Transliteration as a Solution to Xitsonga Culturally Vulgar Words Expressing Human Anatomy from English within the Context of Life Sciences

Mafemani Joseph Baloyi

Department of African Languages, Language Practice Section, Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education, University of Venda, Thohoyandou, South Africa
Email: mafemani.baloyi@univen.ac.za

Abstract

The lack of Xitsonga technical terminology in specialist subject fields is a predominant drawback for translators. This study explores the translatability of culturally oriented terms on human reproduction and illustrates how the linguistic items impact translation from English into Xitsonga. It employs a descriptive qualitative research method to advance a framework of translating culturally vulgar words in Xitsonga. Data for the study is cross-cultural in nature and was extracted from a Grade 12 Life Sciences textbook through content analysis. Data analysis was carried out through diachronic and synchronic procedures focusing on the affixes to the term conceived through transliteration. The study is underpinned by a neuro-psycho-social theory of speech. The findings indicate problems of word-coinage versus transliteration. The study concludes that, transliteration is a better frame to utter the Xitsonga culturally vulgar words without distorting the source language words and can also serve as a vocabulary builder of acceptable culturally vulgar words within the context of Life Sciences and generally, in the Xitsonga linguistic community.

Subject Areas

Language Practice (Translation, Interpreting and Editing)

Keywords

Affixation, Culturally Vulgar Words, Descriptive Qualitative Research, Neuro-Psycho-Social Theory of Speech, Translation, Transliteration

1. Introduction

There is growing interest to teach and learn technical subjects in African languages, including Xitsonga. Jakobson (2000) [1] posits that any meaning can be expressed through any language. Haspelmath and Tadmor (2009: p. 48) [2] also argue that languages are equally complex and expressive of most concepts and "each language has enough resources to coin terms where a lexical gap exists between languages although cultural borrowing may appear justified in such cases". Factors such as social and linguistic sensitivity among the Vatsonga tend to render translation of culturally vulgar words from English into Xitsonga a complex task. The study therefore explores the translatability of culturally orientated terms on human reproduction and human anatomy, and illustrates how these linguistic items impact the translation process from English into Xitsonga. It focuses on the linguistic factors namely, social and cultural allusions, and connotations found in words that are considered culturally vulgar in Xitsonga. The study aspires to advance a framework of translating culturally vulgar words from English into Xitsonga.

The researcher has, however, observed that one of the factors influencing and complicating the development of Xitsonga is blind adherence to language purism. Some of the Xitsonga speakers keep on purging foreign linguistic influences characterised as "impure" and prevent the same from penetrating their language. The Xitsonga linguistic community should take note of the fact that English terminology of technical subjects such as Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Mathematics and Technology originated and developed through borrowing from foreign languages such as Greek, Latin, French, German, Spanish, Hebrew, Chinese and Japanese; and most of the world's scientific community uses Latin as the universal language (Hoffer, 2002 [3], 2005 [4]).

2. Definition of Concepts

This section serves to express the concepts in the study and the meanings assigned to them and cognate expressions shall therefore have a corresponding meaning.

The Vatsonga have somehow become a nation that generally perceives itself as a people whose language and minds are framed in the cultural background of disdain of impolite vocabulary. This claim is evident through paraphrasing every Xitsonga name of the body parts related to male and female reproductive systems as an attempt to avoid uttering it in both public and private conversations, a procedure likely to compromise their original meaning. For example, vagina is referred to as *xirho xa xisati xa le xihundleni* (private/secret body part of a woman). Vulgar or any salacious literature is therefore, not readily acceptable to an average Xitsonga reader. Contrary, the same words perceived as culturally vulgar, or taboo have connotations and allusions of vulgarity in Xitsonga which seem to be tolerated in the English classroom. This is confirmed by Gao's (2013: p. 2322) [5] research that found that, "English countries tend to be freer and

more tolerant on vulgar words, particularly younger ones, feel freer than they once did to talk about sex-related subjects, musturbation, impotence, sexual activities of various kinds, and human sex organs". Andang and Bram (2018: p. 48) [6] advise that "teaching language, including its rude or impolite vocabulary/lexical items would never mean giving negative influences on the students—it could be an extra advantage for better English language learning-teaching".

Any word or expression that might be offensive, repulsive, and therefore cannot be talked about in public is considered vulgar in Xitsonga. Summarily, vulgar in Xitsonga refers to words, expressions, lexical items or language which is offensive, obscene, odious, cursing, insulting, swearing, lacking in refinement, uncultured and ill-bred; and must therefore be avoided of mentioning in public. In Xitsonga dictionaries, the lexical items that constitute vulgarity are marked as vulgar (v), and this study focuses on same as a linguistic phenomenon. Bernstein and Michie (2009) [7] define vulgar words as those having a common and offensively mean character, lacking in refinement or good taste; uncultured and/or ill bred.

When defining "curse words", Jay (2000: p. 82) [8] says "cursing occurs in the accompaniment of anger or emotions of anger type", and that people curse when their anger is "accompanied by a certain feeling of helplessness". He posits that curse words are "associated with emotion states through classical conditioning, the repeated pairing of words (e.g., damn!) with emotional events". Jay (2000: p. 60) [8] considers anger as "one of the most likely causes of cursing". When defining "curse words", Jing-Schmidt (2019: p. 392) [9] introduces the concept of "taboo", and says, "curse words with their lexical semantics rooted in the conceptual domains of sex and bodily effluvia, in particular, derive their potency from the violation of taboos that are deeply offensive yet humanly inevitable."

