheni okanye omnye umntu womzi aphuphe izinyanya, zimxelela ukuba akuyale.

After sunset a woman cannot go outside in a night dress. She must wear a dress and wear something on her head. The ancestors see everything you do, and tell you if they do not like something. Sometimes they tell you this in dreams, or a person of the homestead dreams about the ancestors telling him/her to advise you to change your ways.

This kind of confession would support Ong's view that:

Persons whose world view has been formed by high literacy need to remind themselves that in functionally oral cultures the past is the domain of the ancestors, a resonant source for renewing awareness of present existence ... (Ong, 1982:98)

It is also illustrative of Pauw's reflection that:

... in terms of Xhosa tradition the favour of the ancestors on which the desired stability depends is ensured largely by conforming to ritual and other customs ... (Pauw, 1975:324)

3.2.1.7 How Hlonipha is Learnt

The older women in the Tsolo district (i.e. those over 40) indicated that they had become accustomed to hearing hlonipha spoken by their mothers, but were really only introduced to the fuller complexities of the language once they were married. This "education" was carried out by either the sisters-in-law or the mother-in-law:

Ndandiyazi intetho yakhe kodwa ndisakuba mdala ndaqonda ukuba xa esithi ukudubula kukuhahula, uhlonipha UMduna, uyisezala.

I knew the way she spoke, but when I got older I realised that when she used to say ukuhahula for ukudubula (to shoot) she was respecting Mduna, her father-in-law.

This sequence of events was generally held to be true for the younger women as well, although on the whole, they felt they were exposed to less actively hloniphaing women and thus the "language" acquisition process was more difficult and protracted for them. In addition, an emphasis on book learning tends, to some extent, to undermine the purely oral forms of learning encountered at home.

3.2.1.8 People Hloniphaed

When asked about whom they hloniphaed, it was obvious that the oldest women (over 60) were more thorough in avoiding the names of their husbands, fathers-in-law, mothers-in-law and their husbands' male relatives. It was moreover evident from their language use during the interviews that they were unselfconsciously substituting words and syllables. The younger informants would hlonipha usually only their fathers-in-law, but still tried to avoid calling the names of the other relations and those ancestors whose names were known to them. This indicates a shift in emphasis when considering traditional attitudes towards hlonipha. More important now is the mere avoidance of the name, syllabic avoidance being less frequent, and the use of certain integrated "hlonipha" words is becoming more usual. This shift away from the more competitively rigorous avoidance rules would suggest that, as the members of the community become - with increasing education - less orally oriented, personal interaction becomes less significant. It appears, therefore, that even in rural societies people are moving away from being "word-attentive in a person-interactive context" (the oral type of context) towards being "object-attentive" (Ong, 1982:68).

3.2.1.9 Duration of Hlonipha

Informants in the Tsolo district were adamant that they would hlonipha until they died. If we could assume, as in the case of the two oldest women, that this would entail using a considerably altered vocabulary, the implications are linguistically important and would require extensive analysis and further research. Finlayson notes, however, that the trend is away from the "conscious avoidance of syllables", towards an elementary adoption of certain "core" words without regard to particular names (Finlayson, 1984(c):140). While this is the direction hlonipha is taking in urban areas, it should not be considered definitive for the entire Xhosa speaking area. There exists, within rural communities, a modus vivendi which is relatively self-contained and independent, and is able to justify certain values and customs as worthy and useful. Extended family networks are, moreover, durable because of their continuity and their historical and cultural importance. As Goode notes:

Although the extended household loses members through mortality or migration, it is more durable than the conjugal household. That is, as in any other large group, the loss of an individual or two does not change the basic pattern of the group. Even the loss of the eldest male will not change things fundamentally, since there is typically another mature male to take over when that happens. By contrast, in the small domestic unit, the death or absence of the mother or father seriously impairs or even destroys the effectiveness of that family. (Goode, 1982:107)

However, the movement of people from rural to urban areas and back again unavoidably brings about a certain amount of

linguistic assimilation. Duration of the practice would thus be affected by the length of the period for which a woman remained a member of the group of women who hlonipha:

The most obvious source of influence on linguistic variables is the speaker himself, i.e. the kind of person he is and the experiences he has had. (Hudson, 1980:171)

3.2.1.10 Punishment for not Hlonipaing

Older informants were able to recount vividly their experiences as newly-weds, and were able to elaborate on the particular punishments passed on to them for forgetting to hlonipha:

Indodakazi iyandiconizisa kufuneka ndazise abanye oomolokazana. Emva koko siye emakhaya size sibuye nemali ukuza kucela uxolo. Kodwa nendodakazi irhola inkomo kusakube kuxoxiwe icele uxolo kumolokazana lowo. Bonke ke, oomolokazana baye emizini yabo bayityele loo mali bebeze nayo.

If my sister-in-law gives me punishment, I am supposed to tell all the other daughters-in-law. After that we go to our homes and come back with some money to ask for forgiveness. But even the sister-in-law, in return, has to bring something like cattle, after discussion, to ask for forgiveness from the daughter-in-law. All the daughters-in-law go back to the homestead and use the money there.

From the above report, one can ascertain that punishment is not one sided; there is rather a tacitly understood sequence of behaviour which allows all parties to benefit. It is important to note too that proficiency in hlonipha indicates some kind of investment (i.e. a woman well versed in the

hlonipha of her homestead will be able to demand recompense from a less efficient member, and would be less likely to incur similar debts herself).

Explanations of hlonipha as a custom moreover often involved a reference to the behavioural, community aspect of the practice. This indicates a disinclination to separate language from action and led me to question what aspect of hlonipha people considered more important - the behavioural or the linguistic. The impression I gained was that the behavioural side was often given more attention since it is a more external, easily detectable phenomenon. However, the linguistic aspect of hlonipha helps to form and strengthen a particularly respectful demeanour, indicating that the language people use can influence their attitudes just as attitudes are themselves regarded as influential over language.

This co-operation of language, behaviour and attitudes is evident in the process of detecting omissions and errors and inflicting punishment upon the transgressing daughter-in-law. If a woman does not avoid her father-in-law's name, her attitude is considered to be deviant, and she must therefore behave in such a way as to give recompense for her omission.

One male informant in Lotana whose father's name was Mankesi said that if his wife called this name in any way he would be directly responsible for bringing this deviancy to her notice:

Ndiza kumxelela okokuba ngutata lo umbizayo kwaye oko kukumconozisa. Uza kuhamba uMambhele (umtshakazi wakhe) nabo bonke abafazi bakwaNgxabani, baye kumawabo baye kuthatha intlawulo kabawozala lo ambizileyo. Yena Mambhele uza kuza negusha acele ngayo uxolo.

I will tell her that it is my father whom she is calling and I will scold her. Mambhele (his wife) will go with all the women of Ngxabane and they must go to their mother and they must get a payment for the father-in-law whose name she called. As for Mambhele, she must bring a sheep in order to ask for forgiveness.

This aspect of the practice of hlonipha is so hierarchical and legalistic in nature that it is justified, in an attempt to depict the actors on the hlonipha stage and their relationship to one another, to draw a comparison with a court case and its participants:

COMPLAINANTS: FATHER-IN-LAW; MOTHER-IN-LAW; HUSBAND

WITNESSES: SISTERS-IN-LAW

ACCUSED: NEW BRIDE

CRIME : LANGUAGE MISUSE

VERDICT: GUILTY

SENTENCE: FINE AND SUSPENDED SENTENCE

In contrast to this situation however, the younger informants indicated that their punishment took the form of a more subtle, indirect disapproval, often resulting in stern words from the mother-in-law. The fact that punishment is likely to become less and less prevalent is indicative not only of changing mores, but also of a shift in the fundamental economic base of rural life. People cannot afford these kinds of inroads to be made on their subsistence farming, neither do they expect it of others. Therefore a woman's laxity in hlonipha will often be overlooked if she is able to demonstrate her usefulness in other, more profitable ways.

This issue can be further complicated by the disparity between what some women believe, and what others merely acknowledge as existing somewhere in the hlonipha "mythology". Thus the older women were convinced that there was a link between a neglect of the hlonipha custom and a visitation of bad luck. This perception of reality reinforced their adherence to their hlonipha lexicons and explains their unwillingness to deviate from the rules. The younger women did not see any philosophical connection between bad luck and not using the hlonipha vocabulary, but did admit that harmonious relations in the homestead could be disrupted by such a lack.

3.2.1.11 Hlonipha in Towns

The continuing use of hlonipha when out of the immediate area of the village appears to be minimal, most women agreeing to call the taboo names in order to facilitate bureaucratic and economic processes. Thus to the question:

Uhambe edolophini ukurhafa - kufuneka uthethe - xa uthetha uthi uthetha ntethwini?

When you go to town to pay tax - and you have to speak - how do you speak?

the following reply was given:

Uyathetha nje!

You just speak!

Others, however, indicated that this was not the case:

... xa uthandaza; xa uya eofisini - kufuneka uhloniphe.

... when you pray; when you go to the office - you must hlonipha.

The general indication was, however, that hlonipha is not used in churches, hospitals and courts (see Mncube, 1949:225). Some women, nevertheless, seem to impose upon themselves their own kind of rigorous hlonipha discipline, refusing to relax their standards at any stage. In Tsolo, only the oldest informant, MaXesibe (67) and one other woman, Mrs Makatiso (30) (who lives in the remote village of Khohlopong outside Maclear) claimed that they never abandoned the hlonipha rules. The women in Lotana and Mahoyane all asserted, "Sihlonipha emzini wodwa." (We only hlonipha in

the homestead). The reason for this was attributed to the fact that people in the towns did not understand hlonipha, and not because these women did not want to hlonipha. One informant from the Lotana district, speaking from her own personal experience, warned against this tendency, however:

Xa ubuya ekhaya kufuneka uhloniphe. Ukuba uqhelile uyakulibala - noba uya edolophini ungayiyeki.

If you return home you must hlonipha. If you have become used (to not hloniphaing) you will forget how to - so even when you go to the town you shouldn't abandon it.

3.2.1.12 How Hlonipha is Liked

For the older informants in Tsolo, hlonipha was viewed as an important custom, the authority of which was not to be questioned, and the suggestion therefore that they might not like using this "language" was considered invalid:

Andinakho ukuba ndingakuthandi ukuhlonipha kuba yindlela endiqonda ngayo ukuba ndendile kulo mzi. Ngoko ke mandamkele amasiko awo lo mzi. Ndiyakuthanda ke ngoku.

I can't hate hlonipha because it's the way I know I am married to this household. I must accept the custom of this household. Now I do like it.

This statement reveals that although there is a certain degree of compulsion to hlonipha, women have been able to accustom themselves to its necessity, and by habit have grown to like it. The younger informants were also fairly unquestioning in their attitudes towards hlonipha. One positive aspect of the custom manifested itself in the

feeling of solidarity and mutual understanding displayed by many of the women when discussing hlonipha, the language being a common, shared aspect of all their marriages. Some women noted that they would tend to conform to the behaviour expected of them. Thus one likes hlonipha because not liking it would challenge the decision-making processes of one's husband's family.

Ndiyakuthanda kuba ndendile kulo mzi, uza ungazi kaloku kulo mzi. Umele ukuthande ukuhlonipha.

I love it because I am married in this house. You come knowing nothing, you are supposed to love it.

In various informal conversations with women in both rural and urban areas about hlonipha, I noted that an insistence by "traditionalists" on punctilious observance of the custom has, in some instances, led to an alienation from the custom as a whole on the part of younger people, as opposed to the modified compromise that might otherwise have evolved.

3.2.1.13 Future Generations

When asked to forecast the future of the hlonipha tradition and to comment on its possible discontinuation, most women displayed a simple confidence in its survival and continued significance. They were convinced of the desirability of teaching their children and daughters-in-law about hlonipha, some even suggesting that punishment should still be used against those who might be careless or neglectful:

Ukuba akahloniphi umntwana wam emzini wakhe, ndiyamgxolisa, ndimkhuthaze ukuba ahloniphe.

If my child does not hlonipha in the homestead I scold her, I encourage her to hlonipha.

One woman described the passing on of the tradition from generation to generation as a smooth, uninterrupted process of transmission:

Abantwana baza kufunda nabo. Thina sonke siza kufundisa abantwana bethu, nabantwana baza kufundisa abantwana babo, njalo, njalo.

Children are going to learn too. We are all going to teach them and they too will teach theirs, etc etc.

While this comment might appear to contradict other statements that intimate that hlonipha is not a language learnt at home, but during marriage, it is nevertheless compatible with the view that attitudes towards language are learnt in childhood, and by example.

The term hlonipha is being used here in its general sense of "respect", and the women interviewed tended to communicate their understanding of it as operating in conjunction with related societal norms and values. The linguistic aspect of hlonipha was nevertheless considered extremely important and most women intimated that they would not like to see it lightly discarded by their children.

3.2.1.14 Man vs Woman - Status

The district of Tsolo was visited during the months of November and December, which proved to be a favourable time to meet and chat with some of the men who had returned to their villages for their annual holidays. In giving their comments on how they viewed hlonipha there was a general consensus amongst the men that the woman belongs to the weaker sex and is thus required to respect her husband and the men of his household.

A group of men in the Xabane district of Tsolo were adamant that "Indoda inegunya elikhulu - igunya labafazi lincincane" ("Men have the greater authority - the authority of women is smaller.") This attitude may have arisen from the fact that having been separated from their families for a considerable length of time, the men were eager to reassert and reclaim their authority. Also, as their migrant worker status divested them of much of their power and autonomy, they needed to re-establish for themselves a sense of power. Their wives were symbolic to them of their manly status. Even though wives obtain a certain amount of hegemony over their households while the men are away, most men appoint some kinsman to look after the affairs of their homes and land in their absence. Thus, although women may manifest considerable ability in managing their homes and farms, this does not usually count for promotion in the social system. It

would appear, moreover, that the women's language of respect helps to entrench abstract gender differences which usually act in favour of men. Many men were, however, willing to express the opinion that there is an equal share of duties and responsibilities:

Nangona kunjalo inkosikazi ayinalo ilungelo lokwenza izinto ngaphandle komyeni wayo, ukanti nomyeni wayo akanalo ilungelo lokwenza into ngaphandle kwenkosikazi. Yonke into bayenza phantsi kwezigqibo zabo badibane bavane. Inkosikazi kufuneka ibe yeqeqeshekileyo.

Although it is true that a wife does not have the right to do anything without her husband, the husband too does not have the right to do anything without his wife. Every decision they make they must agree upon. The wife must be trained.

And, as some women pointed out, men too have a duty of respect to their in-laws:

Nomyeni akanakho ukuwabiza amagama abazali benkosikazi yakhe. Kufuneka abahloniphe.

The husband also is not allowed to call the names of the parents of his wife. He must respect them (see Soga, 1931:208 for allusion to men hloniphaing the names of in-laws).

