

# **Gender Sensitivity in Shona Language Use**

**A lexicographic and corpus-based study of words in context**

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## Abstract

The study is primarily a databased study of a semantically defined set of items that refer directly to human gender and their use. It investigates the construction of gender, primarily the female gender, in Shona discourses. It examines the language that is used in address and reference, by females and males from all walks of life, in day-to-day discourse, in the ALLEX Shona corpus, as well as lexicographic works, to uncover and document explicit and implicit attitudes to women and women's space (vis-à-vis men's and gendered animals' space) encoded in these forms, either consciously or unconsciously by the speakers. The understanding in the study is that attitudes result from a person's experiences, transmitted through the socialization process. The study identifies and analyses the language used in the socialization process in order to reveal society's views and treatment of the sexes.

Chaps 1-3 provide the background, theoretical, materials and methodological issues to the study. The approach that is chosen is a multi-method approach incorporating mainly qualitative methods, supported by quantitative methods, and working within the 'dominance-difference' framework. Materials from the field are gathered mainly through questionnaires. Chaps 4-7 are the data and analysis chapters. Chap 4, the reference chapter, examines the main female and male lexical forms, collocations and proverbs used to refer to and to describe women (vis-à-vis men) for meaning and attitude. Proverbs are especially important as they function as an integral part of the socializing discourse. Chap 5 investigates address forms used between people who are not known to each other, or if they are, who do not know each other very well and are not related. It investigates which address forms are used and for who and what the address forms reveal about the society's attitudes towards women and men. Chap 6 investigates the address and reference title *Va-*, its meaning, the type of forms it attaches itself to and the changes in the types of forms that it inflects that have occurred over time and how these changes impact on gender. Chap 7 examines 'bad' language in insults, both the so-called corrective insults that evaluate or describe someone's behaviour, and are used as part of the socializing discourse; and the obscene curses that are used as weapons of verbal aggression. The study attempts to investigate why these obscene remarks feature women only. Chap 8 provides a summary and conclusion of the thesis.

Findings from the study have shown that the presence/absence of terms for certain phenomena may reflect the need for dominance and control of women by men. Avoidance or non-acknowledgement of responsibility for females may be manifested through depersonalising, tabooing, distancing or the use of euphemisms. Womanhood is socially constructed with reference to manhood. Such asymmetries reveal the disparity in the treatment of the sexes.

It is hoped that this work has provided general space in which diversity and more specific topics in gender and language can be explored in future research. The study touches on lexicography, particularly the ALLEX Project dictionaries. I hope that some of the findings will help lexicographers and other language researchers become more consciously aware of the need for gender sensitivity in the linguistic treatment of the sexes. Acknowledgements

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## A Glossary of the Main Items under Study

Below is a glossary of terms compiled to facilitate easy reference of the major terms under study:

<i>(a)mai</i> - 'mother'	<i>munhu</i> - 'person' (pl. <i>vanhu</i> , below)
<i>(a)mbuya</i> - 'grandmother'	<i>murume</i> - 'man/husband'
<i>ambuya</i> - 'mother-in-law'	<i>musikana</i> - 'girl/young woman'
<i>baba</i> - 'father'	<i>mvana</i> - '(young) woman with children and no husband/divorcee'
<i>bhinya</i> - 'violent person/rapist'	<i>nyenairwa</i> - 'flirt'
<i>chembere</i> - 'old woman'	<i>nzenza</i> - 'flirt'
<i>chikadzi</i> - 'the female way of doing things'	<i>pfambi</i> - 'prostitute'
<i>chirume</i> - 'the male way of doing things'	<i>roora</i> - 'bride wealth'
<i>chivanhu</i> - 'the people's way of doing things'	<i>-roora</i> - 'marry (for a man)'
<i>fende</i> - 'slattern'	<i>-roorwa</i> - 'get married (for a woman)'
<i>harahwa</i> - 'old man'	<i>-rume</i> - 'male'
<i>hure</i> - 'whore'	<i>sekuru</i> - 'grandfather'
<i>jetu</i> - 'insurbodinate woman/wife'	<i>ukadzi</i> - 'years of a woman's life when she can bear children/womanhood'
<i>joki</i> - 'whore'	<i>ukomana</i> - 'boyhood/young manhood'
<i>-kadzi</i> - 'female'	<i>umvana</i> - 'single motherhood'
<i>mhandara</i> - 'a virgin of marriageable age'	<i>unhu</i> - 'proper human beingness'
<i>midzimu</i> - pl. <i>mudzimu</i>	<i>urume</i> - 'semen/sperm/manhood'
<i>mudzimai</i> - 'married woman/wife'	<i>usikana</i> - 'girlhood/young girlhood'
<i>mudzimu</i> - 'ancestral spirit'	<i>vanhu</i> - '(the) people/humans'
<i>mukadzi</i> - 'woman/wife'	<i>Va-</i> - 'reference and address title'
<i>mukomana</i> - 'boy/young man'	
<i>mumvana</i> - '(young) woman with children and husband'	



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# Donongoro yemavara, mazwi nezvirungamutauro zvinodoma vanhukadzi nevanhurume muChiShona

## Mavambo

Tsvakurudzo ino inoongorora mashoko anoshandiswa kudana kana kutaura pamusoro pevanhukadzi nevanhurume, mashandisirwo awo nezvaanoreva. Mashoko anoongororwa ndeaya anotaurwa mazuva ese vanhu vachiziva kana kuti vakatovairirwa. Chinangwa ndechekuda kuburitsa pachena pfungwa dzevanhu pamusoro pemaumbiro avanoita unhukadzi neunhurume. Tsvakurudzo ino inotarisa zvakare vara rekukudza Va- uye zvituko. Mutauro unoongororwa saizvozvi nekuti mukutaura ndimo munobuda pfungwa dzinotitaridza kuti chinonzi munhukadzi kana munhurume chii. Dzinoratidzawo kuonekwa nekutarisirwa kunoitwa munhukadzi kana munhurume. Nzwisiso yetsvakurudzo ino ndeye kuti mafungiro kana maonero aya anorerwa mukukura kunoita vanhu vachidziidziswa magariro anotarisirwa nevabereki vavo kana neruzhinji.

Zvitsauko 1-3 zvinotsanangura tsika nemagariro evaShona zvinobatsira mukunzwisisa tsvakurudzo ino; kunobva umboo hunoshandiswa pachinyorwa; nzira dzakashandiswa mukuongorora nethiyori dzinotibatsira kunzwisisa zvinobuda mutsvakurudzo. Nzira dzakashandiswa mukuwedzera umboo hwemaduramazwi nekopasi dzinosanganisira hurukuro, mibvunzo yakanyorwa pasi ichida mhinduro, mibvunzo muchitaura makatarisana neongororo yenyaya dzemupepanhau reKwayedza dzinotaura nezvemagariro everuzhinji.

Thiyori inoshandiswa muchinyorwa mubatanidzwa wemathiyori maviri emasimba (Fishman, 1980. Spender, 1985) nesiyano (Tannen 1990) zvichibatana kuita masimba-siyano. Thiyori yemasimba inoti iyo vanhurume nevanhukadzi havana kuenzana nekuti vanhurume vanongozvarwa nekukura vachinzi vane masimba ekutonga vanhukadzi ndokusaka paine kusiyana kwetarisiro nemaonerwo. Yesiyano inoti aihwa handizvo zvemasimba. Vakadzi nevarume vakasiyana kuriro yavanoita mudzimba nemuvanhu vachidzidziswa mabasa nemaitiro akasiyana sevasikana nevakomana asi vakaenzana. Thiyori iyi inoti kusiyana kusiyana chete, hazvireve kuti pane mukuru kana mudiki. Tannen anotsoropodzwa zvikuru nevamwe vanotsvakurudza nezvenyaya idzi pakupomhoda kwaanoita nyaya yemasimba achitora musiyano kunge usina zvaunoreva. Ndinoona mathiyori maviri aya achibatsirana kutsanangura kugara kweVaShona. Ehe, vanakomana vanongozvarwa vachinzi ndivana baba. Ichokwadiwo kuti kukura kwevanasikana nevanakomana kwakasiyana sezvo vachidziidziswa maitiro nemabasa akasiyana.

Mazwi nezvirungamutauro zvakaite setsumo zvinoongororwa mutsvakurudzo zvinobva mu-:

kopasi nemaduramazwi eShona eALLEX<sup>1</sup> anoti, Duramazwi reChiShona (DRC) neDuramazwi Guru ReChiShona (DGR); duramazwi raHannan rine ChiShona neChirungu; nyaya dzemupepanhau reKwayedza; uye tsvakurudzo yandakaita muvanhu inosanganisira hurukuro, ongororo yekunge uchigara muvanhu, mibvunzo yakanyorwa inoda kupindurwa papepapo nemibvunzo yekunge makatarisana kune vaya vaisada kunyora. Tsvakurudzo iyi yakaitwa kutsvaga umboo nekuongorora misoro yenyaya dzainge dzisingabatwe mukopasi nemaduramazwi.

## **Tsvakurudzo nezvakabuda**

Nyaya inoongororwa muChitsauko 4 inyaya yemazwi nezvirungamutauro zvinotaura kana kutsanangura munhukadzi kana munhurume. Chinyorwa chinotarisa mazita anoti musikana, mukadzi, mukomana, murume, chembere, harahwa, mumvana, mvana, mhandara namudzimai nedudziro dzacho dzemumaduramazwi; tsumo dzine dzitsi rekuti –kadzi na-rume kana nedzimwewo dzakanangana nevanhurume nevanhukadzi. Tsumo dzinoongororwa kuti mifananidzo inobuda madziri inotiratidzei pamusoro pepfungwa dzevanhu maererano nezvavanotarisa kuvanhurume nevanhukadzi.

Vakadzi vane mazita akawanda anovatsanangura kana tichifananidza nevarume. Vanhurume vakomana kana varume kana harahwa. Vanhukadzi vasikana, mhandara, mudzimai, mukadzi, mvana, chembere. Chiremera chemunhukadzi chinobva pakuti musikana azere here kana imvana. Kana kuti akaroowa ane mhuri here kana haana. Unhu hwemunhukadzi hunobva pakuti akazvibata akachengeta usikana hwake here kana kuti akapa usikana uhwi kumurume akamuroora. Nyaya yebonde inyaya hombe inovaka unhukadzi ndokusaka mvana nechembere zvichionekwa sevakadzi pasina. Chembere mukadzi gasva nekuti inonzi yakapwa, haichina chekupa. Mvana mukadzi gasva nekuti inogonzi inogopa. Zvinoita sekuti muviri wemunhukadzi hauzi wake kuti angopa paanenge ada kana afungira. Mazita akaita sanamvana ari kuvakadzi asiri kuvarume anoratidza kudonongorwa nekutongwa kunoitwa vakadzi kuti vatevedze gwara. Mukadzi kwaye ibonde kumurume wake, mai vevana nemushandi wemumba zvinova ndizvo zvinozadzika basa guru rinopihwa munhukadzi nemazwi nedudziro netsumo dzacho. Pabonde apa murume ndiye anotonga nekuti ndiye muiti, mukadzi ari muiwa.

Kana tikatarisa chikadzi nedzimwe tsumo munhukadzi anoratidzwa zvakare ari munhu anoty, gwara, asina kungwara, anotaurisa nezvimwewo zvakangoshata kudaro. Munhurume akanzi, uri mukadzi panomuka hondo isingamuke kana munhukadzi akanzi uri murume. Zvinodaro nekuti murume muchengeti nemusoro wemba. Murume ane simba, simba rekutonga nesimba rekuzvarisa. Urume nechirume mashoko anotaridza simba iri, kushinga neungwaru.

Pane mumwe musiyano zvakare unopa varume masimba wekuti munhurume anoitwa ndiye dzitsi rinotsanangura zvinhu, mukadzi mukadzi waNgingi, vana nde-

<sup>1</sup> ALLEX ipurojekiti yakatanga paYunivhesiti yeZimbabwe (UZ) muna 1992 nechinangwa chekuita tsvakurudzo yemutauro yevanhu veZimbabwe. Purojekiti iyi yakatanga nechikwata chevatsvakurudzi vepaUZ, Yunivhesiti yeOslo neye Gotheburg. ALLEX yakazobve zera ikakura zvekuti iye zvino yava inisitichuti paUZ inonzi ALRI.

vaNhingi uye musha ndewaNhingi, Nhingi ari munhurume nekuti murume ndiye anoroora mukadzi.

Ongororo yechitsauko chino inoratidza kuitwa vadiki vasingaonekwe kwevanhukadzi uye kuumbwa kunoitwa munhurume semukuru, mutungamiri. Kunyangwe zvazvo vakadzi vaine basa rinogona kuvapa simba guru, basa rekutakura nhumbu nekuzvara sana mai, basa iri harinyanyosimudzirwa mukutaura. Rinoitwa serinyadzisa kutaura, risingataurike sezvariri kuti nhumbu kana kuzvara robva rataurwa nemadimikira kunzi akatakura kana kupona/kubatsirwa zvinopomhodza simba racho zvoita sekuti kuzvara kunongoitika.

Chitsauko 5 chinotarisa mazwi anoshandiswa kudana pakati pevanhu vasinganyatsozivana kana vasiri veukama. Aya mazita anoshandiswa sepaya munhu anenge achimhoresa kana kukumbira kubvunza nzira apo anoti, “Pamusoro X”. Tsvakurudzo yemibvunzo inotarisa mazita anoshandiswa kuvanhukadzi nevamwe vanhukadzi nevanhurume. Inotarisa zvakare mazita anoshandiswa kuvanhurume nevamwe vanhurume nevanhukadzi. Mazita aya anotibatsira kuona pfungwa dzinoburitswa nevanhu mumazita avanosarudza kushandisa. Vanonyora vanoti zita rinosarudzwa rinoratidza ane simba kana mukuru pakati pevanodaidzana. Tsvakurudzo inoratidza kuti zita rinosarudzwa rinoenda nemagariro evanhu ekuti munhu munhui, anogarepi, zera rake, akaroor(w)a here kana haana, ane mwana here kana haana, basa rake, mapfekero nezvimwewo. Zvese izvi zvinobva mukuongorora nekufunga kunenge kwangoita munhu achiona mumwe. Panoonekwa paine mutsauko pakati pemazita anoshandiswa kumusha neanoshandiswa muguta reHarare. Kumusha vanowanoshandisa mazita eukama zvichienda nekuona kunenge kwaita mudani kuti ungangoita ambuya vake here kana vahanzvadzi. Vakomana vechidiki kumusha vanoshandisa mazwi anofanana nemuguta akasangana eukama neasiri.

Mazita anoshandiswa pakati pevakadzi ndeaya anokudza achiratidza zvinzvimbo zvinenge zvichitarisirwa kunge zvine vanhukadzi ava mudzimba zvichienda nezera ravanenge vachifungirwa kunge vari sekuti mwana here kana ndimai kana ndimbuya. Mazita anoshandiswa pakati pevarume anoratidza zvinzvimbo zvavo sevarume vanotonga, vakazvimirira. Kubatana kwevarume kunoonekwa mukushandisirana mazita akafanana kana anoenderana, asingaratidze zera asi achikudza zvakaaro, sekuti, mukuru kana shefu. Mazita anoshandiswa nevakadzi kudana varume ndeaya anoratidza kunyarikana zvinoita kuti pasaite kujairirana pakati pavo. Uyewo, kuti pasave nekufungira kuti vanhukadzi haana kukwana anongosekererana nevarume zvinove zvinozomubvisa chimiro. Zita rinonyanyoshandiswa muguta ndimukuwasha. Paukama, mukuwasha murume wemwana. Varume vanoti vanoshandisawo mazita akaita saambuya namai kuti varatidze kuti hapana chiripo. Paukama ambuya ndimai vemudzimai<sup>2</sup>. Dzimwe nguva mukadzi uyu anogona kunge ari mukadzi wemunhu. Mukadzi wemunhu anotyisa kutaura naye saka ambuya kana mai vachishanda.

Kunyangwe zvazvo vese varume nevakadzi vachishandisirana mazita ekunyarikana panoonekwa zvakare pasina kuenzanirana pamazita aya. Varume vanoshandisa mazita anokudza asi achichembedza nekutsigisa vanhukadzi uyu zvisinei nezera remurume anenge achidana, semurume wechikuru anoti mai kumanhukadzi wechidiki nekuti amuona akabereka mwana. Murume wechidiki haanzi baba namai vechikuru

<sup>2</sup> Kunyangwe zvazvo ambuya richigona kushandisawo kureva mudzimai watsano vanhu vandakataura navo mutsvakurudzo vakati vaireva mai vemukadzi vanova ambuya vavanonyanyokoshesa.

nekuti aonekwa achifamba nemwana. Anongonzi mukuwasha kana mwana, mazita anopa varume udiki vachibva vazvibatawo saizvozvo.

Mazita anoshandiswa kuvakadzi anoita sekuti ndeekukudza asi pachokwadi chokwadi achipinza vakadzi mugwara. Mazita aya anoita kuti vakadzi vambwandire nekuzvibata kuti vasasvorwe. Kusiyana kwemasimba evarume nevakadzi ndikowo zvakare kunobuda mukusiyana kwemazita avanoshandisirana. Vakadzi vari kuramba vakasungirirwa mumagariro emudzimba echinyakare, varume vachikwanisa kubata kwese kunzungu nekunyimo. Ndivanababa vanotonga vanamai mudzimba uyewo vakuru vanotongazve kunze. Kunyangwe zvazvo vanhu vanoshandisa mazita aya vakati havambofunga nezvaanoreva nekuti anongoshandiswa nemunhu wese idzi ndidzo pfungwa dziri kutsi kwemazita aya dzinongopfuudzwa kumunhu nemunhu achikura.

Chitsauko 6 chinotarisa vara rinoshandiswa nemazita, Va-, chichiongorora kuti vara iri rinomatirana nemazita api, richirevei uye kuti mashandisirwo aro achiri mamwe here kubvira makare. Vara iri rinotariswa mashandirwo aro nekufamba kwenguva zvichibva muongororo yemabhuku anotaura nezvechinyakare, zvichienda mukopasi yakasangana chinyakare nanhasi kusvika kupepanhau reKwayedza rine mutauro wanhasi. Va- ivara rinoratidza rukudzo kumunhu warinoshandisirwa, rukudzo runobva muzera kana kumunhu zvaari. Zvinobuda ndezve kuti izvo muchinyakare Va- ainomatirana nemazita nemitupo nezvidao zvevanhukadzi nevanhurume. Mazuva ano Va- achiri kushandiswa nemitupo nezvidao. Anowanikwazve akabatana nemazita evarume neechembere dziya dzichiri kudanwa nemazita sezvo vakadzi vazhinji vasisadanwe nemazita avo ekuberekwa. Zvakadaro hazvo neChirungu chakauya Vataapwa ava kunyanyoshandiswa sevara rekudana nekukudza vanhurume rinoenderana nezita rekudoma varume reChirungu.

Saka zvozvoreva ndezvekuti vara rairatidza rukudzo kuvanhukadzi nevanhurume riri kutorwa rava revarume chete. Zvino vakadzi vamira papi? Vakadzi vava kwana rukudzo kwete kubva pakuzvimiririra asi kubva pakuti mwana kana mudzimai waVa- ani zvichirevaka kuti hapachina kuenzana. Magariro evaShona ekuti murume ndibaba neChirungu chakaunza kupatsanura kwekudanwa kwevakadzi nevarume zvabatsirana kutorera vanhukadzi rukudzo rwavaipihwa. Maitiro aya awedzera masimba echirume agara aripo nakare, akadzikirisa vakadzi vambenge vakazvimiririra kuti vachiwana rukudzo mukubudikira nemuvarume. Mazuva ano zvava kunzi zvinonyadzisa uye hazvina rukudzo kusheedza mukadzi (wemunhu) nezita rake. Zvinonyadzisei iro riri zita rake uye varume vachidanwa neavo?

Nyaya yekupedzisira inoongororwa muChitsauko 7 ndeye zvituko zvemazuva ese, zvazvinoreva nevanozvishandisirwa. Zvimwe zvituko zvinotariswa ndezviya zvinonyadzisa kuti zvinotii uye zvinonyadzisa naani. Zvituko izvi zvakabva mutsvakurudzo yakaitwa yemibvunzo yakanyorwa neyekutaurirana makatarisana. Mukudzorwa nekudziidziswa unhu vakadzi vanonyanyotukwa nemazwi ekuti, fende, hure, jetu, joki, nyenairwa, nzenza napfambi. Vakadzi vanodzidziswa kuzvibata, kuchenge-tedza bonde, kusangosekaseka nevanhurume nekutsvinda pamuviri pavo nepavagere. Kutadza kwevakadzi kutadza kuzvibata paunhu nemuviri wavo, kunyanya kungopapa bonde. Vanhurume vanotukwa nemazwi anoti, bhinya, dzenga, gube, koronyera, kuruku, rombe, mhengeramumba, ndururani, nhundiramutsime, nhubu, natsotsi. Mazita aya anotaridza kuti vanhurume vanotarisirwa kunge vari vachengeti nevavaki vemhuri. Sevanhu vane simba, varume vanoonekwawo sevanhu vane zhongazhonga vanokwanisa kuparamura mhosva saka vanotukwa kuti vadzore utsotsi neubhinya. Kutadza kwevarume kutadza kuchenge-tedza zita mumba nekunze.

Zvituko zvinonyadzisira, sabeche ramai vako zvinotaura pamusoro pemiviri yevanhukadzi, kuzasi kwavo zvinoenderera zvakare nekuratidza munhukadzi sebonde. Kunyangwe zvichinzi mai vanokosha handione kukosheswa kwavo kana muviri wavo uchingotaurwa muzvinonyadzisa. Ndinoona sekunge zvinoratidza kudhererwa kwemadzimai nekutukana kwevarume vachiudzirana pamusoro pemadzimai avo. Kutuka murume mutukire vanhu vake vaanofanira kunge achichengetedza.

## Magumo

Tsvakurudzo inoburitsa kuti pane kusaenzanirana nekusafanana kwevanhurume nevanhukadzi kuri mumutauro kunobva mukurerwa nemukukura kwavo. Vanhukadzi vanoongororwa nekutonongorwa zvikuru mabasa avo nemaitiro zvinobuda mumazwi akawanda anoshandiswa kudonongora nekudoma vanhukadzi. Varume havana udonongorwa hwakawanda kudai. Murume murume. Haana mvana kana mumvana.

Varume vanotarisirwa nekubatwa saana baba mudzimba vakadzi vachionekwa sanamai vanozvibata nekuita mabasa emumba kusanganisira bonde. Basa revakadzi haripihwi nguva kana mukana kana kuonekwa nekutaurwa serevarume. Semufananidzo zvinongonzi rinonyadzisa kutaura zvongoperera ipapo richitaurwa nemadimikira.

Kukoshesa basa repabonde sebasa revakadzi kunonyanyosimbisa kutongwa kwevanhukadzi nevanhurume nekuti pabonde varume vanonzi ndivo vaiti vakadzi vari vaitwa. Vanhu vanodawo kutonga vakadzi pamusoro pemuviri wavo nekuda kuongorora kuti munhukadzi musikana here, kana mudzimai, kana mvana kana chembere zvavasingaite kuvanhurume. Murume murume chete. Nemukutukwa vakadzi vanongobuda vari vemudzimba uye vari vekushanda nekuchengetedza pabonde. Kuchengetedza pabonde nemazvo ndizvo zvinovapa chiremera. Nyaya yekuona mukadzi sechisikwa chepabonde ihombe inobuda muongororo dzese dzinoitwa. Mai vanoitwa bonde nababa. Zvituko zvinoratidza mukadzi sechisikwa chebonde.

Kutongwa nekudzorwa kwevanhukadzi kunobudazve mumazita ekudana. Varume vanobudazve vari vatongi uye vakazvimiririra. Vakadzi vanobuda vachiwana mazita avo kubva kuukama hwavo nevarume. Mai mukadzi waVa-. Va- adzika midzi yeutongi hwevarume, rava zita rababa, muridzi wemusha.

Kunyangwe hedu tisinganyanyofunga nezvazvo, mutauro watinoshandisa unoshandiswa kuumba, kuchengetedza, nekusandura maonero nemabatiro atinoita vanhukadzi kana vanhurume. Mutauro unoburitsa mafungiro evanhu anoburitsa pfungwa dzavainadzo pamusoro peunhukadzi kana unhurume vachiziva kana vakarivara vasingatombofunga nezvazvo. Pfungwa dzabuda ndedzekuti idzo vanhukadzi basa ravo neunhu hwavo kuva mudzimai wemba, vachichengetedza magariro evaShona anoti baba ndivo mukuru. Zvimwewo zvavanoita kunze zvakaita semabasa vanoita havo asi hazvisizvo zvinovaita vanhukadzi. Basa ramai rinozivikanwa kuti ririko asi haringotaurwa nezvaro kana kungodetemberwa.

## Ramangwana

Tsvakurudzo ino yabata-bata misoro yakasiyana muchinyorwa chikuru chekutanga chinotarisa maumbirwo anoitwa unhukadzi neunhurume muChiShona. Ndinovimba ongororo ino yavhura nzira yekuongorora nyaya idzi muChiShona zvakadzama apo kopasi yeALLEX inenge yanyatsokwenenzverwa zvekuti inenge yonyatsoshandiswa mupfepfepfe.





## Introduction

### 1.1 Aim of the Study

The study falls within Sociolinguistics, specifically language and gender studies. It is primarily a data-based study of a semantically defined set of items that refer directly to human gender and their use, and is, in that sense, a lexicographic study. The purpose of the study is to investigate the construction of gender identities in Shona through the study of these terms. The study is intended to be a substantial and original exploration of how gender issues are reflected in reference and address forms used for the sexes, and for female and male space, as they are used in Shona discourses (cp. Chimhundu 1987; 1995; Chitauro-Mawema 1995; Gaidzanwa 1985), in both those settings in which Shona traditions are relatively strictly adhered to as well as those in which they are not. Researchers like Frank and Anshen (1983: 3) writing on the English language about how 'women and men use language, how society uses language to favour one sex over the other, and how we can analyse language to reveal society's disparate views and treatment of the sexes' have provided the motivation for this study. Spender (1985) writes that language informs and constructs our beliefs, perceptions, and biases, among other things. I have undertaken this investigation to understand more about the relevant forms and their associations for a deeper appreciation of meanings, roles, expectations and subsequently attitudes towards women.