Like Jay (1992 [10], 2000 [8]), Anderson and Trudgill (1990: p. 53) [11] associate swear words with emotions and attitude but goes further to introduce the concept of "taboo", and posit, "swear words refer to something that is taboo and/or stigmatized in the culture; should not be interpreted literally; and can be used to express strong emotions and attitudes". Contrary, Drößiger (2017) [12] uses swear word and taboo interchangeably and posits that swear words are used to express intense emotions or used as an expression of anger, despair, and/or contentment. Drawn from the definitions provided above, curse words and swear words are associated with emotion states.

Wardhaugh (2000: p. 234) [13] defines taboo as "the prohibition or avoidance in any society of behaviour believed to be harmful to its members in that it would cause them anxiety, embarrassment, or shame". Words that are taboo in Xitsonga are usually avoided for utterance in public and can only be reserved for particular contexts such as traditional initiation schools. This practice is supported by Avila-Cabrera (2016: p. 28) [14] who defines taboo language as "related to terms that are not considered appropriate or acceptable with regard to the context, culture, language and/or medium where they are uttered". Anderson

and Trudgill (1990: p. 24) [11] posit that taboos are "surrounded by feelings of guilt, repulsion, uncleanliness or belief in supernatural forces". It is for this reason that the Vatsonga employ euphemism as a tool to manipulate meaning by way of politeness. Euphemistic words and/or expressions are used to neutralize the unpleasantness in Xitsonga. What frustrates most is when the very words classified as taboos in Xitsonga, even if articulated euphemistically, are also stigmatised and re-routed to paraphrasing. For example, in Xitsonga, the taboo word, nyompfi ("anus") was euphemistically referred to as *mpfila* ("anus"), but later coined as xihetamavele ("that which finishes mealies"). This linguistic development confirms Samovar's *et al.* (1997 [15], 2015 [16]) observation that culture is learned through communication while communication serves as a reflection of one's culture. It is the translator's responsibility to ensure that the language is appropriate for the target readers. House (2001) [17] therefore, argues that these cultural gaps are bridged by the translator's ethnographic knowledge of the target readers. This implies that the translator must grasp the cultural knowledge, values, beliefs, practices and conventions of the target culture in the attempts to produce target-oriented texts.

Culturally, in Xitsonga all terms or linguistic items understood to be part of offensive, bad or emotional language are considered vulgar. Unlike curse words and swear words which derive their potency from emotion states, vulgar words in Xitsonga can form part of the vocabulary of a language as standalone. For example, uttering any word associated with sexuality including anatomy or human sex organs in public is vulgar, and therefore considered as taboo. This cultural position is somehow supported by Ljung (2011: p. viii) [18] who defines taboos as "words whose literal meaning denotes semantic areas that are too private, too vile or too sacred to be mentioned". Karjalainen (2002: pp. 14-15) [19] also considers taboo as "something that is socially, culturally or religiously prescribed" and posits that "taboos are not universal, but are created by each culture and language, although they often overlap". The Vatsonga also developed this criterion for what constitutes taboo within their cultural contexts.

3. The Role of Translation in Xitsonga

The study subscribes to Munday's (2001: p. 5) [20] definition of "translation", which is "transferring meaning and messages from a source language (SL) into the target language (TL), or even that regards translation as a process of transferring culture". Xitsonga survived obliteration through translation. Many new words in Xitsonga have been assimilated from English through Bible translation processes, and most of the terms are part of the current speech, for example, *Kriste* and *Muprista* have been transliterated from the English words, **Christ** and **Priest** respectively. It is important to note that the suffixes, /-ste/ > Kriste and /-sta/ > *muprista*, are formed by consonants that are not supported by vowels and have since become practical elements in both old and new Xitsonga Bible versions (1907 [21] and 1989 [22]) regardless of their clumsy sounding words or

awkward spelling pattern. The spelling pattern of these new Xitsonga words has since deviated from the traditional standard spelling pattern, but currently endorsed in the Xitsonga Spelling Rules and Orthography, published by Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) in 2008 [23] (and its revised edition in 2019) [24].

4. Current Xitsonga Translation Frame of Technological Lexical Items

When new technological lexical items were introduced to the South African society, attempts were made by some Xitsonga linguists to develop terminologies through coinage. Their attempts could have been motivated by fear to perpetuate the hegemony of English, or the fear of seeing their language relegated to a narrow indigenous home, and only reserved for domestic and cultural functions with no real impact to the scientific and technical world. The following modern terms are some of the Xitsonga linguists' product of their native creations through coinage:

The brief descriptive analysis presented below was carried out with the support of dictionaries and other related references. The analysis is meant to assist the reader to have a better understanding of how Xitsonga vocabulary is built, how coinage impacts the native speaker's terminological understanding and implementation. It may also help the reader to closely experience why almost all the new Xitsonga coined terms provided in Table 1 are likely to be rejected sociolinguistically.