Amadoda nawo, ayahlonipha ebukhweni bawo. Xa eye ebukhweni uthwala umqwazi okanye nokuba udlula ngakhona. Akufunekanga angene endlwini. Ngolohlobo indoda ihlonipha kulo nkosikazi ukuze inkosikazi ihloniphe kulomyeni.

Men also must respect their fathers-in-law's places. When he goes to his father-in-law's place he wears a hat or even if he passes there. He can't just enter the house. In this way a man respects his wife so that his wife should respect him.

It seems then that even in the rural areas men's and women's roles and duties are drawing closer together. Women tend to hlonipha less rigorously than in the past, while men continue to acknowledge that a certain amount of respectful behaviour is still required of them.

3.2.1.15 Examples of Hlonipha Substitutes

When hlonipha substitutes were being asked for, it was difficult to ascertain which names were being respected as the informants were unwilling to call these names because that would have meant a breach of the custom. In addition, my intention was to extract only those words that had become integrated into their lexicons; words which were frequently used and which were likely to be passed on to the following generation. Thus, in the Tsolo district, the following substitutes were obtained from those areas identified by maps B, C and D:

<u>English</u>	<u>Xhosa</u>	<u>Hlonipha</u>
bread	isonka	isiqhusheko
Saturday	umGqibelo	umShibelo
to take	ukuthatha	ukutshekula
spoon	icephe	itshayisa/iwaku
to ride	ukukhwela	ukurhoza
bull	iduna	inkunzi/inkabi
to kill	ukudubula	ukukhahlula
egg	iqanda	ihlongozo
knee	idolo	ikruqelo
leg	umlenze	umngqilo
to walk	ukuhamba	ukunawuka
to grind	ukusila	ukunqaqha
pot	imbiza	inteleko
white person	umlungu	umnyepha

forest	ihlathi	igawuli/ingetha
food	ukutya	ukumala/ukumunda
horse	ihashe	inqalashé/iqhvesha
to see	ukubona	ukuloza
to finish	ukugqiba	ukufeza
to respect	ukuhlonipha	ukulongopha
pig	ihagu	ulobe
north	-ntle	-tyhu
below/south	-zantsi	-gxayi
to enter	ukungena	ukukatheka
hearth	iziko	icantsi
scarf	iqhiya	ifayidhuk
poultry	iinkuku	ityiphu/iimpengu
doctor	ugqirha	umxilongi
tooth	izinyo	ihlafuno
to come from	ukuvela	ukuthuza
teacher/priest	umfundisi	umgetyhisi
to study	ukufunda	ukugetya
person	umntu	umnyatheli
to cook	ukupheka	ukutheleka
water	amanzi	amanunga/imvotho
wood	iinkuni	intyodi
head	intloko	impoba
ears	iindlebe	iinkcumbuzo
stamp mealies	umngqusho	umtampo
sorghum beer	amarhewu	amantyawuleza
to drink	ukusela	ukunatha

hands	izandla	izamkelo
outside	-phandle	-gameni
man	indoda	inyentsa
crime	ityala	iwuko
household	umzi	umtyanti
lid/cover	isiciko	isitshakiso
cow	inkomo	inombe
dog	inja	ikhanka
boy	inkwenkwe	ityhagi
road	indlela	impambuko
field	intsimi	ibuwo
to hoe	ukuhlakula	ukuyendeza
to farm	ukulima	ukukrela
mud	udaka	uxovula
to live/sit	ukuhlala	ukuzinza
stick	intonga	intsimelelo
house	indlu	inkumba
thing	into	ini/iba
bad	-bi	-gxathu
beaker	ibhekile	ijoma
girl	intombazana	intshiki
light	isibane	isilayito
axe	izembe	itsheca
plough	ikhuba	igaba
to speak	ukuthetha	ukukhuluma
broom	umtshayelo	umkhukhulo
mat	ukhukho	isicamba

reed basket	ingobozi	imfothozo
paddle	iphini	izamiso
grass	ingca	inkwatshuko/inkothu
maize	umbona	utiya
sheep	igusha	imbuzi
goat	ibhokwe	itsokhwe
to sleep	ukulala	ukugiyama
cord	intambo	intshicilo
stone	ilitye	ithoboza
big	-khulu	-tyinzi
fog	inkungu	inzimeza
porridge	umqa	umgintsa
to burn	ukutsha	ukulumatha
sun	ilanga	isotho
wind	umoya	umhlengethe
rain	imvula	intyuda
dung	ubulongwe	uburagala
to smear	ukusinda	ukukhothuluza
moon/month	inyanga	inkwezi
tree	umthi	umsimeko
garden	igadi	isitandi
fat	amafutha	amathambiso
meat	inyama	intsitshi
pumpkin	ithanga	ixabelo
bucket	i-emele	ivasela
to die	ukufa	ukunoboka
manure	umgquba	umshuxa

mealie stalk	udiza	inkaphela
tray	isithebe	isilelo
behind	emva	emawule
young man	umfana	umtsibane
door	ucango	uhlango
wall	udonga	ikhithika
location	ilali	icikela
pipe	inqawa	ipepu
seclusion of circumcised boys	isuthu	ithonto
boiled maize	iinkobe	iintsala
sour milk	amasi	amabhiba
bread/corn & milk	umvubo	umzamiso
sleigh	isileyi	isivuno

3.2.2 Case 2 : MQANDULI DISTRICT

(15 interviews)

3.2.2.1 Age of Interviewees

60 2 interviewees

40-60 7 interviewees

20-35 6 interviewees

In Mqanduli, as compared to Tsolo, age did not operate as a particularly significant variable in determining the intensity with which hlonipha was being used. There appeared to be a greater degree of sameness in hlonipha acquisition running through most age groups. The fact that in Tsolo there appeared to be a greater understanding of hlonipha among the older people seems to indicate factors distinctive to the younger age group in Tsolo. These are characterised by the relative mobility of this group who, because of the inaccessibility of many of the mountainous villages to secondary schools, are compelled to board away from home, where the tolerance level to hlonipha is greatly reduced. In addition, the particular kind of missionary influence that has been established in this district over the years has tended to encourage even the very poor to aim for a higher education for their children.

3.2.2.2 Reasons given for Hloniphaing

A discussion of my findings with respect to this variable will be found under 3.2.2.6 (Belief in the Presence of the Ancestors). As these two aspects were found to be so closely related in this region, it was decided to combine the treatment of the data obtained.

3.2.2.3 Self-identification

The impression I gained in the Mqanduli district was that there was a greater awareness than in Tsolo of the distinction between the "amaBomvu" and "educated" people. This could be due to the greater accessibility of most of the villages to the main centre (see map E) where "amaBomvu" people do most of their shopping (as opposed to Tsolo, where this group's shopping is largely restricted to isolated trading stores) and to the existence of a strategic scenic route cutting through the countryside and ending in Coffee Bay. This route has increased the presence of tourists in the area, with their obvious interest in people dressed in "traditional" clothes, thus causing greater self-consciousness and perceived differences.

A 55 year old woman working in a shop in Mqanduli held the popular view that:

Abantu abafundileyo abahloniphi. Andazi ukuba kutheni, kodwa abahloniphi bona, njengababomvu.

Educated people don't hlonipha. I don't know why, but they don't hlonipha like the amaBomvu.

Surely, in terms of Ong's thesis, this is because they are moving away from an oral culture towards a literate one where human interactions are not as important (see Ong, 1982:45-46). Two women in the 30-35 age group referred to their adherence to hlonipha as being a result of not having being educated:

Siyahlonipha kuba singamaqaba.

We hlonipha because we are ochre people.

An interesting case was MaJongozi (58), who identified herself as a likumtsha (educated person) and revealed that because her father had been a "coloured" she had never heard hlonipha spoken at her home. She was not forced to hlonipha at her husband's home, but eventually did so because of covert societal (not domestic) pressure:

Zange ndifundiswe zonke kuba ndilikumtsha. Mandithi ngoko utata wam liColoured, kwakungahlonitshwa ekhaya - kubizwa nje. Ndende ke, ubawozala wathi ndingayeka ndingahloniphi kuba undithathe endazi ukuba ndingumntwana wamakumtsha. Kodwa ke ndathi ngentloni ndahlonipha.

I was not taught anything (about hlonipha) because I am a modern person. Let me say then my father was Coloured and there was no hlonipha at home - we just called things by their names. When I married my father-in-law said I didn't have to hlonipha because I didn't know, being a "foreign" child. But because of shyness I hloniphaed.

Abantu abafundileyo abahloniphi. Andazi ukuba kutheni, kodwa abahloniphi bona, njengabomvu.

Educated people don't hlonipha. I don't know why, but they don't hlonipha like the amaBomvu.

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3.2.2.4 Education

Of the 15 women interviewed, the only three with post-standard six education were the youngest two, aged 19 and 20, and an older woman employed in the main business area, aged 55. None of the other women had proceeded further than standard 5. It is significant that the 19 year old woman, having been forced to leave school after standard 8 in order to marry, was making a conscientious effort to learn the hlonipha vocabulary of her new household. Education, in this instance, did not seem to have sufficient power to undermine the authority of the homestead. In fact, in the course of my research I observed that it was only when education was accompanied by a complete internalization of a literate world view together with a physical and emotional separation from the confines of the homestead, that traditional beliefs and customs would be radically modified.

3.2.2.5 Hlonipha as an Important Custom

While most (13) of the women believed hlonipha to be a significant custom, two women felt that it was of minor importance. As in Tsolo, the positive descriptions concentrated on its continued vitality as a tradition that confers a particular status, not only to the wider group, but also to the individual people who use it:

Isihlonipho lisiko lakwantu.

Hlonipha is an African Custom.

Ukuhlonipha kubalulekile - yinto ezimasekileyo
(iyakuzimasa) emzini wakho.

It is important - it dignifies you in your homestead.

Apart from those informants who disagreed with the view that hlonipha was a substantial and fundamental element of Xhosa life - "Nasekhaya kwakungahlonitshwa futhi ..." ("Even at home we don't hlonipha anymore...") - there were also those who doubted its persistence:

Yinto elungileyo ngokwesixhosa, kodwa ke abanye abayinaki.

It is a good thing among the Xhosa, but some don't care about it.

3.2.2.6 Belief in the Presence of the Ancestors

(incorporating 3.2.2.2 Reasons given for Hloniphaing)

The majority of women of all ages stressed that hlonipha was needed both in order to maintain good, stable relations in the home, and to reinforce the "married" status of women. A belief in the ancestors, while acknowledged by most informants as an important consideration, did not seem to have as decisive and concrete an effect on day to day hlonipha practice as the actual presence of living members of the homestead. The fact that women who had gone to live and

work in cities (i.e. those who found themselves outside the immediate influence of the homestead) tended to observe hlonipha less conscientiously testified to this. Generally speaking, in Mqanduli there did not seem to be as close a connection between hlonipha and the ancestors as was demonstrated in Tsolo. There were a few references to the protective power of the ancestors - "izinyanya zindigadile" (the ancestors guard me) - but a more common admission was that there was no real, direct experience of them, either as protectors or as admonishers. In one instance the church completely took over the role of the ancestors when a woman felt that her sacrifices to the ancestors had gone unheeded:

Bendigula ndilibala kukuthi, mandixhelelwe ibhokwe ndisuke ndingaphili. Ndithe ndakuza enkonzweni ndaphila andabi nanto.

When I was sick I wasted time slaughtering a goat, but I didn't get better. When I went to church I recovered.

A number of women stressed that if one did not hlonipha one was not really married:

Ukuba awuhloniphi awufani nokuba wendile.

If you don't hlonipha you will not seem like a married woman.

One woman did, however, admit to a belief in the physical co-operation of the ancestors:

Uyabona ukuba umolokazana ubamba elo selwa, akanakuliyeka kungangenanga mntu apha eminyango kuba izinyanya ezimbabile ebeliba kaloku. Sibonakala apho ke isinyanya ukuba sikhona.

You see, if my daughter-in-law is trying to drink from the calabash, she won't be able to stop holding it until someone enters (and catches her red-handed). It is quite clear that the ancestors are here.

3.2.2.7 How Hlonipha is Learnt

Of the 15 Mqanduli informants, five indicated that they had learnt hlonipha from their mothers-in-law, three from their sisters-in-law and one from her own mother. Six women did not specify who had taught them, but indicated that generally they had picked it up while still small as well as in their new homesteads:

Umama akandixelelanga onke amagama - amanye ndiwazi kuba kuthethwa phambi kwam. Ndikwazi ngolu hlobo ke nam. Ngelinye ixesha xa bethetha nam bendithuma beyibiza ngesihlonipho sabo.

My mother didn't tell me all the words - some I know because they were spoken in front of me. That's the way I learnt. Sometimes when they spoke to me and sent me (to the shops) they would call (things) in their hlonipha.

Two informants admitted that their mothers had not hloniphaed and suggested that this fact made it more difficult for them to learn the new vocabulary. Personal characteristics and idiolects were mentioned as discouraging factors:

Umama wayeyingquthu - umntu ongathandi ukuthetha. Kunzima ukufunda izihlonipho emntwini onjalo kwayeke wayehlonipha loo nto na loo nto - engahloniphi lonke ixesha.

My mother was a quiet person - she didn't like to talk. It is difficult to learn to hlonipha from such a person. She didn't hlonipha everything.

In addition, there is the usual problem of each household having a different set of names and syllables to avoid. Thus in answer to the question:

Njengokuba umama wakho wayehlonipha, yayingakuncedi na loo nto ekukhumbuleni amagama athile emzini wakho?

Did the fact that your mother hloniphaed not help you in your homestead?

one woman replied:

Hayi, kaloku, imizi yahlukile, nezihlonipho zayo zahlukile.

No, households are different - their hlonipha is also different.

As one informant noted, the education is never complete, because although you are told what syllables you are to avoid, you are not always given a substitute vocabulary or even a formula with which to avoid these syllables:

Ungawaxelelwanga, usala uzicingela.

You are not told, you think for yourself.

Sometimes a woman's need to conform to societal norms may be the reason why she would embark on a programme of self-education, as did the informant whose own mother had not hloniphaed:

Zange ndifundiswe zonke kuba ndilikumtsha, kodwa ke, ndive xa abanye behlonipha, nam ke, ndisithathe eso sihlonipho.

I was never taught because I am a learned person but when I heard other people I picked up this hlonipha.

3.2.2.8 People Hloniphaed

Twelve of the 15 women indicated that they would consciously try to avoid those syllables occurring in the names of their fathers and mothers-in-law. Syllables in a father-in-law's name were most consciously avoided. Thus when asked for examples of hlonipha substitutions, respondents usually referred to the names of their fathers-in-law, indicating that these were the people whom they considered the most entitled to expect respect.