The research examines the set of lexical units and their uses by females and males from all walks of life to uncover and document explicit and implicit attitudes to women and women's space (*vis-à-vis* men's space) and which are encoded in these forms either consciously or unconsciously by the speakers. 'Space', as used here, refers to roles, activities, processes or references associated with either or both of the genders. A 'lexical unit' comprises a form and its sense of meaning. Cruse (1991: 49) describes lexical units as 'form-meaning complexes with (relatively) stable and semantic properties which stand in meaning relations such as antonymy, hyponymy and synonymy'. Since researchers elsewhere (Cameron 1985, 1990, 1998; Coates 1998; Spender 1980; West and Zimmerman 1975 etc.) have shown that linguistic behaviour is one of the keys to understanding the nature and status of women in given societies, examining gender identity construction through the reference and address forms and their meanings should reveal much about attitudes towards women. Linguists draw a distinction between sex and gender. Sex is 'biologically founded', while gender is 'by contrast socially constructed' (Talbot 1998: 7). Individuals acquire characteristics, which are perceived as feminine or masculine. Gender should therefore be seen in the context of social relations. In describing gender identity, Talbot explains that, as a social subject, an individual is placed in a wide range of positions, which she refers to as 'subject positions'. These positions are established in discourse. A subject is placed in varied institutional and societal structures, which give her specific roles, dictated by the different discourses. Since these positions are determined by discourses, subjects

are, therefore, 'effects of discourse rather than producers' (Talbot 1998: 156). Individuals are therefore processes, constructed by discourses. As individuals we may or may not actively participate in this construction of gender identities.

### 1.1.1 Objectives

The major questions that the research addresses are: What does Shona, by its structure, content and daily usage, reflect about gender construction and attitudes towards women and women's space, vis-à-vis men and men's space? Further questions that arise from this big question are: Are women and men defined differently? Has the defining changed over time? If so, how? The main objectives of the study are the investigations of the so-called natural patterns of referring to, addressing or representing women (vis-à-vis men) in various Shona discourses to uncover and document symmetries, asymmetries, consistencies and inconsistencies in lexical units and collocations used to refer to or talk about women and women's space vis-à-vis men and men's space.

Since my focus is quite specifically, the construction of the female gender, the study will, inescapably, carry more elaborate explanations for women than men, while the implications of manhood which affect women are also highlighted.

Specifically, the study focuses on:

- a) Exploring the attitudes through examining forms and their meanings for women and men taken from, mostly, noun classes 1a, 2a, 2b, 1, 2, 7, 9 and 21 (See 1.3.1 for a discussion of the Shona noun). The research also examines key collocations consisting of *mukadzi* (woman) and *murume* (man) as nodes serving as grammatical subjects or objects and the qualificatives and auxiliary verbs that they commonly occur with, as well as commonly occurring qualificatives for women vis-à-vis those for males with the aim of finding out to what extent these modifying items occur in negative or positive contexts (Stenström 1999);
- b) Examine the positive, neutral and negative implications and connotations that are reflected in the meaning or definition part of the selected lexical units from the lexicographic works highlighted in Chap 4;
- c) Examine Shona proverbs containing the feminine stem (*-kadzi*) and the masculine stem (*-rume*) as well as those containing related terminology in the Shona dictionary *Dramazwi Guru reChiShona* (see Chap 4) for content and meaning, as well as the wisdom and truth imparted in the images, to explore the construction of gender in Shona;
- d) Examine the discursive usage of lexical items referring to women in the lexicographic definitions;
- e) Examine labels used as part of the socializing discourse, to tutor young females and males into their respective roles as members of the Shona society;
- f) Examine curses used in angry language; g) Investigate terms of address for women vis-à-vis those for men, both traditional and new forms;
- h) Lastly, the study also aims to develop ways through which attitudes towards women's space and men's space can be explored and analysed in Shona and which would hopefully serve scholars in other Bantu languages.

### 1.1.2 Definitions of key concepts

This study is being carried out with an understanding that language is a major vehicle for the transmission of cultural beliefs and values (see, e.g., Malmkjaer 1991), and that its use may profoundly reflect, as well as affect, female-male relations. Language has been defined as a subset of cultural rules 'enabling a person to engage in behaviours which will be considered meaningful by other members of the same society or societal group.' (Smith 1973:103). Smith (1973) defines culture as the learned system of rules, which 'governs' the behaviour of members of a society. Culture cannot exist apart from a society (Smith, 1973:99). Studies that have been carried out elsewhere (Frank and Anshen 1983; Cameron 1990, 1998; Coates 1998; Spender 1980; West and Zimmerman 1975 etc.) have shown that research into linguistic behaviour is one of the keys to understanding the nature and status of women in the given societies.

The attitudes transmitted through language may '...either help to reinforce the status quo, or they may be a factor in changing it' (Malmkjaer 1991: 258). Social psychologists, Augoustinos and Walker (1995) refer to attitudes as 'categorizations'; also as 'evaluations'. They write of attitudes as 'predispositions to respond to some classes of stimuli with certain classes of responses'. Augoustinos and Walker (1995:14) offer three major classes of responses, which are the affective, behavioural and cognitive. The affective has to do with a person's feelings towards the stimuli. The behavioural has to do with 'simply overt behaviours'. The cognitive has to do with knowledge and beliefs a person has about the stimuli object. Mueller (1986) defines attitude as, '(1) affect for or against, (2) evaluation of, (3) like or dislike of, or (4) positiveness or negativeness toward a psychological object'. Within this framework, attitudes are categorizations and evaluations resulting from a person's experiences. The attitudes are transmitted through the socialization process, from parents, friends and others. They are also often accepted without thinking or question. To date, most studies in the area of language attitudes have placed emphasis upon language choices, linguistic variables or the features that are socially stratified and how these variables may serve in attitudinal valuations by speakers. Linguistic choices (including choices of language in contexts where choices are available) and linguistic variables often fulfil different social and semantic functions for the speakers who use them (see, eg., Labov 1966; Trudgill 1972, 1983; Mkifili 1978; Fasold 1990). The current research reflects a departure from studying attitudes towards linguistic variables and language choices to focusing on attitudes towards women and men as a result of language use.

Sinclair (1991: 172) defines discourse as 'language in use', a generally fitting description of discourse as it is used in this study, with an emphasis on the way language forms are used in context rather than on the usual linguistic definition of social interaction in specific situations or 'interactive events' (Fasold 1990: 65). Philosopher and social theorist, Foucault's (1990: 151) 'structures of possibility and constraint' - not the generally accepted linguistic definition - also captures the definition of discourses as used here. Critical discourse analysts, provide an encompassing definition, inclusive both the Foucault definition as well as the general linguistic definition of 'interaction in specific situations' (see, e.g., Kress 1985). Kress (1985: 6-7) gives a very useful definition of discourses as 'systematically organized sets of statements which give expression to the meaning and values of an institution'. In this investigation, the meanings and values of constituent institutions are examined, with the umbrella institution, the Shona language and culture. To sum up, these definitions highlight the

use of language in context and its role as the means of expression of the meaning and value of the social order within the community, both areas under investigation in this study. The definitions are useful in that, this is an empirical study of lexical forms and their meanings in context; and, also because the study critically analyses these usages to uncover subtle and overt assumptions and attitudes portrayed in the ways women and women's spaces have been referred to or described vis-à-vis men's. The study highlights the observation that lexical items get their meaning from their contexts.

Collocations are combinations of words that habitually co-occur (Crystal 1980; Sinclair 1991), in the ways that relatively fixed idioms do. The issue of what constitutes a collocation has been debated in terms of the flexibility and frequency of the co-occurrences (see, e.g., Willners 2001: 50). I take Sinclair's (1991) flexible definition of 'the occurrence of words within a short space of each other in a text'.

The difference between collocations and idioms, however, is that while idioms are made up of one semantic constituent and act like words, in collocations, each lexical constituent is also a semantic constituent (Cruse 1986). The individual words in collocations still have their own meanings and the collocation, as such, does not have a meaning that is unrelated to the sum of the meanings of the different words.

## 1.2 The Shona people: cultural issues

Below, I sketch through an overview of the Shona people and the cultural issues that provide relevant background to the investigation.

### 1.2.1 The Shona

The Shona are a Bantu group of people making around seventy-five percent of the Zimbabwean population, currently estimated at twelve-and-half-million (with the other Bantu group, the Ndebele, making up roughly fifteen percent, with the rest going to the other 'smaller' Bantu groups and other groups of European and Asian descent). The 'traditional Shona areas' in Zimbabwe cover the Central, Eastern and South – Eastern districts of the country. The thesis, by and large, covers Speaking-speaking regions in both rural and urban areas. The Shona people have been described, as being Zezuru, Karanga, Manyika, Korekore and Ndau, making up the five official (regional) varieties (or dialects) of Shona. The first three, Zezuru, Karanga, Manyika make up the core of 'standard Shona', and in that proportionate order. The fairly general ALLEX Shona corpus and dictionaries, from which the study draws much of its data, cover the generality of the regional varieties of the Shona. The fieldwork areas Harare (urban) and Mhondoro (rural) fall within the Zezuru-speaking region of Shona.

Shona people also inhabit the border areas of Mozambique adjacent to Zimbabwe, and even further, especially Manica Province up to Beira. There are also substantial populations in South Africa and Botswana.

The following sections discuss relevant aspects of the Shona's way of life, their systems and traditions.

### 1.2.1.1 Patriarchy and colonization<sup>3</sup>

An underlying premise in my research is the acknowledgement of the existence of a patriarchal order (see, eg., Chitauro-Mawema et al. 1994, Chinyowa 1997). Patriarchy is the symbolic order in which individuals live in 'a behavioural system in which men simply have power over women' (Simpson 1993: 161).

The study also acknowledges colonialism, with its physical dislocation, urbanisation, commercialisation and de-villagisation, as yet another force providing new discourses.

### 1.2.1.2 Religion

The Shona are, traditionally, a deeply spiritual people. The coming of colonialism, with Christianity and its denunciation of *Chivanhu* (Shona traditional religion and philosophy) as savage ancestor worship, has led to confusion, which is still apparent today. The Shona now follow *Chivanhu* and/or Christianity, with *Chivanhu* being practiced both openly and clandestinely (the disrepute and misconceptions of the colonial days still hang over traditional religion). Some emerging local Christian sects seem, in my opinion, to incorporate elements of both *Chivanhu* and Christianity.

### 1.2.1.3 Mitupo nezvidao (Totems and clan praises)

A key element of *Chivanhu* is the *mutupo* (totem), which is an ethnic group identity. Briefly, *mutupo* (totem) has been defined as "*rudzi rwako*"<sup>4</sup> (your ethnicity or clan identity). An individual is said to *-yera* (loosely translated as 'revere') a totem, which could be an animal or a part of the body of an animal, by which all members of that clan are known. The animal or body part is personified such that one may, for example, be (ceremoniously) referred to or addressed as *Shumba* (Lion) or *Moyo* (Heart), in the same manner that first names or nicknames are used. Females and males of the same patrilineal line share a totem. Clan praises or praise poems are then derived from the totem and are often 'an appreciation of the metaphorical character of one's relationship to the animal' (Pongweni 1996: 2). There is a female and a male side to the clan praises. Women and men are praised for different things. The praises are an attribute of one's totem, highlighting a personality or quality that the clan members get just being of that totem. A parallel example might be astrology, where members of the same zodiac sign are said to have a certain personality or quality. The praise poetry is a celebration of the worthiness and achievements of the clan.

Later, if the children get married, the males continue as before, with the birth totem and clan praise name; the females continue as before, with their totem and clan name, in the early years of marriage, often, before they have children. In time, their own totem and clan name is often subsumed by the husband's clan praise name, which a woman takes as part of her marital identity.

It should be pointed out that while Shona-speaking areas are divided into the five varieties mentioned above, *mitupo* and *zvidao* are Shona, and have no bearing on regional varieties. A *Shumba* (Lion), for example, can be Karanga, Zezuru or Manyika. This is a result of the splitting of groups from the 'original' group, as well as chief-led migrations over time (see, eg., Chimhundu 1992).

<sup>3</sup> Zimbabwe was colonized by the British, beginning in the 1890s up to 1980. After a protracted liberation struggle, the country got independence and majority rule in 1980.

<sup>4</sup> VaTaaziva. October 2001. Mhondoro.



Totemism has been the subject of much controversial discussions by early western anthropologists and Christians who misconstrued totemism to mean, for example, that a group was claiming that they were descendents of the animal, or the group saw the animal as their god (see, eg., discussion by Pongweni 1996).

Interestingly, while female and male siblings get the same totem from the father, I have observed, among the younger generations, that it is often the males who are ceremoniously addressed by this totem, while, for women, clan praises are preferred.

#### 1.2.1.4 *Midzimu, mitupo and the family*

*Midzimu* (ancestral spirits) are believed to mediate between *Mwari* (God) and the living. They are seen as being spirits who are closer to God because of their spiritness. They have, as a result, the power to intercede in human affairs. Because totems are inherited from paternal ancestors, children are never really the mother's because, as a woman, she cannot pass on to them an identity, i.e. a totem, or invoke their *midzimu* to protect them, as their *midzimu* is the father's. The paternal ancestors are the *midzimu* whose concern is the welfare of the (extended) family. They are believed to protect and heal, or, to punish or discipline to make their descendents behave. While the matrilineal *midzimu* may also have the same powers, they, however, do not have the ultimate voice and authority. Although some Shona will today argue that they do not believe in *midzimu* and totems, in the mainstream Shona culture such institutions are much respected. The institutions highlight the intricacies of Shona society, complexities that pose profound challenges to new discourses.

Totemism also makes the role of the (extended) family central to Shona culture, as it is clear that one gets her or his identity, i.e. name, from her/his totem. In the rural areas, the usual pattern is that the extended family lives next to the other in the village. In the family, females and males have complementary roles. Everyone has a (communal) role to play, irrespective of who they are as individuals. Some therefore view the extended family as not encouraging the negotiation of identities, what is referred to, in linguistic studies, as the deconstruction of gender (see, eg., Eelen 2000). Families promote the institution of marriage, between a woman and a man, for procreation. Marriage is also seen as the decisive step into adulthood. Marriage, adulthood, motherhood and fatherhood bring status, respect and privileges to both women and men. Wisdom is also believed to come with age, hence, the special honour given to older people in general, and grandparents in particular. Young people are expected to listen to their elders, 'who have seen it all' and 'now know it (all)'.

In the marriage process the man plays the 'doer' role while the woman is the 'done'. The man 'marries' (-*roora*), while the woman 'is married' (-*roorwa*). The man is the subject of the active verb -*roora* while the woman is the subject to a passive verb -*roorwa*. The introduction of the -*w*- into the verb form brings in the passive element. The marriage process is done when a man pays *roora* (bride wealth) to the woman's family. The bulk of the *roora*, which today includes cattle, money and clothing, is for the father. The mother gets a cow and clothing. The *roora* is what is claimed to give the male paternity/custody, i.e. of the children borne during the existence of that marriage, in the traditional context. *Roora* is seen, traditionally, as a token of gratitude to the family that bore a man his soon-to-be-wife. A current development has been that some men are now increasingly regarding marriage as a license to 'own' or dominate a wife. A woman could 'escape' from being 'owned' by getting a civil marriage and forfeiting the customary marriage. But, then the *mudzimu*, it is said, would not

recognize the union because the cultural formalities would not have been done. It is important that the *midzimu* acknowledge the union because non-acknowledgement means abandonment, an unwanted situation considering the importance of family among the Shona. As a result, most modern couples have both a *roora* – customary - and a civil marriage, in an effort to gain advantages of both marriages. This is despite the fact that, the law allows for either one of the two. One major difference between them is that the customary marriage allows a man more than one wife, while the civil marriage, as in any other country, is a one-man-one-woman union.

### 1.3 The Shona language: an overview of word building in Shona

Shona is a Bantu language, and, the majority language in Zimbabwe. The language is also spoken in Mozambique and South Africa, in the areas bordering with Zimbabwe. Numerically, Shona is placed among the ten most spoken Bantu languages. The history of Shona as a written language is quite recent, dating back to the beginning of the last century. Oral traditions are, therefore, still very much alive, although the literacy rate is now believed to be quite high, with an official figure of eighty seven percent being claimed.

Shona is an agglutinating language. This is a language characterized as one 'in which various affixes may be added to the stem of a word to add to its meaning or to show its grammatical function' (Mutaka 2000: 224). The affixes 'glue' or string to the stem morphs representing morphemes. The language thus yields abundant prefixes and suffixes. This agglutination is evident in nouns, verbs and qualificatives, and, as Orr and Scotton (1980: 33) maintain, more evident in verbs because they 'incorporate various concords, tense prefixes and extensions' (see e.g. Fortune 1977, 1981; Mashiri and Warinda 1999; Myers 1990). However, as my study investigates nouns, I will only explain the structure of the Shona noun, in an effort to aid comprehension of the data.

Tone is an important feature of the language. It is phonemic. Two phonemic tones are recognized, the high (H) and the low (L).

#### 1.3.1 The Shona noun

The current study examines words, mostly nouns, and their meanings. The following description of the noun classification system is given to provide background and understanding to the structure and meaning of the nouns.

Shona has 21 noun classes (see, eg., Fortune 1955, 1981; Mashiri and Warinda 1999). The classification of nouns, specifically the prefixal morpheme, roughly along singular and plural pairing, is a characteristic that is central to Bantu languages, the family group to which Shona and other languages like Ndebele and Swahili belong. Mutaka (2000) outlines three general structures of the Bantu noun as follows:

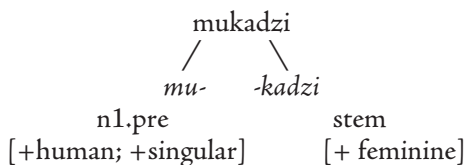
- a) (primary) prefix + stem
- b) augment + prefix + stem
- c) secondary prefix + prefix + stem

Shona nouns show the first and third structures (with the second structure displayed in Ndebele, a sister language to Shona. Ndebele is made reference to, from time to time, in the current study).

Mutaka categorizes the noun that carries the primary prefix (which, in Shona class 5 and 9/10, is not always overtly marked on the noun itself) as the underived noun, while the noun that carries a secondary prefix is the derived noun, derived from other nouns. The derived noun carries with it more than one prefix (pre), the secondary + primary prefixes (see, eg., Doke 1930, 1954 for more on noun classification of Bantu languages).

Using a class 1 noun (n1), *mukadzi* (woman) to give the morphological analysis of an underived noun and a class 7 noun (n7) *chimukadzi* (short, ugly, etc., woman) for a derived noun, here is how they would look:

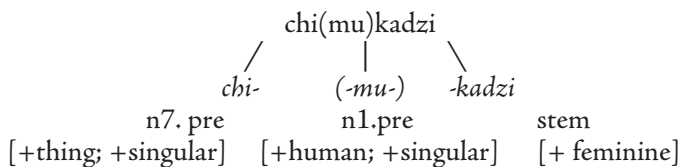
(i)



→ *mukadzi* (woman/wife)

The primary prefix gives grammatical gender and marks singularity/plurality. The stem carries the basic meaning that the *mu-* subcategorises more narrowly.

(ii)



→ *chimukadzi* (short, ugly, etc woman)

Class 7 is a class of ‘things’, so if a human stem is prefixed by a ‘thing’ prefix to form a human noun the result is the denigration of the human – the *chi-* in this example, gives meanings such as, eg. ugly, short, or, with negative personality traits (Depending on the discourse, the *chi-* may also be inverted to an endearment). A point to note is that, depending on the noun, *chi-* may also take a primary position, eg., in *chikoro* (school) (a borrowed noun). The secondary prefix, which affixes to what was *mukadzi*, further, specifies the referent with additional descriptive information.

Other examples are as follows:

1 *mu-* + *-mvana*

1.pre [+human] + stem [- virgin]

→ *mumvana* (married mother/married woman who is [- virgin])

(Class 1 nouns are regular human nouns.)

9 Ø pre- + *-mvana*

9. (pre [+thing]) + stem [- virgin].

→ *mvana* (divorcee/single mother)



(Class 9 is mostly a non-human class, which also carries ‘special’ people.)

The primary prefix becomes optional in nouns carrying secondary prefixes. The secondary prefix, like the primary prefix, gives grammatical gender and singularity/plurality, and more, in terms of meaning, such as ugly, big and small.

Shona has 21 noun classes, which are based on person, animacy (to some degree), and other features/characteristics such as size, length, badness, etc. Of these, class 1a, 2a and 2b are the proper noun and honorific classes. The table below gives an overview of the Shona noun classification system. Noun classes 1-10 consist of singular and plural pairings. Thereafter, the singular-plural pairing becomes a bit loose. Where the plural class is not in the neighbourhood of the singular form, the class is indicated in parenthesis, as in eg., 21 [6]. Brief notes meant to characterise the basic meanings of the class are also included for each grouping. Noun classes 1-2, and all its sub-classifications, are human classes, as the notes will show.

**Table 1.1 The Shona noun system: prefixes, examples and notes**

<u>Class</u>	<u>Prefix</u>	<u>Example of noun</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1 (s)	mu-/mw-	<i>musikana</i> (girl) <i>mwana</i> (child)	humans
2 (pl)	va-	<i>vasikana</i> (girls)	humans
1a(s)	Ø	<i>baba</i> (father) <i>changamire</i> (sir)	humans
2a (s/pl)	va-	<i>vatete</i> (aunt) <i>vanachangamire</i> (sirs)	humans
2b (s)	a-	<i>ambuya</i> (grandmother/mother-in-law)	humans
3 (s/nc)	mu-/mw-	<i>muti</i> (tree), <i>mweya</i> (air)	trees, inanimates, etc,
4 (pl)	mi-	<i>miti</i> (trees), <i>mweya</i> (air)	
5 (s)	(ri-)	<i>rume</i> (big man)	- contains augmentatives ‘good’ big – big shows manhood and/or prosperity /affluence “negative’ big – a woman should not be big
6 (pl)	ma-	<i>gadzi</i> (big woman) <i>marume</i> (big men)	
7 (s)	chi-	<i>chirume</i> (short man)	(short things); male manner or style of doing things
8 (pl)	zvi-	<i>zvirume</i> (short men)	
9 (s)	(i-)	<i>mvana</i> (single mother)	animals, ‘special’ human, technological things, inanimates, etc
10 (pl)	(dzi-)	<i>mvana</i>	
11 (s) [13]	ru-	<i>rukadzi</i> (thin/small/ugly woman)	things and ‘thingy’ people/animals – thin and long

12 (s)	ka-	<i>kakadzi</i> (small/thin woman)	diminutives, 'thingy' - Could also be an endearment depending on discourse
13 (pl)	tu-	<i>tukadzi</i>	
14 (nc/s)	(h)u-	<i>unhu</i> (humanness) <i>urume</i> (semen/sperm/ manliness) <i>umbutu</i> (mosquito)	qualities/abstracts (small) things
15 (nc)	ku-	<i>kuroora</i> (marrying) <i>kuroorwa</i> (marrying)	verbal nouns/Gerunds. the man 'marries' the woman. The woman gets married.
16 (nc)	pa-	<i>pamusha</i> (at the house)	locatives. – although not basic prefixes they appear in concordial agreement
17 (nc)	ku-	<i>kumusha</i> (to/at the house)	
18 (nc)	mu-	<i>mumusha</i> (in/into the house)	
19 (s)[8]	svi-	<i>svikadzi</i> (small woman)	things and 'thingy' people. Could also be an endearment in some regional dialects
21 (s)[6]	zi-	<i>zimurume</i>	augmentatives, pejoratives, etc. Bigger (and uglier) than class 5

#### ABBREVIATIONS

(s) singular

(pl) plural

hon honorific

(nc) non-count

## 1.4 General background literature

While the earlier sections give literature specific to Shona and Bantu languages, in general, this last section provides background literature relevant to the linguistic areas covered in the study. Chaps 2 and 3, the theoretical, and materials and methodology chapters, respectively, expand on some of the relevant literature raised in this section.

Researchers like Frank and Anshen (1983), Russ (1983), Hardman (1978, 1988, 1993) have provided the initial motivation for the current study, with their own studies on the English language and how it can be analysed to show the treatment of the sexes and the disparities that exist. Pauwels (1998), Penelope (1990), Spender (1980, 1985) and Mills (1995) have also carried out research on gender in ways that have stirred this research.

A few language-attitude studies about Shona have been published so far. These include publications on attitudes towards a language or dialect (e.g., Chiwome and Thondhlana 1989), or on attitudes affecting linguistic output (Chimhundu 1987, 1995; Chitau-ro-Mawema 1995; and Pongweni 1996). Chimhundu's (1987) article examines courtship, marriage and copulation terminology and displays the way Shona terms suggest a passive role to women and an active one to men. In my MA thesis (Chitau-ro-Mawema 1995), I investigate a speech event in Shona, and highlight how the language used shows women in submissive roles. Pongweni (1996) examines gender and sexuality in Shona praise poetry. He, like Chimhundu (1987, 1995), also observes how women are conceived as playing a submissive/passive role during the sexual act. Ranger (1993), Chinyowa (1997, 1998) and Chitau-ro-Mawema, et al. (1994) write on patriarchy and colonialism and how they have influenced gender

identities among the Shona. The current study builds on this foundation, and broadens the investigation of attitudes towards women and men, as exposed by choices of lexical items and their uses in a wider variety of discourses.

Jay (1985, 1992), Goodenough (1931), Montagu (1967) and Flexner (1976) writing on the use of dirty words in English, provide comparative studies for the investigation of insults and curses in Shona. This is more so, as, besides giving the motivations for cursing, Jay (1992) also investigates cursing across sex lines, who uses what and for whom. The thesis investigates meaning as well as the question of which insults and curses are used for women, for men or for both,

Cameron (1991, 1996) and Talbot (1998) give a sketch of theoretical frameworks in gender and language study from deficit, dominance and difference to post-structuralist frameworks. The frameworks are discussed more fully in Chap 2. These frameworks cover a range of theoretical positions. The frameworks arise, mostly, from studies on gender and discourse patterns in English (e.g. Coates 1986, 1998; Cameron 1991, 1998; Uchida 1998; Tannen 1990, 1991; Talbot 1998). Lakoff (1975) discusses asymmetrical relations as resulting from the differences in language styles by women and men, differences between 'women's' language and men's 'neutral' language. The model encourages women to adopt the 'neutral' male discourse (Cameron 1996). Tannen (1990) and Gray (1992), among others, in the difference framework, discuss asymmetries as arising from the two subcultures in which women and men are socialized. West (1975, 1984) and Fishman (1980), among others, discuss asymmetrical relations in language as resulting from power differences between the two sexes, with women negotiating their relatively powerless positions in interaction. Poststructuralists write about power negotiation in discourse. Butler (1990, 1993), Foucault (1990), Crawford (1995), Mills (2002), among others emphasize the diversity of women and the need to constantly negotiate the norms, behaviours and discourses that define femininity or masculinity at a particular point in history, what is referred to as the deconstruction of gender. Eelen (2000: 223), for example, writes that, 'on one hand, collective history creates a 'common' world in which each individual is embedded. On the other hand, each individual also has a unique individual history and experiences the 'common' world from this unique position. The 'common' or shared is thus never identical for everyone. Bing and Bergvall (1996) write that gender identity should be seen as a continuum rather than a female-male dichotomy. Foucault says that powerful people create that power through discourse by dictating boundaries and categories. Bucholtz (1996) offers Black feminist thought, a historical approach, as a viable option to white mainstream western middle-class poststructuralist frameworks.