4.1. Cellphone > *riqinghonyongeni* ("A Telephone on the Hip")

The word, **telephone** ("*riqingho*") has been generally accepted by the Xitsonga native speakers. However, most of the Xitsonga native speakers refer to it as *thelefoni* ("telephone"). Both cellphone and telephone refer to instruments for reproducing sound or transmitting speech at a distance by means of radio system. The difference is that cellphone is wireless and mobile while telephone has a microphone and a receiver mounted on a handset linked to a fixed line. The term, *riqinghonyongeni* ("a telephone on the hip") has been coined based on the first cellphone instrument that had a hook to fasten with onto the belt, very heavy to put in the pocket unlike today. Technology has since developed to very small

Table 1. Xitsonga coined technical terms (a collection of the researcher).

Modern English Terms	New Xitsonga coined terms	Generally applied Xitsonga terms
Cellphone	*Riqinghonyongeni* ("a telephone on the hip")	*Selulafoni* ("cellular phone")
Laptop	*Xixingiwa* ("that which is carried on one's lap")	*Lepthopo* ("*laptop*")
Radio	*Xiyanimoya* ("that which goes with the air")	*Rhadiyo* ("*radio*")
Refrigerator	*Xigwitsiritsi* ("that which freezes things")	*Firiji* ("fridge")

instruments and free-hands instruments conveniently accessible while driving, etcetera. Most of the Xitsonga native speakers have practically demonstrated their resistance to this newly coined term, to adopt the term, *selulafoni* ("cell-phone") rather than *riqinghonyongeni* ("a telephone on the hip").

4.2. Laptop > *xixingiwa* ("That Which Is Carried on One's Lap")

A laptop computer is somewhat smaller than a desktop computer, able to be carried on one's lap. A laptop is not strictly designed to be carried on one's lap, but one can work with it on the table or desk. Culturally, what comes first when a Xitsonga native speaker is told about *xixingiwa* ("that which is carried on one's lap") is a baby. Generally, the Xitsonga native speakers translate laptop as *lepthopo*, and thus rejecting the coined term.

4.3. Radio > *xiyanimoya* ("That Which Goes with the Air")

The term was coined based on the understanding that sound is heard through space without connecting wires. The word, **radio** is a scientific term referring to electromagnetic waves generated by high transmitting set, a wireless sound, message, broadcast. The term, *xiyanimoya* ("that which goes with the air") may easily be confused with the concepts such as, airplane/aeroplane, air balloon, kite, etcetera. Also, a telephone transmits sound through air waves from a distance. Hence, many of the Xitsonga native speakers continue to call it *rhadiyo* ("radio") instead of *xiyanimoya* ("that which goes with the air").

4.4. Refrigerator > *xigwitsirisi* ("That Which Freezes Things")

The term was based on the cooling apparatus' basic function, that is, to produce ice and maintain a low temperature or contraction. The fact that ice is also formed in the chamber, that is, a water-filled vessel for condensing in distillation creates some elements of ambiguity. The word, *gwitsi* ("hoar frost"), is a noun borrowed internally, and its verb, *gwitsila* ("freeze"), since the intense cold or white frost can make a person's body to freeze. Most of the Xitsonga speakers prefer the term, *firiji* ("fridge") transliterated from English to the coined term, *xigwitsirisi* ("that which freezes things").

5. Literature Review

Nong, *et al.* (2002: pp. 16-17) [25] investigated Northern Sotho native speakers' preference between loan words and their indigenous counterparts, and it was found that "neutralized (transliterated) loanwords were preferred over pure loanwords where indigenous words were not offered as options". The ambiguities resulting from the terms provided in Table 1, therefore may be proving that coinage is in most cases creating cultural and terminological ambiguity and misunderstanding in Xitsonga, and in some cases, likely to distort the source word, hence rejected sociolinguistically.

The examples provided in Table 1 demonstrate preference of transliteration

to coinage. Regmi *et al.* (2010: p. 18) [26] define transliteration as "a process of replacing or complementing the words or meanings of one language with meanings of another as sometimes the exact equivalence or exact meaning might not exist". This definition emphasizes the need to arrive at common semantic equivalence (similar meanings in two cultures or languages involved in the translation process) and content equivalence (similar meanings and relevance in two different cultures or languages). This implies that transliteration can be a good tool to translate technical terminology from English into Xitsonga as one of the African languages. This view is supported by Al-Azani *et al.* (2010: p. 2) [27] who claim that transliteration "is often used as a practical strategy in contexts where the written form of a language is unfamiliar or does not otherwise exist" and conclude that it can be used as "a bridge to learning for children who are studying more than one script".

Apart from the Multilingual HIV/AIDS Terminology list compiled and published by the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture in 2013 [28], there is currently no Xitsonga technical dictionary known to the researcher. The same holds for Xitsonga texts on human reproduction. Lack of these technical texts render internal views and structures on male and female reproductive organs, effects of hormones during puberty and pregnancy, contraception, menstruation, impotency as well as unique human characteristics of some aspects of reproduction (which form the nucleus of this study) foreign concepts in Xitsonga. Researchers such as Mbananga *et al.* (2004) [29] contend that one of the consequences of lack of technical dictionaries in African languages is that English becomes a barrier to accomplishment of African learners' grades as they are compelled to learn to think and express their ideas in English.