Examples

Father-in-law's name was PHUWANA

Some words hloniphaed:

<u>English</u>	<u>Xhosa</u>	<u>Hlonipha</u>
to give	ukupha	ukunika
to wipe bottom	ukuphipha	ukosula
to dream	ukuphupha	ukutonga
to stand up	ukuphakama	ukusukuma

Father-in-law's name was QUQA

Some words hloniphaed:

to kneel	ukuguqa	ukuphindelela
egg	iqanda	ihlongozo
to understand	ukuqonda	ukushonda
pagan	iqaba	ikota
stiff mieliepap	umphokoqo	ipalishi
to tidy up	ukuqoqosha	ukutyotyosha

Father-in-law's name was NDILELE

Some words hloniphaed:

to sleep	ukulala	ukungqengqa
to forget	ukulibala	ukutyantsa

Father-in-law's name was NDLALIBOMVU

Some words hloniphaed:

road	indlela	imfenqa
red	-bomvu	-ntyathu

One 30 year old woman, however, was adamant that she hloniphaed the grandfather, father, uncles, brothers and mother of her husband:

Names she had to hlonipha:

ubawo umkhulu	husband's grandfather	MSEBE
ubawozala	father-in-law	NOMKHONGO
abakhuluwa bakabawo		
	father-in-law's brothers	NTILINI
		NTLOTOVU
		MAJIMANI
umninawe kabawo	father-in-law's younger brother	PHINGITINI
umazala	mother-in-law	NOPHINDILE
abakhuluwa bomiyeni		
	husband's brothers	MATATI
		BHALI
		NOTYOBHO

Examples:

to write	ukubhala	ukukrwela
the porridge is thick	isidudu sijiyile	siyilile
eyelashes	imisebe yamehlo	imiqwazuba
axe	izembe	ixabela
to hoe	ukuhlakula	ukukhutula
firewood	iinkuni	ifintyothi
to bark	ukukhonkotha	ukuntyentyeza
to dream	ukuphupha	ukutyutya
to hold	ukuphatha	ukusapha
to fly	ukuphapha	ukubaleka
dish	isitya	ibeysini

Phrases:

"Where are the eggs?"	"Aphi amaqanda?"	"Atyi amahlongozo?"
"Hello!"	"Molweni!"	"Yiwutheni!"

(Her mother holoniphaed utat'omkhulu - NDIZALE)

to give birth	ukuzala	ukubeleka
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3.2.2.9 Duration of Hlonipha

Three women indicated that they would not always hlonipha; one because she had left her husband's homestead after his death and therefore felt that she was no longer required to respect his ancestors, and the other two because they actually chose not to take the custom and its rules particularly seriously. The remaining women were fairly determined to sustain the practice. One woman's comment illustrates the extent of this resolution in that, although she had been converted to Christianity and her husband had died (two factors that could have influenced her to forego the custom), she continued to hlonipha:

...yasweleka ke indoda sendiguqukile kodwa ndisahlonipha nangoku - andibizi into ekufuneka ndingayibizi.

...my husband died when I had already been converted but I still hlonipha even now. I don't call any name that is forbidden.

Although the tradition requires a woman to respect her husband's relatives linguistically until her death, in practice there is a high degree of individual interpretation of this requirement. However, those women who live in circumstances which favour the use of hlonipha naturally become more comfortable and fluent with this language variety as the years pass and are thus progressively less inclined to abandon it.

3.2.2.10 Punishment for Not Hloniphaing

Even a 68 year old informant was unwilling to overrate the significance of the ancestors as instigators of the more esoteric kinds of punishment (such as amashwa), and emphasized rather the prerogative of society to demand recompense if the custom was ignored or treated lightly. She did wryly admit to having heard of the superstition that one might go bald if one didn't hlonipha:

Sasixelelwe ukuba inwele zakho zijika zibe nenkqayi ube nempandla.

We were told that your hair will fall off and you will go bald.

but elaborated more on practical, societal injunctions:

Kwakuthiwa xa elibele ukuhlonipha ebize umntu ngegama makagoduke ayekufuna igusha kokwabo ahlawule eli gama alibizileyo lo mntu omkhulu angaphinde alibize.

It is said that when a woman forgets to hlonipha and calls a person by name, she must go home and get a sheep from her household and pay for the name she called that older person and must not call it again.

Another informant referred specifically to the need to keep the peace in the home:

Kufuneka ndihloniphe kuba luxolo ekhapa.

I must hlonipha so that there is peace at home.

However, there appeared to be a fairly widespread belief that not even domestic pressures could substantially affect the security of a woman who refused to hlonipha:

Nongahloniphiyo uyahlala akagxothwa.

Even if you don't hlonipha you won't be chased away.

And, according to a 69 year old informant, the custom mentioned above of having to "pay" for not respecting, was no longer relevant:

Awubizwa akukho tyala kuloo nto.

There is no crime (offence) for that thing.

There is, however, an apparent link between a woman's own personal conduct and the seriousness with which she may view a breach or loosening of the precepts of hlonipha. One of the most diligent and disciplined informants, Nokwaka Manyakaza (30), who was referred to by her neighbours as a woman who really hloniphaed, had a fairly uncompromising view of the consequences of such linguistic laxity:

Abantu bomzi bayakhathazeka xa unгахloniphi kuba uza kuchewuka. Izinyanya ziyamfulathela umfazi xa engahloniphi. Abe namashwa. Uza kuhamba esithubeni, ugxothwa zizinyana kuba engahloniphi.

The people of the homestead will be distressed if she doesn't hlonipha because she will get used to bad things. The ancestors will turn their backs on a woman who doesn't hlonipha. She will have bad luck. She may leave home at any moment, driven away by the ancestors because she doesn't hlonipha.

There was more than one reference to ukuchewuka (to become lax) indicating a generally held impression that a relaxation of the rules dictated by custom (including those concerning hlonipha) could encourage moral licence and thus a disorganization of the proper ordering of relationships within the society. Most women, however, seemed comfortable with their own particular interpretations of what hlonipha required of them, and in turn judged other people according

to their individual definitions. Because the actual rules for hlonipha were ultimately defined by particular family groupings, a certain amount of variation in both application and definition was tolerated.

3.2.2.11 Hlonipha in Towns

In the Mqanduli main centre, there were three categories of hlonipha users. One group, predominantly traditional and illiterate, would hlonipha in the shops as a matter of course. One shop attendant said she had to know quite a bit of hlonipha in order to understand some of the requests that her customers made. Another group comprised largely semi-educated women who, although they would have hloniphaed at home, realized that commercial communication required a different set of linguistic values. The third group comprised people who lived in the town, and who (like the shop attendant) manifested a passive understanding of hlonipha but who would not feel called upon to use this form of respect themselves.

3.2.2.12 How Hlonipha is Liked

As in Tsolo, the inherent "rightness" of the hlonipha custom was upheld, although many women admitted to falling short of the ideal. As a custom, it was considered a necessary and logical element of marriage and therefore its validity and legitimacy were as unquestionable as the institution of marriage itself. This unquestioning attitude was revealed in many conversations with women, with perhaps varying degrees of honesty:

Ndiyakuthanda, kaloku, kuba sendiphaya.

I like it because I am already there.

Ndiyakuthanda kuba ndize kuko.

I like it because I have come to it (I find myself in this situation).

A slightly more resigned, unenthusiastic attitude was also revealed:

Ndiyakuthanda kuba ndinyanzelekile kuko.

I like it because I am forced to.

The fact that most women grew up hearing their mothers using a hlonipha vocabulary encouraged them to view this "sub-language" as a completely natural and familiar convention:

Andithi, sikhulele koku kuhlonipha sewungathi udaliwe ngoku sowukuthanda.

We were brought up in this hlonipha thing - it's just as if you were born like this, so you like it.

Apart from describing hlonipha as a symbol of a married woman, one woman even intimated that it could invest its speaker with properties of warmth and intrinsic virtue:

Ndikuthanda ngokuba ukuhlonipha yintsitha yomfazi ekunika isidima sokuba uhloniphe abantu abakhulu apha emzini, nokunika umsantsa emfazini.

I like to hlonipha because by respecting the older people of the homestead the woman shows that she has warmth and dignity; it gives the woman a difference.

Another opinion held by some informants indicated that hlonipha not only gives the woman dignity, but confers upon the marriage itself substantial value and worth:

Ndikhetha ukuthetha nomfazi ohloniphayo kuba ndimbona ekuxabisile ukwenda kwakhe.

I prefer to speak to a woman who hloniphas because then I can see that she values her marriage.

Only one woman indicated a complete rejection of the hlonipha rules and regulations, not by herself, but by her own mother. This kind of resolve is, however, unusual:

Utata wakhe wayemcebisa kodwa angamphulaphuli.

Her father advised her (to hlonipha) but she didn't listen to him.

3.2.2.13 Future Generations

While 14 of the 15 women were positive about their children continuing to hlonipha in their own married homes, there was still an element of doubt since no-one was absolutely sure that this discipline would, in fact, be insisted upon in their "new" homes.

Common answers to the question:

Xa bendile, baya kuhlonipha na, abantwana bakho?

When they marry, will your children hlonipha?

were appropriately evasive:

Kuxhomekeka kulo mzi bendele kuwo.

It depends on the homestead they marry into.

Ekungazini kodwa ndakuba ndibafundisile.

I am not sure, but I would have taught them.

There were, however, those who gave categorical answers in the affirmative, as well as those who realized that other values and ideologies were likely to discredit the more traditional customs:

Umntwana wam ungene enkonzweni kamsinya - akahloniphi. Ecaweni batsho "Kholelwa kuThixo kuphela, sukukholelwa kwizinyanya."

My child is going to enter the church soon - she does not hlonipha. At church they say "Believe in God only, do not believe in the ancestors."

While some churches might demand a complete rejection of any loyalties shown towards the ancestors, they appear to be in the minority and are definitely of the more fundamentalist type.

3.2.2.14 Man vs Woman - Status

As in Tsolo, the comments made directly or indirectly by men indicated that they felt there was a strict division between the sexes; women were expected to fulfil certain duties and functions, and any deviation from the norm was considered

suspect. Even the member of parliament for the area, Mr Julius Matutu, admitted that, although his wife did not linguistically respect his family any more, he demanded a certain obedience and passivity from her with regard to familial and other affairs.

A few older men I spoke to in Mqanduli were able to provide me with a vast amount of hlonipha vocabulary which, they said, they had learnt from having heard women speak when they were young. They intimated a certain regret that the custom was no longer being adhered to as rigorously as before.

It seemed, therefore, that men viewed the decline in (and possible ultimate disappearance of) hlonipha observance with more regret than did women. While those women who had attained higher educational qualifications and become more aware of the world outside the homestead felt less need for such traditional observances, many men saw this as undermining the status and authority which women's use of hlonipha had symbolised, and reinforced. Naturally this applied to a greater degree to older men, who were better versed in the details of hlonipha practice and vocabulary, but even the younger men perceived and resented the resultant blurring of distinctions between the sexes.

3.2.2.15 Examples of Hlonipha Substitutes

For examples of hlonipha terms used in this area, see the Appendix.

3.2.3 Case 3 : URBAN AREA (CAPE TOWN)

When making an analysis of data collected in urban areas it is necessary to isolate three factors:

- a) The temporary nature of the urban home: in the majority of cases women did not consider Cape Town to be their home. Although many spent only holidays at their homes in the Ciskei or the Transkei, these were the places referred to as containing the homestead or home. This fact has been greatly influenced by the South African homeland policy, group areas, influx control laws and migrant labour system, which have succeeded in creating a large, unstable urban population. This sense of displacement is further aggravated by the fact that in some instances neither the rural nor the urban area is able to provide permanent employment and security. As Simkins states, it is now not so much a case of "men of two worlds" as "men of no worlds" (the term "men" is here being employed in its non-exclusive sense):

With a declining proportion of Africans able to maintain a base in the "white" farming areas and with the rapid urbanisation ... of the homelands - often accompanied by the creation of very few jobs locally - on the one hand, and increasing state determination to keep legal rights to permanent settlement by Africans in "white" urban areas to a minimum, on the other, there is a growing class of "men of no worlds", unable to regard any area as their base. (Simkins, 1983:46)

For hlonipha to survive as a dynamic and meaningful sub-language, family unity (in its wider reference) and the constancy of the homestead must remain relatively entrenched. Once the important "actors" are withdrawn from the hlonipha "drama" other participants tend to miss their cues or merely say their lines without proper consideration of their meanings. By this I am suggesting that a certain amount of internalization of hlonipha is required by women together with a positive identification with oral modes of expression and their particular interactions with society. If this internalization and identification is not reaffirmed or reciprocated by the members of the society, the importance of such a particular mode of expression as hlonipha will be severely undermined.

- b) The establishment of new relationships and values: No longer living in a close-knit society where families and relationships are inextricably connected, a woman who has moved from a rural to an urban area will have to redefine her reference world and her loyalties within this new environment. The importance of hlonipha will be considerably lessened, because the woman's role as mother and keeper of the homestead is usually redefined as she moves out of the purely domestic realm and becomes an active member of an urban labour force.

- c) Lack of appropriation and a sense of freedom: In the homestead those persons responsible for the proper teaching of hlonipha would also administer the necessary admonishments to the young wife and encourage her to behave and speak according to the rules. An absence of these "maintainers of the law" generates a corresponding lack of commitment, and as a discipline, hlonipha loses its significance and falls into the background as other more urgent matters take precedence.

In some instances, a woman living apart from the strictures of village life may find she has greater opportunities to increase her education, this increase in literacy leading to a decrease in the internalization of older, purely oral forms of expression. Occasions for a greater diversion of interests and interaction with people using different languages and dialects also help to establish a greater sense of individuality and a tendency to allow self-expression and self-actualisation. In addition, role models in urban areas will be of a completely new dimension; educated, motivated, strong, independent women will be portrayed as those most likely to survive both economically and socially.

An interesting paradox exists here, in that those of the women I interviewed who were most vigorous and conscientious about hlonipha in the rural areas were often those who displayed a more generalized vigour and energy and resourcefulness. However, quiet submission is still expected of newly married women and qualities of gentleness and domesticity are highly valued in rural areas.

3.2.3.1 Age of Interviewees

60+	1 interviewee
40-55	4 interviewees
24-36	3 interviewees

All of the women, with one exception, identified an area in a so-called "independent" state as containing their home town or village. Only one woman was living "permanently" in Langa with her husband, and moreover considered this to be her real home. The others were either (temporarily) living in white residential areas or had accommodation in townships such as Khayelitsha. Six of the women had managed to create fairly permanent homes, while two were still attempting to find some kind of security in Cape Town with regard to both employment and accommodation. Apart from a 24 year old woman who had only recently arrived in Cape Town, all of the women had been living in the area for more than ten years.