Linguistic asymmetries have been described and defined (explicitly and implicitly) by Pauwels (1998), Lakoff (1987), Brown and Gilman (1960) and Simpson (1993) in ways that have been used productively in this study. Pauwels (1998) and Lakoff (1987) highlight common features across languages, which reflect the dominance of women by men. Brown and Gilman's research on the use of pronouns in European languages has made power and solidarity fundamental issues in Sociolinguistics. Their research highlights that the key to power is in the asymmetrical use of pronouns, i.e., non-reciprocal, while that to solidarity is the symmetrical use of pronouns, i.e., reciprocal. The power/solidarity idea has been extended to cover terms other than pronouns and has been used by gender and language scholars.

While some researchers have argued that gender is arbitrary and that it is not the language that is sexist but the tradition it preserves (eg., Haugen 1987), research undertaken elsewhere has shown that language, too, plays a role in excluding women. Tests on the use of generic nouns and pronouns in English have strongly supported the conclusion that the use of these forms has the effect of excluding women (see, e.g., Bodine 1975; Martyna 1980). The tests have shown that the perception and understanding of masculine generic nouns and pronouns is not as generic (gender neutral) and unambiguous as some linguists claim, e.g., in the use of 'man' and 'he' for humans. It has been shown that both adults and children call up male images with these forms (Lyons 1977; Frank and Anshen 1983).

McEnery and Wilson (1996) note briefly (and explicitly) that corpus linguistic methodologies have been applied before to gender issues in a variety of languages, producing generally accepted results. They observe that, '... most sociolinguistic projects with corpora to date have been relatively simple lexical studies in the area of language and gender' (McEnery and Wilson 1996: 99). The current study seeks to look at lexical items and their meanings as well as the resultant influence on the construction of gender identities. Kjellmer (1986) and Holmes (1994), Miller and Swift (1977) and Fournier and Russell (1992), for example, have carried out gender studies using corpora in ways that have been useful to the present study. In one of these studies, Kjellmer (1986) used the Brown and LOB Corpora of English to investigate masculine bias in American and British English. He carried out a mainly quantitative study, which explored specifically the occurrence of feminine/masculine pronouns and nouns and the frequency of their occurrence in the two corpora. Holmes (1994) adds a cautionary note on methodological matters for such studies. She says that, when counting and classifying, it is important to consider the context and see if there are alternatives and also to consider the difficulty of classifying a form, which is actively undergoing semantic change. The current investigation offers a fuzzy classification of items.

Still on literature on research methodology, other works that have been useful to this study are Schmied (1993), Leedy (1997), Glesne and Peshkins (1992), Fournier and Russell (1992), Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum (1957) and Fasold (1984). These works discuss qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. Milroy and Milroy (1978), J. Milroy (1981, 1984) L. Milroy (1980, 1987), Labov (1981) and Romaine (1982) have provided valuable insights on fieldwork, specifically on sampling, data collection, methodological principles and fieldwork strategies. In a volume edited by Gomm, Hammersley and Foster (2000) on the case study, articles by various scholars explore the case study as a method of qualitative research, its meaning, strengths and weaknesses with the main debate being on the 'scientificness' or 'unscientificness' of the method. Hammersley and Gomm (2000) point out that, despite this debate, the case study method has been successfully used in sociology and other areas of social enquiry. Cruse (1986), Leech (1981) and Goddard (1998) discuss meaning in semantics, and, among other things, explain componential analysis and its use in highlighting meaning relations. Cruse (1991) offers a contextual (descriptive rather than formal) approach to the study of lexical semantics, namely the study of lexical units.

Zgusta (1971), Jackson (1988) and Svensén (1993) discuss a number of theoretical issues implied in lexicography, emphasize the importance of good definitions, and argue that these speak most directly of the craft of the lexicographer, a claim which partly motivates this study, as it seeks to reveal information which would contribute to gender sensitive treatments of words naming aspects of women and women's space.

Their discussions and findings on such topics as the analysis of meaning, definitions and explanations, examples and collocations have been enlightening for this study. In corpus-based lexicography, Sinclair (1987, 1991), Moon (1987), Fox (1987) and Hanks (1987) give an account of the COBUILD Project's experience in lexical computing. The capacity to study the use of word forms and collocations by concordance software was notably first exploited in the Cobuild Project (Sinclair 1987; Kennedy 1998). Svensén (1993) defines collocations and discusses their importance in both monolingual and bilingual dictionaries in guiding the user to words that commonly occur together and also to the appropriate equivalent. He shows that examining these systematically can reveal information about attitudes and evaluations that may not be made explicit or even consciously known. Since this is an empirical study of words, their senses and their collocates, the insights gleaned through corpus-based lexicography seemed to be reasonable starting points for the exploration undertaken in this study.

## **1.5 Presentation of the dissertation**

Chap 2 sketches frameworks in gender and language studies as well as other linguistic theories relevant to the study. It also explains why 'dominance-difference' is chosen as the major framework guiding the study. Chap 3 gives a description of the materials and methodologies adopted. Chaps 4-7 provide the data and analyses of the topics covered in the thesis. Each of the chapters comes with its own objectives, methods and results, and discussions sections. Chap 4, the reference chapter, examines the main female and male terms for meaning and attitude. It, in a way, provides a background to the chapters that follow, especially Chap 5. The fifth chapter is the address study, which investigates address forms used between people who are not known to each other, or if they are, who do not know each other very well and are not related. Chap 6 investigates one address and reference title *Va-*, previously used for (older) women and men. Chap 7 examines 'bad' language in insults and curses. The dissertation ends with a summary and conclusion in Chap 8.



## Theoretical Frameworks that Have Motivated and Shaped the Study

### 2.1 Introduction

Generally, most gender study theoretical frameworks (also referred to as 'models' or 'approaches' in my study) emanate from research on gender studies in discourse practices in English (e.g., Cameron 1991, 1996; Coates 1986, 1998; Uchida 1998; Tannen 1990, 1991; Foucault 1990; Bucholtz 1999; Eelen 2000; Mills 2002). The western frameworks are explored here to see whether they could be used fruitfully to explain the linguistic phenomena at hand. Since this investigation is, to my knowledge, breaking new ground in a Bantu language, no frameworks for handling these specific languages exists. I should also mention that while these frameworks have developed, mostly, from research in discourse studies (interaction in specific situations), in this thesis I apply them to the study of language use in discourses (statements which give expression to the meaning and values of an institution). Words and expressions are studied, not in the context of an interaction, but as they are used in a context such as a string or a dictionary entry, in order to understand what the attitudes towards them are, as well as what motivates such attitudes.

In this chapter, I sketch a number of theoretical frameworks developed for Euro-American language studies in gender and discourse studies. First, on language and gender studies, I discuss the early models of 'deficit', 'dominance' and 'difference' (Lakoff 1975; Tannen 1990; West 1975, 1984; Spender 1985; and Fishman 1980, 1983). I then proceed to discuss recent poststructuralist approaches, and to highlight some of the positions advanced in this broad framework. The poststructuralist theories (Foucault 1990; Kress 1985; Crawford 1995; Mills 2002) emphasize negotiated gendered discourse practices, rather than the pre-given practices of earlier frameworks.

Because of the complexity of the study, I will also discuss and utilize other theories such as Cruse's (1986) contextual approach to semantics; cognitive models (Lakoff 1987); linguistic asymmetries and markedness (Lakoff 1987; Matthews 1997); and Brown and Gilman's (1960) work on pronouns and power and solidarity.

### 2.2 Discourse models

#### 2.2.1 Deficit, dominance and difference

'Deficit', 'dominance' and 'difference' provided early models for the analysis of language and gender differences in the social sciences, especially Sociolinguistics and Sociology (see e.g. Thorne and Henley 1975; Talbot 1998). Researchers who take the deficit approach see the asymmetrical relations in the language used by women and men, and to women and men, as resulting from women's deficiencies. Lakoff (1975) exemplifies the deficit position because her categorization presents women as having a deficiency



(Cameron 1991). Lakoff has identified two types of language, the 'neutral' (men's) and 'women's'. Her categorization sees male language as the norm and, in contrast, women's language as the deviation and one that reflects deficiency from the norm. She explains that women are socially conditioned to be different, in a way that makes them become deficient. Her position, as summarized by Cameron (1991), is that 'women and men are unequal because they are different'.

In the dominance approach, the asymmetries are seen as resulting from power differences between the sexes. West (1975, 1984), Spender (1985) and Fishman's (1980, 1983) work represent the dominance position. The position as summed up, again, by Cameron (1991) is that 'men and women are unequal and therefore they are different'. In this model, socialization is seen as the most important gender constructing process. Girls learn female rules and roles because they are labelled as 'female', while boys learn male rules and roles because they are labelled as 'male' (West and Zimmerman 1987: 126-7). Gender (construction) as seen by West and Zimmerman is 'a routine, methodical, and recurring accomplishment' and also 'the activity of managing situated conduct in light of normative conceptions of attitudes and activities appropriate for one's sex category' (West and Zimmerman 1983: 140). Again, West and Zimmerman (1983: 140) point out that, 'a person's gender is not simply an aspect of what one is, but, more fundamentally, it is something that one does, and does recurrently, in interaction with others'. The claim is that girls learn 'solidarity' while boys learn 'dominance'. Men are socially empowered to dominate, and this is evident in interaction. So when women and men are 'doing gender', they are doing it within an accepted hierarchical ordering of things.

Tannen (1990) offers reinterpretations of what has been given elsewhere as dominating behaviour by men in American culture. She exemplifies the difference position. Her position, as summed up by Cameron (1991), is that 'women and men are different but equal'. Researchers who take a difference perspective see asymmetries as arising from the different subcultures in which women and men are socialized. Tannen models her approach after Gumperz (1982) and Maltz and Borker (1982) whose framework had been put forward for studying problems in inter-ethnic communication. Tannen (1990: 254) argues that, since American girls and boys '... grow up in different worlds, therefore sex differences can be seen as culture differences and consequently cross-sex communication is seen as cross-cultural communication.' The approach works on the hypothesis that, in cross-cultural or inter-cultural communication, members of different cultures will bring their own assumptions and rules of communication and apply them in order to understand what is going on. Tannen takes up this hypothesis and applies it to gender studies based on the postulation that women and men 'come from different sociolinguistic subcultures' (Maltz and Borker 1982: 200). The difference approach is sometimes referred to as the 'sub-cultural' or 'two-cultures' approach. The main point that Tannen (1990) raises is that, if society understood these differences more deeply, then women and men would be equal.

These theories have been discussed extensively as the body of work on gender and language research has grown. Criticism has been levelled against the deficit and difference approaches as inadequate frameworks for studying any work in gender studies, because they do not seem to realize that differences arise from inequality and not vice versa (eg. Cameron 1991; Uchida 1998). Both deficit and difference do not mention the issue of power. The deficit approach is, generally, criticized by most language and gender researchers for adopting patriarchal tendencies that result in the failure to



recognize women and their styles as equal to men and their styles. Tannen's 'popularising' work has been criticized for being 'anecdotal and highly speculative' and for avoiding mentioning power as an issue in interaction between women and men' (Talbot 1998: 100; see also Freed 1992, 1996a). Cameron and Talbot say that difference is particularly attractive to 'politically moderate' researchers because it is tolerant and conciliatory, and, does not put the blame on any one. Unlike dominance, the theory does not make value judgments. Difference agrees with the goals of Sociolinguistics, to regard variation as positive and 'equal'. It is traditional in linguistics to see difference as 'neutral', what is termed as linguistic relativism; and to see inequality as resulting from the suppression or stigmatisation of difference (Cameron 1996: 42, Talbot 1998: 133). As a result of this show of tolerance of men's styles, the two models, of deficit and difference, have been used to sell books to a mass audience, with self-help books on work relations using mainly the deficit approach (Manning and Haddock 1989), encouraging women to adopt men's styles; and those on marriage using the difference approach (see, e.g., Gray 1992), encouraging women to understand man's interaction styles as cross-cultural communication. Dominance, on the other hand, is 'politically strong' and too 'explicitly feminist to sell books to a mass audience' (Cameron 1996: 40) because it questions the status quo, making some people uncomfortable.

New poststructuralists theoretical positions have started to question power inequalities as they are presented in the dominance approach.

## 2.2.2 Poststructuralist-influenced frameworks

New poststructuralist-influenced frameworks are now emerging as a result, partly, of a natural growth process and partly as a result of criticisms of the early frameworks' applicability in a context now removed from the 60s and 70s. Some researchers now find the older frameworks redundant. Poststructuralism covers a range of positions, such as those presented by critical discourse analysts (those working with critical discourse analysis (CDA)) such as Foucault (1989), Kress (1985) and Fairclough and Wodak (1997). The approaches focus on the individual, recognizing diversity in society rather than on a homogenous female or male group as seen in the earlier frameworks (see Crawford 1995; Mills 2002).

Mills (2002) says that patriarchy is no longer an issue in gender discourses today as the emphasis is now on the individual rather than the group. She highlights a new 'wave' in gender and language studies, which she calls the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wave. The 1<sup>st</sup> wave highlighted differences between women and men while in the 2<sup>nd</sup> wave feminists demanded equal treatment. The 3<sup>rd</sup> wave, coming partly as a result of criticism that current theories have been about white straight middle class women (see, e.g., Bucholtz 1999), and partly growth from the other two phases, now celebrates the diversity of women, highlights the performative nature of gender identity, as gender is not given but participated in. The 3<sup>rd</sup> wave also focuses on the local context, rather than generalizing across contexts. Like other poststructuralist positions, Mills argues that identity is not given but negotiated through the management of power relations during interaction. She says that patriarchy is not an issue anymore, thus making difference and dominance irrelevant.

While the poststructuralist frameworks recognize the role of power in discourse, they, however, call for a more 'textured' approach to power (Crawford 1995) that shifts in different discourses, rather than a monolithic, all-encompassing state of po-

wer given to one group (Kitzinger 1991: 124), as in the dominance framework. There are arguments against a female-male dichotomy (dividing humans into female and male) but instead for a continuum of experience (see, e.g., Bing and Bergvall 1996). Poststructuralists argue that identities are not given but are created moment by moment by the individual as she finds herself in different subject positions in different contexts. An individual does not finish becoming her gender as she is constantly negotiating the norms, behaviours and discourses of femininity and masculinity, thereby redefining gender norms, through the deconstruction of gender (see also Cameron 1996). Foucault's (1986, 1990) idea of 'poststructuralist discourse' has been incorporated into CDA and influenced works such as that of Kress (1985) whose definition of discourses has been adopted in the study, as noted in Chap 1. Foucault argues for a position in which knowledge and identity are socially constructed. He says that people's identities, as either of the feminine or masculine gender, are socially constructed in discourses (the structures possible within the society), from discourse to discourse. Foucault argues that power is created in discourse/interaction and is not a property of the powerful such as men, capitalists, etc. He says that new discourses have been created over the years. He says, for instance, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the English language spoke of 'sexual perversion' and 'deviance', but, today, the structures of possibility and constraint now recognize homosexuality (rather than deviance).

Bucholtz (1996, 1999) criticizes the new 'white middle class poststructuralist stance' for not paying close systematic attention to how language is applied in particular situations for particular situations and suggests that sociolinguistics could borrow from other disciplines, within and outside linguistics, tools to explain language phenomena outside the mainstream white middle class. She gives Black feminist thought as a viable alternative. She says that, while Black feminist thought comes with a wide range of positions, it still is a viable framework because, while the positions may be many, they, however, converge in making women of African descent central to their theories. She highlights, among others, Collins' (1990) sociological theory whose position arises from historical political considerations.

In my view, research by Foucault and others working with CDA are relevant to this study, only to a point. CDA highlights the idea that history and society are important factors in delimiting gender (more than the usual discourse or conversational analysts usually do). Historical and societal structures offer explanations to the language issues discussed in this study. I am, however, sceptical of generalizing that power is not a property of the powerful group, but is negotiated in discourse. While such contexts for negotiation may have been reached in the western white middle-class contexts that the poststructuralists are working in, the same cannot be said of a patriarchal communal structures such as exist within Shona institutions. The same need to recognize diversity, expressed in poststructuralism, is claimed here. The Shona society is still, to a large degree, overtly and covertly patriarchal and communal. Patriarchy is not dead. It is still relevant, thereby leaving very little room for the negotiation of identities. Socially, people are still categorized by gender, for the most part. Since Shona culture continues to expect, mostly, elements of the pre-given/static, where individuals are concerned, more so where women are concerned (Ranger 1993; Chinyowa 1997), performed gender identities, as new discourses (Faucault 1990), are often rejected or discouraged. Or, the new identities are discussed with ridicule and/or sarcasm for being contrary to prescribed norms. As an example of the continued insistence on pre-given discourses, the growing class of independent professional executive women

has been disparaged for doing some of the things that men in their positions do. To use Foucault's discourses, they are seen as 'deviants'. Such new coinages as *mapajero* (the Pajeros<sup>5</sup>) or the 'Pajero Brigade' (Grace Mutandwa's column, 'Chilling Out', in an article entitled, 'Manhood: the man's best friend' Financial Gazette 18-04-02) to refer to a new class of independent professional executive women, who drive Pajeros, shows the scorn with which these women are seen within the culture. Other coinages like '*vekutaundi*' (those of the town centre, i.e. the Central Business District, vis-à-vis those on the periphery of the town) and *vekumaNGO* (those of the NGOs (Non Governmental Organizations) referring to those women working for NGOs, especially the ones dealing with gender empowerment) are now being floated around in the city of Harare to refer to the emerging class of professional women (both married and single). They are also referred to as *vemazita maviri* 'those with two names - those with the double-barrelled last names' or the *mvana* (divorcees) now 'flooding' the NGOs and the private sector. They are said to have found themselves in the *mvana* status because they are uncontrollable and no man would want to live with another 'man' in his house. There can only be one bull in a kraal<sup>6</sup>, it is said.

While this 'poststructural seed' has been sown in the society, I hasten to add that, for the most part, women are still being treated as a homogenous group. One hears such expressions as *mukadzi mukadzi*<sup>7</sup> (a woman is a woman), irrespective of what she does. The patriarchal structure is still clearly cultivated in the broader picture of the extended family and of the group as a whole, where at social events men, through their own hierarchical structures, 'naturally' dominate the proceedings. Therefore, while for a few the hierarchical structures may now exist more in language than in reality, for many the hierarchical structure is still given in the family unit, through patriarchal institutions. Yes, all men are not in a position to dominate all women in all positions, but within the 'culture', there are institutions/situations that still bring (unintentional) male dominance and, consequently, masculine hegemony. Hegemony refers to a situation where a group claims and sustains a leading position in society (Connell 1995). The exposé of the current structures in Shona, through this study of words and their uses is, in part, an attempt to show the constraints that Shona women face that may severely limit the negotiation of identities.

In her analysis of poststructuralist frameworks, Bucholtz (1996: 270) raises the issue of constraints on women outside the mainstream white discourses. She writes, 'identities can be chosen, as poststructuralists point out, but the meaning of such choices do not rest with the individual alone, and the range of choices is itself limited by the constraints of physical appearance and other factors'. The introductory chapter has given a brief overview of Shona structure from which it is clear that the vast majority of women are not isolated self-governing people but live in a community in which their roles and responsibilities are defined. In my opinion, it is, therefore, still too early to talk about specific women in Shona.

<sup>5</sup> Pajero is a car brand, currently considered a status symbol.

<sup>6</sup> < Afrikaans – a night enclosure where cattle, sheep, goats and other kept animals sleep in the rural areas.

<sup>7</sup> The ALLEX Shona corpus has 2 concordance hits of this expression.

### 2.2.3 A summary of the discourse models

The discourse models sketched and discussed above provide, to varying degrees, insights that are useful for the analysis of the data in this investigation. As will be shown, the complexities of the Shona context suggest dominance and difference, simultaneously, as the main motivating factors in influencing the differences between the terms referring to the sexes, the ways these are used in everyday conversation and ultimately the attitudes reflected therein. This is a position earlier advanced by Uchida (1998). Uchida argues that, when we talk about gender, we look at women and men as making up sociocultural groups. These groups are created by differences in the position that the two sexes are placed in within the social hierarchy. Considering the socialization of girls and boys and the complementarity of roles between women and men in the traditional Shona set-up, difference becomes a plausible approach. However, difference does fall short, because of the apolitical stance it takes in that it does not acknowledge that power and dominance dictate the patterns of socialization. I have described the Shona society as a patriarchal one. Difference is therefore a consequence of the domination of one group by the other. What occurs in Tannen (1990) should not be seen as straightforward misunderstandings but an everyday power struggle between people who are operating from different power bases. So, if we admit that there is a hierarchy, a power structure in the society, it is impractical to claim that it will not affect the language used to convey and perpetuate these structures. Dominance, difference and other local dimensions 'should be seen as simultaneously composing the construct of gender' (Uchida 1998: 290). The major frameworks in this study shall hereafter be referred to as 'dominance-difference'.

## 2.3 Cognitive models

Lakoff (1987) examines cognitive categories. His main line of reasoning is that 'we organize our knowledge by means of structures called idealized cognitive models or ICMs, and that category structures and prototype effects are by-products of that organization.' The ideas he brings from cognitive linguistics are influenced by such researchers as Fillmore (1982), Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Langacker (1986), among others. ICMs are based on societal expectations and are therefore often oversimplified, as in a bachelor is,

an unmarried adult man, but the noun clearly exists as a motivated device for categorizing people only in the context of a human society in which certain expectations about marriage and marriageable age obtain ... John Paul II is not properly thought of as a bachelor' (Fillmore 1982).

Cluster models result when a number of cognitive models combine to form a complex structure that is more basic than the individual models taken individually. Lakoff (1987) gives the example of the concept "mother" whose individual cognitive models may be, the birth model; the genetic model; the nurturance model; the marital and the genealogical model, which will then combine to form a cluster model resulting in prototype effects. Asymmetries called prototype effects, i.e. gradience from a best example, result because in these models there is still a pull to see one sense as the most important, as is often seen in dictionaries (Lakoff 1987);. Dictionaries may choose the

biological, nurturance or genealogical models as central or prototypical (Lakoff 1987: 74); or what Austin (1961) refers to as 'primary nuclear senses'.

Another level of prototype effects occurs in stereotypes. Social stereotypes explain cultural expectations. In the "mother" example, housewife-mother would constitute a stereotype.

## 2.4 Linguistic asymmetries: markedness

The study of manifestations of asymmetries is known as markedness (Cameron 1998, Lakoff 1987: 61). *The Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics* defines markedness as, '... the theory that in the languages of the world certain linguistic elements are more basic, natural and frequent (unmarked) than other elements which are referred to as 'marked.' It goes on to state that that the concept has been discussed particularly within generative phonology.

Lakoff (1987: 60) working in cognitive linguistics, defines markedness as 'a term used by linguists to describe a kind of prototype effect—an asymmetry in a category, where one member or subcategory is taken to be somehow more basic than the other (or others). Correspondingly, the unmarked member is the default value, the member of the category that occurs when only one member of the category can occur and all other things are equal.' An example of such an asymmetry is the neutralization of contrasts, which occurs in semantics, e.g., in gradable pairs of antonyms such as "tall/short". The two words are not totally symmetric. "How tall is she?" does not necessarily suggest that she is tall; whereas "How short is she?" suggests that she is short. Therefore, one of these two terms, "tall" is the 'unmarked' term because it is the one used in questions of degree (Fromkin and Rodman 1993). It occurs where the contrast is neutralized. The unmarked form is cognitively more basic than the marked one (Lakoff 1987). Marked vs. unmarked binary pairs operate at all levels of linguistic analysis (Hartmann and Stork 1972: 137).

Matthews (1997: 217) highlights three senses of the word, which sort of break up this long definition and aptly captures the varieties of the concept as it used in this study. He says that marked means:

1. Having a feature, or the positive value of a feature, as opposed to lacking it or having the negative value. ... 2. Having a feature or a value of a feature, which is not that, predicted or expected, by some general principle. ... 3. Thence, in general, of any unit, construction, etc. which is in any way a special case, or which is simply rarer...' (Matthews 1997: 217).

In gender studies, linguistic asymmetries reveal quite a lot about the attitudes that the societies have of the sex (Cameron 1991, Takahashi 1991). As Lakoff (1987: 61) elucidates, in asymmetries reflected in gender studies '... women are subsumed under the linguistic norm which is based on, or identical to, men's representations, leading to their invisibility. Sometimes they are made visible only to display their difference, i.e. their deviation from the norm. The latter leads to their 'marked' linguistic treatment.

Pauwels (1998) explains that, while the manner in which sexism is embedded in and expressed through language is language specific, there are some common features across languages, which reflect the male dominance. Some of the features highlighted in the theory include:



- a) The male or man is portrayed as the benchmark for all humans. Terms for referring to women are gender-specific, while for men they can be both gender-specific and generic. In most instances, women are referred to as women, while, for men, it is not deemed necessary to refer to them as men;
- b) Another common feature is that the man is portrayed as a rational and intelligent being, unlike the woman, who is a physical and sexual creature. Or the things that the man does or says are evaluated more positively, while those that the woman says and does are valued negatively. And, where things do not get done, women 'fail', while men are 'unfortunate' or they are unable to succeed through no fault of their own (Simpson 1993:163);
- c) Usually, gaps are created which leave the woman largely visible or invisible. If she is made visible, the visibility is predominantly of an asymmetrical nature revealing her 'deviation or exception' from the norm.
- d) One's gender's terminology is presented positively, while the other is presented negatively or as a lighter or fainter version of the other. Two paired examples from English, 'womanly' and 'manly', and 'spinster' and 'bachelor' illustrate this phenomenon.