Lack of technical resources in African languages renders terminology an obstinate obstacle to the translators and use of Xitsonga in high-function domains such as academia. The situation is exacerbated by lack of native words describing some parts of the external structure of male and female reproductive organs. For example, some female private parts are generalised as one name, for example, many Vatsonga can hardly differentiate between clitoris and labia minora; vulva, urethra, cervix and vaginal opening, instead these terms are recapitulated as mileve (taboo) and xitombo (taboo) respectively. Xitsonga translators also contend with this challenge of lack of terminology in specialist subject fields such as Life Sciences, and are therefore, forced to explore words beyond the existing Xitsonga dictionaries.

6. A Brief Overview of Transliteration in Xitsonga

Transliteration is described by Sager (1990: p. 90) [30] as "the taking over of the term from another language but adjusting its pronunciation, spelling and morphological characteristics". However, Mtintsilana and Morris (1988: p. 111) [31] caution that although transliteration seems to be the most productive method of developing terminology, a language may run a risk of losing its character if it al-

lows transliteration to fill lexical gaps. These researchers further advise that transliteration should perhaps not be used as a shortcut or first aid, but rather as a last resort, for instance in the fields of medicine and the natural sciences. Moreover, Mphahlele (2004: pp. 341-342) [32] argues that transliteration is not necessarily the best solution and that it is a mere duplication of a source language term. Thus, transliteration should not be regarded as a first, but as the last solution, after all measures have failed. According to Carstens (1997) [33] where all measures for supplying term equivalents have failed, creating new linguistic entities should take the following into consideration: transparency; internationalism; conventions within the subject field; systematic and formal economy.

Guided by the definitions provided above, transliteration also plays a role of preserving the sounds of the source language although not providing an accurate phonemic representation as in transcription. Unlike transliteration whose focus is on the spelling of words from one language with characters from the alphabet of another, transcription serves as a representation of the sound of words in a language using any set of symbols the translator may care to invent or borrow for the purpose (Regmi *et al*., 2010 [26]; Al-Azani *et al*., 2010 [27]). However, this study argues that although transliteration introduces new stylistic constructions in Xitsonga as the target language, it retains some stylistic features of the target language.

7. Research Methodology

7.1. Research Method

The study employed a descriptive qualitative research method to explore the processes and procedures of translating terminology on human reproduction from English into Xitsonga. The research method allowed the researcher to include his "own worldviews, paradigms, or set of beliefs" in the process of analysing and interpreting data (Reason & Rowan, 1981: p. 20) [34]. Reason and Rowan (1981) [34] posit that descriptive qualitative research method is characterised by an emphasis on contextually situated meaning, and therefore, allowed the researcher to assume a reflexive stance and to develop a shared understanding on Xitsonga culturally vulgar words. The approach focused on obtaining conceptual and cultural equivalence in instances where the ideas, concepts, and feelings could not be translated exactly from English into Xitsonga to reflect the breadth and depth of the Vatsonga cultural framework.

7.2. Research Question

The study was guided by the research question: "What urges Xitsonga to translate lexical items on male and female anatomy, and reproductive systems from English even though it has native words store for same terminology?"

7.3. Data Sampling

The data has been extracted from Clitheroe's *et al.* (2013) [35] Grade 12 Life

Sciences textbook through content analysis, with focus on terminology expressing male and female anatomy and reproductive systems. Twenty terms were sampled for the study; 5 terms attached to male reproductive structure, 6 terms attached to female reproductive structure, and 9 terms on human anatomy in general. The content analysis method used to collect data was managed to ensure that relevant lexical items were sampled to yield scientific results. The researcher adhered to the norms, values and principles that guide the translation profession, and the rules governing the translator's conduct and the obligation to not harm the target audience, (Kruger & Crots, 2014: p. 158) [36].

The existing Xitsonga translation frame was explored by scrutinizing some coined technical words and borrowed words to determine the general trend underlying the strategies and procedures through which Xitsonga vocabulary was developed.

7.4. Data Analysis

The analysis was carried out within the diachronic and synchronic perspectives. Diachronic approach assisted the researcher to establish the original forms of Xitsonga transliterated words, and synchronic approach enabled the researcher to investigate transliterated words in their current forms. In the study of grammar of Xitsonga transliterated words, the analysis focused on the affixes (applicable/applied affix -el-, causative affix -is-, passive affix -iw-, etc.) to nouns as a form of classes. Affixation is one of the processes of word-formation in Xitsonga. A morpheme (the smallest meaningful unit of a word) is added either at the beginning (prefix) or the end (suffix) of the word, or the root which is central to the building of new words. Affixation is therefore a morphological process whereby a bound morpheme, an affix, is attached or affixed to a morphological base (root) to create a new word (Nordquist, 2019) [37]. Kilambi (2019: p. 32) [38] claims that "affixation is the second largest word-formation process after compound words".

The researcher's reflexive stance facilitated an understanding of the impact of his own subjective influences on the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data (Primeau, 2003) [39]. The researcher adopted a moderate viewpoint on language development, that is, allowing purism in some domains of language, and allowing liberal viewpoint in others. Literature reveals that the same approach was used as the vocabulary expansion in Xitsonga through Bible translation. This implies that moderate viewpoint is not intended to cripple the language, but to enrich it by applying both internal and external resources maximally.

The English terms were first read out loudly to grasp their sounds clearly before transcribed and transliterated into text within a Xitsonga spelling pattern as guided by the Xitsonga Spelling Rules and Orthography published by Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) in 2019 [24]. Duranti (1997: p. 27) [40] posits that transcribing spoken words into text is a technique for the "fixing on paper of fleeting events" rather than just writing.