3.2.3.2 Reasons given for Hloniphaing

When asked why there was such a thing as hlonipha, only one woman answered historically, referring to it as a custom that had once had significance but that was now, to her knowledge, no longer in operation:

Ngexesha lakudala yayiyindlela ekwakugcinwa ngayo abafazi bezazi ukuba bendile.

Long ago it was a way to let women know they were married.

The other women gave virtually the same reasons as their rural counterparts, although with less emphasis on the actual ancestors (izinyanya). Some of the more common opinions were:

Ukuhlonipha kwenzelwa ukuba umfazi azazi ukuba wendile.

Hlonipha makes a woman know she is married.

Amadoda ayazidla ngomfazi ohloniphayo kuba athi unesidima ebantwini bomzi.

Men are proud of a woman who hloniphas because they say she has dignity amongst the people of the household.

Ndiyakuthanda ukuhlonipha kuba kundenza ndiziqonde kakuhle ukuba ndingumendi kulomzi.

I like to hlonipha because it makes me realize I am a married person in this household.

One woman motivated a more pressurising reason for why she hloniphaed:

Ndisahlonipha nangoku, mna, ngoba andifuni kugxothwa emzini okanye ndibe namashwa.

I still hlonipha now because I don't want to be cast out of the homestead or to be unlucky.

In the above statements, one underlying, essential ingredient of hlonipha is stressed, namely that even in urban areas people refer to the umzi or household, when discussing hlonipha, thus covertly admitting that this is a matter that must be related to the place in which it occurs. This would support the sociolinguistic theory of accomodation cited by Russell, insofar as a place is also defined by the people who inhabit it (Russell, 1982:138-139).

3.2.3.3 Self-identification

Only the 24 year old woman from Idutywa identified herself as being an "iqaba" (red Xhosa). The other seven women all considered themselves to be educated "converted" people:

Mna, ndingumntwana wasesikolweni - ndixela amagqobhoka.

I am a school "child" - I mean I have been converted.

Although the levels of education obtained by these women were not particularly high, the fact remains that this education allowed them the possibility of seeking work in Cape Town. This evidence also indicates the interconnectedness of the Christian religion and education. In addition, as will be demonstrated below under the heading 3.2.3.6 Belief in the Presence of the Ancestors, this kind of self-identification does not necessarily entail a complete rejection of, or disregard for, the ancestors and the many customs and rituals that involve them (such as hlonipha).

3.2.3.4 Education

Of the eight women interviewed:

2 had matriculated

3 had completed standard 6

1 had completed standard 7

1 had completed standard 5

1 had completed standard 2

Their own mothers were also relatively well educated, with two having had professional jobs (nursing and teaching) and only one not having progressed further than standard 6. Comparing these data with those of the rural areas, one can deduce that the higher the educational level, the higher the chances are that women will question and challenge existing customs.

Related to this is the pervasive question of orality. Once women are able to read and write, the emphasis on oral taboos becomes less prominent and less exacting, while knowledge of the written word becomes more urgent. Thus the more advanced a woman's education, the greater the likelihood of her being able to speak English more fluently, which would, in turn, increase her chances of being able to procure a job in an urban area. Moving into a different environment will, as has been mentioned, result in changed attitudes, not only to social relationships but also to language and language usage.

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Often the most pressing linguistic demand made on women living in urban areas (particularly those who received their education in rural areas) is to learn English. This factor once again demonstrates the viability of the accommodation theory, in that women are now not looking for approval from their ancestors or their husbands' relatives, but from potential employers and bureaucratic employees.

3.2.3.5 Hlonipha as an Important Custom

When asked whether hlonipha should be considered an important custom (both behaviourally and linguistically) only one woman replied in the negative. Other responses suggested that the custom is still valued as having consequence in Xhosa tradition, and particularly to Xhosa marriages.

Lisiko lesintu ukuhlonipha.

Hlonipha is an African custom.)

Ukuhlonipha kubalulekile kumakhosikazi endileyo.

Hlonipha is important for a married woman.

One woman, who confessed that she no longer hloniphaed, nevertheless still endorsed the custom by declaring:

Ukuba bendisahleli elizweni lam ngaba ndisahlonipha.

If I was still living in my "country" I would still be hloniphaing.

Other women, however, when pressed to consider the situation in urban areas, admitted that the custom had little, if any, validity for young urban dwellers:

Yayibalulekile ngemihla yamandulo kodwa
ayisabalulekanga.

It used to be important in the old days but it is no longer important.

The problem with hlonipha, according to one informant, is that it cannot exist without marriage. However, even the institution of marriage itself is losing much of its former solemnity and stability:

Umtshato wawubalulekile ngemihla yamandulo kodwa kule mihla awuxabisekanga.

Marriage used to be important in the old days but these days it is no longer valued.

This attitude can be attributed to a number of factors such as influx control laws dividing families and disrupting marriages, the influence of materialistic values, overcrowding and a lack of security.

3.2.3.6 Belief in the Presence of the Ancestors

The enduring presence of the ancestors is closely associated with the homestead, particularly with the cattle kraal where homestead heads are buried. (Pauw, 1975: 130)

The truth of this statement was borne out by the women interviewed, who all (with one exception) indicated that their ancestors' presence was most felt at their homesteads. This does not mean that in urban areas ancestor rituals are completely abandoned, but it does indicate a falling away of

certain practices such as hlonipha, which requires extreme diligence and self-discipline. One informant noted that although the ancestors still remain important even in urban areas, it is the uncommunicativeness of hlonipha that finally leads a woman to abandon it (She also points out how a woman using hlonipha can be easily identifiable as rural - which also might act as a deterrent for some women).

Xa uhlonipha apha edolophini lo nto nje yodwa iyakucacisa ukuba ungumntu wasemaphandleni. Zona izinyanya zibalulekile nokuba sele uphina, kodwa apha edolophini umntu nje usuke adinwe kukutolikela abantu abangazi nto.

When you hlonipha here in the town it is evident that you are a rural person. The ancestors are nevertheless still important even if you are still here, but in the town a person gets tired of translating for people who don't know the words (hlonipha).

3.2.3.7 How Hlonipha is Learnt

All of the women interviewed were able to recall their own mothers using hlonipha in their daily speech. While six women admitted that they had been taught how to hlonipha by their mothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, two confessed that they had never been taught. Of these, one communicated that she was still trying to learn by a process of imitation and assimilation (when she was in the rural area) while the other had no intention of learning, considering the custom irrelevant, archaic and reactionary.

3.2.3.8 People Hloniphaed

It was clear that the women interviewed were not in the habit of avoiding those syllables that occurred in the names of their husbands' relatives. Only three of the women, however, actually admitted this fact, two maintaining that they would still like to hlonipha but that it was difficult when not "at home":

Ndisawuxabisile umzi wam kodwa ngamanye amaxesha ndiyaphazama kuba andikho mzini wam.

I still respect my home, but sometimes I make mistakes because I am not there.

Andisahloniphi ngoku, ngenxa yokuba ndingumsebenzi - akulula ukuthetha ulwimi olungaziwayo.

I don't hlonipha now because I am a worker - it is not easy to speak a language that is not known.

This last statement would support Russell's conviction that:

... people, in their everyday encounters, are largely dependent on others rather than on an abstract society, and that their behaviour is not entirely determined by culture, rules and belief systems. (Russell, 1982:125)

When recalling what names their mothers used to hlonipha, four of the women stressed that it had been their grandfathers (their mothers' fathers-in-law) whose names had been most meticulously avoided, while four observed that all their fathers' male relatives had been equally respected. The youngest informant, having recently arrived in Cape Town from Idutywa, was no less informed than her older

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I don't hlonipha now because I am a worker - it is not easy to speak a language that is not known.

This last statement would support Russell's conviction that:

... people, in their everyday encounters, are largely dependent on others rather than on an abstract society, and that their behaviour is not entirely determined by culture, rules and belief systems. (Russell, 1982:125)

When recalling what names their mothers used to hlonipha, four of the women stressed that it had been their grandfathers (their mothers' fathers-in-law) whose names had been most meticulously avoided, while four observed that all their fathers' male relatives had been equally respected. The youngest informant, having recently arrived in Cape Town from Idutywa, was no less informed than her older

counterparts - a fact strengthening the view that the tradition is likely to be perpetuated more by the solidarity of communities surrounding its geographical genesis than by individual members, once again a testimony to Russell's hypothesis.

3.2.3.9 Duration of Hlonipha

The seven women who felt that hlonipha was or had been important, indicated that if circumstances had not necessitated a move to an urban area, they would have hloniphaed until they died. This is seen as being one of the requirements of the custom; a requirement, however, which they are able to compromise by at least trying to hlonipha when they go home.

3.2.3.10 Punishment for not Hloniphaing

There did not appear to be an unwavering persuasion that a visitation of bad luck (amashwa) would be brought upon a person who did not hlonipha. There were some superstitious, perfunctory allusions to possible adversity, but these were obviously not the result of deep seated convictions. The conscious (or subconscious) redefinition of "taboo" gives a further clue as to why a woman's approach to hlonipha might become less of a preoccupation, and thus less disciplined:

Ndiva abantu abadala besitsho, besithi lilishwa.

I hear old people saying it is bad luck.

Andiqondi ukuba kukho into embi. Ewe ukuba uhlala namaXhosa.

I don't understand that there is anything bad. Yes, if you live amongst the Xhosa.

In other words, hlonipha is perceived as a taboo that has meaning for old people and people often referred to as "traditional". Thus there is a greater tendency to a disaffection and alienation from a custom that would identify one with such a group which, partly through indoctrination and partly through lack of knowledge, has been portrayed as "backward" and "uncultured".

3.2.3.11 Hlonipha in Towns

(The word "towns" in the above heading should, in this instance, be interpreted as "urban areas".)

As has been noted above, the urban family is regarded as a unit that does not exert opprobrium on its members for not obeying the hlonipha rules:

Abakhathali kuba utshata nje, ahlale nomyeni wakhe kungabikho bazali.

They don't care because she just marries and lives with her husband, there are no parents.

Abakukhathalelanga ngoba omnye udibene nomyeni wakhe edolophini angabonani nabazali bomyeni wakhe.

They did not care about it because one would meet her husband in the town and not see his parents.

Andihloniphi edolophini kuba andikho mzini wam.

I don't hlonipha in town because I am not in my homestead.

From their own comments and from general sociological observations and research, it is possible to detect a number of changes in both the perceived and the actual role of the woman in urban areas:

- a) Dependence to independence: Women living in urban areas are often forced to supplement their husbands' incomes by entering the labour force. In some instances they are the only breadwinners. This does not, however, elevate their status, except in cases where they enter "professions" such as teaching and nursing or have spent most of their lives in urban areas.
- b) Extended family to nuclear family: For a number of political and economic reasons the possibility of maintaining an extended family along the lines of the rural homestead (umzi) is impractical in urban areas. The composition of the family unit is organized in a far less hierarchical manner. Mayer reviews the significance of this difference in family membership:

Hlonipha is demanded of school women ... but all these patterns drop away in town almost inevitably. The joint household has vanished, and with it the occasion for much of the traditional etiquette. The schoolwife in town is an autonomous housewife, responsible for her own arrangements, not a junior member of a hierarchy. (Mayer, 1971:217)

- c) The absence of ritual: Although ritual feasts and sacrifices are still carried out in urban areas, people co-operate comparatively less with their ancestors, although many still acknowledge their presence and importance. (see Pauw, 1975:205-227). Areas of preoccupation shift as women and men become more involved in the churches and other social and political organizations.

3.2.3.12 How Hlonipha is Liked

Only two out of the eight women admitted to not liking the concept of hlonipha, while the other six gave various reasons for endorsing the custom:

Ndikuthanda ngoba xa uhlonipha uyandiliseka, ube namathamsanqa emzini.

I like it because when you hlonipha you have dignity and luck in the household.

Ndiyakuthanda kuba ngoku indoda yam iseRhawutini, ingathi ikhona kuba kaloku ndiyahlonipha.

I like it because my husband is presently in Johannesburg, if I hlonipha it is as if he is here.

Lisiko lokwenda.

It is a marriage custom.

These responses do not, however, adequately reflect the real attitude to hlonipha which came across as largely indifferent due to its almost complete removal from its proper context.

These comments are therefore residual and relate to a world view that is often radically modified and one that is constantly undergoing variation and further qualification.

3.2.3.13 Future Generations

In response to the question asking whether they believed their children would hlonipha, three informants were uncertain, explaining that it would depend on the type and location of their daughters' new homes:

O, hayi, kaloku, leyo into ngekhe ndiyazi kuxhomekeka
...

Oh, no, that is not something I know, it depends...

The other four women were convinced that their children would completely disregard the custom:

Ndicinga ukuba abantwana bam soze bahlonipha bona.

I think my children will never hlonipha.

Andingetsho, kuba abantwana bethu abeva.

I can't say because our children don't understand/listen.

Ababethu abantwana abafuni ukuhlonipha.

Our children don't want to hlonipha.

One suggested explanation of the attitudes of the youth to hlonipha was that, like any other language, hlonipha must be heard constantly if it is to become a meaningful part of a child's linguistic repertoire:

Andiqondi ukuba abantwana abakhulela apha edolophini baya kukwazi ukuhlonipha kuba abeva mntu uhloniphayo.

I don't believe children who grow up here in the towns will know how to hlonipha, because they don't hear anyone hloniphaing.

3.2.3.14 Man vs Woman - Status

Six men between the ages of 32 and 50 were interviewed, and their opinions regarding the equality of the sexes were elicited. The most important aspect arising from these interviews was the indication that men differed only marginally from women in their perceptions of hlonipha. As with women, the most obvious connection made was that of language and symbol, hlonipha being considered a linguistic manifestation of a woman's changed status after marriage. It was moreover stressed that the dignity and respect that a woman would gain from using this language would devolve on the whole of her extended family; thus it was not a purely personal, individual matter on the part of the woman. Her use of this language would not only reflect her femininity but also her sense of responsibility to the rest of her community. In addition, men emphasised that if their spouses hloniphaed they would be esteemed as a couple:

Ndithanda umfazi wam ahloniphe ngoba lo nto inika thina sobabini isidima esiqibeleleyo.

I like my wife to hlonipha because it gives us two complete dignity.

The majority of men believed in the gender specificity of duties - women are consigned to the area of the house or

home, while men are involved with affairs outside of the house, both agricultural and political. This dichotomy included a suspicion on the part of men that their roles were more important and that they thus had the right to greater authority:

Mna, elam igunya lingaphezulu kowam umfazi mpela.

My authority is greater than that of my wife.

Most men acknowledged, however, that in their absences their wives would assume an equally authoritative position. This was nevertheless described as a passing of responsibility from the man to his wife, not as an attitude spontaneously emanating from the woman:

... kuba ndiyahamba ndiye eRhawutini, ndimshiye esebenzisa igunya lam.