Together with those features highlighted in Pauwels, the study will also consider,

- e) Asymmetries shown in differential senses of terms;
- f) Asymmetrical forms of address for women and men; and
- g) Historical developments of language that favour one sex.

## 2.5 Addressing women and men: power and solidarity

Brown and Gilman's work (1960) has made power and solidarity fundamental to sociolinguistic theory. In their work, they look at the use of pronouns in European languages, which have two forms of the 2nd person pronoun, e.g., *tu* and *vous* in French, and come up with the following observations: the key to power is asymmetry, which in their studies is associated with the non-reciprocal use of pronouns; and, solidarity, on the other hand, is associated with reciprocal pronoun use or symmetrical forms of address. Solidarity is where both speakers address each other with *tu* or *vous*. Shona, too, has gender-neutral pronouns that discriminate on grounds other than gender, grounds such as age or power (cp. *iwe* (you – sing) and *imi* (you – pl)). The concepts of power and solidarity guide the study of female and male address forms in Shona. The study examines both traditional and new/extended forms of address to ascertain the meaning of these forms and to show the asymmetries in their uses.

## 2.6 Conclusion

To summarise, 'difference-dominance' is the overall guiding framework that motivates and shapes the study. Poststructuralist-based theories working with CDA highlight diversity and that history and society are important factors in gender studies. The other theories do, to varying degrees, corroborate with difference-dominance as they offer analytical frameworks that feed into the main framework. Markedness exposes

asymmetries, which in turn reveal power relationships in the topics under study. Chap 4, which studies the meanings of female and male reference terms in Shona discourse draws also from the contextual approach as well as the markedness theory. Chap 5, the address chapter, is guided by Gilman's power and solidarity theory as well as the markedness theory. Chap 6 and 7 are also guided by the markedness theory.





## Materials and Methods

### 3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. It presents the materials and the methods used in the research undertaken. The introduction to the chapter includes a brief sketch of the ALLEX Project, the major contributor of materials used in this study; I highlight, briefly, the organization and research work of the Project. Thereafter, I sketch the materials; and then the methodologies used in the gathering and analyses of the materials.

#### The ALLEX Project

The ALLEX Project (NUFU Pro 28/96 (1996-2001) - now 18/2002) started in 1992 as an indigenous language project researching on the indigenous languages of Zimbabwe. The Project is a cooperative research activity by members from three equal partners, namely:

- a) The University of Zimbabwe (UZ), through the African Languages Research Institute (ALRI)<sup>8</sup>;
- b) The University of Oslo through the Department of Scandinavian Studies and Comparative Literature and the Documentation Project<sup>9</sup>.
- c) The University of Gothenburg, through the Department of Swedish<sup>10</sup>

As of January 2001, the ALLEX Project had collected corpora of over two and a half million running words for Shona and close to a million running words for Ndebele. The Project has now also published three monolingual dictionaries, two in Shona and one in Ndebele, one of the Shona dictionaries in the first phase (1992-6) and the other two in the second phase (1996-01). Work on the corpora and lexicography continues as the Project is now in Phase III (2002-6) of its operation.

The ALLEX Project Shona lexicographical and corpus materials have provided significant sources of data for this investigation. The data, by and large, covers all Shona-speaking regions in both rural and urban areas, as the general ALLEX Shona corpus and the ALLEX dictionaries cover the generality of the regional varieties (or dialects), namely, Zezuru, Karanga, Manyika, Korekore and Ndau.

Since, as already noted in earlier chapters, a language reflects the concepts and culture of its society, these representative materials should reflect the society's attitudes to women and women's space. However, since ALLEX materials have been

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<sup>8</sup> with Professor Herbert Chimhundu as the Director (ALRI)/Coordinator (ALLEX), leading a team of researchers at UZ

<sup>9</sup> with Oddrun Gronvik, the Coordinator (ALLEX) and, Dr Christian-Emil Ore, responsible for the management of the technical and database research activities

<sup>10</sup> with Dr. Daniel Ridings, responsible for the development and management of corpora software.

collected and compiled for more general language work, there were, predictably, going to be gaps in the corpus for the current study. There was, therefore, need to collect additional data, specifically targeted at the areas under discussion.

The following section describes comprehensively the materials used in the study.

## 3.2 The Materials

The materials used in this study were:

- a) ALLEX lexicographic materials,
- b) The ALLEX Shona corpus,
- c) Hannan's Shona-English-Shona bilingual dictionary,
- d) Questionnaire data,
- e) Interview data,
- f) Informal discussions data, and
- g) Observation data,

### 3.2.1 The Lexicographical Materials

The research explores and examines 'known' lexical units (headwords, definitions and citations) applying to the sexes. These units are drawn mainly from:

- a) Relevant paper draft definitions and examples drawn by ALLEX research assistants (RAs) working for the ALLEX Project at the beginning of the defining phase of the general Shona dictionary, *Duramazwi reChiShona* (DRC), from which a questionnaire was developed for this study (see Appendix 4-I).
- b) The ALLEX monolingual Shona dictionaries: *Duramazwi reChiShona* (DRC) (Chimhundu et al. 1996), and the advanced and bigger Shona dictionary, *Duramazwi Guru reChiShona* (DGR) (Chimhundu et al. 2001). The ALLEX lexicographic works were ready for this research, as they are electronically processed.
- c) The bilingual Shona-English-Shona dictionary, the *Standard Shona Dictionary* (SSD) (Hannan 1981).

The DRC and DGR are presented here as 'sister' dictionaries, with the latter being a revised and more advanced version of the former. Consequently, the DGR is used more often in this study. The DRC is a general monolingual Shona dictionary, aimed at O'level students and the general population, while the DGR is aimed at those interested in the study of Shona at more advanced levels. The latter contains two parts. Part I has the 'standard' dictionary entry and definition (as in the DRC), and Part II has *zvirungamutauro* (proverbs and other stylistic expressions) and their explanations. The investigation examines materials from both Part I and Part II.

Part II is relevant to the study because Shona proverbs have been said to contain the wisdom of the VaShona, gathered over the years (see, eg., Chimhundu 1980). The wisdom contained in these expressions is what has been passed down from generation to generation as children are socialized into and taking up their respective roles as adults. It would, therefore, be interesting and prudent to investigate the 'wisdom and truth' encoded in these expressions to discover what they say about females and males or femininity and masculinity. Unlike in western traditions, where proverbs

may be known but unused in day-to-day events, proverbs in Shona tradition are still very much alive.

### 3.2.2 The ALLEX Shona corpus

As mentioned earlier, the Project has collected a Shona corpus of over two and a half million running words of spoken and written language. A corpus is 'a body of written text or transcribed speech which can serve as a basis for linguistic analysis and description' (Kennedy 1998:1). The spoken corpus is representative in terms of its demographic sampling. It contains current and old (mid 20<sup>th</sup> century) data and is also fairly representative in terms of genre. It contains written and oral texts, fiction and non-fiction, that have been randomly gathered from the Shona-speaking regions of Zimbabwe.

Although at this point in time the corpus has relatively more oral than written texts, and, with respect to the latter, more fiction than non-fiction, the aim is to achieve a healthy balance through more data gathering (as described below). The need for balancing the factors described arises because some constructions seem to occur more in the spoken than in the written language, and others more in the written (a phenomenon described, for example, by Aarts 1999). For example, oral materials are better sources of data for attitude studies because they show non-edited language compared to written language, a factor which makes the corpus valuable for the study. On the other hand, written texts may be helpful in areas such as sexuality and other sensitive areas where some data may not be available in the oral interviews.

The oral data, making up 60% of the corpus, have been compiled from over seven hundred hours of taped interviews and conversation, which have been transcribed and tagged. The 'sampling frame' (McEnery and Wilson 1996) of the Shona corpus, i.e., the entire population of texts in the corpus, is relatively representative. The oral corpus is representative in terms of the gender of participants and regional dialects, for all the Shona-speaking regions of Zimbabwe. These texts, which show female-male interaction, provided clues to attitudes and underlying assumptions and (over)generalizations about women. While the fiction texts, with the highest percentage in the written corpus, may be criticized for providing idealized or exaggerated data, it is important to remember that what is exaggerated or how it is exaggerated is a clue to attitudes, underlying assumptions and (over) generalizations about women.

The written corpus, making up the remaining 40%, consists of mainly literary texts such as plays, novels and short stories and fewer non-fiction texts such as reports, minutes of meetings, manuals and modules, as well as newspaper and magazine extracts. The materials in the corpus also include a large number of school textbooks. As of December 2001, there were 52 literary texts, 12 non-fiction texts and 22 textbooks. The smaller quantity of non-fiction texts can be explained by the reality that the history of Shona as a written language only dates back to the beginning of the last century. Moreover, Shona (like the other indigenous languages) has had restricted contexts of use, with English being used to express authoritative ideas about the nature of the world, about the business and technological matters. Thus, although a considerable amount of fiction texts have been produced, only a modest number of non-fiction texts have been published so far.

### 3.2.3 Why additional materials

The following reasons, (some alluded to earlier) explain why it was pertinent to collect additional data, to supplement the lexicographic and corpus materials:

- a) ALLEX materials have been gathered primarily for lexicographic purposes and more general language studies;
- b) Although genres are reasonably well represented in the corpus, the amount of data included for each genre varies widely;
- c) Some of the words and topics in my study are generally considered taboo, crude or vulgar (e.g., insults) and would therefore be avoided in most contexts, including those that are recorded in the corpus. Such topics, for example, would not be discussed between people unfamiliar with each other. For such topics, one would have to pair women or men who are either contemporaries or are close enough to share such talk. In the ALLEX Project, young adults (university students) mainly did the interviewing, hence the need for more fieldwork, done by mature adults;
- d) Some topics can only be freely discussed in restricted settings such as kitchen tea parties and other intimate same sex gatherings and hence would have to be recorded surreptitiously to ensure natural and spontaneous talk. Research Assistants (RAs) who were engaged by the ALLEX Project to carry out most of the interviews were instructed not to undertake such unethical practices.
- e) The impressionable age of most of the ALLEX Project RAs may have been a hindrance. Nearly all of them were young adults in their early twenties and the 'real' adults would not want to discuss certain topics with such young unmarried people who need to be 'protected' from such adult issues. Modesty, innocence, purity and chastity are presumed to be synonymous with their youthful status. For my part, I engaged both young and mature TAs.

## 3.3 Collection of additional data

Given that some of the topics that I had intended to investigate would not be spoken of because of their sensitivity and the general avoidance of 'bad' language, the following methods were used to collect additional data for the topics under investigation.

### 3.3.1 Fieldwork

The fieldwork covered a rural and an urban area, specifically, Mhondoro and Harare, the capital. Mhondoro and other Zezuru-speaking localities surround Harare, thus giving the capital a prominent Zezuru influence. For that reason, and the issue of the proximity of the two districts, the Harare data might not be much at variance with Mhondoro findings. Or, it might be, thereby providing grounds for comparing how much the Mhondoro Zezuru has been influenced by the 'sociolinguistics of the metropolis' and vice versa.

Here are the variables that were considered in the fieldwork:

- a) Contexts  
Traditionally, the sociolinguistic variables that have been highlighted in Shona literature and language studies have been the rural-urban dichotomy. The rural areas have been seen as the custodians of culture and traditions, while urban areas have

been seen as constantly changing areas threatening 'our culture' (see eg., discussions in Gaidzanwa 1985; Kahari 1986, Chitauro-Mawema 1987). The rural-urban variables in the study were meant to compare and contrast with this hypothesis in mind. A variation in results may then reflect a continued dichotomy while similar results would suggest a bridging of the gap between traditional and urban practices.

b) Informants

In instances where I name informants, I use the traditional ways of naming. I use first names or nick names for the young. I use the traditional title *Va-* plus first names or nicknames, irrespective of sex, for the old and/or married. I use these forms as pseudonyms in referring to informants quoted in the study, as a way of camouflaging their identities. The informants, whose numbers vary from topic to topic, as indicated in the respective chapters, were a cross-section of rural and urban women and men, covering the low to middle class socio-economic strata, from illiterates to semi-illiterates to the highly literate. Their ages ranged from 21 to 70 plus years.

c) Research Assistants<sup>11</sup> (RAs)

Because most of my targeted informants were not comfortable or unable to fill-in the questionnaires, it became clear that I needed assistance. I trained RAs to help me with conducting the questionnaire-cum-structured interviews, at different stages of the fieldwork. Harare RAs' ages ranged from twenty something to forty something. In Mhondoro two women (one in her thirties and the other in her fifties) served throughout the fieldwork periods, as they had already established a rapport with the community and had shown astuteness, perception, sensitivity and curiosity to the study. These women, for example, proved valuable at extracting information on 'bad' and 'sensitive' language for this and other projects, what Norwegians would metaphorically refer to as the '*ammestue-snakk*' (breast-feeding talk). I have learnt that, in Norway, in the old days there was a spoken genre called scornfully (by men) '*ammestue-snakk*' where women would sit together, breastfeed their children and talk. Women would not breast-feed in the presence of men. Breastfeeding time therefore gave them the opportunity for woman-to-woman talk about births, bodies and sex<sup>12</sup>.

The fieldwork comprised questionnaires, interviews and discussions.

### 3.3.1.1 Questionnaires

Four questionnaires were distributed to:

- a) Ask for comments on the lexical units for the main reference terms for women and men (Appendix 4-I);
- b) Solicit data on forms of address (Appendix 5-I);

<sup>11</sup> Here are the names of all my research Assistants – the 10 who did the interviews plus three others who did different research tasks for me at different periods of my program: Christina Kadani, Daina Nyama, Felix Mubhawa, Patricia Chimutanda, Johnson Gondongwe, Darmarris Kaguda, Muchaneta Tavazadza, Masvanhise Atchy, Mahanya Morgan, Benson Bokosha, Gresaldah Kadani, Yvonne Kadani and Marble Timbe.

<sup>12</sup> As a result of the body and sex talk, married men were seriously advised to forbid such gatherings in their homes, as they could lead to discord in the homes.

- c) Ask for definitions of selected labels and their classification by sex (Appendix 7-I); and,
- d) Solicit insults/curses that include the mother/father words ((part of) Appendix 7-II).

While open questionnaires give respondents more freedom to record their views than closed ones, their disadvantage is that they could be difficult to manage as they allow the respondent to drift from the topic under investigation. Also, respondents have been shown elsewhere (eg., Fasold 1984) to generally find it easier to work with closed questionnaires even though the data they provide is, in some cases, too restrictive. It is evident that both open and closed questionnaires have advantages and disadvantages. Fasold (1984) suggests that to make an ideal compromise between the two, one should first do a pilot study with an open questionnaire and then later construct a closed questionnaire using the findings. A similar procedure was roughly followed for this study, though in the same questionnaire for Appendices 4-I and 5-I. Also, in the 'labels' questionnaire (Appendix 7-I) administered in the current study, the first part was open, asking for definitions of the insulting words. The second part then asked a closed-type-question where respondents have to indicate the target sex(es) for the label. Appendix 7-II provided mainly open-type questions.

*From questionnaire to questionnaire-cum-interview:*

During the first research visit to the rural area of Mhondoro, it became clear to me that informants did not favour completing questionnaires but would rather orally respond to the questions, while someone wrote down the responses. After discovering that the questionnaires were not very popular, I reverted to completing the questionnaires as tightly structured interviews, instead. Sometimes, I taped the interviews for later completion of the questionnaire. The tape recorder did not seem to deter most as I had promised them that they could listen to themselves afterwards or I could make them a copy for them to keep. This research methodology is what I refer to as the questionnaire-cum-interview or the structured interview. Most of the informants, mainly women, were not very receptive to the idea of having to work with pen and paper, partly because they were either illiterate or semi-literate or they thought they were. The literate ones said they just did not have the confidence to write anything for 'university people'. The younger men and a few younger women, on the other hand, exuded confidence and were excited about responding to the questionnaire. In the end, the two RAs and I delivered the questionnaires as structured interviews, in the interest of maintaining consistency in the rural areas.

I also found it difficult to arrange individual interviews with particularly the women, as they were busy with one thing or another. I had planned to do my research at a time that I thought was off-season for the bulk of their work (the dry season), but, apparently, the women were otherwise engaged. There are other activities that women are involved in, collectively, such as, church, school and other developmental activity meetings, so, I followed them to their work. Besides, I had discovered that women felt freer to speak in the company and support of their relatives and friends. Groups made the situation more realistic and familiar for the women resulting in unreserved and enthusiastic talk.

While women preferred to do the exercise in groups, with men, it was easy to get them one on one, or sometimes as a group, either at home or at Mamina Growth



Point, a business and social centre. The other factor which compounded all these constraints was that the questionnaire(s) (especially 4-I and 5-I) were long and demanding to complete, the time range being 20 to 40 minutes.

In Harare, both women and men had no problems with talking one on one, or with filling-in the questionnaire on their own. Filling-in the questionnaire for Harareans would have been considered patronizing by most. The new improvised methodology in Mhondoro worked to my advantage because I got more that way than I did in the individually filled-in questionnaire in Harare. There, the responses to the questionnaire tended to be brief and clinical.

In both settings, the research was done from door-step to door-step or home-to-home or group-to-group with people whom my research assistants or I knew or were introduced to by someone we knew. I found that informants were freer to talk that way because they felt they knew you, or your parents or where you come from. As an interviewer, I could not just walk up to someone and ask for an interview without them having prior knowledge of the research and of me. Considering the type of data that I was looking for and the length of time they would be working with me or on the questionnaire, we needed proper introductions. Although a personal introduction might do, one needs to be introduced, somehow, to the potential informants. The introduction could even be an announcement in church or school, or any other gathering. Such a 'personal touch' was preferred rather than mailing questionnaires or just leaving them to the prospective respondents to mail in their own time, or to be picked up later. People were wary to speak to strangers. Was I trying to trick them into talking politics, they asked? The questionnaires were administered in late 2000 to early 2001 during a time of political disturbances in the country.

### 3.3.1.2 Interviews

Indirect methods of informal interviewing were often used to disguise the nature of the research from an informant. The advantage with such open interviews is that they elicit open answers and give the interviewer control by being able to direct the interview depending on the responses one gets.

Since the aim of these, mostly informal, interviews was to indirectly extract information to investigate attitudinal matters, the interviews were quite insightful. The method proved to be a very skilful way of keeping an informant from knowing that the interview was being conducted to investigate her/his attitudes, thereby giving the informant room to speak freely. Informants were interviewed on topics that would somehow bring out the desired language.

Targeted informal interviews (as well as the structured interviews referred to here as the questionnaire-cum-interview) were carried out to explore address and referential terms and to find out why certain terms are used and what they mean. Because one of the aims of this study is to check observations that people have made in passing (eg., that address and referential forms tend to be used differently between and within urban (Harare) and rural (Mhondoro) settings, the interviews were conducted in both types of setting.

### 3.3.1.3 The case study method

The case study, would in the manner it was done in this study, technically, fall under the interview section, discussed above. The case study has, however, been separated as, ideally, it should be a separate method. The case study has been constructed, for

the most part, from one major interview, and minor subsequent ones to check details, with an elderly female, referred to as *Tete* (aunt), as the main informant. In the interview she is asked to recount both address and reference names of people in her village, spanning four generations. She, with the help of other mature adults who sat in with her to give her support, contributes part of the materials for Chap 6. I had initially held informal discussions with her to lay the ground for the interviews by one of the Mhondoro RAs. After the interviews, I and another research assistant had gone back for more discussions on the names. The chapter investigates the occurrence of the title *Va-* with names. It provides a rough guide for the examination of the use of the reference and address form *Va-* over four generations. In other words, the case study offers a diachronic study of the usage of the title *Va*. The case study was originally spurred by informal observations that I have made over the years.

One limitation of the study is, that it is not a study that has been recorded over time, throughout the four generations covered, as a case study should. However, the history of writing in Shona is quite recent, dating back to the beginning of the last century. Orality is, therefore, still very much alive, although the literacy rate is now quite high. The consolation is that, among the Shona, where history has been mostly preserved through orature, until recently, elderly people, especially women, have been entrusted with the responsibility of carrying forward and passing on the culture and traditions. An old woman is therefore the best choice under the circumstances.

Hammersley and Gomm (2000) write on the case study method, its problems of definition and the debate on the 'scientificness' or 'unscientificness' of the study. The meaning of the term often overlaps with such studies as 'ethnography' 'fieldwork', 'life history', 'qualitative research' and 'participant observation'. Hammersley and Gomm (2000: 3) agree to the 'fuzzy-edgedness' of the meaning. They give a general definition which explains the case study as referring 'to research that investigates a few cases, often just one, in considerable depth'.

Apart from a lack of clear and fixed meaning, the term is also used in other areas such as legal work and social studies, areas not associated with research, as it is understood in the academic world. The main criticism leveled at qualitative research, specifically the case study method, has been whether its results can lead to generalizations, in the manner that a scientific study should. The debate has been on the question of the scientificness of studying one case or a few and producing the results that cannot be replicated or generalized. Stake (1978), Donmoyer (2000), Schofield (2000), Goetz and LeCompte (1984), Guba and Lincoln (1981, 1982) and Gomm, Hammersley and Foster (2000), among others, argue that because of the nature of qualitative studies, the case study does not produce general and replicable results as understood in the traditional view (the classic concept of universality as in Kaplan 1964) of the physical sciences. The goal of case studies 'is to explain patterns that exist, not to discover general laws of human behaviour' (Schofield 2000: 70). Case studies are important in capturing unique language phenomena. Donmoyer (2000) writes that human action is constructed, not caused, and therefore a study of the complex social process cannot possibly produce Newton-like generalizations. Stake (1978) writes about 'naturalistic generalizations', instead. Goetz and LeCompte (1984) talk of 'comparability' rather than 'generalizations'. Guba and Lincoln (1981, 1982) suggest 'fittingness' as phenomena studied are context-dependent. Gomm, Hammersley and Foster (2000: 103) propose 'empirical generalization', which 'involve drawing inferences about features of a larger but finite population of cases from the study of a



sample drawn from that population', a definition which, in my opinion, sums up the position that I take in the *Va-* study in Mhondoro. It is hoped that results from this community, can, hopefully, represent what occurs in the rest of the Shona-speaking population through 'empirical generalization'.

### 3.3.1.4 *Informal discussions*

These, like the informal interviews, were mainly initiated or manipulated to get at people's beliefs and attitudes about the topics under study.

### 3.3.1.5 *Participant observation*

Observation, the least obtrusive method, was used to get the most naturalistic data, eg., address and referential forms, terms for activities or other areas of women's space that may be considered too sensitive, vulgar, etc. and hence would most likely not appear in the corpus. Observation and interviews combine well, as they complement each other.

## 3.3.2 *Kwayedza weekly*

One of the immediate tasks was to build up the non-fiction contribution in the written texts with real life stories. A collection of the weekly *Kwayedza*, which is the only significant nationally distributed paper publishing articles in Shona, was specifically compiled to facilitate investigations of the title *Va-* and other discursive practices of superfluously using female terms in non-fiction writing. A random selection of six papers was made from the years, 1995, 2000 and 2001. A gap exists in the 1996-9 period because, reportedly, the publishing house did not have, any more copies of papers from those years. The study looks at these stories to investigate asymmetries reflected in the selection of referential and address forms for women and men and the senses of meaning contained in these forms vis-à-vis those used for men. The forms used are then analysed for attitude. Investigations for these expressions were done manually, since the paper was not yet available on-line (unlike the other Zimpapers Publishers daily and weekly publications in English, which were on-line).

Among other things, *Kwayedza* news items cover the traditional definitions of 'hard core' and 'soft' news. The former are associated with narrowly political and economic news, and cover dominant sections of society, while the latter are associated with social and cultural issues, which cover the rest of the society. The 'hard' news is obviously considered as being serious and important since it makes the front page while the 'soft' news is not seen as major and important, as it occupies less prominent positions. The paper also has a literature section targeted at secondary school students. Therefore, one can say that it is targeted at a diverse readership from school children to adults.

In order to avoid indiscriminate sampling and to ensure homogeneity, texts used were selected from similar sections, an effective method as demonstrated by Magnus Ljung (1998, 114). The current study examines texts from the so-called 'soft' news section, covering routine police and court reports, conferences and assemblies, sports and entertainment. This is the section where the ordinary (non-politicians) women and men and their lives are likely to be featured (see also Tuchman 1978; Joseph and Sharma 1994).

These stories were also selected because they also seemed to be the most popular genres read by the majority of the paper's readers, as evidenced by conversations in public places. These stories are popular because most of them tend to be of the sensational type, giving them an almost tabloid outlook. Thirdly, for most urban dwellers who have access to the dailies (in English), the core news section is often outdated and also does not cover what they consider to be pertinent and topical issues.

### 3.3.3 Literature

I also successfully skimmed additional literature texts, especially novels and clan praises, in addition to those in the corpus, for the title *Va-*, and other topics (see Chap 6).

## 3.4 Methods of analysis

### 3.4.1 Qualitative and quantitative analyses

In order to document and make explicit the attitudes towards women reflected in Shona usage, a multi-method approach incorporating mainly qualitative methods, supported by quantitative methods, was used to analyze the data. The research benefits from such an approach where the richness and precision of qualitative analysis is combined with statistically reliable and generalized results (Schmied 1993).

In general, qualitative research is used to describe and answer questions from a participant's point of view. In qualitative analysis, the data is used to identify items, explain aspects of usage and to provide real-life examples of usage, what this study seeks to do. The inductive process of qualitative studies starts with general questions, collects an enormous amount of verbal data, carefully observes this data and then presents the findings, which may conclude with tentative answers about what was observed (Glesne and Peshkins 1992), as happened in this study. This answer may, in turn, yield a hypothesis, which is tested through additional qualitative or quantitative research. Glesne and Peshkins (1992:6) describe the qualitative conclusion in social research as, 'coming to understand and interpret how the various participants in a social setting construct the world around them.' The advantage of using a qualitative study approach is that the findings are descriptive (Leedy 1997) and hence can capture the vagueness and subjectivity within a language analysis study such as the current one.

Quantitative analysis typically answers questions about relationships between quantifiable values with the intention of explaining, predicting and controlling phenomenon (Leedy 1997). However, quantitative analysis requires that results be exactly classified, in an 'Aristotelian' type of classification where an item either belongs or does not belong. It also tends to sideline rare occurrences. In a linguistics study investigating the construction of gender, this type of classification is somewhat of a disadvantage, as many of the linguistic items and phenomena do not fit any strict classification but more recent notions of 'fuzzy sets'. Hence the type of classification that was adopted for this research was one that is consistent with the notion of 'fuzzy sets' (McEnery and Wilson 1996).