7.5. Theoretical Framework

The study is underpinned by a Neuro-Psycho-Social (NPS) Theory of Speech proposed by Timothy Jay in 1992 [10]. The theory was first introduced and popularised in his books, *Cursing in America* in 1992 and *Why We Curse* in 2000 respectively. The theory blends cross-disciplinary factors (Neurological, Psychological, Social and Cultural) underlying cursing. It is designed to explore cursing rules and cursing behaviours developed within particular social and cultural contexts, and study causes of violations to the rules (Jay, 2000) [8].

The researcher applied the theory as a lens to explore different sets of linguistic and semantic constraints on Xitsonga culturally vulgar words. The theory was also grounded on the conceptual frameworks of morphology, phonology, semantics and adoptive (Bybee, 1985 [41], 2001 [42]; Trudjill, 2001 [43]; Fromkin, 2018 [44]).

Morphology is the study of the formation and structure of words; semantics studies the meaning of words; phonology deals with the study of sounds of words in their cognitive aspects, and adoptive refers to linguistic forms that have been adopted from other languages (Bybee, 1985 [41], 2001 [42]; Fromkin, 2018 [44]). The study was largely influenced by a moderate viewpoint on language development, as its lens rather than purist or liberal viewpoint.

8. The Xitsonga Orthography Frame and Current Framework of Xitsonga Translation

8.1. Xitsonga Orthography Frame

The Xitsonga orthography has never been decisively settled since the publication of the first translation of the Bible in 1907 [21] (and its revised edition in 1929), the second translation of the Bible in 1989 [22] (and its revised edition in 2012), and the publication of the standardised orthography, Tsonga terminology and Orthography No. 2 in 1960 [45] (amended in 1962) by the then Department of Bantu Education of the Republic of South Africa. The Tsonga terminology and Orthography No. 3 published in 1980 [46] declared that "Tsonga orthography remains the same as previously published in the Bantu Education Journal of October, 1956 (Vol, 11, 8) as amended in October 1962 (Vol, VI, 8)" (Maluleke, 2017: p. 204) [47]. The Xitsonga Spelling Rules and Orthography, published by Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) in 2008 [23] (and its revised edition in 2019) [24] finally standardised the orthography.

The standard Xitsonga spelling pattern is that of a consonant + vowel [C + V]. However, the Xitsonga Spelling Rules and Orthography, published in 2008 [23] and revised in 2019 [24] states that when transliterated, new words often end up being spelled differently, as per the examples of Christ and priest provided above.

8.2. Current Framework of Xitsonga Translation

Xitsonga has five productive vowels, namely, **a**, **e**, **i**, **o**, **u**. The Xitsonga Spelling

Rules and Orthography (2019: p. 61) [24] prescribes the standard spelling rules of Xitsonga words as follows:

Marito lama helaka hi ntwariso wa /-ter/, /-ner/, /-dar/, /-ure/ na man'wana lamo tano eka tindzimi to fana na Xinghezi ya fanele ku hela hi /-ra/ loko ya hundzuluxeriwa eka Xitsonga.

("Words which end with the sounds of /-ter/, /-ner/, /-dar/, /-ure/ and others similar to those ones in languages such as English, must end with the sound, /-ra/ when translated into Xitsonga").

However, the Xitsonga Spelling Rules and Orthography (2019: p. 61) [24] also states the following exceptions:

XIYA: *Swi nga endleka man'wana marito ya nga pfumeli ku tirhisa xilandzi xa /-ra/ xa nawu lowu, xk. collar > kholoro; spanner > xipanere; archar > acha.*

("NOTE: It is possible that some of the similar words may not align with the rule of adopting the suffix /-ra/, e.g., collar > *kholoro*; spanner > *xipanere*; archar > *acha*").

Translators require knowledge and understanding of the linguistic mechanisms of word-formation processes.

The standard spelling of Xitsonga words follows the pattern of a consonant + vowel [C + V]. It is also noteworthy that new Xitsonga words formed through transliteration end up being spelled differently from the standard spelling pattern. The very deviation is supported by the following rule extracted from the Xitsonga Spelling Rules and Orthography published by PanSALB (2019: p. 73) [24]:

Loko ku hlayiwa, malombiwa ya ta twarisiwa hilaha ya twarisiwaka hakona eka ririmi rimbe, xk: CText (sithekst) < Centre for Text Technology; EFF (i-ef-ef); UDM (Yu-Di-Em).

("When reading, the borrowed words will sound in the same way as they are from the foreign language, e.g., CText (sithekst) < Centre for Text Technology; EFF (i-ef-ef); UDM (Yu-Di-Em").

From the examples provided above, the word, CText > sithekst < Centre for Text Technology has resulted in a different rule from the standard spelling pattern, consonant + vowel.

9. Data Presentation, Discussions, and Research Findings
Data Presentation

Table 2 presents the English terms on male reproductive systems with their Xitsonga translation as collected by the researcher from Grade 12 Life Sciences textbook.

The second column from Table 2 presents the Xitsonga indigenous terms on male human reproductive systems and are labelled as culturally vulgar in Xitsonga. The third column presents the Xitsonga coined equivalent words and are considered as euphemistic in Xitsonga. The fourth column presents the Xitsonga terms developed through transliteration.