... because when I go to Johannesburg, I leave her to use my authority.

Moreover, there appears to exist a kind of "mystification" about men; this probably arises from the fact that they experience an elaborate and secretive initiation, while women do not. Raum's comparison of the two initiation ceremonies is illustrative of this:

The purposes of the isolation period were well defined for male initiation, namely, to observe a custom, to accustom initiands to hardship, to make them live with the ancestors, to separate them from the community, and, in particular, to separate them from women Other end results were recognized as making the initiands serious, responsible and intelligent persons...

The purposes of the intonjane differ from the above ... (it) prepares the girl for marriage ... teaches girls the taboos and avoidances of new status ... (and) makes her a full woman. (Raum, 1972:140-141)

The implication is that because women do not undergo a formal, extended procedure of symbolic metamorphosis they are less important and are in some way of less immediate consequence.

3.2.3.15 Examples of Hlonipha Substitutes

The method used for obtaining hlonipha substitutes entailed:

- a) asking whether the informants could remember any of the hlonipha words their mothers had habitually used; and
- b) requesting informants to write down some imagined hlonipha sentences.

This particular method was adopted after it had been ascertained that these women were not, in reality, using hlonipha vocabulary or substitutions in their everyday speech. The approach also favours the collection of hlonipha words that still exist in the consciousness of these women, rather than attempting to deduce how names were avoided.

When women were asked to try to remember the hlonipha words their mothers used, there was a striking similarity of response. Most of the words can be found in Finlayson's core vocabulary; this fact lends credibility to her lexicon.

These words were:

boy	inkwenkwe	ityhagi
young man	umfana	umtsibane
bread	isonka	isiqhusheko
blanket	ingubo	intyatho
spoon	icephe	iwaku
to see	ukubona	ukulozela
meat	inyama	intshani
cow	inkomo	inombe
dog	inja	ikhanka/ibetha
water	amanzi	imvotho/amanunga
pot	imbiza	inteleko
to walk	ukuhamba	ukunawuka
plate	isitya	isimalelo
horse	ihashe	iphala
wagon	inqwelo	ikoloyiya
needle	inaliti	incukumisa
salt	ityuwa	iwakethe
favour	inceba	isheba
road	indlela	inyathuku

In the next section the various "imagined" hlonipha sentences elicited from the interviewees will be given, together with the Xhosa equivalents of the hlonipha words.

Although the situation (ie writing down a primarily oral language in response to a specific question) was artificial, certain important points can be raised as a result of this exercise:

- a) The fact that they had to "imagine" hlonipha being spoken indicates that it is treated by these women as being separate from Xhosa and thus that they have not internalized it as a language.

- b) Most of the sentences deal with a traditional landscape.
- c) A significant number of the words used occur either in Finlayson's core list or my own adapted list.

Iyolo ndithekele ubawozala etyhuke intyithana kugesha esithi ukhanuka imheya ndiyabona wenziwa ngumolulo.

Yesterday when I arrived, my father-in-law slaughtered the goat, saying for a long time he had been longing for some meat - I saw that it was the beer (making him feel like meat).

<u>English</u>	<u>Hlonipha</u>	<u>Xhosa</u>
yesterday	iyolo	izolo
to arrive	ukuthekela	ukufika
to slaughter	ukuyuka	ukuxhela (ixhela)
goat	intyithana	ibhokwe
long time	kugesha	kudala
meat	imheya	inyama (core)
beer	umolulo	utywala (core)

Ndiyavuya nina niza kutyotha nimale intshani. Xa ndithuza emabuweni ndokhe ndize kuyitsiba

I am glad that you are going to sleep - you must eat meat.
When I come from the fields, I will want some.

to sleep	ukutyotha	ukulala
to eat	ukumala	ukutya (own core)
meat	intshani	inyama (own core)
to come from	ukuthuza	ukuvela (own core)
in the fields	emabuweni	emasimini
to want	ukutsiba	ukufuna

Novelile, kuthekele abanawuki basemtyantini phaya ekhaya, andiyili baza kumala shini. Nditheleke intyamsha nje andinazo nenoyi ezi zokuthela kuzo.

Novelile, the homestead travellers have arrived at home, I don't know what they will eat. I am just cooking boiled mealies. I don't even have beans to add to it.

to arrive	kuthekele	kufike
traveller	abanawuki	abahambi (core)
homestead	umtyanti	umzi
to know	ukuyila	ukwazi
to eat	ukumala	ukutya (own core)
what	shini	ntoni
to cook	ukutheleka	ukupheka
mealies	intyamsha	inkobe
beans	inoyi	imbotyi (own core)
to pour	ukuthela	ukugalela

Nhiki wethu Nozolile, nazi intathamba, thela kwezontyamsha.

Nantsi nentshani yenombe ndithuza nayo komtyinzi

No Nozolile, here are beans, pour them onto the boiled mealies. Here is the beef that I got from the chief's place.

no	nhiki	hayi
beans	intathamba	imbotyi
pour	ukuthela	ukugalela.
boiled mealies	intyamsha	inkobe
meat	intshani	inyama
to come from	ukuthuza	ukuvela (own core)
chief's place	umtyinzi	umkhulu

Nawuka empetha kwenkumba, kodwa ulumkele ikhanka ingakumundi.

Walk behind the house, but make sure the dog doesn't bite you.

to walk	ukuwuka	ukuhamba (core)
behind	empetha	emva
house	inkumba	indlu (core)
dog	ikhanka	inja (own core)
to bite	ukumunda	ukuluma (core)

Nawuka ugamathe inteleko uyise kwabawo 'mtyinzi, kuza kutyukwa inombe kugabuka.

Go and take the pot to grandfather's place, they are going to slaughter a beast tomorrow morning.

to go	ukuwuka	ukuhamba (core)
to take	ukugamathe	ukuthathe
pot	inteleko	imbiza (core)
big	-tyinzi	-khulu
to slaughter	ukutyuka	ukuxhela
cow	inombe	inkomo (core)
tomorrow morning	kugabuka	kusasa ngomso

Yhini na nihineleni enkumbeni nangu umnthiso ulayita inkumba?

Why are you staying inside the house while it is burning?

to stay	ukuhineleni	ukuhlala
fire	umnthiso	umlilo
house	inkumba	indlu (core)

Ndizo kulanda le shexa yakuthi kuba imunda ityhosha apha kwaSotha.

I have come to fetch this man because he is spending money here in Langa.

man	ishexa	indoda
to eat/spend	ukumunda	ukutya
money	ityhosa	imali
in Langa	kwaSotha	kwaLanga

Iyolo bendiye esiNqumeni. Ndathekela ubawo omlokwana engamandanga

Yesterday I went to Sinqumeni. When I arrived my father-in-law's brother was not well.

yesterday	iyolo	izolo
to arrive	ukuthekela	ukufika
small	-lokwana	-ncinci
to be well	ukumanda	ukuphila

Kuthiwa abayeni bakwaNombe baza kuthekela ngoMsombuluko baza kolobola ngamaphala amatyatya neskapu. Yaye baza kutyhukelwa imbuzi.

It is said that the people who have been sent to Nombe's place will arrive on Monday to pay a lobola of two horses and a sheep. A goat will be slaughtered for them.

to arrive	ukuthekela	ukufika
Monday	uMsombuluko	uMvulo
horse	iphala	ihashe (core)
two	-tyatya	-bini
sheep	iskapu	igusha
to slaughter for	ukutyhukela	ukuxhelela
goat	imbuzi	ibhokwe

Gamatha ubunameka utyibilize kula nkumba ilokwane kuza kuthekela abanyatheli basemtyantini

Go and fetch some cow dung and smear that small house because people from the homestead are going to arrive.

to fetch	ukugamatha	ukuthabatha
cow dung	ubunameka	ubulongwe
to smear	ukutyibiliza	ukusinde
house	inkumba	indlu
small	-lokwane	-ncinci
to arrive	ukuthekela	ukufika
people	abanyatheli	abantu
household	umtyanti	umzi

Izolo ndilozele ityhagi inawuka apha empetha kwenkumba
iphethe inakutho yentyithana

Yesterday I saw a boy walking behind the house carrying a
goatskin bag.

to see	ukulozela	ukubona
boy	ityhagi	inkwenkwe (core)
to walk	ukunawuka	ukuhamba (core)
behind	empetha	emva
house	inkumba	indlu (core)
bag	inakutho	ingxowa
goat	intyithana	ibhokwe

3.3 NOMAXABISO TSULUKA - AN URBAN CASE STUDY

Mrs Tsuluka (61) is an articulate, extremely well-read woman who has been a domestic worker in Cape Town for many years. Her documentation of her hloniphaing "history" is of particular interest, in that it traces her development from being an active participator in hlonipha to being an indirect, non-participatory commentator.

Ukuhlonipha kukunika imbeko kubantu bomzi. Mna, ndathi ndakwenda ndanikwa igama lomzi ukuhlonipha elam lobuntombazana - kwathiwa ndinguNoamen. Ndibona ukuba kungoba umyeni wam kwakukuphela kwakhe indoda kokwabo. Ubawozala igama lakhe yayinguMathole. UBawomkhulu yayinguNcedani. Zininzi izinto endandizihlonipha. Ezinye ndizibize xa kukho izizathu zoku njengaseofisini apho kufuneka ubize yonke into ngohlobo lwayo ungahloniphi.

Ndathi akusweleka umyeni wam, ndeza apha eKapa, ngo1970, ndeza kusebenza kwanzima apha ukuhlonipha kuba ndisebenza nentlanga ngentlanga bangeva abantu xa ndithetha. Ndadinwa kukusoloko nditolika, kodwa xa ndiye eholideyini ndibuyela emzini wam, andilibali ukuhlonipha kuba ndiyazi ukuba zihleli phaya izinyanya zomzi wam. Andicingi nokuphazama. Ndingakwenzela umzekelo ngamagama ambalwa anje ngala (kwaMathole, kwaMawuko, njal njal):

amazimba	amayika
ukuthenga	ukunana
ukuthengisa	ukwananisa
ukunceda	ukusiza

Maninzi, ke, namanye andigewagqibi. Amanye nam, ndafika ehlonitshwa nguMazala anje ngeswekile yona, ndafika kusithiwa yiNtlabathi. Nam ndatsho kuba wayehlonipha owakhe ubawozala owaye nguSwelindawo. Kodwa ke, mna ndandinganyanzelekanga uba ndimhloniphe. Ikakhulu abantu abahloniphisayo ngabantu abangamaqaba oluhlobo ke lwabantu zange luye esikolweni aluyi nasecaweni lukholelwa kuQamata njengoyena. Bangakhonza yena kunye nezinyanya zabo. Umha ke, yena, noko, ndandimhlonipha njengoba nam owam umama andimbizi ngagama. Amadodakazi ke, wona, isidima sawo, ngosisi noba uyabona ukuba noko mncinci kufuneka ndimhloniphile. Kanti nomyeni kanye ndandimhlonipha, ndimbiza ngomtwana wodade wabo, ndisithi nguMalume kaNomvo.

(Apha uyaqalisa ukuhlonipha)

Kudala wethu, ndikuncokolela ngezinto zomtyanti wam. Ndidiniwe ngoku ndizakukhe ndilumeke ipepu yam. Ngoku khe ndizinze phantsi. Undisizile ngeshelete ndakuzinanela iziqholo ngoMsombulukoko.

Translation

Hlonipha gives honour to the people of the homestead. I myself, when I married, was given a new name of my homestead to replace and respect the one I used as a girl. They called me Noamen. I think it's because my husband was the only one (man) in the house. My father-in-law's name was Mathole. His third younger brother was Mazimba, his second younger brother was Ntengo and his elder brother was Ncedani.

There were so many things I used to hlonipha. In some instances I had to call these names, as in offices where I had to call a spade a spade and not hlonipha.

In 1970, after the death of my husband, I came here to Cape Town to work and it was not easy for me to hlonipha as I was working among different "tribes" who could not understand me when I was speaking. I became tired of having to interpret all the time, but during my holidays I go back to my homestead and I don't forget to hlonipha because I know that my homestead ancestors are still there, I can't make a mistake. I can exemplify by giving a few words like these (hloniphaing Mathole, Mawuko etc etc):

amazimba	amayika	Kaffir corn
ukuthenga	ukunana	to buy
ukuthengisa	ukwananisa	to sell
ukunceda	ukusiza	to help

There are too many words for me to relate all of them. On my arrival (as a bride) in my homestead some words were used by my mother-in-law like sugar (iswekile) which they used to call intlabathi. I also used the same word because she was hloniphaing her father-in-law, Swelindawo, but I was not bound to hlonipha him.

Most people who use the hlonipha language are the "ochre" people. Such people have not been to school and do not go to church as they believe Qamata is their god. They worship him with their ancestors. I hloniphaed my mother-in-law giving her the respect I used for my own mother, whose name I would not call. To show respect to the sisters-in-law you have to call them oosisi regardless of their age. Even if she is younger than me I am bound to respect her. I even respected my husband; calling him by the name of his niece, I would say "Nomvo's uncle."

(Here she breaks into hlonipha)

I have been chatting to you for a long time now about my household, my dear. I am tired now and am just going to sit down and light my pipe. You have helped me with money, I will buy you some perfume on Monday.

<u>zomtyanti</u>	zomzi	(of) the homestead
<u>ndilumeke</u>	ndilayite	and (I will) light
<u>ipepu</u>	inqawa	pipe
<u>ndizinze</u>	ndihlale	and (I will) sit
<u>undisizile</u>	undincedile	you have helped me
<u>shelete</u>	mali	money
<u>ndakuzinanela</u>	ndakuzithengela	I will buy you
<u>ngoMsombuluko</u>	ngoMvulo	on Monday

Mrs Tsuluka's comments on hlonipha as well as their inherent contradictions are fairly widespread among Xhosa women living in both rural and urban areas. For example, her comments indicate a certain difficulty in defining who actually hloniphas. She does, when she goes home, but later on states that the people who really hlonipha are those who are uneducated and believe in Qamata. She indirectly links their hloniphaing custom with this belief and their worship of their ancestors. Ancestors are, however, still very real to her as she states:

... xa ndiye eholidayini ndibuyela emzini wam, andlibali ukuhlonipha kuba ndiyazi ukuba zihleli phaya izinyanya zomzi wam.

... during my holidays I go back to my homestead and I don't forget to hlonipha because I know that my homestead ancestors are still there.

Much of my research indicates that this perception - of the "right time and place" for hlonipha - is generally held and, as long as societal structures in Southern Africa continue to encourage the existence of urban communities with strong rural links, it will be an important influencing factor.

CONCLUSION

A Limbo Language?