Schmied (1993) has observed that a stage of qualitative research is often a precursor for quantitative analysis since, before phenomena are classified and counted, the categories for classification must first be identified.

However, this should not be taken as a 'rule' since categories can be derived straight from the theory or the data.

Both methods have advantages, which are exploited in this study – with the qualitative method being the main method – whose results can then be supplemented by the quantitative analysis. For example, the study on address while exploratory and descriptive benefits from a quantitative analysis of the responses through placing the findings in ranked categories (Scholfield 1995).

### 3.4.2 Procedures used in the corpus and lexicographic analyses

The study attempts a thorough search of the ALLEX Shona corpus and lexicographical output, some of which is in draft form, as well as the other sources cited above for units such as morphemes, words, proverbs, collocations and definitions referring to women and men and their respective spaces and roles; and the usage of specific terms for women.

#### 3.4.2.1 *The corpus analyses*

The corpus data were used as a basis for identifying words and contexts, analysing and describing aspects of usage as well as for providing real-life examples of the language.

The data was analysed through simple searches as well as through more complicated ones, which were carried out randomly and according to topic. A current limitation of the corpus, as a whole, is that the tagging of the texts has been done at the basic textual mark-up level only. And, since Shona has no female/male markers on nouns or other parts of speech, the way the attitudes were investigated was through searching for trunked *(.\*)*<sup>13</sup> particular 'known' basic lexical items and examining the contexts of their usage very carefully. The contexts themselves then provided more data to add to the list of 'known' lexical items, collocations, etc. The difficulty with working with these materials was how to get at certain key words and their contexts, as word class tags are still to be developed for the Shona corpus. The initial list of 'known' items was drawn from a) introspection and b) observation. The basic procedures in corpora analysis, which were used in this study, were concordancing, listing, sorting, and counting (McEnery and Wilson 1996).

The corpus examples used in the study are typical examples, of what may be referred to as the neutral, positive or negative senses/features, selected from a broader corpus. The selection of examples in the individual chapters, as well as in the appendices are representative of the meanings/senses that were gleaned from the broader corpus body.

These procedures used in the study are described, as they were used in this study, in more detail below. The procedures ensured that the data was thoroughly investigated logically, inquisitively, statistically and comparatively. Such corpus linguistics methodologies have also come to exemplify a type of research where the quantification of the distribution of the items is part of the research process itself. Fournier and Russell (1992) refer to such tasks as first level and advanced level electronic searching. In this study, first level searching, concordancing, was used to search for concordances of

<sup>13</sup> In the searches, the “ ” mark a search; the “ ” refers to any character; and, the “\*” to zero or more of the previous.) of the feminine and masculine terms.

obvious key items such as referential and address forms, terms for marked relationships and terms for women's space. Advanced searches were used to isolate and yield frequency lists of gender specific terms<sup>14</sup>, concordances of collocations, and other fixed forms, as well as selecting other relevant data. These processes are explained below:

a) Concordances

I made general concordance searches of the trunked main female and male terms. A concordance is 'a collection of the occurrences of a word-form, each in its own textual environment' (Sinclair 1991: 32). In the ALLEX corpus, the searches were done with the KWIC (Key word in context) program, which gives 30, 40, 50 or 100 tokens in a string, to the left or right of the target, depending on how much context is required. A search of a concordance string was made to get concordances whose contexts would facilitate the investigation of the meaning. A search such as, for example, *“\*kadzi”* and *“\*rume”*, would capture the *-kadzi/-rume* (feminine/masculine) stems in all their possible contexts of occurrence with whatever prefixes and other affixes that occur before the stem. Because of the agglutinative nature of the language the noun may carry affixes such as adverbial markers, in addition to the noun class prefixes.

b) Frequency counts and lists

These provided indication, where needed, of how often a form occurs in the corpus. They classify items according to a particular scheme and then calculate the number of relevant occurrences. Frequency counts were used in this study as a pointer or indicator to collocation status and to corroborate the qualitative findings, rather than as the factor. Two main problems arise in the lists:

- i) Agglutination - complicates things in the context of software designed to handle relatively isolated word forms
- ii) Variation – as exemplified in the following examples, *nemurume/nomurume* (with, by a man) or *kwemurume/komurume* (of the man, the man's). I wanted to avoid a situation where I would get overloaded with the intricacies of an agglutinative or inflecting language, trying to separate these to see, for example, what co-occurs with what.

The searches also yield a maximum 1000 hits, the same 1000 hits over and over again. This constraint makes the corpus being studied relatively small.

c) Collocations

The research looks at key collocations consisting of female and male words as nodes and serving as grammatical subjects or objects, and the qualificatives and auxiliary verbs that they commonly occur with. A node is the target word in a collocation, the one whose behavior is under examination (Sinclair 1991: 175). The exercise is used to reveal co-occurrences and to reveal to what extent particular modifying items occur in negative or positive contexts (Stenström 1999). The capacity to study the use of word forms and collocations by concordancing software was notably first exploited in the COBUILD Project (Sinclair 1987) where the comparatively large size of the corpora made it possible to find enough examples of the occurrence of less frequent types to have some confidence in the validity and reliability of the lexical entries (Kennedy

<sup>14</sup> For these lists, I have Daniel Ridings, The ALLEX corpus administrator, to thank.

1998). While researchers have debated the question of how big the corpus should be to allow for collocation studies, it is important to stress at the outset that the size of the corpora obviously affects the chances of a particular sequence actually recurring. Although it is generally agreed that a large corpus is needed, to my knowledge, the question of really how much is adequate has not been tackled. While too little data is inadequate, too much data may also be daunting, as it would lead researchers to be over-loaded by an overabundance of data (Collier 1993). Kjellmer (1987), working with English, has suggested that one million words may contain enough data to yield a considerable part of English phrases in current use. Utilizing Kjellmer's figure of over one million, I would say that the Shona corpus at over two and a half million running words meets more than the minimum requirement. Further, Shona is an agglutinating or conjunctively spelt language, which makes the two and a half million running words more like one and a half to two million English phrases.

On collocation status, the study takes Sinclair's (1991) definition (see Chap 1) that a collocation is an occurrence of two or more words that are within a short distance of each other in a string (vis. eg., Willners 2001 who differentiates between a collocation (adjacent) and co-occurrence (not adjacent)). Insisting on exact formal identicalness of sequences in order for them to be labelled as collocates may miss certain regularities in language (Kennedy (1998: 114). Kennedy also says, '... if we insist that collocates must be adjacent to each other then significant patterning can be lost'. Kjellmer (1991) has argued that units in our mental lexicon are both fixed and flexible. This study also takes the view that frequency is not always a factor to legitimate collocation status. Kennedy (1998: 112), in arguing for such a viewpoint, uses the example of the LOB Corpus of the following tokens,

(a) at London Airport	8 tokens
(b) between friends	4
(c) between you and me	0

He argues that on the basis of 'naturalness' c) would be judged, by native English speakers, to be the most natural and a) the least natural, yet the tokens speak a different story. Sinclair (1991: 174) explains 'naturalness' as follows: 'Competent users of a language acquire acute sensitivity to naturally-occurring language, and are quite good at spotting contrived and artificial constructions.' He however says that, 'it is beyond the competence of linguistic research to describe this facility', currently. I relied on my native speaker intuition in determining naturalness and used the quantitative data as hints and pointers.

### 3.4.2.2 Lexicographic Analyses

For the lexicographic works, the research centred on identifying and analysing selected lexical items, definitions and examples through computer searches, for the ALLEX materials available in electronic form. For example, searches for relevant lexical units in Part II of the DGR, the *zviringamitauro* (proverbs and other (stylistic) expressions) section, were done by doing a global search for all the 'lexemes' containing *\*kadzi* (feminine) and *\*rume* (feminine) stems.

Manual searches for 'known' lexical units were made on the draft definitions and the SSD.

The findings were then further analysed through some of the methodologies sketched below.

### 3.4.3 Language-attitude research methods

Working hand-in-hand with the lexicographic and corpus searches and analyses described above, a number of established qualitative methods of language-attitude research were used in this study. The methods utilized included introspection, an adapted version of the semantic differential, distinctive features with semantic relations, cognitive categorization and identifying asymmetries in forms and their meanings.

#### 3.4.3.1 Native-speaker introspection

My own insights, competence, and introspective judgment as a native speaker of Shona presented a purely subjective view. Those included in the study were supported by the more objective quantitative and qualitative findings.

#### 3.4.3.2 Evaluating emotional meaning

In my analysis of the curses, I used an adapted version of the seven-point semantic differential scale (Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum 1957), to summarize and evaluate the emotional meaning of the coarse insults. This method has been shown, in a number of sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic studies, to provide a relatively accurate picture of attitudes about a variety of issues (see, eg., Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum 1957; Fasold 1984). The semantic differential is an interval level of measurement which involves the evaluation of a concept or thing by having informants rate it on a scale comprising of adjectival points, rated from one extreme to the other, with intermediate positions marked in between. Numbers are assigned to seven different positions to allow quantification of the data. The numbers can range from either 1 to 7 or -3 to +3, with graduations such as,

good\_\_:\_:\_:\_:\_:\_:\_bad  
unfair\_\_:\_:\_:\_:\_:\_:\_fair

Ideally, these scales would be used to allow respondents to rate multiple attitudes towards a concept, to measure the evaluative component of word meaning and to measure subjects' relative agreement or sentiments towards different definitions of forms used to refer to or address women and men. In the present study, I used the scales as part of my own evaluation of the descriptive responses the respondents gave in their definitions and in evaluating the curses in Chap 7. Given the cultural background and the varied educational backgrounds of my respondents, I think that the exercise would have been too demanding to be successfully and precisely carried out by all in the manner that it should be ideally used. For example, Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum (1971) have slightly over a page of an example of 'typical instructions' to be included in the questionnaire, already appearing too 'sophisticated' for a rural semi-illiterate woman or man.

#### 3.4.3.3 Analyses in lexical semantics

Cruse offers what he calls a 'theoretically uncommitted exploration' (Cruse 1991: xiii), contextual approach to the study of lexical semantics. This is a descriptive rather than



formal approach to the study of lexical units (words and meanings). The meanings of a word are derived from 'its relation with actual and potential linguistic contexts' (Cruse 1991: 1). Cruse discusses idiomaticity, hierarchical relations and syntagmatic relations, among other things. He also writes that the contextual approach is 'well-suited to the exploration of the infinite subtlety and particularity of word meanings' (Cruse (1991: 20)), which makes the theory useful to this study, which is an exploration of words and their meanings, in order to reveal conscious and unconscious attitudes about women (and men). Leech (1974: 26) identifies seven types of meaning: the conceptual (cognitive or denotative); the thematic (the way message is organized); and, a broad type, the associative. The associative is inclusive of the connotative (what the language refers to), the affective (the feeling and attitude of the speaker), the stylistic (the social circumstances of language use), the reflected (association with another sense of the expression) and the collocative meaning. The conceptual meaning seems to be organized, for the most part, on contrastive features. Distinctive features used with semantic relations offer a formalized explicit dictionary meaning, not the full fuzzy-edged description of a word in its cultural context. The analysis of such meaning consists of comparing and contrasting related words and summarizing the results in an explicit and economical way. This is what is referred to, in structuralism, as componential analysis (CA). The success of the distinctive feature analysis in phonology has influenced distinctive feature analysis in semantics (Goddard 1998). In phonology, the characteristics of phonemes, such as voicing or manner of articulation, are contrasted. In semantics, the analysis contrasts the senses of the words. Leech (1974) says that such an analysis was first used in anthropological linguistics as a means of studying relations in kinship terms (see also Gouws 1996).

The current study investigates, in depth, mainly the associative meaning while feature analysis is used in highlighting aspects, which are in opposition, especially in Chap 4, where the study investigates the main female and male nouns in use. There, distinctive features and semantic relations are utilized for their economy and capacity to show opposition. Despite the occasional use of distinctive features, the study remains a descriptive one (rather than formal).

#### 3.4.3.4 *Clusters and stereotype categorization*

In these analyses, senses are grouped mainly along the two cognitive models, the clusters and the stereotype models (Lakoff 1987). In the clusters models a combination of models go into covering all aspects of a concept, as is illustrated in the tables summarizing the senses of the lexical items in Chap 4. In the stereotype models, a subcategory is taken to represent the whole category and is used to depict societal expectations. Proverbs are taken as highlighting stereotypic cultural expectations about women and men and the like (Type A); or, gender roles or something about them (Type B).

#### 3.4.3.5 *Markedness analyses*

These analyses include highlighting asymmetries in the forms and their meanings, through, eg., identifying asymmetries such as items that act as the default terms, those that have a positive value of a feature as opposed to those that do not have it, avoidance of certain terms and gaps, among other forms ( see 2.4 for more on asymmetries and their occurrence).

### 3.5 Conclusion

The study seeks to investigate Shona language use in context (the corpus and everyday discourses) and in compiled works such as the dictionaries. This being a substantial qualitative study, extensive and wide-ranging data was needed, in order to advance a convincing argument. The limitations of the ALLEX data, the major research materials, therefore, necessitated further fieldwork. Because the topic under study is highly complex and highly interdisciplinary, a 'varied arsenal' (Schur 1983: 13) of methods was engaged to collect and handle the data. It was essential that I use these methods in order to cover the four-pronged argument presented in the study. The methodological analysis used is largely qualitative, supported by the quantitative.

While the methodologies, both of gathering and for analyzing data discussed in this chapter, have been developed for explorations in a variety of languages, especially European ones, none have yet been developed that are entirely applicable for the exploration of any of the indigenous Zimbabwean languages. Part of this study, therefore, focuses on discovering how to apply these methods in locally relevant ways as well as developing other methods that may not have been used before but which will reflect the rigor required of academic inquiry.



## The Main Female and Male Forms

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores lexical units of the main female and male reference forms, both underived and derived forms, used for women and men, in spoken or written discourses. Reference forms are those terms that we use when we mention or talk about someone or something. The study also explores these forms in their contexts of usage in the corpus and the dictionaries, among other contexts. This is an empirical study, which explores 'natural' or unthinking habitual uses of lexical forms and other expressions such as the collocations and proverbs in which these forms occur. These are uses that help shape people's views and social attitudes and are, as a result, central to a study which seeks to reveal how gender identities are constructed.

#### 4.1.1 Objectives

The main objectives of this chapter are to:

- a) Investigate main lexical forms used to refer to and to describe women vis-à-vis men in order to learn what they reveal and how they help define and construct the female and male genders in Shona. 'Main lexical forms' in this study refer to 'normal' or basic female and male nouns<sup>15</sup>;
- b) Uncover and analyze suggestions of meaning drawn from collocations and proverbs making reference to women and women's space vis-à-vis men's; and,
- c) Examine language use, as reflected in the data under investigation, to reveal and compare attitudes portrayed in the ways women and women's spaces have been referred to or described vis-à-vis men's and gendered animals'.

#### 4.1.2 The main lexical forms

The study examines the following basic terminology in noun class 1 (n.1)<sup>16</sup>:

*musikana* – 'girl'  
*mukadzi* – '(married) woman; wife'  
*mukomana* – 'boy'  
*murume* – 'man; husband'

The study also looks, in detail, at the following class 9 nouns:

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<sup>15</sup> Shona has twenty-one noun classes/genders. See Chap 1 for more on noun classes.

<sup>16</sup> Noun class 1 is the basic noun class for humans. It is made up of nouns with the prefixes *mu-* or *mw-*, as in e.g. *muroora* (bride) and *mwana* (baby), respectively.

*chembere* – ‘old woman’  
*harahwa* – ‘old man’

Other human nouns, used to refer to females, below, are also introduced, as the study unfolds. They are discussed in places where they are needed to throw more light on the meaning of the basic forms:

*mumvana* (n.1)- ‘woman with children and husband’  
*mvana* (n.9) - ‘woman with children and no husband’  
*mhandara* (n.9) – ‘a virgin of marriageable age’  
*mudzimai* (n.1) – ‘married woman; wife’

Glosses given in the examples are what a quick translation would give as the closest equivalents in English. The English quick glosses are initially put in quotation marks. Thereafter, the glosses appear without quotation marks, though these are understood to be there. The study seeks to capture these meanings, as well as the stereotypes, assumptions and expectations behind the forms. In semantics, a stereotype is described as a ‘set of characteristics which describes a prototype;’ (Crystal 1999: 320), i.e. a typical member. The *Collins Cobuild Dictionary* defines a stereotype in plain English as ‘a fixed general image or set of characteristics that a speaker believes represent a referent, based on either fact or belief’.

*Musikana* (girl) and *mukomana* (boy) are studied as the foundation stages in which meanings, views and attitudes about womanhood or manhood start to formulate. Expected behavior in these early stages feeds into mature womanhood and manhood. *Chembere* and *harahwa* are at the older end. Definitions of these ends should be important in understanding the middle *mukadzi* (*mudzimai*, *mumvana*) and *mvana*; and *murume*. *Mudzimai* is mentioned because it refers to a wife and mother. Some people reported that it was a more appropriate term for a wife than *mukadzi*. However, *mukadzi* is chosen for the study, because it is the more general term, like *murume*. *Mvana* and *mumvana* are categories of *mukadzi* that also need to be explained in order to understand how women are classified and the attitudes that prevail towards the different categories. In the Mhondoro area, where I did most of my field-work, distinction is made between,

*mumvana* (n.1) – (young) woman with children and husband; and  
*mvana* (n.9) – (young) woman with children and no husband

*Mvana* was said to be a bad word, rarely used in public. *Mumvana*, the ‘good woman’, is in the human noun class 1, the same class as *mukadzi* and *murume* while *mvana*, the ‘bad woman’ is in class 9, a mixed nouns class comprising such groups as ‘special people’, birds, animals, most borrowed nouns, etc. In class 9, *mvana* has been stripped of the class 1 *mu-* human element. The *umvana* (single motherhood) can be as a result of having children outside marriage or a result of divorce or, sometimes, being widowed (at an early age). I suspect that these two forms may have been one form, *mumvana*, that could have been contracted as *mvana* in the beginning, and that, as often happens with female and other minority terminology, one of the terms degenerated into having negative connotations. This argument is buttressed by the fact that there are still areas

where *mumvana* and *mvana* are used interchangeably, as a full and contracted form, respectively, to mean what *mumvana* means in my lexicon. *Mudzimai* (married woman; wife) is, in some contexts, synonymous to *mukadzi* and *mumvana*.

The study also researches into femininity and masculinity, as expressed in the following terminology:

- chikadzi* (n.7) – ‘the female way of doing things’
- chirume* (n.7) – ‘the male way of doing things’
- usikana* (n.14) – ‘girlhood’
- ukadzi* (n.14) – ‘years of a woman’s life when she can bear children’
- ukomana* (n.14) – ‘boyhood’
- urume* (n.14) – ‘semen/sperm’

All these forms are examined in order to build towards broader meanings of *mukadzi* and *murume*; to unveil assumptions, expectations and traditional roles and responsibilities that feed into attitudes that prevail towards how a woman or man is defined in Shona; and, what these attitudes say about the Shona people’s sensitivities to womanhood and manhood or femaleness and maleness.

While the list of ‘main’ nouns can go on and on, it had to stop somewhere. If not checked, the list could have ballooned even more. As evidence, I started, initially, with six terms but then the data dictated further inclusions so as to efficiently cover the whole spectrum of the female and male sexes and genders. For this lot, while it may be wise, in the interest of consistency, to also consider *uchembere* and *uharahwa*, I feel that *chembere* and *harahwa* will be adequate.

Also excluded from this study are most *-kadzi* (feminine) and *-rume* (masculine) forms whose meanings are more descriptive rather than basic. A look at the noun class table (1.3.1) shows that *-kadzi*, for example, yields the main form *mukadzi* (n.1) with its plural *vakadzi* (n.2) as well as other (often derogatory) forms such as, *gadzi* (n.5) (big woman), *chikadzi* (n.7) (short, ugly woman) *rukadzi* (n.11) (thin/ugly/sickly woman) *kakadzi* (n.12) (small woman), *svikadzi* (n.19) (small/ugly woman) and *zigadzi* (n. 21) (big/ugly/strong woman). *Chikadzi*, for example, has two senses (in parallel with *chirume*, *chisikana* and *chikomana*),

- an abstract one denoting the womanly ways, and
- a concrete one referring to a short, ugly, terrible, etc, woman.

The second sense is more like a description of a particular type of the primary noun, *mukadzi* (n.1). This latter meaning, while understood, is left out of the discussion. I have chosen to omit these senses of terms from the study because the data that I have collected and the corpus are too limited to give me enough evidence to make informed arguments about the meanings of these, let alone to do a comparative study between terms for the two sexes. Besides, in-depth studies have not yet been carried out on these noun classes that would unearth every one of the meanings behind the various secondary prefixes, which, in my opinion, have not been fully and thoroughly explained<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> Some research has been done – for example, Lafon (1994) has published an article on class 5 nouns in Shona; Mabugu (Department of Linguistics, UZ) has written a Hons dissertation on class 6 nouns.

Such a study might, therefore, either eclipse the rest of the investigation or lead to a drift in focus.

### 4.1.3 The materials and methods used in the investigation

The research scrutinizes these terms as they are:

a) Defined in the draft definitions in the Questionnaire (Appendix 4-I)  
The questionnaire comprised definitions made by compilers in the early stages of the *Duramazwi ReChiShona* (DRC). These draft definitions were put together in a questionnaire administered during my fieldwork. This evidence from the questionnaire, therefore, highlights both the draft definitions and comments made by those who responded to the questionnaires. The comments provide us with the users' ideas about these lexical units.

I should also mention, again, that though the exercise (as with the others that follow) had been intended to be an individual filling-in exercise, it ended up, technically, being more of a structured interview, with the interviewer often talking with more than one person at a time (see 3.3.1.1). Forty-two questionnaires were used for this study, 22 from Mhondoro and 20 from Harare. In the Mhondoro data, 14 were completed for women and the rest for men. In the Harare data, 12 were completed by men and the rest by women. In the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to look at the draft definitions and say whether they were:

- A *Ndizvozvo* (good)
- B *Ndizvowo* (sort of alright)
- C *Handizvo* (not good)

and, to make comments, if they had any, on the choice they had made. The exercise was done in this manner instead of just soliciting the meaning, as done with labels (Chap 5), because the exercise had originally been intended to be a critique of definitions and the editorial language rather than a search for meaning. This explains the occurrence, in Appendix 5-I, of pregnancy terms, '*mimba*', '*pamuviri*' and '*nhumbu*' and the 'augments', '*gadzi*' and '*rume*' for big woman and man, respectively, which are not used in the chapter. Further, the questionnaire was also administered before my list grew from the initial list, which had been based on introspection. As a result, there is no questionnaire data for the 'abstracts', '*usikana*', '*ukadzi*', '*ukomana*', '*urume*'; and the 'olds' '*chembere*' and '*harahwa*', added on during the development of the chapter; and for the female forms, '*mumvana*', '*mvana*', '*mhandara*' and '*mudzimai*', also given some prominence in the study.

b) Defined in the dictionaries

The dictionary lexical units of these terms are drawn from:

Hannan's (1981) *Standard Shona Dictionary* (SSD) - bilingual, and,  
Chimhundu et al. (2001) *Duramazwi Guru reChiShona* (DGR) - monolingual. The DGR data has two parts to it.

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Fortune's (1957), earlier work, generally, remains the definitive work on this, the base from which linguists now do more comprehensive studies.

- DGR Part I has the standard dictionary entry and definition, and,
- DGR Part II has *zviringamutauro* (proverbs and other (stylistic) expressions) and their explanations. The importance of proverbs among the Shona has already been highlighted in Chap 3. This chapter investigates the 'wisdom' about women and men in the proverbs, which guides young people, as the messages contained in them are very much respected, as an authority would be.

Since the DGR is a monolingual dictionary, the English translations, for the DGR materials, are mine. Literal translations are made. Sometimes paraphrased meanings are also made to aid comprehension. I include, at times, idiomatic equivalents in English, where I can find them. Since proverbs contain cultural information, international readers might find some of the explanations still opaque. I shall, therefore, assist in comprehension by making prominent those features suggested by the proverbs, which are relevant to the study. Feature analysis is used to provide an economic way to highlight meanings and make comparisons easier. Even so, I would like to stress that, it is the image that is created by the literal meaning that is important to this investigation. While, culturally, these proverbs do, obviously, carry deeper meanings or interpretations, this study focuses on and discusses the mental images that they highlight. The proverbs, as described earlier, are targeted at the young, so the study highlights the images that a young mind, such as a Grade 7 pupil or even an O' Level student, or any other person who may not have the vast experience of the mature to understand this proverb. But, even with their experience of the world, the mature still use the literal to understand the deeper cultural meaning. For example, one cannot say that the cultural meaning of the proverb (DGR Part II) *nzou yakafa nesvosve* (the elephant was killed by an ant), that small things should not be looked down on as they may impact on bigger things, has nothing to do with the literal interpretation of the proverb. The literal images highlight the disparities in the sizes of the two creatures, the picture of a huge elephant being killed by a tiny ant. Besides, proverbs are said to be coined from experience, from observations from life, so the literal interpretation is often a reflection of what is believed to be 'usual'. Comparable studies elsewhere might include studies that have been done in English on the generic 'he' and 'man' (see, e.g., Bodine 1975; Martyna 1980). Frank and Anshen (1983) write that the tests have shown that the perception and understanding of masculine generic nouns and pronouns is not as generic and clear as some claim. The studies have shown that both adults and children call up male images with these forms. Thus, the argument made in this study is that the proverbs are not as unambiguous as some would think. A proverb whose subject or object is *mukadzi* (woman) or *murume* (man) creates the mental image that it refers to a woman or man, respectively, before it can, at the cultural interpretation level, be generalised to be referring to a group or a neutral subject.

I analyse the proverbs as either reflecting gender stereotypes and the like to illustrate in a vivid way a general stereotypic wisdom (Type A). Type A proverbs highlight images and characteristics that the society has about the referents. Or, the proverbs are classified as revealing clusters of gender roles or something about them (Type B). These highlight (pregiven) roles of the referents.