Table 2. Terminology on male reproductive structure (The researcher's own collection).

Male reproductive structure	Xitsonga culturally vulgar equivalent word (taboo)	Xitsonga coined equivalent word (euphemism)	Suggested equivalent word through transliteration
Foreskin	*nsuvu* ("foreskin")	*chupu/fosi* ("tube/last tip of a whip")	*foskini* ("foreskin")
Glans	*xitsonyo* ("glans")	*ndluwa* ("groundnut")	*dlilense* ("glans")
Penis	*mbolo* ("penis")	*nsiha/tlhari* ("muscle/spear")	*phenisi* ("penis")
Scrotum	*heche* ("a dangling small flesh bag")	*xipaci* ("wallet")	*skrotamu* ("scrotum")
Testis	*kendze* ("testis")	*rhanga* ("*tuber of various species of plants*")	*thestisi* ("testis")

Chupu ("tube"), a euphemistic term for foreskin, is coined from optic tube, which means "a collapsible cylinder from which material in the form of paste or viscous liquid can be squeezed out" (Landau, 2001: p. 1579) [48]. The coined term has some elements of relevance to a foreskin because it covers the glans that can be squeezed out like paste or viscous liquid as described above. But the same word, "tube" can also refer to a pipe or any long hollow body. The very term, *chupu* ("tube") is therefore, likely to create elements of ambiguity.

Fosi ("last tip of a whip") is very common among the Vatsonga herd-boys or shepherds who use the long whips to obstruct their livestock from going astray. *Fosi* ("last tip of a whip") is therefore, symbolic when used to refer to a foreskin. The very approach of coinage in the form of symbols has been adopted for the words, *ndluwa* ("groundnut") for glans, *nsiha/tlhari* ("muscle/spear") for penis, and heche/*xipaci* ("a small dangling flesh bag ("wallet") for scrotum.

Table 3 presents the English terms on female reproductive systems with their Xitsonga translation as collected by the researcher from Grade 12 Life Sciences textbook.

The second column from Table 3 presents the Xitsonga indigenous terms on female human reproductive systems and are labelled as culturally vulgar in Xitsonga. The third column presents the Xitsonga coined equivalent words and is considered as euphemistic in Xitsonga. The fourth column presents the Xitsonga terms developed through transliteration.

Xinyanyulo ("stimulator") is a Xitsonga euphemistic term for cervix, but also refer to an object shaped like an erect penis and used, especially by women, for sexual stimulation—a dildo.

Euphemistically, in Xitsonga, *tihaka* ("hooks") means clitoris, but may also refer to the Xitsonga euphemistic word for labia majora (minora) *nyawa/xidikidi* ("bean"/"tickler"). This naming has probably been influenced by the shape of the very body part which is like a kidney-shaped seed in long pods. *Xidikidi* ("tickler") adopts the same definition for xinyanyulo ("stimulator") as described above.

Xirhundzu ("conical basket") is cone-shaped and has a circular plane base. The word, *xirhundzu* ("conical basket") is polysemous to *xirhundzu* ("male urinating part"). Etymologically, the Vatsonga employed the word, *xirhundzu* ("conical basket") to refer to vagina based on the cultural attachment of the tool to

Table 3. Terminology on female reproductive structure (The researcher's own collection).

Female reproductive structure	Xitsonga culturally vulgar equivalent word (taboo)	Xitsonga coined equivalent word (euphemism)	Suggested equivalent word through transliteration
cervix	*xivumbelo* ("cervix")	*xinyanyulo* ("stimulator")	*sevhiks* ("cervix")
clitoris	*neve* ("*clitoris*") *ntsingi* ("*clitoris*")	*tihaka* ("hooks")	*tlilithorisi* ("clitoris")
labia majora (minora)	*nkongo* ("labia majora/minora")	*nyawa*/*xidikidi* ("bean"/"tickler")	*labiyamajora*/*labiyaminora* ("labia majora/minora")
vagina	*xitombo* ("vagina")	*xirhundzu* ("conical basket")	*vhajayina* ("vagina")
vulva	*xibyata* ("something indented on both sides like pumpkin")	*xifungenetamavele* ("something that wraps up mealies")	*vhalvha* ("vulva")
urethra	*Xilawulaxitsoti* ("anti-anuria" or controlling failure in secretion of urine/urine-trickling through lack of control")	*xitsakamiso* ("that which makes things wet")	*yuretra* (urethra")

women. Only women were expected to pound maize in a mortar, sift it and temporarily store it in the conical basket.

Xifungenetamavele ("something that wraps up mealies") is a Xitsonga euphemistic word for vulva. *Mavele* ("maize") is considered a precious commodity among the Vatsonga and should therefore be preserved attentively. Figuratively, vulva should be preserved always. Euphemistically, *xitsakamiso* ("that which makes things wet") refers to urethra in Xitsonga.

Table 4 presents terminology on unique human characteristics of some aspects of reproduction.

In Xitsonga, *xihetamavele* ("that which finishes mealies") may also refer to an excessively greedy eater or glutton. Culturally, some of the Vatsonga may hardly draw a line between *jasi ra mukon'wana* ("jacket of the bridegroom") and *jasi ra mukhalabye* (jacket of the old man) presented as part of the bridegroom during lobola.