There is sufficient evidence to support the assumption that there is, still, a women's language of respect in Xhosa society. In rural areas most women can identify with this "sub-language" and view it as an important and fundamental aspect of their lives. However, some women in rural areas, and many women in urbanized areas, offer a different interpretation of its meaning, intimating that it has lost, and is still losing, much of its relevance. To them hlonipha signifies a collection of words their mothers used in their homesteads - words that exist in a kind of limbo in their own vocabularies.

Why this difference?

As I have indicated in my study - and as the women's own responses demonstrate - this is a language that will survive only as long as certain other institutions survive. This will require social stability, a world view that is firmly based in oral culture and a patriarchal ordering of society uninfluenced by any feminist perspectives or demands.

Changing political, economic and social conditions severely undermine traditional institutions, however, and there are shifts in emphasis in all the areas mentioned above. A previously oral culture is becoming chirographic and patriarchal authority is undermined as women not only predominate numerically but also begin to enter areas of responsibility previously reserved for men; the extended family, even in rural areas, is becoming less supportive as economic demands necessitate migrant labour, and in urban areas the concepts of individualism and personal achievement are highly prestigious.

I would nevertheless predict that because there is still such a positive attitude towards hlonipha by many traditionalists - despite these radical social changes - the essential character and meaning of hlonipha will not be entirely forgotten, and that, even if, as the women in this study have suggested, their daughters do not use the language, they will retain some of its forms and a respect for what it once symbolized in Xhosa society.

APPENDIXA SURVEY BASED ON FINLAYSON'SCORE VOCABULARY

Finlayson's core vocabulary of 53 words was used as the basis of a survey of hlonipha usage in the Mqanduli area. The 53 items in the list were submitted to 21 informants, each of whom stated the hlonipha term (if any) she would use for that item.

The aims of this exercise were:

- a. to ascertain to what extent Finlayson's core hlonipha vocabulary could be said to be universal;
- b. to investigate the possibility of identifying other widely used forms, ie an alternative (possibly regional) core vocabulary; and
- c. to try to establish the pervasiveness of syllable avoidance by recording idiosyncratic hlonipha terms.

In the following tabulation of my findings, responses are indicated as percentages. I have described the alternative widely used forms mentioned in point 2 above as "allocores", and those encountered more rarely and derived by syllable avoidance (point 3) as "alloforms". I have included in the latter category terms used by up to four (19%) of the respondents, as it was often found that women of the same household "shared" hlonipha terms which were not encountered outside that group and which, therefore, could not be considered to be "widely" used. Where an alloform was used by more than one respondent, a percentage response is indicated.

Table B depicts the response to each item on Finlayson's list in terms of percentages of the total sample of 21 informants. Table A records the reactions of each woman by specifying (a) the percentage of the 53 items on the list for which she used hlonipha equivalents, and what proportion of each woman's hlonipha vocabulary comprised (b) Finlayson's core, (c) allocores and (e) alloforms respectively. Column (d), presenting a combination of Finlayson's core and allocores, serves to indicate to what degree each woman used a common, core vocabulary rather than the traditional technique of syllable avoidance, which is represented in column (e). It should be noted that the percentages in columns (b) to (e) indicate proportions of each woman's total as reflected in column (a).

FINDINGSTable A1. Items hlonipha'ed

Only one of the informants hlonipha'ed fewer than 50% of the 53 items; in fact, they responded to an average of 79% of the items. Moreover, in Tsolo (see 88-92), where this list of terms was not submitted to informants, a substantial number (28) of the items hlonipha'ed coincide with those specified by Finlayson. These facts endorse Finlayson's finding that hlonipha is encountered most prolifically in the context of everyday objects, phenomena and situations, and validates my use of her list in this investigation.

ii Use of Finlayson's core vocabulary

Finlayson's core vocabulary was fairly widely used, comprising 43% of the terms elicited from the average informant. Even if one views this in terms of a proportion of the whole list (ie including in the calculation those items to which women did not respond at all), words from Finlayson's core vocabulary were used, on average, for as much as 34% of the items involved.

iii Use of allocores

A significant number of widely used "allocores" was recorded, comprising 32% of the average response.

iv. Use of Finlayson's core vocabulary plus allocores

The greater part (75%) of the average response comprised either words found in Finlayson's core vocabulary or allocores. This proportion indicates that standardised terms are preferred to syllable avoidance.

v. Use of alloforms

Terms used exclusively by individuals or groups of fewer than five comprised 25% of the average informant's response. This figure is sufficiently high to suggest that most women are, at least to some extent, aware of the practice of (and presumably the reasons for) syllable avoidance.

Table BPreference for a core vocabulary

While most of Finlayson's core hlonipha words were recognised, only 14 (26%) were almost universally acknowledged (ie by more than 65% of the informants. This indicates that within Finlayson's core vocabulary there is a particularly entrenched subgroup.

Of the allocores recorded, six occurred with the same frequency as this subgroup. In this region, therefore, it can be said that a core vocabulary of at least 20 terms exists. This, together with the data discussed in (ii), (iii) and (iv) above, supports Finlayson's finding that many hlonipha substitutes are standardised rather than arrived at by means of syllable avoidance.

However, despite the existence and predominance of this form of hlonipha, it is clear from the number and incidence of alloforms (see also (v)) that syllable avoidance is still widely practised in this area, if not particularly rigorously.

TABLE A

21 respondents coded A - U

	(a) Items hloniphaed (% of 53)	(b) Finlayson core used (% of a)	(c) Allocores used (% of a)	(d) Core vocabulary used (b + c)	(e) Alloforms used (% of a)
A	92	39	37	76	24
B	94	42	38	80	20
C	62	33	58	91	9
D	70	46	43	89	16
E	87	46	35	80	20
F	64	29	26	56	44
G	53	36	32	68	32
H	87	41	41	83	20
I	87	39	39	78	24
J	100	38	38	75	25
K	87	52	28	80	20
L	81	28	37	65	35
M	83	50	16	66	34
N	91	40	33	73	27
O	74	56	26	82	18
P	26	14	7	21	79
Q	81	67	23	90	12
R	85	47	20	67	33
S	83	48	25	73	27
T	94	38	38	76	24
U	85	49	24	73	26

Average:

79	43	32	75	25
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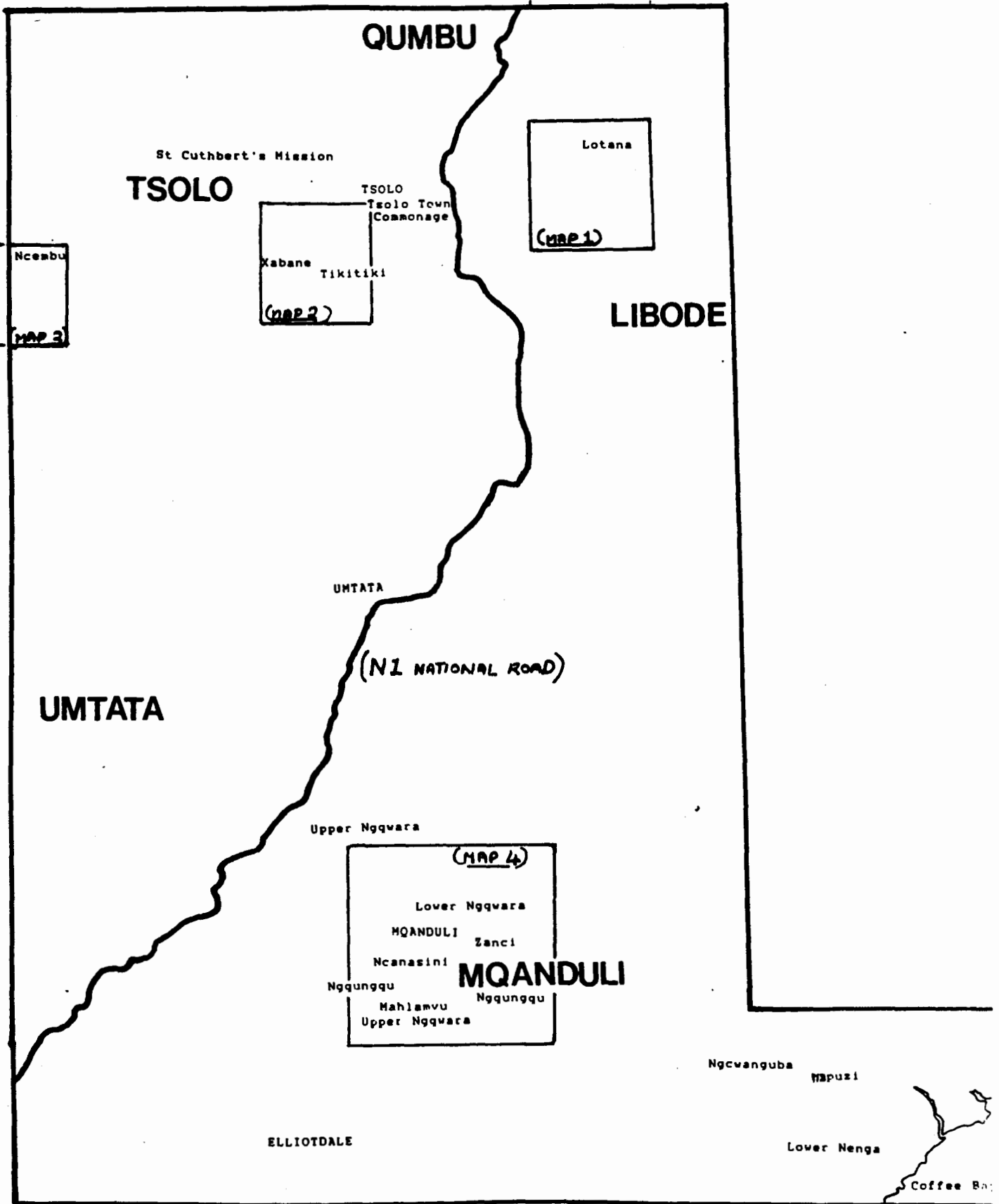
TABLE B

<u>XHOSA</u>	<u>CORE HLONIFHA</u>	<u>CORE OCCURRENCE</u>	<u>'ALLOCORE' (a)</u>	<u>= %</u>	<u>'ALLOCORE' (b)</u>	<u>= %</u>	<u>OTHER ALLOFORMS</u>
ukutya	ukumunda	48%	ukumala	43%	-----	--	-----
isitya	isimundelo	10%	isimalelo	52%	-----	--	isikotile 14% ibeyisin isiyethe
imbiza	inteleko	91%	-----	--	-----	--	unopotwana ipotwe
imela	ihabathi	0%	-----	--	-----	--	isitshetshe 19% imesi ummeso inayif isiphewula isikela itsobholo isilimazi
icephe	iwaku	86%	-----	--	-----	--	idyaku idyako
isonka	isiqhushelo	76%	-----	--	-----	--	isityhushelo
umbona	utiya	10%	utyena	52%	-----	--	uwelesha 10% uweleshe 10% umbhila umcaciso
imbotyi	intlumayo	14%	inoyi	52%	-----	--	uthintsi
itapile	izambane	67%	-----	--	-----	--	imbushelo
iqanda	ihlongozo	86%	-----	--	-----	--	i-eye ("eier")
inyama	imheya	0%	intshani	67%	-----	--	incosi 10% intshitshi ingcosi ichosi
iswehile	iwekete	0%	ishukela	48%	-----	--	isawuti imandi
iti	amagqabi	29%	-----	--	-----	--	ikofu 10% amatyasguba amabengula amabembula
ikofu	impungo	0%	-----	--	-----	--	imula 10% i-ofu isiphungo
amanzi	imvotho	24%	amayile	24%	amanyeko	29%	amathinzi isimulelo amantiko amanunga amangcwe
ubisi	uhlaza	24%	-----	--	-----	--	intusi 19% ukratya 10% uhuko ukrece ilophisi
amasi	amagoboto	0%	amanyengelo	29%	-----	--	amabhiza 14% amavutshwa 10% amanyithi amanyandelo
utywala	umolulo	48%	-----	--	-----	--	ujiki 14% umqomboti 14% umhlomboti umwatala