In order to get at these proverbs, systematically, the stems of the targeted set of nouns (*musikana*, *mukomana*, *mukadzi*, *murume*, *chembere* and *harahwa*) were used to search for the proverbs, electronically, from the dictionary database. Certainly, there are more proverbs that talk about females and males without mentioning these lexical

items which could not be gotten at in this manner. Some do surface, referred to or given as synonyms. I would like to indicate that while Shona has, obviously, a larger stock of proverbs that talk about females and males, it is hoped that this systematic selection covering all the main forms under study can be empirically generalized to represent attitudes towards women and men. I present here all the proverbs carrying these nouns and appearing in the authoritative DGR Part II, which partly explains the length of this chapter. Providing a selected sample would have made the data less cumbersome but then sampling in the initial draft had drawn criticisms, from colleagues, of potential biased selection towards certain conclusions.

c) Used in the ALLEX corpus.  
This was done through:

- (i) General concordance searches of the main *-kadzi* and *-rume* terms to draw the meanings and assumptions about womanhood, manhood and humanhood that feed into attitudes towards women and men.
- (ii) Collocations from more advanced corpus searches for *murume* and *mukadzi*:

The collocations, mainly of the adjacent a + b type (bigrams), with either a or b being the node, were selected from a larger selection of bigrams. The two forms, a and b, are not necessarily lexical words, but may actually be two phrases, as a result of the agglutinative nature of the Shona language and of its conjunctive spelling system. Not all the combinations generated by the bigrams search qualified for collocation status. There was therefore need to select, firstly, only those pairs that I considered as collocations; and then subsequent to that, only those that I considered as relevant to this study, thereby excluding those that did not yield much information that distinguish beliefs about women from those about men. In selecting the collocations, I was guided by the study and the patterns that had already emerged in the simple concordance searches as well as the rest of the materials. Those that I selected for this study are primarily the semantic collocations that I found to be strikingly familiar and that passed the 'naturalness' test (Kennedy 1998: 112) based on my experiences and native speaker competence. As explained earlier, this study takes the definition of collocation as those expressions that keep natural 'habitual company' (Firth 1957: 14). The definition, a) does not insist on exact formal identicalness of sequences, and b) allows for discontinuous collocations, i.e. containing words not necessarily adjacent to each other (Kennedy 1998: 114; Sinclair 1991). The English glosses for the corpus materials are mine.

The corpus examples cited in the data and discussion sections are typical examples extracted from a broader ALLEX Shona corpus. Appendices 4-II and III present more examples from the mother body (see 3.4.2.1 for more on corpus analyses). The examples of concordances given in the chapter and appendices are, therefore, only typical examples and are not in any way the only source of the corpus information discussed in the study. General features are drawn from the broader corpus. In the table highlighting features of the lexical units, the findings are drawn from all the sources.

#### 4.1.4 The presentation of data

I present the lexicographic data first, followed by the results of the corpus searches. The evidence is presented following a roughly chronological order. For each term:



- a) The SSD lexical units
- b) The draft definitions in the questionnaire, extracted from Appendix 4-I, as well as other expressions or comments that might have been suggested during the field-work exercise.
- c) The DGR data is presented in two parts:  
Part I, the 'normal' standard lexeme and definition;  
and,  
Part II, proverbs, where they occur.
- d) The last pieces of evidence are:
  - i) The suggestions of meaning drawn from the ALLEX corpus concordances. The concordances are scanned through, manually, for meaning and attitude (see Appendix 4-II for a sample of the data, for all the nouns – those that are covered in depth); and
  - ii) The collocations for *mukadzi* and *murume* where a two 'word' phrase is generated containing a collocate, to the left or right of the node (bigrams).
- e) After the presentation of the results, source-by-source, I give, in a table, a feature summary of results from all four sources. The tables are self-explanatory and may, therefore, need no further explanations. In the analyses the senses are regarded as a number of cognitive models forming a complex cluster defining the concepts. Central or prototypic meanings are identified from the dictionaries (see 3.4.3.4 for more). Dictionary data from the SSD and the DGR are presented in tables.

## 4.2 Searching for a definition of womanhood and manhood

### 4.2.1 The main female reference forms

#### 4.2.1.1 *Musikana*

- a) SSD  
Girl
- b) Questionnaire (See Appendix 4-I)

*Musikana munhukadzi anenge ava pazera riri pakati pehwana neukuru, asati aroorwa.*

*Musikana* is a female person who is at the age between childhood and adulthood, not yet married

While the definition passed as 'good' in Harare, most individuals and individuals in groups of the Mhondoro elderly people said that the definition was 'sort of alright'. They suggested that the definition should read,

... atema rutsanga asi asati asangana nemurume/asina mwana inonzi yava mhandara

...started to menstruate but has had no sexual relations/any children, one said to be a virgin – young woman

They emphasize youth, the onset of periods and virginity as the prerequisite features for *musikanahood*.

c) DGR

Part I

***Musikana munhukadzi anenge ava pazera riri pakati pehwana neukuru, asati aroorwa. PIK mukomana.***

*Musikana* is a female person who is at the age between childhood and adulthood, not yet married. ANT mukomana.

This is the same definition as given in the questionnaire.

Part II

The *musikana* data suggests two types of proverbs, Type A and B.

TYPE A

***Musikana chihambakwe, asvika anokanda chibwe... Munhukadzi anodiwa nomurume wose wose, saka anopfimbwa nevakawanda, asi hazvirevi kuti achadanana navose vanenge vamunyenga...***

*Musikana* is like a pile of stones at the side of the road/end of a field where anyone can add on to... A female can be loved by any man therefore she is courted by many, but it does not mean that she will go out with all these men.

***Musikana munaku ihambakwe... Mhandara tsvene inopfimbwa nevazhinji. •Musikana munaku ihambakwe, inoti asvika akanda chibwe. ONA Musikana chihambakwe. A pretty girl is like a pile of stones ... It is a good young woman who is courted by many... SEE Musikana chihambakwe.***

***Musikana idomboka rinoti asvika anokanda chidombo. ONA Musikana chihambakwe.***

same translation as for *Musikana chihambakwe*, above.

***Musikana idziva asvika anokanda duo.***

A girl is like a river where anyone can throw a fish trap.

***Musikana isango rebuni rinotsvakwa naani naani.***

A girl is like a forest of firewood from which anyone gathers wood.

***Musikana ishavi anoteverwa neshiri ... ONA Musikana chihambakwe.***

A girl is like a *mutsamvi* fruit, often sought by birds... SEE *Musikana chihambakwe*.

TYPE B

***Musikana rufuta runobarika... mwanasikana wose anokura achizovika pazera rokuroorwa izvo zvinoita kuti aende kune imwe nzvimbo uko kwaanondotanga mhuri yakewo.***



A girl is fat, which sparks, lands and starts to burn elsewhere ... every girl grows to an age where she can get married, the marriage resulting in her moving to another place, the man's, where she starts her own family.

*Ane rema ndaane mukomana, ane musikana anombodya.* Mwanasikana wose anotoroorwa uye baba vake vanotodyawo pfuma yake chero ari zengeya, asi mwanakomana akapusa anoita kuti baba vake vaparadze zvavanenge vanazvo.

One with an idiot is one with a boy child; one with a girl child may eat of the bride price... every girl gets married so that her father will eat of the bride wealth, even though she is stupid, but if a boy is dull the father will spend what he has on him.

Type A proverbs reveal the stereotype *musikana* as an object of male desire. Type B reveal her role as that of a (potential) homemaker and an investment.

#### d) The ALLEX corpus

The corpus yielded the maximum figure of a 1 000 hits. Here are typical examples:

*shamwari dzemusikana uyu dzinomutira* Kitchen Party  
friends of this girl/woman throw her a kitchen party  
*Vachiri vasikana here? Vakaona usisiri musikana, votokubvunza kuti ndiani kukudai.*  
Are they still girls (for virgins)? If they see you are not a virgins, they then ask who did this to you?

The equivalents highlighted in these examples are girl/woman and virgin. The rest of the suggestions, drawn from more examples in the corpus, are highlighted below in e), in the corpus column. See Appendix 4.II for more concordance examples.

#### e) Table 4.1: A summary of the senses (features) associated with *musikana* that can be drawn from the data presented:

SSD	QSNNAIRE	DGR Part I	CORPUS
-a girl	- a girl child	- a girl	- a baby girl
	- a virgin	- unmarried	- a (young) girl
	- a female who has started menstruation	<u>DGR Part II</u>	- a girl child
	- a female	- a girl	- a daughter
	person who is at the age between childhood and adulthood, not yet married	- a daughter	- a girlfriend
		- a woman 'ripe' for marriage	- a virgin
		- object of men's desires	- a young and single woman
		- an investment (bride wealth)	- a young woman
		- a potential homemaker.	- a female human
			- an unmarried woman
			- early and prime womanhood
			- a wife-in-waiting
			- a female worker

The data show a whole range of meanings of *musikana* from babies to girls to women and to female workers. The prototypic meanings coming out of the dictionaries are the biological and marital status senses. The stereotype models would give the 'best example' (Lakoff 1987) of *musikana* as a young single female who is a virgin.

#### 4.2.1.2 *Usikana*

##### a) SSD

1 Girlhood. 2 Virginity.

##### b) Questionnaire

This item was not in the questionnaire. However, during the *musikana* question, reference was made to *usikana* being equivalent to a youthful period for women who are virgins.

##### c) DGR

###### Part I

1 *Usikana* inguva inobvira munhukadzi ari mudiki kusvika aite imba yake. PIK ukomana 14. 2 *Usikana* inguva iyo munhukadzi anenge asati aziva murume. *Usikana* is the time from when a female human is small to the time she has her own house – starts her own family. ANT ukomana 14. 2 *Usikana* is the time when a female human will not have known a man – slept with a man.

###### Part II

###### TYPE A

*Usikana ishonga kamwe, chikuru umvana.* Chinhu chinoti kana chapfuura, chae-nda zvachose hachidadi asi chiya chinogara chiripo narini. Girlhood (Virginity) you only wear once, the big thing is no-virgin status – it is ephemeral/transitory) The thing that passes and passes for good is not something to be proud of as much as that which stays.

*Ziitakamwe mimba yousikana..* ONA *Ziitakamwe gava rakadambura musungo.* It is the-do-once pregnancy of girlhood... SEE *Ziitakamwe gava rakadambura musungo.*

Here is the synonym, also Type A that carries the definition for the second proverb above:

###### TYPE A

*Ziitakamwe gava rakadambura musungo. ... kana munhu akawira munjodzi kamwe chete haazodi kuita zvinomupinzazve mudambudziko rimwe chetero, saka anogara akazvichenjerera.* FAN *Ziitakamwe mimba yousikana.* It is the-do-once; the wild dog broke the leash. This is a proverb that means that when a person falls into danger once, s/he will not do things that will land her/him

in the same problem, so s/he will be careful. SYN *Zitakamwe mimba yousikana*. *Usikana*, as indicated in this expression, is synonymous with *umhandara* (virginhood of marriageable age), so, I will include, also, *umhandara* (period when young woman is a virgin) expressions here.

#### TYPE A

*Umhandara idambakamwe...* kana munhukadzi akangorara nemunhurume kana kuti akaita mwana umhandara hunenge hwapera atove mvana, chero akasaroowa neanenge amuitisa pamuviri.

'Virginhood' can only be played once ... if/when a woman sleeps with a man or has a child then virginity would have been finished and she is now a non-virgin, even if she does not get married...

*Umhandara ingoma yomusiiranwa...* paupenyu zvimwe unozviita wasvika pane rimwe zera zvichizosarirawo vechidiki kana zera rasiya

Virginity is a dance that you leave for others ... some things are done at certain times/ages then left for the younger ones ...- You can only be a virgin once, naturally.

All the proverbs on *usikana* and *umhandara* highlight the female gender stages of life focussing on the ephemeral, transitory, fleeting and delicate status of virginity.

#### d) ALLEX Corpus

*Usikana* yields seven hits. Here is a typical example:

*Iwe ndiwe wakandibvisa usikana. Tikadzokera kumusha tinoenda tose.*

You are the one who removed my virginity. If we go to your home, we will go together

The meaning suggested here is virginity. See Appendix 4.II for more concordance examples.

#### e) Table 4.2: A summary of the features associated with *usikana* that can be drawn from the data presented:

<u>SSD</u>	<u>QSNNAIRE</u>	<u>DGR Part I</u>	<u>CORPUS</u>
- girlhood	- virginity	- time between girlhood and	- virginity
- virginity	- period of young womanhood	wifehood	
		- virginity period	
		<u>DGR Part II</u>	
		- young womanhood	
		- virginity (loss could mean danger)	
		- ephemeral, strictly once-in-lifetime- state	
		- naturally transitional state in a woman's life	

The 'best example' of *usikana* is youthful femininity with virginity.

#### 4.2.1.3 *Mukadzi*

##### a) SSD

1 Wife. 2 Married woman...

##### b) Questionnaire

1 **Mukadzi** munhu anogona kukwanisa kuumba mwana mudumbu make, uye ane mazamu anogona kuyamwisa mwana uyu. 2 **Mukadzi** wemunhu ndiye anenge akaroorwa, ari amai vemba yake yaanochengeta zvese nemhuri.

1 *Mukadzi* is a person who may be capable of creating a baby in her uterus, who has breasts that may breastfeed this child. 2 *Mukadzi* of a person is a married woman who is mother of a household that she looks after along with the family.

These biological and marital status clusters definitions were by and large seen as 'good'. In Mhondoro, some of the women thought the definition would even be better if *mazamu* (breasts) were dropped from the definitions, as they knew women whose breasts had not developed.

##### c) DGR

###### i) Part I

**mukadzi** ... Munhu asiri murume. 1 **Mukadzi** munhu anokwanisa kuumba mwana mudumbu make, uye ane mazamu anogona kuyamwisa nawo mwana uyu. 2 **Mukadzi** wemunhu ndiye anenge akaroorwa, ari amai vemba yake yaanochengeta zvese nemhuri. 3 Kana munhurume achinzi **mukadzi**, anenge achinyanya kuteta kana kutya kuita zvinhu zvinoitwa nevamwe varume, kazhinji pakurwa.

A person who is not a male. 1. *Mukadzi* is a person who may be capable of creating a baby in her uterus, who has breasts that may breastfeed this child. 2 *Mukadzi* of a person is a married woman who is mother of a household that she looks after along with the family. 3 If a man is said to be a *mukadzi* he will be apprehensive or fearful of doing things that other men do, like fighting.

The first unnumbered definition is a global definition meant to embrace all the definitions to follow. The global definition highlights that *mukadzi* is a human who is not a man. Such a definition is referred to as a 'negative' definition in lexicography. Highlighted here also are the models in the questionnaire, and a fourth metaphoric female meaning. This is where a man is referred to as a woman.

###### ii) Part II

Presented here are proverbs containing *mukadzi*, after which those containing the *-kadzi* stem are also included.

#### TYPE A

**Kuroora mukadzi roora muroyi, unofuma wowana chinokurwisira daka.** Dzimwe nguva chinhu chinovengwa neruzhinji ndicho chinozokupa ruyamuro.

To marry a wife marry a witch, this will get you something to carry out your irreconcilable hatreds. Sometimes a thing that most people hate can ultimately give you assistance.

**Mukadzi akanaka ari womumwe...** *munhu anoda chinhu kana asati ava nacho; kana akangogara nacho kwenguva refu chinenge chisisamunakiri kunyange chakangofanana nezvevamwe. FAN Murume akanaka asiri wako.*

A wife is beautiful if she is somebody else's ... a person likes something when they do not have it; once they have it for a long time then they do not find it enjoyable even though it is the same as what others have - A case of the grass being greener on the other side. SYN A man is handsome if he is not yours.

**Mukadzi akarambwa inhema yokumutsirwa.**

A woman who was divorced by her husband is like a rhino that has been put in a state, stirred or provoked by another (and sure to) come face-to-face with you.

**Mukadzi muchero, adimura anonhongawo...** *ONA Musikana chihambakwe. (A woman is a fruit, whoever passes-by can pick)... SEE A girl is chihambakwe*

**Mukadzi mupinyi webadza, wasvika anomboedzawo.**

A woman is like a hoe handle that anyone can pick and test/try out.

#### TYPE B

**Mukadzi akanaka ndoune mukutu...** *munhu wese anoda kuchengeta chinhu chinomubatsira kana kuti chinomupa mubayiro.*

A good wife is one with a useful 'bag'... people like to keep things that that are helpful to them or that make them a profit/prize).

**Mukadzi akanaka ngeune matukutswa.**

A beautiful woman is one with a useful carrier bag.

**Musha mukadzi ...** *kureva kuti, kuti murume ave nechiremerera, anofanira kuva nemudzimai anenge ari iye muchengeti wake anoona kuti basa repamba rafamba here.*

A home is a woman/wife ... means for a man/husband to have respect and dignity, he must have a woman/wife who will look after him and see to it that the work is done in the home.

**Kunzi mukadzi ari apa kunatsa munyu.** *Kuti munhu aremekedzwe anofanira kugona basa raanotarisirwa kuita...* To be said there is a woman/wife is to be good with salt (For someone to be respected they should be able to do the work expected of them well...

Below are proverbs containing the *-kadzi* stem, which have also been included as clues to the meanings of *mukadzi*.

TYPE A

*Ane mburi ndeane mburikadzi. ... muupenyu mwanakomana anokurumidza kuwana zvokuzviriritira nazvo kupfuura mwanasikana uyo anoda kuchengetwa kwenguva refu.*  
One who has a (big) family is one with female children ... in life boy children claim their independence early unlike females who continue to want to be taken care of.

*Mbandakadzi ihonza varanda... mukadzi anogara achingopopota anoita kuti mhuri nevamwewo vanhu vagare vakasuruwara.*  
A quarrelsome woman causes the family to be slaves – A quarrelsome woman brings sadness and misery to the family.

*Mhosvakadzi muripo mwene. ...kana munhurume akatadzirwa nomunhukadzi haamuomeseri zvokusvika pakumubhadharisa chimwe chinhu asi kuti anotogona kumuita mukadzi wake.*  
A crime committed by a woman is a crime that pays for itself ... means that when a man has been offended by a woman then a man does not make things hard for her by asking to be compensated but instead he can ask for sexual favors as payment.

TYPE B

*Chakadya ndebvu dzavakadzi ndichowo chakadya mazamu evarume. Vanhu bavafaniri kushamisika kana mumwe munhu achiita zvinhu zvakasiyana nezvavanoda kana kufunga nokuti vanhu vose vakasikwa vakasiyana.*  
That which ate the woman's beard is that which ate the man's breasts ... People should not be surprised if a person does things or thinks differently because people are created differently

The proverbs provide both the Type A and B meanings of *mukadzi*. The A proverbs suggest the stereotypic role of *mukadzi* as i) a woman who is: a sexual object of men's desires; a minor; and ii) as a wife she can be: difficult; immoral; rough when scorned/turned away/divorced/a witch who can fight for her husband; and someone else's wife. The second proverb highlights that a girl will be a dependent or minor for a long time, needing to be provided for by her father versus the expected male role of an independent individual who will be able to take care of himself quite early in his adult life.

The B type highlights *mukadzi* as the domestic person, the homemaker.

d) The ALLEX corpus

The corpus generated a 1 000 hits of *mukadzi*. Here is an example of the concordances:

*Kufa kwemukadzi wai-shandira Garwe kwaitaura zvakanwanda.*  
The death of the woman working for Garwe spoke many things.

*nyaya inonetsa maningi kuti ngozi yemukadzi igandanzara*  
it is a difficult problem that the avenging spirit of a woman/wife brings misery  
*ndiye mukadzi watapuhwa uyu*  
this is the sister-in-law that we have been given.

In general, the concordances highlight the human biological and marital cluster models. In the data, it is not always easy to tell between the two, because of context limitations. Either one would need a paragraph, at least, much more than the maximum of a 100 characters. Often, too, these roles merge into each other in context. The third use of *mukadzi* translates to daughter/sister-in-law in English. What emerges also is the communality of the Shona marriage. The 'wife' is not only for the husband, but also for the family. The same is true for *murume*. The rest of the suggestions, drawn from more examples in the corpus, are highlighted below in e) in the corpus columns. See Appendix 4.II for more concordance examples.

e) Table 4.3: A summary of the senses associated with *mukadzi* that can be drawn from the data presented:

SSD	QSNNAIRE	DGR Part I	CORPUS
- a wife - a married woman	- a person who may be capable of creating a baby in her uterus - a married woman who is mother of a household	- a person who is not a male - a person who can carry and suckle a baby - a married woman - keeper of house and family - a cowardly male <u>DGR Part II</u> - a woman - a wife - a housewife - a homemaker - a mother - a young woman available to be 'picked' - a female human - a sexually active woman - a quiet woman (loud ones are bad) - (to a man's advantage) if she is a witch - a dependent person - a person whose punishment can bring a man pleasure	- a married woman - a wife (someone's, second, his, mine, the dog's) - a housewife - a mother - a woman - a sister-in-law <sup>18</sup> - a lover - a widow - a divorcee - a prospective wife - a woman on the verge of marriage - a female human - a cowardly male

<sup>18</sup> Traditionally, the wife's sisters are regarded as 'wives' by the brother-in-law. In the event that the wife died or could not produce children, one of her sisters or cousins could replace the deceased.

The prototypic meanings coming out of the dictionaries are married marital status and the biological. Gender roles and the social female senses also appear. The social (metaphoric) use where a male is referred to as an 'honorary' *mukadzi* is captured in the third sense defined in the DGR. *Mukadzi* is assumed to come with an assumption of motherhood. Other cultural (stereotypic) meanings are highlighted in the corpus and the DGR Part II.

#### 4.2.1.4 *Ukadzi*

- a) SSD  
1 Years of a woman's life when she can bear children. 2 Feminine qualities.
- b) Questionnaire  
This item was not in the questionnaire. No reference was made to *ukadzi* during the course of the questionnaire-cum-structured interview.
- c) DGR  
Part I

*...inguva yokuti munhukadzi anokwanisa kuita vana. 2 Ukadzi itsika namaitire anotarisirwa vanhukadzi.*

*...it is the time when a woman can bear children. 2 Ukadzi are behaviours and manners/ways expected of women.*

- d) Corpus

The corpus gave one hit,

*Zvino handiti ndihwo **ukadzi** ukuru hwamange maita here hwekuziva kuti...*  
Isn't this the senior womanhood that you had done of knowing that ...

The meaning coming out here is (proper) womanhood.

- e) Table 4.4: A summary of the features associated with *ukadzi* that can be drawn from the data presented:

<u>SSD</u>	<u>QSNNAIRE</u>	<u>DGR Part I</u>	<u>CORPUS</u>
-a woman's fertile years	- -	- woman's fertile years	- (proper)
- feminine qualities		- female behaviour or manner	womanhood

#### 4.2.1.5 *Chikadzi*

- a) SSD  
Femininity. Womanly object, way of acting, speaking, etc...



b) Questionnaire

*chikadzi maitiro evanhukadzi kana kuti zvimwewo zvinhu zvinoshandiswa nevanhukadzi, sezvakaita midziyo. 2. chikadzi maitiro asina ushingi anotarisirwa kuitwa nevanhukadzi.*

*Chikadzi is the way/manner of female humans or other things that they use such as utensils. 2. Chikadzi is the way/manner without bravery expected of female humans.*

While there was general agreement that both definition 1 and 2 were 'good' in that they reflected the meanings/senses that are in use for this form, the women informants in both Harare and Mhondoro said that they were displeased with the assumptions behind definition 2. During the interviews, the women suggested the following *mukadzi* (rather than *ukadzi* – same theme to them) statements or expressions as being more reflective of who they are;

***Musha mukadzi .***

A home is a woman (already appearing in the DGR Part II of *mukadzi* and presented earlier in 4.1.1.3)

***Mukadzi chidembo.***

A woman is a skunk.

The women explained that this expression meant that even though women were seen as 'small', 'weak' and incapable of taking care of themselves – without men – they could be sly like the skunks, which, although small, are deceptively shrewd and powerful against perceived enemies. They take responsibility for themselves by emitting a smell that can throw off even the most powerful of enemies.

c) DGR

Part 1

***Chikadzi maitiro evanhukadzi. 2 Chikadzi zvinhu zvinoshandiswa nevanhukadzi, sezvakaita midziyo.***

*Chikadzi are the ways of females. 2 Chikadzi are things used by women such as utensils.*

The meaning highlighted here is female ways or things.

d) The corpus

The corpus search yielded a 1 000 hits. Here are typical examples:

*shamwari dzechirume kana neshamwari dzechikadzi dzaimbouyawo kuzodongorera .*  
male friends or female friends used to come in and check on her/him.

*Kana musikana ava kuenda kune zvetsika dzechikadzi, pamwedzi woga woga, vaku-ru vanotarisa...*

When/If a wife-to-be is now about to get into females things/'rituals' (menstruation) for females, each month, elders expect...

*chirwere chezvionda chiye ichi, chesiki yechikadzi chairapwa...*

the disease of wounds, the STD of women was treated...

The first example identifies male and female friends who look out for the person. The second highlights the meaning of female/feminine rituals/ways/diseases; and female. The third example suggests that sexually transmitted diseases are seen as diseases transmitted by women. More examples of concordances can be viewed in Appendix 4.II.

- e) Table 4.5: A summary of the senses associated with *chikadzi* that can be drawn from the data presented:

SSD	QSNNAIRE	DGR Part I	CORPUS
-femininity - womanly object, way of acting, speaking, etc.	- the way/manner of female humans - other things that are used by females such as utensils - the way/manner without bravery, as is expected of female humans -homemakers -small but shrewdly powerful ways of women	- the ways of human females - things used by women such as utensils	- femininity - female(ness) - of women - for women. -manner of/'rituals' of women - weak and inefficient

#### 4.2.1.6 Chembere

- a) SSD  
...Elderly woman ... elderly person (of either sex).
- b) Questionnaire  
Not in the questionnaire.
- c) DGR  
i) Part I  
1. *Chembere munhukadzi ararama kwenguva refu...* 2 *Chembere munhu ararama kwemakore akawanda.*  
*Chembere* is a female person who has survived for a long time... 2 *Chembere* is a person who has survived many years.

The emphasis is on long or many years of survival, for both females and males.

ii) Part II

TYPE A

**Chembere mukadzi, hazvienzani nekurara mugota.** *Chinhu chese chine basa, hazvinei kuti chasakara sei.*

An elderly woman is (still) a woman; she cannot be compared to sleeping alone in the boys' hut. All things have a use, no matter how old they are-. Half a loaf is better than nothing at all.