Vuvimbiri/*ntlhaveko* ("provoked/salacious feelings") may refer to being lustful or tending to cause sexual desire. Similarly, it may be based on expressing excessive emotion or anything likely to excite emotion. In Xitsonga, *mahuma* ("that which emerges") may refer to faeces or an abnormal or morbid outgrowth on the human body. In Xitsonga, *misisi ya le xihundleni* ("private hair") may refer to pubic hair and/or the human hair that grows in the armpit. Other than *timhaka ta swa masangu*/*ku kha miroho* ("matters of sleeping mats"/"to pluck leafy vegetables harvested for human consumption"), the act of sexual intercourse has since gained a few euphemistic phrases among the Vatsonga. Some refer the act as *ku tsakisana* (to excite each other), *ku tivana* (to know each other), etcetera. *Vununa* ("manhood") which in Xitsonga euphemistically refers to sperm or spermatozoa, may also mean manliness, courage or a man's sexual potency. Euphemistically, in Xitsonga, *ku halata* ("to spill a liquid") may mean to ejaculate or to urinate or to excrete watery faeces when one has diarrhea.

Table 4. Terminology on unique human characteristics of some aspects of reproduction (The researcher's own collection).

Unique human characteristics of some aspects of reproduction	Xitsonga culturally vulgar equivalent word (taboo)	Xitsonga coined equivalent word (euphemism)	Suggested equivalent word through transliteration
anus	*nyompfi/mpfila*	*xihetamavele* ("that which finishes mealies")	*anasi*
condom	*khondomu*	*jasi ra mukon'wana* ("jacket of the bridegroom")	*khondomu*
Erection	*mpfukelo*	*vuvimbiri/ntlhaveko* ("provoked/salacious feelings")	*irekxini*
excrement/faeces	*macimba*	*mahuma* ("that which emerges")	*fisisi*
pubic hair	*makaka*	*misisi ya le xihundleni* ("private hair")	*phyubikhere*
sex/sexual intercourse	*nkundzano*	*timhaka ta swa masangu/ku kha miroho* ("matters of sleeping mats"/"to pluck leafy vegetables harvested for human consumption")	*seks*
sperm/spermatozoa	*byonyo/vuzonyo*	*vununa* ("manhood")	*xipeme*
ejaculation/squirt	*ku rhundza*	*ku halata* ("to spill a liquid")	*ijakhulexini/skwit*
Urine	*mixixito*	*mitsakamiso* ("*cause to wet*")	*mitsakamiso/yurini*

10. Research Findings

Almost all the coined terms which are considered euphemistic in Xitsonga tend to pose some elements of ambiguity. The Xitsonga euphemistic words do not serve to define meaning of the terms that express human anatomy out of context. Instead of serving as English equivalent terms, the Xitsonga euphemistic terms are expressed symbolically, which is sometimes confusing, obscure and indeterminate.

Table 5 presents further findings based on the affixation of either prefix or suffix to a root to form a new word through transliteration. The researcher posits that mastering of spelling is key to mastering of word formation. Out of twenty terms sampled for the study, the following 9 different spelling patterns (grammatical categories of words) were discovered from the analysis:

11. Discussion

The different spelling patterns presented on Table 5 demonstrate that there is no uniform rule adopted in admitting foreign words into Xitsonga. Some words become neautralised, whilst others seem to deviate much from the traditional standard pattern of Xitsonga due to communicative necessities. The standard spelling pattern of Xitsonga words follows the pattern of a consonant + vowel [C + V], but when transliterated, the new terms assumed the following different spelling patterns:

- A prefix pattern of consonant + consonant + vowel [C + C + V] and a suffix pattern of vowel + consonant + vowel [V + C + V]. For example:

  phenisi ("penis") > *phenisi*

  thestisi ("testis") > *thestisi*

  tlilithorisi ("clitoris") > *tlilithorisi*

Table 5. Different Xitsonga spelling patterns.

No.	Prefix spelling pattern	Suffix spelling pattern	Number of new terms	Percentage
1.	consonant + consonant + vowel [C + C + V]	vowel + consonant + vowel [V + C + V]	5 words	25%
2.	consonant + consonant + vowel [C + C + V]	consonant + consonant + vowel [C + C + V]	2 words	10%
3.	vowel + consonant + vowel [V + C + V]	vowel + consonant + vowel [V + C + V]	2 words	10%
4.	vowel + consonant + vowel [V + C + V]	consonant + vowel [C + V]	1 word	5%
5.	consonant + vowel [C + V]	vowel + consonant + vowel [V + C + V]	4 words	20%
6.	consonant + vowel [C + V]	consonant + consonant [C + C]	2 words	10%
7.	consonant + vowel [C + V]	**consonant + consonant + vowel**	1 word	5%
8.	consonant + consonant + consonant + vowel [C + C + C + V]	vowel + consonant + vowel [V + C + V]	2 words	10%
9.	consonant + consonant + consonant + vowel [C + C + C + V]	consonant [C]	1 word	5%

     vhajayina ("vagina") > *vhajayina*

     khondomu ("khondomu") > *khondomu*

- A prefix pattern of consonant + consonant + vowel [C + C + V] and a suffix pattern of consonant + consonant + vowel [C + C + V]. For example:

     kriste ("Christ") > *kriste*

     vhalvha ("vulva") > *vhalvha*

     dlilense ("glans") > *dlilense*

- A prefix pattern of vowel + consonant + vowel [V + C + V] and a suffix pattern of vowel + consonant + vowel [V + C + V]. For example:

     ijakhulexini ("ejaculation") > *ijakhulexini*

     irekxini ("erection") > *irekxini*

- A prefix pattern of vowel + consonant +vowel [V+ C + V] and a suffix pattern of consonant + vowel [C+ V]. For example:

     anasi ("anus") > *anasi*

- A prefix pattern of consonant + vowel [C + V] and a suffix pattern of vowel + consonant + vowel [V + C + V]. For example:

     labiyamajora ("labia majora") > *labiyamajora*

     labiyaminora ("*labiyaminora*") > *labiyaminora*

     foskini ("foreskin") > *foskini*

- A prefix pattern of consonant + vowel [C + V] pattern and a suffix pattern of consonant + consonant [C + C]. For example:

     seks ("sex") > *seks*

     sevhiks ("cervix") > *sevhiks*

- A prefix pattern of consonant + vowel [C + V] and a suffix pattern of consonant + consonant + vowel [C + C + V]. For example:

  yuretra ("urethra") > *yuretra*

- A prefix pattern of consonant + consonant + consonant + vowel [C + C + C + V] and a suffix pattern of vowel + consonant + vowel [V + C + V]. For example:

  phyubikhere ("pubic hair") > *phyubikhere*

  skrotamu ("scrotum") > *skrotamu*

- A prefix pattern of consonant + consonant + consonant [C + C + C + V] and a suffix pattern of a consonant [C]. For example:

  skwit ("squirt") > *skwit*

The standard spelling pattern of Xitsonga words is largely influenced by the prefixes which serve to maintain the word class of the noun it is modifying. The new nouns formed from transliteration tend to omit vowels constituting irregular nouns in Xitsonga. Some of these nouns are consonant clustered, such as *skwit*, *phyubikhere*, et cetera. The new words formed through transliteration fit the Xitsonga spelling rules as a target language (TL) and respect the rules of grammar and pronunciation of Xitsonga, so the readers can understand easily what the words mean.

12. Conclusions

The article explored the translatability of culturally-orientated terms on human reproduction and anatomy, and illustrated how these linguistic items impact the translation process from English into Xitsonga. It also explored the impact on the process of translation from English into Xitsonga since the existing native human reproduction terms in their current indigenous forms are considered culturally vulgar or taboo in Xitsonga. The analysis drawn above lays bare that the Vatsonga solely relies on applying symbols and other forms of euphemism to avoid vulgar words which unfortunately cause a loss of original meaning, create different subjective opinions and therefore, subdue the academic goal.

The study set the transliteration principle as a framework for translating culturally vulgar words from English into Xitsonga. Grey areas which threaten the implementation of Xitsonga as a language of teaching and learning technical subjects can best be addressed through transliteration. The framework is largely informed by integrating a new stylistic approach to terminology that conforms to the target language.

The study has also demonstrated the value of affixation as one of the modes of word formation in Xitsonga. The proposed framework has demonstrated that, although the new terms formed through transliteration are heavily loaded with borrowings from English, resulting in some clumsy-sounding words due to widespread lexical changes, they are scientific and self-explanatory in the academic environment. Like English, the Xitsonga scientific terms formed through the proposed translation frame are characterised by their appropriateness, ade-

quateness, user-friendliness, efficiency and effectiveness, even when uttered out of context. The Xitsonga euphemistic terms sampled for this study in their current form can only be best understood in context.

It has also been concluded that shying away from all Xitsonga indigenous terms referring to human reproduction and anatomy, including those expressed through euphemism and/or the adoption of frame of mechanical word coinage, points to the novelty and eccentricity of Christian faith amongst the Vatsonga. The newly formed Xitsonga scientific terms resulting from transliteration are semantically equivalent to their indigenous counterparts without any distortion of the source language terms.

Transliteration, therefore, seems to be by far the preferred procedure of uttering and translating Xitsonga culturally vulgar words in public conversation. The study created basic conditions for the strengthening of Xitsonga to become a language of meaningful academic discourse, as well as a source of knowledge in various disciplines.

13. Recommendations

The study posits that the future of Xitsonga is dependent on the creative and innovative power of the language speakers. If the Vatsonga "blindly" adhere to linguistic purity and cede cultural conditions to determine the properties of Xitsonga terminology, then they must view their language as a form of cultural practice, and a barrier to technical language development. The status quo will undoubtedly render Xitsonga as a barrier to explicit instruction instead of facilitating access and success in teaching and learning technical subjects. The Vatsonga should instead embrace English as a resource than view it as a superior culture, and their language as inferior or primitive culture.

Translators may use a variety of word-formation processes which differ in importance according to the contextual factors of both the source language and the target language, but transliteration has been demonstrated to be the best frame of translating culturally vulgar words expressing human reproduction and anatomy from English to Xitsonga. Transliteration allows a translator to make a conscious choice to use the same word in the target text (TT) as it is found in the source text (ST) in cases where there is no equivalent term in the target language (TL). Translators should be guided by their professional ethics than personal ethics in order to grasp and master terminology on human reproduction and anatomy. It is recommended that a similar approach may be explored and applied to other African languages, since Xitsonga has similarities with many other South African official languages.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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