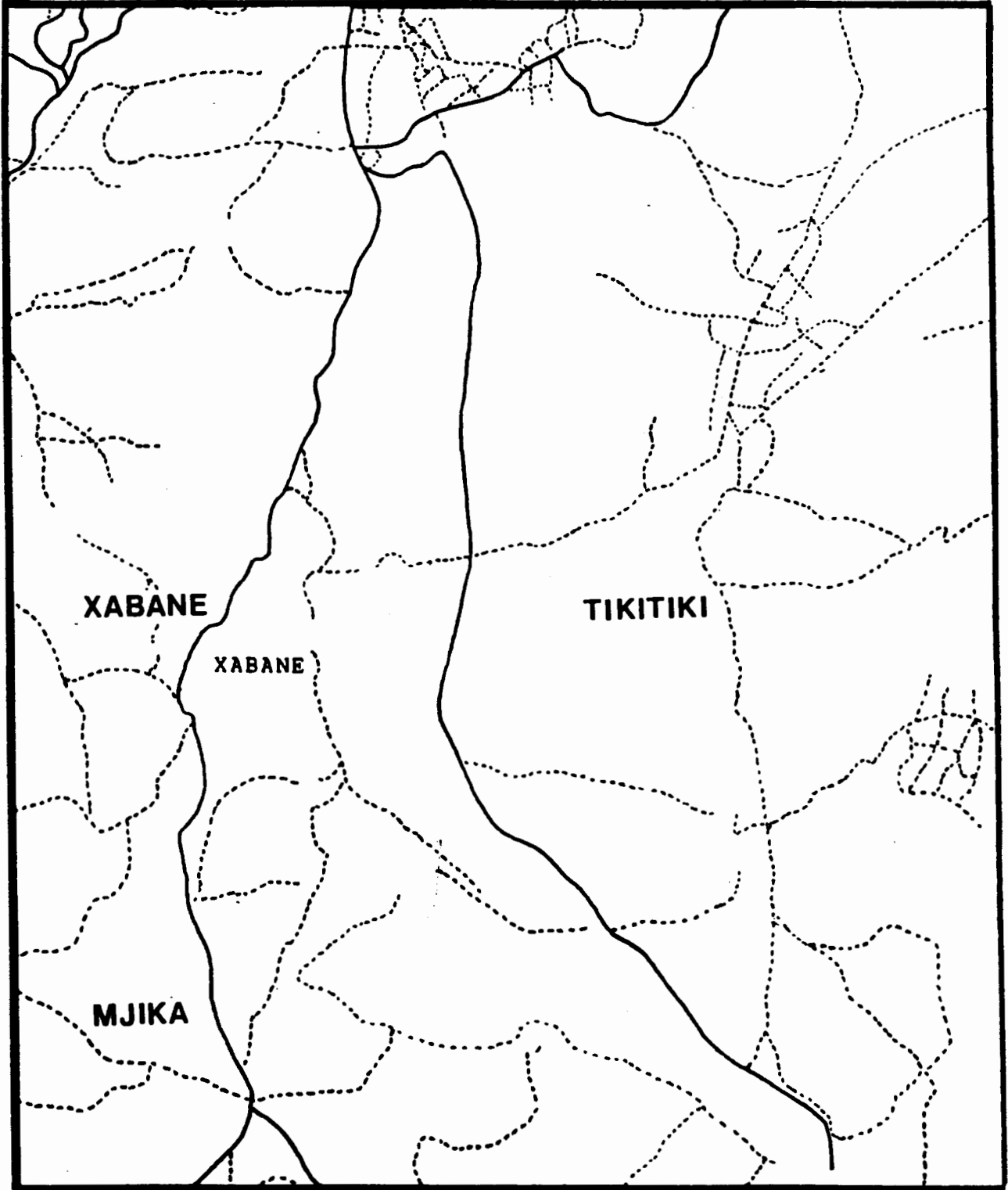
<u>XHOSA</u>	<u>CORE HLONIPHA</u>	<u>CORE OCCURRENCE</u>	<u>'ALLOCORE' (a)</u>	<u>= %</u>	<u>'ALLOCORE' (b)</u>	<u>= %</u>	<u>OTHER 'ALLOFORMS'</u>
inkomo	inombe	14%	imetha	76%	-----	--	imulu ingadudu
ithole	uhuko	19%	-----	--	-----	--	inkonyane 19% iyeku 10% igqeku 10% inonjana 10% inombe inzenyane ixhelesha
inja	ibetha	19%	ikhanka	43%	-----	--	impasala 19% iholo
ihashe	iphala	0%	ipele	52%	-----	--	inqalasha 10% ingqalasha 10% ixhesha 10% ihuyi ingqalatsha
ihagu	ingulube	10%	ihontyi	43%	-----	--	ipigi imu
inkwenkwe	ityhagi	86%	-----	--	-----	--	umfana
intombi	inikazi	5%	intshiki	62%	-----	--	intsonazana inkinyazana
indoda	incentsa	72%	-----	--	-----	--	umfo isheka iwonga
umlungu	umnyepha	86%	-----	--	-----	--	umrhwepha
usana	ityubuka	52%	-----	--	-----	--	ingane 10% ingani 10% imveku untemekwana umntwana
ixhego	ikhitha	5%	-----	--	-----	--	umadala 19% ityego ikhokho ingwevu inkothovu ugogo utata
intloko	iphoba	5%	imfolamo	33%	ityhodi	24%	impoba 14% impobe intyunzi iqecele i-kelele
amehlo	amagabuko	10%	anakhangelo	67%	-----	--	anabaluko 19%
ingalo	umnakazo	0%	-----	--	-----	--	imelatho 14% isamkelo 10% imelathu imolatho iyelatho isiphanga isiphatho
isifuba	isinyamba	29%	isinamba	24%	-----	--	ugaga ugembe isigingci
idolo	ikruqelo	81%	-----	--	-----	--	iguqo
umlenze	umnabo	48%	-----	--	-----	--	intungo 10% inyathelo
indlu	inkumba	91%	-----	--	-----	--	intshinga

<u>XHOSA</u>	<u>CORE HLONIPHA</u>	<u>CORE OCCU- RENCE</u>	<u>'ALLOCORE' (a)</u>	<u>= %</u>	<u>'ALLOCORE' (b)</u>	<u>= %</u>	<u>OTHER 'ALLOFORMS'</u>
umlilo	umbaso	72%	-----	--	-----	--	umnameko umvutho umvuthiso uvuthiso umtyaso
isipili	isilozelo	0%	isibuko	33%	isibono	33%	isilayito 10% isikhangelo isibanelo isimilelo
indlela	umgaqo	10%	umendo	38%	impambuko	33%	intyathuko intyatuka umbatho
inyanga	inkwezi	29%	intwaso	57%	-----	--	ilayiti
ilanga	isotha	19%	ibalela	67%	-----	--	ifuthe
izulu	ihloma	0%	igorha	43%	-----	--	izongomo 10% ihlanti ilulama umhlaba ibhakabhala
isitulo	isichopho	52%	-----	--	-----	--	isicwanyo 10% isihlalo isizinzo
ucango	ubuyiso	14%	uhlango	29%	-----	--	isivalo 10% uvalo ivalo ugingco unamelo
amabele	amanyiso	52%	-----	--	-----	--	iimbongo 14%
phandle	ethameni	0%	thuze	91%	-----	--	-----
-mhlophe	-weke	0%	-mweka	67%	-----	--	-gabukile 10% -gabuka -mcaciso
ukufaka	ukunyambela	0%	ukuvubela	24%	ukukhatheka	24%	ukungenisa 10% ukunyalatya ukunyakatya ukuphimsela ukuchaka
ukufa	ukunoboka	76%	-----	--	-----	--	ukudasha ukusweleka ukubhubha
ukuhamba	ukunawuka	67%	-----	--	-----	--	ukunyathela 14% ukuhangxa
ukusenga	ukuhuka	62%	-----	--	-----	--	ukucensa ukumula
ukuthetha	ukukhuluma	67%	-----	--	-----	--	ukubalula ukuhlondla
ukubaleka	ukumathela	5%	ukugijima	62%	-----	--	ukugxinya ukuthuza ukutsamaya

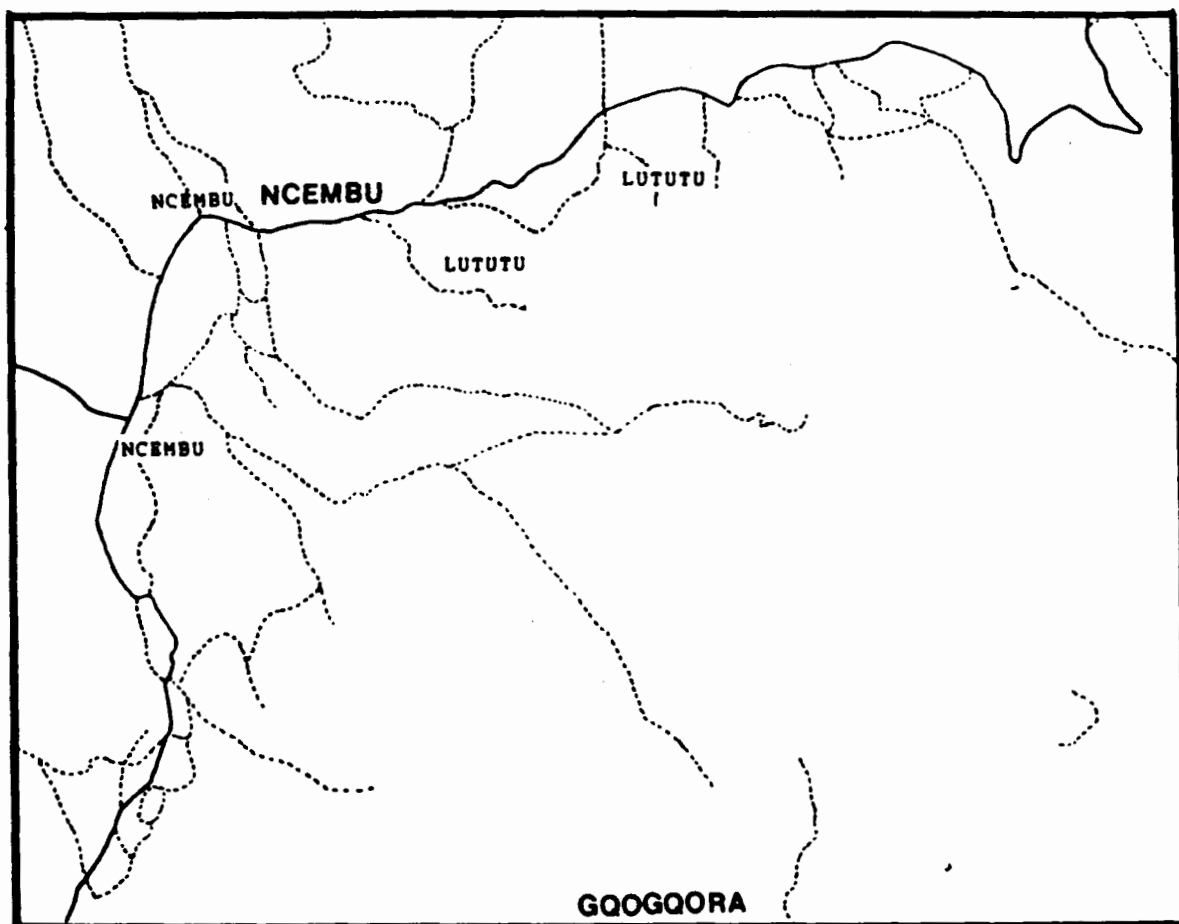
MAP A: MAP INDICATING ALL AREAS WHERE RESEARCH WAS CONDUCTED



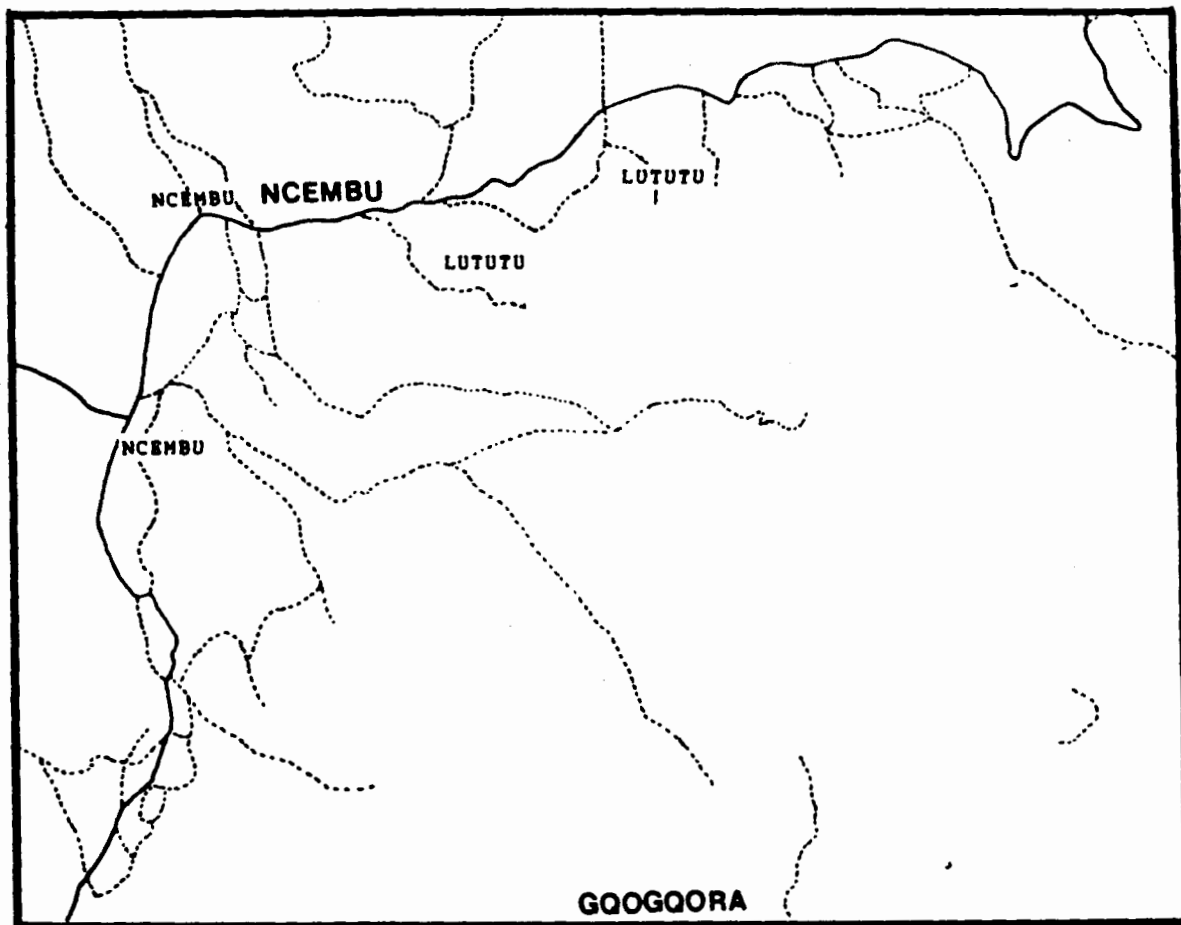
MAP B: XABANE/TIKITIKI (TSOLO)



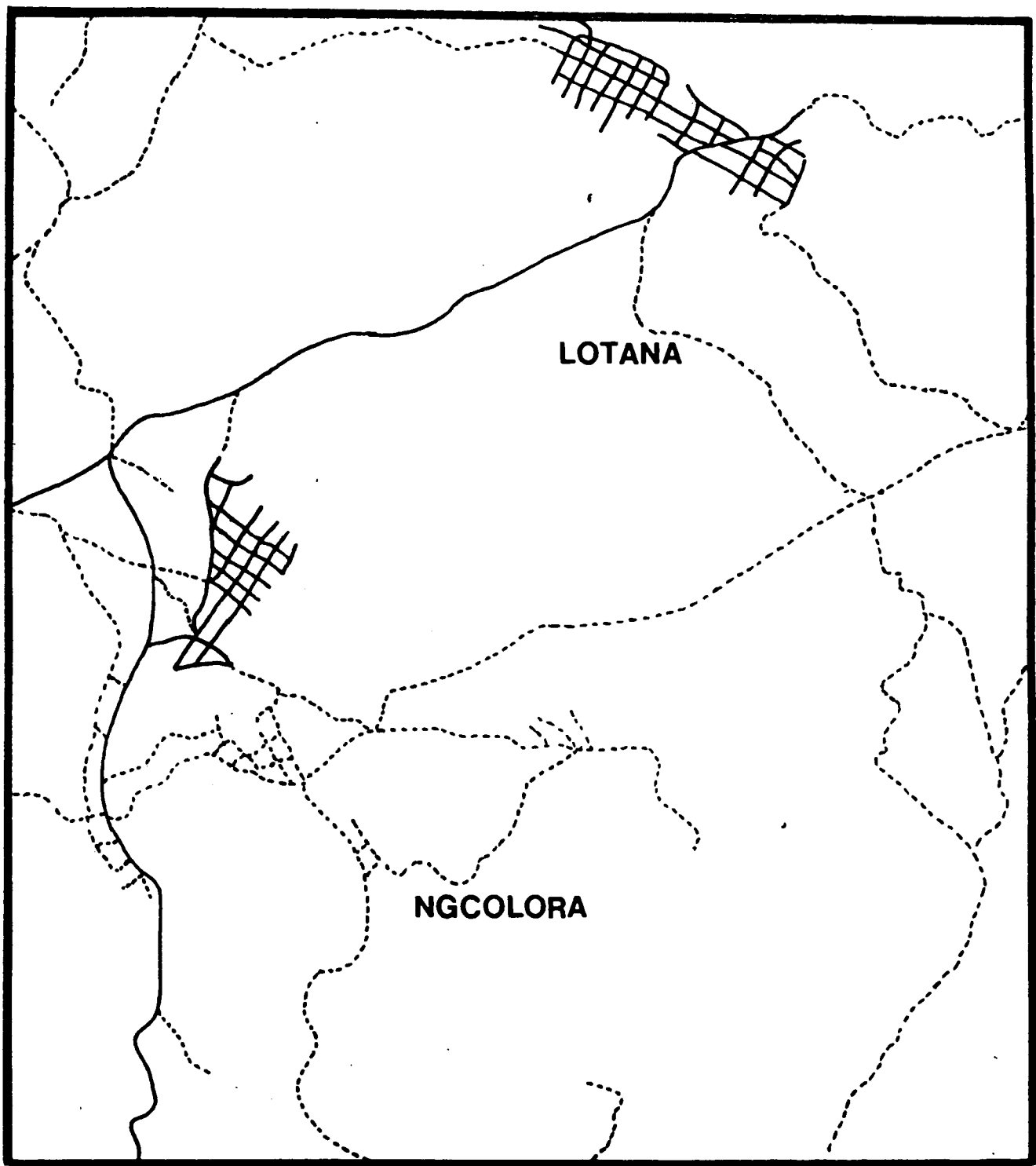
MAP C: NCEMBU (TSOLO)