**Chembere masikati usiku imvana...** *vanhu vanogona kuvanza zviito zvavo zvakai-pa kana vari paruzhinji rwevanhu, vozozviita kana vava pakavanda.*

An elderly woman by day a lascivious single mother by night... People can hide the bad things that they do when in public view, and then do those things in private.

**Ziriwo rechembere, ziramba waravira...** *zvinhu ndezvekumbotanga waedza usati wazviramba nekuti zvinogona kuzonge zvichikubatsira mune ramangwana. FAN Zi-pfuko rechembere, ziramba watonha.*

Ugly vegetables offered by an elderly woman only reject after tasting ...means that one needs to try things first before refusing/rejecting them because these things may prove useful in future - Do not judge a book by its cover. SYN The beer pot of a *chembere* refuse only after you have tasted (the beer).

**Chembere ndeyembwa, yomurume ndibaba vevana.** *Munhurume haanzi achembera nokuti paanofa anosiya mhuri inoramba ichingovapo. Izvi zvakasiyana nemhuka nokuti haifi ichisiya mhuri.*

The old is that of a dog, that of a male human is a father – An old male is that of a dog, that of a man is a father ... An elderly man cannot be said to become old and useless because when he dies he leaves behind a family. This is different from an animal, which will not leave a family behind.

**Usaravidza chembere muto wegwaya, mangwana inofira mudziva.** *Usadzidzise vamwe vanhu zvinhu zvinofanira kuitwa mukuzvibata sekuti vanopedzisira vaita zvinonyadzisa kana kupinda munjodzi.*

Don't give old woman (/individual?) a taste of the soup of a bream. Don't teach others things that must be done with caution and prudence because they will end up doing embarrassing things or getting into danger.

**Zvinhu zviedzwa, chembere yokwaChivi yakabika mabwe ikamwa muto.** *Munhu haafaniri kutya chinhu chaasina kumbozama, anofanira kuzoregera mushure mokukundikana. FAN Zvinokona zviine hata.*

Things should be tried; the old woman of Chivi cooked stones and drank the soup. A person should not be afraid to try, they must stop after failing. SYN What fails with a head pad.

TYPE B

**Chembere ndeyembwa, yomurume ndibaba vevana.** *Munhurume haanzi achembera nokuti paanofa anosiya mhuri inoramba ichingovapo. Izvi zvakasiyana nemhuka nokuti haifi ichisiya mhuri.*

The old is that of a dog, that of a male human is a father – An old male is that of a dog, that of a man is a father. An elderly man cannot be said to become old and useless because when he dies he leaves behind a family. This is different from an animal, which will not leave a family behind.

The first three Type A proverbs refer to a female old person, suggesting the Type A meaning of *chembere* as being old, and less of a woman, sexually. The fourth proverb highlights *chembere* as possibly generic. The last proverb highlights the stereotypic wise old *chembere*. The Type B proverb (also used as an example in the unisex meaning in Part I) seems to be specific to an old male, pointing to the genericness of *chembere* in some contexts. In this proverb, the old man's limitation comes, inevitably, with age and death, and, even with these limitations, he heads the family and is responsible for posterity and for the continued survival of the family line. The fifth, which could refer to women only or to both women and men, highlight the incapacitations to the mind and physique of old age. The last proverb highlights the stereotypic creative wise old woman.

Since one of the *chembere* proverbs makes reference to *mvana*, there is need to examine this term, as it seems important to meaning and attitudes towards the female gender, even when the female is an old woman. The following proverbs contain *mvana*:

#### TYPE A

***Kunyenga zvimvana ita zviviri, kura-  
mba kwechimwe, chimwe unosara nacho.***

*Haufaniri kuisa chivimbo chako chose pa-  
ne chinhu chimwe chete nekuti chinogona  
kukurasisa ukasara usina chawakabata.*

When you date some sluttish single mothers make them two so that when one dumps you, you have another to fall back on. You should not put your trust on one thing because it may let you down, leaving you clutching nothing - do not put your eggs in one basket.

***Mudzimu wemvana kuroorwa ichira-  
mbwa...*** FAN Urombo hune nherera kudy a ichirutsa.

It is the ancestral spirit<sup>19</sup> of *mvana* getting married and being dumped over and over again – It is her misfortune to get married and be dumped... SYN Urombo hune nherera kudy a ichirutsa. It is the poverty (misfortune) of the orphan to eat and vomit the food (an orphan cannot have the luxury of vomiting food – should eat and conserve).

***Zviri kumvana kubara mwana asina  
baba.*** ONA *Zviri kumwene wejira.*

It is up to the sluttish single mother to bear a child who has no father. SEE *Zviri kumwene wejira*. It is up to the owner of the blanket (to do what they want with).

The three proverbs indicate the *mvana* stereotype role as willfully loose, and as untrustworthy. In these proverbs, the woman is ridiculed. Her 'condition' is referred to with sarcastic humour tones.

#### c) ALLEX corpus

The corpus search yielded 531 hits of *chembere*. Here are some typical examples:

<sup>19</sup> Ancestral spirits are look after you and protect you from harm (see 1.2.1.4)

*Musi wokuvambiwa kwedoro todanazve vaduku vava vanochera mvura vava vachipa mvura kumadzimai aya chembere dzaguma dziya , chembere dziya dzinobika doro dziya*

On the day when they start to brew the beer the young ones will fetch water for the women, while *chembere*, those who have stopped (menstruation) brew the beer

*zvayo yapera ura ikadaro ndiyo ingabva yakutora mwoyo ukadaro here ? "Shamwari mwana uya haisiri chembere. Pamwe kuda pane wauri kureva hako iwe Gibson. Handibvume kuti Angeline angave mvana*

such (an old old woman) whose intestines are finished to have taken your heart like so? "Friend this baby is not *chembere*. Maybe you are referring to someone else. I don't accept that Angeline is a *mvana*.

The meanings emerging here are elderly woman; and, young women who are sexually active. The rest of the suggestions, drawn from more examples in the corpus, are highlighted below in e) in the corpus column. See also Appendix 4.II for more concordance examples.

- e) Table 4.6: A summary of the senses associated with *chembere* that can be drawn from the data presented:

SSD	QSNNAIRE	DGR Part I	CORPUS
- elderly woman	- - - - -	- female person who has survived for a long time	-old (postmenopausal) woman
-elderly person		- a person who has lived many years	- old and emotional
			- widow
			- less of a woman
		<u>DGR Part II</u>	because of age
		- elderly person	- woman no longer having babies
		- elderly woman	- woman in her menopause
		- fraction of a woman/ individual	- nonvirgin (sexually active)
		- wise elderly woman	- woman no longer a virgin (deflowered)
		- perpetrator of family line (male)	- guidance counselor
			- child minder
			- expert on culture
			-witch

The prototypic meanings coming out of the dictionaries are the biological (old woman) and generic (old person) senses. The stereotype models would give the best example of *chembere*, as an old woman/person who guides and counsels.

## 4.2.2 The main male reference forms

### 4.2.2.1 *Mukomana*

- a) SSD  
Boy
- b) Questionnaire

*mukomana* ... *munhurume wechidiki, anenge akura asi asati ava baba* (*Mukomana* is a young male, grown but not yet a father).

The response elicited from the draft definition on the Questionnaire was 'A - good'. It is interesting to note that, unlike with *musikana*, the virginity factor was not raised with reference to *mukomana*.

- c) DGR

#### Part I

*Mukomana munhurume wechidiki, anenge akura asi asati ava baba. FAN munhukomana 1. PIK musikana 1. 2 Kana musikana achiti ane mukomana anenge aine murume wechidiki waanenge ari kudanana naye.*

*Mukomana* is a young male, who is grown but not yet a father. SYN *munhukomana 1. ANT musikana 1. 2* If a girl says she has *mukomana*, she has a young male whom she is seeing – Boyfriend

#### Part II

In passing, it needs to be noted that the DGR Part II does not seem to have as many wise sayings for *mukomana* and *murume* as it does for *musikana* or *mukadzi*. Of the two expressions that I found for *mukomana*, one carries *mukomana*, and the other the *-komana* stem. The second expression is a repeat, having been included under *musikana*.

#### TYPE A

*Kuyarutsa mwanakomana kuzvikohwera mapfumo mumba. Mubereki oga oga anofanira kuziva kuti kana mwanakomana akura anoita zvinhu zvakasiyana-siyana zvinogona kupinza iye nevabereki vake mumatambudziko.*

To raise a boy child is to harvest and bring spears into your household. Every parent must know that when a boy child is growing he will do things that may cause affliction or pain to him and his parents.

#### TYPE B

*Ane rema ndaane mukomana, ane musikana anombodya. Mwanasikana wose anotoroorwa uye baba vake vanotodyawo pfuma yake chero ari zengeya, asi mwanakomana akapusa anoita kuti baba vake vaparadze zvavanenge vanazvo.*

One with an idiot is one with a boy child; one with a girl child may eat of the bride price... every girl gets married so that her father will eat of the bride wealth, even though she is stupid, but if a boy is dull the father will spend what he has on him.

The first proverb reveals the assumption and stereotype that males are predisposed to violence. The society seems to take aggressiveness as an aspect of the masculine gender. The second presents a situation where if a male fails at his role then he fails the parents, but a female can always get married and provide wealth to her parents through the *roora* that is paid for her.

d) The corpus

A 1 000 hits were generated by a search of *\*mukomana* from the corpus. Here are some examples:

“*Aiwa mune mudumbu menyu mune mwana mukomana*”

“... your stomach (uterus) has a baby boy” ...

*Mushure mekumborambaramba kuti handina mukomana*, *ndipo pavazotaura voti*, ...

After having refused that ‘I do not have a boyfriend’, (she) then said..

Highlighted in these examples are equivalents baby boy and boyfriend.

The rest of the suggestions, drawn from more examples in the corpus, are highlighted below in e) in the corpus column. See Appendix 4.II for more concordance examples.

e) Table 4.7: A summary of the senses associated with *mukomana* that can be drawn from the data presented:

SSD	QSNNAIRE	DGR Part I	CORPUS
- a boy	- a young male, grown but not yet a father	- a young male not yet married - a boyfriend	- a young boy - a boy - a son - a man
		<u>DGR Part II</u>	- a boyfriend
		- a boy child who could be violent	- a young man
		- a potentially independent human	- a young and single man
			- a baby boy
			- a boy child
			- a male
			- a male worker

The prototypic meanings coming out of the dictionaries are the biological and single marital status senses.

#### 4.2.2.2 *Ukomana*

a) SSD

Boyhood



b) Questionnaire

It was mentioned during the *mukomana* discussion that virginity was not really an issue with and for boys.

c) DGR

Part I 1

**Ukomana** inguva yekunge munhurume asati ava saimba. *PIK usikana* 14. 2 **Ukomana** inguva yekunge munhurume asati aziva vakadzi.

*Ukomana* is the time/period before a male becomes a household head or a husband... 2. *Ukomana* is the time/period before a man has 'known' women – slept with women.

d) Corpus

The corpus concordance search yielded four hits. Here is one example:

*Karikoga kubvira ucheche hwake kusvikira ukomana hwake*

Karikoga from his babyhood to boyhood/young malehood

The meaning highlighted here is the time or period between infancy and adulthood. The rest of the suggestions, drawn from the other examples in the corpus, are highlighted below in e) in the corpus column. See Appendix 4.II for more concordance examples.

e) Table 4.8: A summary of the senses associated with *ukomana* that can be drawn from the data presented:

SSD	QSNNAIRE	DGR Part I	CORPUS
-boyhood	- - -	- time before one becomes a head of a household (married)	- boyhood time/period between infancy and adulthood)
		- boyness (virginity)	

A point to note is that *ukomana* is synonymous with the period during which a boy/man is a virgin is revealed in Part I of the dictionary, the DGR. The rest of the sources do not.

#### 4.2.2.3 Murume

a) SSD

1. Man 2. Husband

b) Questionnaire

1 **murume** ... munhu anogona kuburitsa urume hunoti, kana hukasangana nezai remukadzi, mukadzi ogona kuchiumba mwana mudumbu make. *FAN munhurume*

1. 2 **Murume** wemunhukadzi anenge ari munhu wechirume akamuroora.

*murume* ... is a person who can produce sperm such that when it meets a woman's egg, the woman may then create a baby in her stomach. *SYN munhurume* 1. 2. *Murume* of a female human is a male person she is married to.

While half of the respondents said the definition was 'good', the others gave a 'sort of alright' answer. The latter response came mostly from women in Mhondoro who reacted to the mention of 'urume' (semen/sperm) saying that not all men are fertile. Even though the definition mentioned the 'potentiality of' producing sperm, they were still not happy. While *urume*, as is apparent in the corpus, is used for both semen and sperm, it was clear to the women either that *urume* refers to sperm only or that they do not make a distinction between the two.

## DGR

### Part 1

1 **Murume** munhu anogona kuburitsa urume hunoti kana hukasangana nezai remukadzi, mudzimai ogona kuchiumba mwana mudumbu make... 2 **Murume** wemunhukadzi anenge ari munhu wechirume akamuroora. 3 **Murume** munhu akasimba uye akashinga chaizvo... 4 Kana munhukadzi achinzi **murume**, zvinoreva kuti akasimba kana akashinga, kana kuti anogona kuriritira mhuri zvinowanzotarisirwa kumunhurume.

1 *Murume* is a human with potential to produce sperm such that when it meets with the woman's egg, a woman may then create a baby inside her stomach... 2 A *murume* of a female is a male that she is married to. 3 A *murume* is a strong and brave human... 4 If a woman is said to be a *murume* then it means that she is strong, brave and is a provider, things, usually, expected of men.

### Part II

#### TYPE A

**Murume akanaka asiri wako...** ONA Mukadzi akanaka ari womumwe.

A husband is handsome if he is not yours... SEE A wife is beautiful if she is somebody else's

**Hapana murume anofa asina ngava.** Hapana munhu angagona kuwana zvose zvaanoda kushandisa nguva nenguva muupenyu, anototi akumbirewo vamwe vaanenge achigara navo.

No man dies without a debt. There is no person who can get all they want to use in life, they may need to borrow from others they live with.

**Panotorerwa chirume demo panosara matsunetsune.** Munhurume haawanzobvuma kukurirwa. Anotomboedza napose paanogona napo kurwisa kuti zvaanoda zviitike.

Where a man's axe (weapon) is taken, what remains are signs of a tough struggle. A human male does not often allow himself to be defeated by another. He tries by all means to fight back so that he can get what he wants.

**Kufa kwemurume kubuda maura...** munhu haafaniri kukasira kutya kana kuvhundu kana awirwa nematambudziko, asi kuti anotofanira kushingirira nepose paanokwanisa.

The dying of a man is the coming out (rupturing) of his intestines (from his stomach) ... a person should not fear or be afraid if they are in trouble, but should try as much as they can to have courage.

**Rume risinganyepi hariwani...** kana munhu ane zvaanoda kune mumwe, anotofanira kutaura nenzira inogutsa uye inovimbika.

The big man who does not lie will not get. This is a proverb that means that when a person wants something, he must speak in a way that is satisfying and that is trustworthy.

#### TYPE B

*Murume kufuma kubuda mumba kutumirira muromo. Munhu wose anofumira pamba pemumwe anenge ane mashoko aanoda kutaure.*

For a man to leave the house early means they have something to do for the mouth.

For a person to be at someone's house early means they have something important to discuss.

The Type A proverbs highlight the male stereotypic qualities of bravery, shrewdness and resourcefulness. The Type B proverb highlights the male role as head and provider.

#### d) The corpus

The corpus search yielded a 1 000 hits. Here are some examples:

*paa* Wedding Gown *renyu imini nesuit yemurume wenyu*

wedding gown of yours (?) and a suit for your man/husband

*Mwari ndiye anoziva. Asiwo ini murume handichadi. Zvikoni zvikoni. Ndakamboedza.*

God knows. But, me, the husband, I no longer love/need/want. What has failed, has failed. I tried.

The meanings coming out of the two examples are the biological and the marital. As with the *mukadzi* corpus data, these models are not easily divorced from each other, in most of the examples. The rest of the suggestions, drawn from more examples in the corpus, are highlighted below in e), in the corpus column. See Appendix 4.II for more concordance examples.

#### e) Table 4.9: A summary of the senses associated with *murume* that can be drawn from the data presented:

SSD	QSNNAIRE	DGR Part I	CORPUS
- a man	- a person who	- a person with the potential to	- a man
- a husband	can produce	impregnate	- a married man
	sperm that	- a husband	- a brother-in-law <sup>20</sup>
	when it meets	- a strong and brave male	- a husband
	a woman's egg,	- a strong female who is a	- a cultural
	the woman	provider	husband <sup>21</sup>
	may then	DGR Part II	- a lover
	create a baby	- a provider	- a widower
	- a husband	- a highly virile male	- a divorcee
		- a risk taker	- a human male
		- a strong fighter	- a guy (colloquial)
		- a clever and cunning person	
		- a lineage maker or perpetuator	
		- a female who has courage and	
		strength	

The prototypic meanings coming out of the dictionaries and draft dictionary (questionnaire) are the biological and the married marital status senses. Gender roles and the social female senses also appear. The social (metaphoric) use where a female is referred to as an 'honorary' *murume* is captured in the third sense defined in the DGR. The DGR Part I also contains a gender stereotypic meaning, of the man as 'brave and strong.' Other cultural (stereotypic) meanings are highlighted in the questionnaire, corpus and the DGR Part II.

#### 4.2.2.4 *Urume*

a) SSD  
Semen

b) Questionnaire  
This item was not in the questionnaire. No reference was made to *urume* during the course of the questionnaire-cum-structured interview.

c) DGR  
Part **Iurume...** 1 *Uronyo*. 2 *Urume itsika namaitire anenge achitarisirwa munhu wese wechirume*.  
1 Semen. 2 *Urume* are behaviours and manners/ways expected from every male person.

Since *urume* is indicated as being synonymous with *uronyo*, here is the *uronyo* lexical unit from the DGR.

**uronyo** ... *ndezvakaita zvimvura zvichena zvinobuda musikarudzi yemurume, zvine mbeu inogona kuzvarisa mukadzi. FAN urume 14, bonhora 5. ... Uronyo* are white watery things coming out of the male organ, which contain seed that can make a woman fall pregnant. SYN *urume 14, bonhora 5*.

#### Part II

There were no instances of *urume* in Part II, but, since *urume* refers to men and productivity, proverbs and other stylistic expressions on these might fall under *ukomana*. Also, the language does not appear to use terms considered obscene in proverbs.

d) Corpus  
The corpus generates nine hits. I present three of them here as examples:

*nesimba rokubereka . Simba iri rinonzi urume*  
power/strength to have children. Power/strength to produce is called *urume*

*Ongororo yehembe inoratidza ropa kana urume pahembe , ...hembe dzakabvaruka*  
Examination of clothes shows blood or semen on the clothes... clothes are torn

*Ambuya vacho, nhai iwe unoda urume ukuru hwekuchengeta?*  
The grandmother, you want senior manhood to keep?

The suggestions to be drawn from these examples and the rest of the instances of use in the corpus are, the power that men have to reproduce; semen; and the respect for their manhood.

- e) Table 4.10: A summary of the senses associated with *urume* that can be drawn from the data presented:

<u>SSD</u>	<u>QSNNAIRE</u>	<u>DGR Part I</u>	<u>CORPUS</u>
- semen	- - -	- semen - male behaviours/ manners	- sperm - semen - manhood - manliness

*Urume* has both a physical and abstract meaning, in sperm or semen and manhood/ male behaviour, respectively.

#### 4.2.2.5 *Chirume*

- a) SSD  
...Matter concerning, affair of, manner of the male sex...
- b) Questionnaire

1 **Chirume** maitiro evanhurume. 2 ... kuita zvinhu wakashinga sezvinotarisirwa vanhurume. 3 ...munhu anonyenga vasikana chaizvo.

1 *Chirume* is a way/manner of male humans. 2 ... is to do things bravely as is expected of male humans. 3 ... is a person who is always asking girls out.

The response for 1 was 'good'; for 2 the answers ranged from 'sort of alright' to 'good'. Some of the people who gave the former response asked rhetorically if all men were brave and strong. Definition 3 was rejected by most in both Harare and Mhondoro.

- c) DGR  
Part 1  
**Chirume** maitiro evanhurume. 2 **Chirume** kuita zvinhu wakashinga sezvinonzi zvinotarisirwa vanhurume. (1 ...way/manner of male humans. 2. **Chirume** is to do brave things as what is said is expected of male humans

As with *murume*, the definitions highlight assumptions and expectations of strength and bravery.

- d) The corpus search yielded 77 hits of *.\*chirume*. Here are some examples:  
*kwe mukomana kuti azoita tsika dzechirume* .  
with the boy/young man being advised on male ways/manners.  
*ana shamwari dzechirume kana neshamwari dzechikadzi dzaimbouyawo kuzodon-gorera*.  
has male friends or female friends that used to come to look in on her/him.

The rest of the suggestions, drawn from more examples in the corpus, are highlighted below in e), in the corpus column. See Appendix 4.II for more concordance examples.

- e) Table 4.11: A summary of the features associated with *chirume* that can be drawn from the data presented:

<u>SSD</u>	<u>QSNNAIRE</u>	<u>DGR Part I</u>	<u>CORPUS</u>
- matter concerning affair of, manner of the male sex	- a way/manner of male humans - do things bravely as is expected of male humans	- way/manner of male humans - do brave and fearless things (as what is said is expected of male humans)	- masculinity - male - of male - for male - strong, clever, fearless and efficient - the wise way

#### 4.2.2.6 Harahwa

- a) SSD  
Old man

- b) DGR  
Part I  
*Harahwa murume anenge akura zvokutofamba akakotamira, uye achishandisa mudonzvo.*  
*Harahwa* is a man who has aged to the extent of walking bent, using a walking stick.

Part II  
TYPE A

*Harahwa mbiri badzibidzani rwizi... ONA Mapofu maviri haatungamirirani.*  
Two elderly men do not help each other to cross the river. One old man cannot lead another in crossing a river. SEE *Mapofu maviri haatungamirirani. Harahwa mbiri badziurayani... vanhu vane nhamo dzakafanana havasekani asi kuti vanobatsirana sokugona kwavo.*  
Two elderly men cannot kill each other – one old man cannot kill another – Persons with the same calamity or disability cannot laugh at one another, but will help each other as far as they can

The definitions of *harahwa* give a vivid picture of biologically, an old person as the ‘best example’ of *harahwa* (cp. the definition of *chembere* in 4.2.1.6 – Type for *harahwa*). The type A proverbs show a general truth about the diminished capacity that comes with age.

- d) ALLEX corpus

The corpus search yielded 116 hits of *\*harahwa*. Here are some examples:

*wakanga kwabva izwi gobvu , vakaona ino **harahwa** hohonwa yaive namatama awira mukatikati*

where the deep voice came from, they saw this *harahwa* old old man with deep sagging cheeks.

*Ndingori namakore 13 ukundinofanira kusiya chikoro kutindinoroorwa nezibarahwa riya rinavakadzi vaviri nechakare.*

I am only 13 now I have to leave school to go and get married to an ugly old man with two wives already.

The rest of the suggestions, drawn from more examples in the corpus, are highlighted below in e). See Appendix 4.II for more concordance examples.

e)

**Table 4.12: A summary of the senses associated with *harahwa*, that can be drawn from the data presented:**

<u>SSD</u>	<u>QSNNAIRE</u>	<u>DGR Part I</u>	<u>CORPUS</u>
- old man	---	- a very old man - a family elder - perpetuator of family line	- a (very) old man - a family elder - a leader and adviser - a wise old person
		<u>DGR Part II</u> - old and advanced - old and limited	- a man who is vulnerable to young women's attractions - an old sexual romanticist

The prototypic meanings coming out of the dictionaries are the biological and gender role senses. Cultural (stereotypic) meanings are highlighted in the corpus and the DGR Part II. The best stereotypic example of a *harahwa* would be an old man who is a family leader and adviser.

### 4.2.3 Collocations for *mukadzi* and *murume*

The collocations examined in this section are, in my judgment, relevant to defining who *mukadzi* or *murume* are and what the roles and expectations about them are. I should add that while these collocations may not be considered an exhaustive set of examples, they are nevertheless more than adequate for the purposes of the current study. In this examination, the frequency count is not important *per se*, considering the size of the corpus, which is just over two and a half million running words of mostly oral materials and fiction (as at Dec 2001). Also, as explained earlier, the maximum 1 000 hits, the same 1 000 feature of the concordancing software each time a search is made, in effect, makes the available corpus much smaller than it really is for high frequency items like *murume* and *mukadzi*. Still, the collocations and their relative frequencies do provide pointers to legitimate collocation status.

Because of the conjunctive nature of the language, a collocation sequence like *-roora mukadzi* (marry a wife) would be isolated from different realizations such as *kuroora mukadzi* (to marry a wife), *akaroora mukadzi* (he married a wife) and *wekuro-*



*ora mukadzi* (the one who married a wife). In this respect, the sequences are not necessarily fixed.

In the sample of frequency results below, the items that co-occur with *mukadzi* and *murume* fairly equally and frequently, either as a or b, are qualifiers such as absolute, possessives, demonstratives and selectors, and adjectives; (auxiliary) verbs; as well as adverbials and conjunctives. Below, I highlight some of the more natural collocations (irrespective of the frequency figures). A few of these are picked for analysis and discussion. The choice was made based, partly, on frequency of occurrence and naturalness, but, mostly on the strength of their relevance to uncovering women and men's roles and responsibilities.

#### 4.2.3.1 Nouns and qualifiers

The table presents examples of bigrams (a and b) of noun plus qualifier collocations of *murume* and *mukadzi*, selected from a bigger list.