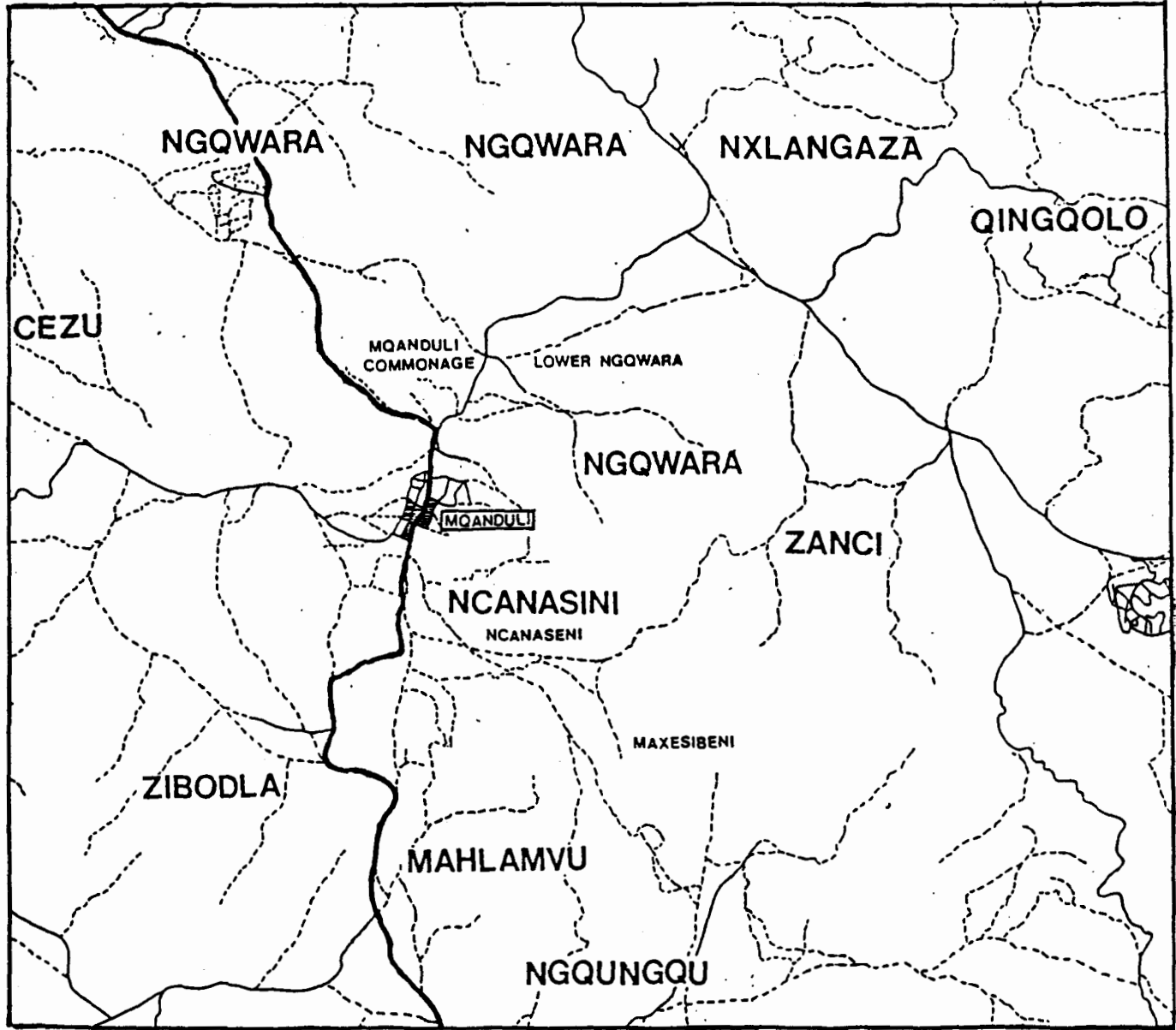
MAP C: NCEMBU (TSOLO)



MAP D: LOTANA (TSOLO)



MAP E: MQANDULI DISTRICT



GLOSSARY OF HLONIPHA WORDS

<u>English</u>	<u>Xhosa</u>	<u>Hlonipha</u>
alcohol	utywala	umolulo/ujiki/umqombothi/ umhlombothi/umwatala
arm	ingalo	imelatho/iyelatho/imolatho/ isamkelo
arrive	ukufika	isiphanga/isiphatho
axe	izembe	ukuthekela itsheca/inxabela
baby	usana	ityubuka/ingane/imveku/ untemekwana/umntwana
bad	-bi	-ngxathu
bag	ingxowa	inakutho
bark	ukukhonkotha	ukutyentyeza
basin	ivasela	ikom
bean	imbotyi	intlumayo/inoyi/umthintsi/ intathamba
bear (children)	ukuzala	ukubeleka
beer (light)	amarhewu	amantyawuleza
behind	emva	emmawule/empetha
below	ezantsi	egxayi
big	-khulu	-tyinzi
blanket	ingubo	intyatho
boiled maize	iinkobe	iintsala/iintyam/iintyamsha
boy	inkwenkwe	ityhagi
bread	isonka	isiqhusheko/isityhusheko
breasts	amabele	amanyiso/iimbongo
broom	umtshayelo	umkhukhulo
bull	inkuni	intyodi
buy	ukuthenga	ukunana
calf	ithole	uhuko/igqeku/ inkonyane/iyeko/ inzenyane/inombe/ ixheleshe/inonjana
cat	ikati	inokwana
cause	ukubanga	ukugadja
chair	isitulo	isichopho/isicwanyo/ isihlalo/isizinzo
change a nappy	ukuphipha	ukosula
chest	isifuba	isinyamba/ugaga/ ugembe/isigingci
chicken	inkukhu	ityiphu/impengu
clear a path	ukugeca	ukugawula
coffee	ikofu	isiphungo/i-ofu/imula
collect	ukuqoqosha	ukutyotyosha
come from	ukuvela	ukuthuza
cook	ukupheka	ukutheleka

corn basket	ingobozi	imfothozo
corn porridge	umqa	umgintsa
country	ilizwe	igorho
cow	inkomo	inombe/imetha/ imulu/ingadudu
cow dung	ubulongwe	uburagala
crime	ityala	iwhuko
die	ukufa	ukuthoboka/ukunoboka/ ukudasha/ukusweleka/ ukubhubha
dish/basin	isitya	ibeysini/isimalelo/ isikotile/isiyethe
doctor	ugqirha	umqhilongi
dog	inja	ikhanka/ibetha/ impasala/ihoko
door	ucango	uhlango/ubuviso/ isivalo/unameko/ ugingco
dream	ukuphupha	ukutonga/ukutyatya
drink	ukusela	ukunatha
ears	iindlebe	iinkcumbuzo
eat/food	ukutya	ukumunda/ukumala/ukuluma
egg	iqanda	ihlongozo/i-eye
enter	ukungena	ukumala
eyelashes	imisebe	imiqwazoba
eyes	amehlo	amagabuko/amakhangelo/ amabaluko
farm	ukulima	ukukrela
fat/oil	amafutha	amathambiso
fields	amasimi	amabuwa
finish	ukugqiba	ukufeza
fire	umlilo	umbaso/unnameko/ umvutho/umvuthiso
firewood	iinkuni	intyothi
flap	ukuphapha	ukubaleka
fog	inkungu	inzimeza/inamathela
forest	ihlathi	igawuli/ingethe
forget	ukulibala	ukutyantsala
garden	igadi	isitandi
girl	intombazana	intshiki/inikazi/ intsonazana/ inkinyazana
give	ukupha	ukunika
goat	ibhokhwe	itsokhwe/intyithana
grace	inceba	isheba
grass	ingca	inkwatshuko/inkothu
grind	ukusila	ukutampa

hands	izandla	izamkelo
head	intloko	impoba/iphoba/ imfolamo/ityhodi/ ityunzi/iqekele/i-ekele
hearth	iziko	icantsi
heaven	izulu	igorha/ihlanti/ ibhakabhaka/izongoma/ ilulama/umhlaba
hello	molo	yiwutho
help	ukunceda	ukusiza
homestead	umzi	umtyanti
horse	ihashe	inqalasho/iqhvesha/ iphala/ihuyi/ ixhesha/ingqalatsa
house	indlu	inkumba/intshinga
Kaffer Corn	amazimba	amayika
knee	idolo	ikruqelo/iguqo
kneel	ukuguqa	ukuphindelela
knife	imela	isithetshe/imesi/ isikela/ummeso/ itsobholo/inayif/isiphewula
know	ukwazi	ukuyila
leg	umlenze	umngqilo/umnabo/ inyathelo/intungo
light	isibane	isilayito
live/sit	ukuhlala	ukuzinza
long ago	kudala	kugesha
lost to (be)	ukulahlekela	ukunalekela
maize	umbona	utyiya/utyena/ uwelesha/umbhila/ umcaciso
male animal	iduna	inkunzi/inkabi
man	indoda	inyentsa/incentsa/ umfo/ishexa/iwonga
man (young)	umfana	umtsibane
manure	umgquba	umshuxa
mealie pap	umpokoqo	ipalishi
meat	inyama	intsitshi/intshani/ incosi/ingcosi/ ichosi
milk	ubisi	uhlaza/intusi/ ilophisi/ukratya/ uhuko/ukrece
milk (verb)	ukusenga	ukuhuka/ukucenta/ukumula
mirror	isipili	isibuko/isibono/ isikhangelo/isilayito/ isibaneko/isimilelo
Monday	uMvulo	uMsombuluko
moon	inyanga	inkwezi/intwaso/ilayiti
mud	udaka	ukukrela

needle	inaliti	incukumisa
no	hayi	nhiki
Nomfundo (name)	UNomfundo	UNomgetyhu
old man	ixhego	ikhitha/umadala/ ityego/ugogo/ ikhokho/utata/ ingwevu/inkothovu
orator	iciko	itshakiso
outside	phandle/-ntle	egameni/-tyhu/-thuze
person	umntu	umnyatheli
pick/hoe	igaba	ikhuba
pig	ihagu	ulobe
pipe	inqawa	ipepu
place	indawo	intshawu
porridge stick	iphini	izamiso
pot	imbiza	inteleko/unopotwana/ipotwe
potato	itapile	izambane/imbusheko
pour	ukugalela	ukuthela
priest	umfundisi	umgetyhisi
pumpkin	ithanga	ixabelo
put	ukufaka	ukuvubela/ukukhatheka/ ukungenisa/ukunyalatya/ ukuchaka/ukuphimisela
request	ukucela	ukushela
respect	ukuhlonipha	ukulongopha
ride	ukukhwela	ukurhoza
road	indlela	impambuko/imfenqa/ umgaqo/umendo/ intyathuko/umbatho
rope	intambo	intshicilo
run	ukubaleka	ukugijima/ukumathela/ ukugxinya/ukuthuza/ ukutsamaya
salt	ityuwa	iwakete
Saturday	UMgqibelo	UMtshubelo
scarf	iqhiya	ifaidhuk/idukhwe
see	ukubona	ukuloza
sell	ukuthengisa	ukunanisa
settlement	ilali	icikela
sheep	igusha	imbuzi/iskapu
shoot	ukudubula	ukuhahlula
skirt	umbhaco	umphawulo
slaughter	ukuxhela	ukutyuka
sleep	ukulala	ukugiyama/ukunqenqa/ ukutyotha
sleeping mat	ukhuko	isicamba
small	-ncinci	lokwane
smear	ukusinda	ukukhotuluza/ukutyibiliza
sour milk	amasi	amabhiba/amanyengelo/ amanyithi/amavutshwa/ amanyandelo

speak	ukuthetha	ukukhuluma/ukubalula/ ukuhlonda
spoon	icephe	itshayisa/iwaku/idyaku
stalk	indiza	inkaphela
stamp mealies	umngqusho	umtampo
stick/rod	intonga	intsimelelo
stones	amatye	amathoboza
study	ukufunda	ukugetyha
sugar	iswekile	ishukela/isawuti/imandi
sun	ilanga	isotha/ibalela/ifuthe
take	ukuthatha	ukutshekula/ukugamatha
tea	iti	amagqabi/amatyashuba/ikofu/ amabengula/amabembula
teeth	amazinyo	amahlafuno
thick milk	umvubo	umzamiso
thing	into	ini/aba
tin dish	ibhekile	ijoma/idyekile
tobacco	icuba	imokwe
tomorrow	ngomso	kugabuka
touch	ukuphatha	ukusapha
translate	ukuguqa	ukuphindelela
traveller	umhambi	umnawuki
tray	isithebe	isilelo
tree	umthi	umsimeko
two	-bini	-tyatya
wagon	inqwelo	ikoloyiya
walk	ukuhamba	ukunawuka/ukunyathela/ ukuhangxa
wall	udonga	ikhithika
want	ukufuna	ukutsiba
water	amanzi	imvotho/amayile/ amanyeko/amathinzi/ amanunga/isimulelo/ amangcwe/amantiko
what	ntoni	shini
white	-mhlophe	-mweka/-mcaciso/-gabuka
white person	umlungu	umnyephe/umrhwepha
wind/spirit	umoya	umhlengethe
yesterday	izolo	iyolo

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