**Table 4.13: Nouns and qualifiers: collocations with *murume*/*mukadzi* in the ALLEX Shona corpus**

Mukadzi	<u>Murume</u>
7 <i>ini mukadzi</i> (I, a woman/wife)	11 <i>ini murume</i> (I, a man/husband)
143 <i>mukadzi wangu</i> (my wife)	157 <i>murume wangu</i> (my husband)
135 <i>mukadzi wako</i> (your wife)	92 <i>murume wako</i> (your husband)
171 <i>mukadzi wake</i> (his wife)	155 <i>murume wake</i> (her husband)
27 <i>mukadzi wemunhu</i> (the wife of a person)	1 <i>murume wemunhu</i> (the husband of a person)
31 <i>mukadzi womunhu</i> (the wife of a person)	1 <i>murume womunhu</i> (the husband of a person)
9 <i>mukadzi wanhingi</i> (wife of X)	6 <i>munhu womurume</i> (a person of male - a male)
5 <i>mukadzi waani</i> (whose wife)	5 <i>semunhu wemurume</i> (like a person of male man)
	6 <i>somunhu womurume</i> (like a person of male man)
	6 <i>kumusha kwomurume</i> (the (birth) home of the husband/man)
	14 <i>kumusha kwemurume</i> (the (birth) home of the husband/man)
10 <i>mukadzi chaiye</i> (proper/real woman)	7 <i>murume chaiye</i> (proper/real man)
170 <i>mukadzi uyu</i> (this woman/wife)	189 <i>murume uyu</i> (this man/husband)

Note: The figure to the left of each collocation refers to frequency of occurrence. Among these collocations, I have picked for discussion those examples that I have observed being used in discourses emphasizing gender roles and role differences. In the presentation, I use one or two collocation concordances. More can be viewed in Appendix 4-III.

a) “*\*ni*” “*mukadzi*” 27 hits or “*\*ni*” “*murume*” 26 hits

The concordance searches for *\*ni mukadzi* yield 27 hits, of which 20 contain the *ini* pronoun, while the rest are not connected to the study, eg., *Mainini mukadzi* (aunt is a woman/female) (where the *-ni* is part of the noun).

The pair examined here is:

*ini mukadzi* (I/me, the woman/wife)

*ini murume* (I/me, the man/husband).

The grammatical frame in this collocation (Benson et al. 1986) of Pronoun + Noun occurs quite naturally in Shona, where the pronoun is used for emphasis or contrast. Here are examples of concordances of the collocations (see Appendix 4-III for more):

*Rejis kudadira ini mukadzi wako nyama imwe newe ? Kutsunga kusvika pakunditiza uchizovata woga?*

Rejis, ignoring me your wife, one flesh with you? Determined to run away from me so you can sleep alone?

*Rangarirai zvenyu kuti ini mukadzi womuchato zvakanhiremera sei kuti ndivate mumba imwe cheteyo navamwe vanhu.*

Remember that for me, a wedded wife, how hard it is for me to sleep in the same room with other people.

The general impression that emerges from these examples and more in Appendix 4-III with *ini mukadzi* is:

- I am (your/a) wife,
- I am the wife of X (where the wife either states a fact or highlights her properness and respectfulness as a married woman, or, her subservient or ‘second best’ role to men).

As with “*\*ni*” “*mukadzi*” the corpus searches with the collocations “*\*ni*” “*murume*” yield 26 hits of which 20 contain the *-ni* and the rest are not connected to the study, as in eg., *zvakanakafani* (sic) *murume* (for *zvakanaka fani* - it is all very good, man). Here is a representative example of a relevant collocation:

*tinofanirwa kuudza mukadzi kuti handidi zvakati , handidi zvakati . Panyaya yokuti vana ava a-a ini murume chero zvandinenge ndareva , chero ndikati ndinoda gumi , ndinoda gumi .*

we must tell the wife that I don’t like this, I don’t like that. As far as these kids a-a, I, the man, whatever I say, if I say I want ten, I want ten.

The relevant examples of usage highlight men’s assertions of their authority, revealing such meanings as:

- I am the decider/ head of family/the leader;
- I am the centre/central figure;
- I am the man/husband;

- I am the brave and strong one.

The findings are in line with earlier results from the lexicographic and simple concordance searches.

- b) “\**mukadzi*” “*wemunhu*” 27 hits and “\**murume*” “*wemunhu*” 1 hit  
 “\**mukadzi*” “*womunhu*” 31 hits and “\**murume*” “*womunhu*” 1 hit

In *mukadzi/murume we/womunhu*, (wife/husband of a person), *munhu* (person) is made to substitute for *murume/ mukadzi* (husband/wife), respectively. Such a usage of *murume/ mukadzi* makes the node synonymous with the generic *munhu*. If we go by the frequencies, the collocation structure *mukadzi we/womunhu*, occurs relatively more frequently than *murume we/womunhu* which occurs only twice.

The following examples present contexts with *mukadzi wemunhu*:

*Hazvigone kudaro muzukuru kuti mukadzi wemunhu aperekedzane nemumwe murume husiku hwakadai nyangwe iwo masikati .*

It should not be like that grandchild for a wife of a person to be strolling with another man so late or even during daytime.

*Handidi kukunzvenga kana kuti upedze bhutsu uchifambira dhongi rakaora . Chokwadi chinoti Hilda ave mukadzi wemunhu .*

I don't want to avoid you or for you to finish your shoes (soles) coming for a dead donkey. The truth is that Hilda is now the wife of a person...

What is suggested is that:

- this is an expression for chiding or admonishing a married woman for not conforming with what is expected of a 'proper' wife;
- it also emphasizes that the woman is taken, i.e., she is no longer a free agent.

Also carrying similar meanings are:

*mukadzi waNgingi* (wife of X) (14 hits),

*mukadzi womumwe* (wife of another) (10 hits),

where *nhingi* and *mumwe* refer to a male person. She is somebody's wife, and that is what gives her status in a home where she has been brought in.

Here are the two *murume we/womunhu* hits:

*kuwanana kwenhaka kwaiuya mushure mokufa komurume womunhu .*

inheritance of a new wife would come after the death of the husband of a person.

*asina ruzivo rwokuti munhu amumba ava murume wemunhu unozvifambisa sei saka basa ratete ipapo rinenge richitorwa.*

Without knowing that the person (in the house?) is now the husband of a person (proper wife?!) how to go about it, so the aunt's job will be taken.

The contexts seem to suggest, though not conclusively, because of the typographical error(s) or (possibly) dialectal variation in the second example, that *munhu* in these environments refers to:

- a deceased wife; or
- a properly married wife ( i.e. not a mistress or girlfriend or one not 'properly' married).

If we take the suggestions, from this limited data, as the likely interpretation of the contexts, then both examples would seem to reflect that qualified 'special' women, not the generality of women, are referred to as *vanhu* (people) here, whereas for men, there is no need to qualify the *munhu*.

For *murume* what is highlighted is their central role as possessors of wives while for *mukadzi* it is that she belongs to a man and that the directing of her behaviour is the society's (including the husband).

- c) “*\*mukadzi*” “*chaiye*” (17 hits) and “*\*murume*” “*chaiye*” (17 hits) – all relevant.

Here is a typical *mukadzi chaiye* example:

*akasvika kumurume ngaachiva mukadzi chaiye - kwete kuti murume kana asipo waenda kubasa kana kupi wosara waanomurume murume*

... when she gets to the husband she should be a proper wife – not be with other men when the husband has gone to work or elsewhere ...

The set of collocations as a whole carries the stereotype meaning of a proper woman, who is:

- calm, composed and of good character;
- fertile;
- beautiful.

The *murume chaiye* collocation is exemplified here by:

*ndichochi chokusaroorwa chete. But otherwise it's not something for me to worry about dear. Komurume chaiye ndinomudii ? Ini ndiri murume pachangu.*  
not being married. But otherwise it's not something for me to worry about dear. But what do I need a real man for? I am a man in my own right.

*Handisati ndambonzwa zvakadaro , baba vemwana . Asi murume chaiye pakadaro angaenda kumapurisa akanobudisa mhosva yake pachena.*

I have never heard of something like that, father-of-the-children. In such a case a real man would need to go to the police and own up to his crime...

Suggestions from these and the other examples in Appendix 4-III show the stereotype meaning of a man, who is:

- Real (synonymous with manly) - having leadership qualities, capable, competent, etc.;

- grown and virile;
- big and strong.

When the same expression, *murume chaiye* (real man) is used to refer, metaphorically, to a woman, as in the first example above, it denotes the same positive elements as with the biological male. This meaning has also surfaced in earlier findings.

#### 4.2.3.2 Nouns and auxiliary verbs

What follows is a presentation of examples of auxiliary verbs that the bigrams show as adjacently cooccurring with either *mukadzi* or *murume*:

Table 4.14: Verbal collocations with *murume/mukadzi* in the ALLEX Shona corpus

Mukadzi	<u>Murume</u>
Auxilliary verb	
18 <i>ndiri mukadzi</i> (I am a woman/wife)	22 <i>ndiri murume</i> (I am a man/husband)
20 <i>uri mukadzi</i> (you are a woman/wife)	33 <i>Uri murume</i> (you are a man/husband)

Note: The figure to the left of each collocation refers to frequency of occurrence.

As before, I select examples that will highlight women and men's roles and responsibilities.

“\*uri” “*mukadzi*” (20 hits) and “\*uri” “*murume*” (33 hits)

The ‘*uri mukadzi*’ (you are a woman/wife) and ‘*uri murume*’ (you are a man/husband) collocations show a relative balance of occurrences. I found only two of the 33 for *murume* with no connection to the study.

Typical examples are shown below:

*Ko kuzvibatawo kunei mukadzi wemunhu Papari papari kupaparika uri mukadzi rudzii Mbiri yaenda kure*

Why not hold yourself with calm and caution the wife of a person? Walking around carelessly and doing things without calm and composure - what type of a wife are you? Your notoriety has gone far (and wide).

*Ini ndino donhesa varume kwavo kwete tudharara twapera pendi twaka fanana newe Nyika . Iwe uri mukadzi wangu pazvibha kera.*

...I fight and fell real man not old finished men like you, Nyika. You are my wife (i.e. a woman) when it comes to fighting.

The data suggest that, when used for a woman, the expression has the following meanings:

*Uri mukadzi* – to a woman

- You are a woman/wife (stating a role);

- You are a woman/wife and therefore you should know your place (expectation - stating both gender roles and stereotypes);
- You are someone's wife and therefore should behave accordingly (stereotype meaning - control).

*Uri mukadzi* – to a man

It suggests:

- You are a coward – not a real man;
- You do women's work (something to be despised);
- You fight like a woman (badly);
- You are 'my wife' (I dominate you). Being someone's wife means accepting domination through given gender roles and through sex.

The general corpus searches as well as the draft definitions for the DRC (treated as part of the questionnaire data) highlight this same metaphorical *mukadzi* meaning. When used to refer to a man, metaphorically, this same expression is a downright insult, meant to provoke the referent or addressee, as in the second example. In the questionnaire, respondents expressed reservations about this meaning. This negative social meaning, however, does not appear in the DGR Part I entry for *chikadzi*.

Turning to *uri murume*, here are typical examples:

*Uri murume rega kutya . Rega kuita somukadzi.*

You are a man you should not be afraid. Don't do like a woman.

*Kana uchifunga kuti uri murume, uya pano .*

If you think that you are a man, come here.

The data suggest that, when it is used to refer to a man, the expression has the following meanings:

- You are the man;
- You are courageous and strong;
- You are capable and decisive;
- You talk sense;
- You can and you do fight your wars (ie., you do not need assistance – the unspoken assumption being that the other sex does).

Unlike with *uri mukadzi* examples, there were no *uri murume* examples that referred to females in the limited 31 hits.

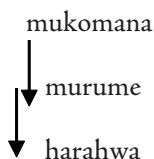
## 4.3 Discussion

### 4.3.1 Towards a definition of womanhood and manhood

After an examination of the lexicographic texts and contexts of usage for *-kadzi* and *-rume*, together with the other related nouns, what emerges is that the concepts are understood both biologically (physically) and socially (cultural stereotypes and gender roles).

In investigating the forms, I have traced the meanings of the main human forms from those naming the young (*musikana* and *mukomana*), where the womanhood and manhood foundation is laid, through to those naming adults (*mukadzi* and *murume*) and, finally, to those naming the elderly (*chembere* and *harahwa*). Below are the discussions of the findings of these investigations.

#### 4.3.1.1 Malehood



*Ukomana* and *urume* are separated by youth, which marks the former, and virility, which marks the latter. There is an overlap between *mukomana* and *murume*, with *mukomana* being sometimes used for grown married/unmarried men, in the same manner that *murume* is used as the generic reference term for all adult male forms, including *harahwa*. On a recent ZBC Radio 3 commercial program, for example, the presenter kept talking about “*vakomana vedu*” (our boys) when referring to the workers at a garbage disposal company. Even callers to the program, both women and men, also referred to the workers as *vakomana*, or as *mukomana*, where they were talking about one of them.

##### a) *Mukomana*

The investigation into the meaning of *mukomana* shows that the term refers to a youthful male, a boy, boy friend, a young man or a strong man, the last two referents confirming *mukomana*’s reference to manhood. The data suggests both social stereotype and gender roles for *mukomana* as follows:

##### i) Independence and leadership

It is believed that *mukomana* gains early independence, as preparation for a leading role in the family and society reflected, eg., in the proverb *ane mhuri ngeane mhurikadzi* (4.2.1.3).

##### ii) Potential for violence

It seems to be expected (and condoned), that, as a man, he may need to prove his muscle or courage. *Kuyarutsa mwanakomana kuzvikohwera mapfumo mumba* (To raise a boy child is to harvest and bring spears into your household) point to aggressive and abusive behaviour being perceived as an integral part of young male behaviour (see also Chap 7 where *bhinya* (murderer/rapist) is seen as a label wholly for men).

##### b) *Murume*

The data gathered on uses and definitions of *murume* expose the features an adult male, a male, a man, a husband and protector and a provider for the family (irrespective of sex). When he gets old or dies, he remains a father and creator of a lineage (highlighted in the ‘male *chembere*’ example). He is also the one who leads in the spiritual



matters of the family. Older age and/or marriage qualify a boy or young man into *urume* status, although in some contexts, he may still be referred to as *mukomana*.

Some informants said they reserved *murume* for mature men, “*murume ndibaba*” (a man is a father - a big person). Interestingly, the plural forms *vakomana* (boys) and *varume* (men) are used interchangeably by both women and men. This is observed where, for example, some people may find it awkward or unsure of whether to refer to a young man as *mukomana* or *murume* but will feel quite comfortable to refer to two such men as *vakomana* or *varume*. For *murume*, emphasis is put on his expected gender roles.

The man is more often seen as an individual, as in such definitions as in the SSD, which defines *murume* as ‘man’ where it defines *mukadzi* as ‘married woman’. In ‘man’ there are no assumptions that one can make about his sexual state or marital status, in the same manner that one can with ‘married woman’. The main features that are important for *murume* are:

#### i) Headship, leadership and dominance

From the corpus, the collocations suggest that the expectations for a good man are that he should be the man, the ‘real’ one. To be ‘real’ has more to do with an actual genuine entity, not an imitation or rehearsal, but a principal being. *Murume* emerges as what is referred to as the benchmark or generic form (Spender 1980; Fasold 1990; Ehrlich and King 1998; Lyons 1977).

Contexts of use taken from the corpus such as, *murume here iyeye asina dzimudzangara* (what kind of a man is he who does not own a radio), indirectly express the expectation for a man to own property to mark his worthiness as the leader and head of the household. If he does not have property, then questions are raised as to whether he is *murume chaiye* (the real man). He ‘owns’ the wife, as well. He is the one who goes out and ‘pays for a wife’ through *roora*, a context some claim gives men leverage over women. In the discussions that I held, some of my informants, in both Mhondoro and Harare, offered marriage practices, among others, as an explanation for male dominance. In Shona culture, the man performs the act of marrying. The wife is married. The woman then, subsequently, goes to the man, his (extended) family and his home, probably already filled with his possessions. It is, therefore, expected of the man to provide for the family, as the head of the household. This exposition makes it obvious why a structure like *murume we/womunhu* (husband of a person) has only two hits to 56 for *mukadzi we/womunhu* (wife of a person). Wives ‘belong’ to their husbands. In the other collocations, *ini murume* (I, the man/husband) or *uri murume* (you are the man), men are also shown as reflecting male authority.

#### ii) Protectors and providers

As a protector and provider, the man shows strength, bravery and fearlessness. In the DGR Part II, *panotorerwa chirume demo panosara matsunetsune* (a human male does not often allow himself to be defeated by another) or *kufa kwemurume kubuda maura* (the dying of a man is the coming out (rupturing of his intestines) illustrate these assumptions and expectations. The corpus contains expressions like *-zvisimbisa semurume* (being strong like a man) or *-mira-mira semunhu wemurume* (being sharp, strong and tough like a man). Doing things the *chirume* way is doing them with cleverness, efficiency, strength and bravery, not the weak female way. Sense 3 of the *murume* DGR Part I entry also highlights the strength and bravery stereotype meaning, hedged with ‘it is said’, implying that it is believed by some people. Women can also earn, hono-

rarily, this *chirume* quality if they perform beyond expectation of their womanly roles (see social males' below).

The work that a man does is important. He is seen as a business-like, shrewd or serious person, such that whatever he does, although it may appear inconvenient to others, is always for a cause. See, *murume kufuma kubuda mumba kutumirira muromo* (for a man to be at someone's house early means he has something [important] to discuss (in 4.2.2.3)).

### iii) Male dominance through virility

*Urume* highlights male dominance through virility. The sperm/semen is understood as a metaphor of the power that men have in them, and with which they dominate women. The contexts in the corpus describe this male capacity as '*simba*', a word that means power or strength.

### iv) Metaphoric/social/honorary males

It also emerges from the data that, women can be elevated to honorary (metaphorical) males if they display strong and provider tendencies that are said to be associated with men. Then they earn such compliments as, "*murume chaiye*" ((she) is a real man). A metaphorical male is a woman who is more-than-a-mere woman.

However, as the data shows, if women perform sexual male stereotype behaviours, such as taking people of the opposite sex as sexual objects, etc., then they are labelled as prostitutes (see also Chap 7 on labels).

### c) Harahwa

*Harahwa* is a *murume*, an old one. Therefore, some of the things that have been discussed in the preceding section also apply to *harahwa*. Here are the additional features that are highlighted for *harahwa*:

#### i) Family elder and leader

An analysis of *harahwa* (old man) expressions shows that he is acknowledged to be physically old, and as a result not capable of doing the physical things he used to do on his own. His condition is viewed as an inevitable consequence of age. He is allowed to age gracefully as, despite his physical limitations, he is assured of continued headship, both physically and spiritually (see *chembere ndeyembwa, yomurume ndibaba vevana* (it is an old dog that stops fathering; that of an old man is a father of the children)).

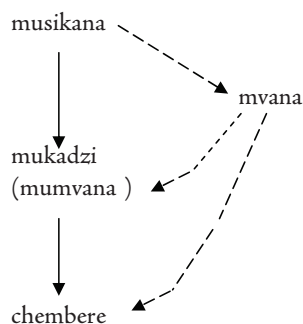
#### ii) Virility

*Harahwa's* stereotypic role, as a virile man, even in old age, is emphasized in his involvement with younger women, as shown in the prevalence of this idea in corpus concordances. There seems to be a celebration of the idea that *harahwa*, despite the limitations that come, inevitably, with his age, can get a young girl/woman to like him. Male virility is celebrated and honoured, in men, in general. In days gone, older men inherited or were given (additional) young wives. Today, such marriages still happen, though not as often (see, for example, the concordance example two in 4.2.2.6).

### 4.3.1.2 Femalehood

The data examined suggests that the woman's path is not as overlapping as the man's. The female develops from *musikana* (*mhandara*) – a virgin, to *mukadzi* (or a detour,

*mvana* depending on the woman's marital status), to *chembere*.) Here is a diagrammatic representation of the lexical developments:



**Figure 4.1: The woman's path from girlhood to old age**

- The direct route is the ideal route, and the one openly referred to.
- - → The detour is, in some people's usage, restricted to use within their inner circle. They may or may not use this form outside their circles when referring to a woman, hence the broken arrow.

*Usikana* and *ukadzi* are described by sexual terms, virginity and fertility, respectively. *Usikana* is presented, as a (dangerous) period to guard and cherish, as it is transitory, and, once lost, will be lost for good. There are emotional reactions to the loss of virginity or of non-chaste behaviour, warning girls and young women not to play with fire or to accept the inevitable. It was explained during discussions that there are even taboos imposed on *vasikana* that if they have sex outside marriage, then they will break their mother's backs.

#### a) *Musikana*

The investigations into the meanings of *musikana* show that the form refers to a girl child, a girl, a virgin, a girl friend, an object of men's desire, a potential homemaker, an investment, or a young (ripe-to-take) woman, highlighting both gender roles and stereotypes. The suggested meanings make *musikana* relevant to the study of womanhood. What follows is a discussion of the highlighted features:

#### i) The virgin

A closer look at the questionnaire, the DGR entries and the corpus data reveal youth and virginity as the main qualifying factors of defining *musikana*. Modesty, innocence, purity and chastity are presumed to be synonymous with her youth status. *Musikana's* role is highlighted, from the beginning, as being a sexually oriented one – the virgin, *musikana akakwana* (girl who is full) ready to be taken by men, literally and otherwise, to the next phase. In discussions on the questionnaire-cum-interview, in Mhondoro, both women and men emphasized the onset of menstruation and virginity as the prerequisite factors that separate the 'little girls' from the 'grown girls'. There was, therefore, need to have two senses of *musikana*, they said. One definition would be for the little girls and teenagers and the other for the grown girls (young women), the latter meaning being synonymous to *mhandara* (a virgin of marriageable age) or any young woman, depending on the context.

ii) An object of male desire

The wise sayings listed in the *musikana* GDR entry and the corpus data containing *harahwa* present interesting correlations reflecting societal, especially male, views of who *musikana* is. *Musikana* in the expressions, is 'devalued' (Schur 1983: 30), and seen metaphorically as a fruit, hotly sought by birds; a river, where anyone can fish; a forest of firewood, where anyone can pick; a pile of stones, to which anyone can add to; and, grease, something one uses to cook for all. Devaluation implies treating people as objects (Schur 1983). Due to reasons of space, I will not be able to explain these metaphors in depth, but a brief explanation should suffice. The rough interpretation of these expressions is that *musikana* is an object for men to pick and 'consume'. She is single and 'out there', and, therefore free game. The expressions contain sexual overtones, highlighting *musikana* in terms of her potential sexual use by men.

iii) The investment

In her birth home, *musikana* is seen as an investment that will bring the father wealth through *roora* (bride wealth).

iv) The (potential) homemaker

The grease expression highlights the idea that a girl is important to perpetuating life. When she gets married, she is the fat that sparks and settles elsewhere to build another family and other lives. Having been married, she moves from her birth home, settles in her marital home, and makes a home for her husband. This is, metaphorically, part of her reproductive role, that of being able to bring new life and life to a 'new' family.

b) *Mukadzi*

The Shona '*mukadzi*' is conceived as a woman, wife (married woman), mother and lover.

i) The loss of virginity

Once *musikana* sleeps with a man, then she is no longer *mhandara* (virgin), but is now considered *mukadzi*, *mvana* or *chembere*<sup>20</sup>, depending on her marital status, and, in the latter case, perceived aging that comes with sex. It is said that it is the man who tames the *gombo* (virgin land) - the 'wild' *musikana* into a *mukadzi* or *mvana* or *chembere* by taking her virginity. A young *musikana* can get these titles if she sleeps around, being a result of the perceived 'wear-and-tear' on the woman from the effects of sex. In other words, the effects of being 'used' and dominated by men during sex. This progression is also observed among the Ndebele, where the *inkazana/intombi* (girl), the equivalent to *musikana*, is said to become *umfazi* (woman), just as *musikana* becomes *mukadzi*. As observed, the woman's loss of virginity is talked of as resulting from men taking the virginity, rather than women giving it. It is as if the virginity was never the woman's to give, but the man's - part of the package that he pays *roora* for. Such expectations would explain the 'cloth tradition'. In some Shona communities, the value of *roora*

<sup>20</sup> On a taped ZBC Radio 4 program (late nineties -exact date unknown) "*Kutsikirirana kwetsika*" led by Mark Peter Mupfurutsa, and in which Mr Stephen Munjanja, a gynaecologist, was a consultant, one of the male panelists, an 'expert' on tradition, kept hammering the point that "*vana vedu*" (our children - males) are being given STDs and sexual disorders by *chembere* that they sleep with in the cities.

(bride wealth) was, and still is, partly determined by whether the woman is a virgin or not. After a check by the elders, a white plain cloth at the marriage ceremony reveals a virgin 'state', while *jira rakaboowa* (a white cloth with a hole in the middle) exposes a non-virgin 'state' of the bride-to-be. A 'pure and untouched' body is rewarded, with the award to the father of a huge *roora*, while a deflowered body fetches less, as it is 'already used'.

The data reveals that *ukadzi* comes with assumptions of adult-non-virgin-married status and assumed fertility. In comparison, the English equivalent comes with 'adult-married status irrelevant'. Virginity or the lack of it does not seem to receive prominence in the English context, hence there are differences in assumptions.

ii) The object of male desire

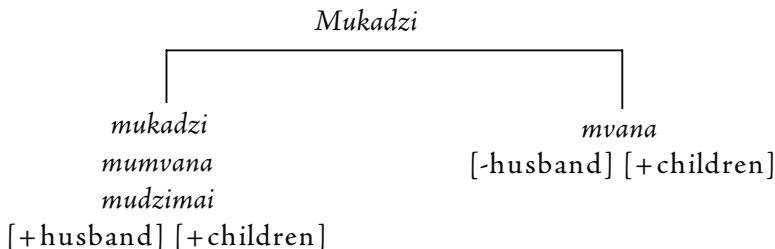
Like *musikana*, *mukadzi* is also seen as a sexual object. For example, *mhosvakadzi muri-po mwene* (a crime committed by a woman is a crime that pays for itself) literally says that a man should not worry if a woman owes him, or if she cannot pay back what she owes; she can always do so 'in kind'. The men can always ask for sexual favours, in return for a cancellation of debt. The literal meaning of the proverbs seems to imply that men might actually enjoy getting sex as compensation or punishment from women who owe them.

iii) The marked category

What is notable in the GDR Part I of the dictionary is that the global definition mentions women with reference to the feature [- man], a negative definition which makes *murume* the positive reference point, the unmarked central form. *Murume* is unmarked in the sense of having (a positive value of) a feature, while *mukadzi* is marked in the sense of having a negative value of a feature (see esp. Matthews 1997 for this treatment of markedness). As Cameron (1998) and Lakoff (1987) highlight, markedness is a manifestation of asymmetry (see more on asymmetry in 4.3).

iv) The proper and not-so-proper woman: *mukadzi* and *mvana*

*Mumvana* is the married, morally correct mother, while *mvana* is the unmarried mother or the divorcee who, the data suggests, is regarded as a moral failure. This is because she loses her virginity and/or has children out of marriage. Since *mumvana* is the married woman, there is no need to label her, so she remains the generic *mukadzi* or *mudzimai* (the woman). On the other hand, *mvana*, because of the stigma that goes with her state is made visible as the marked one, i.e., the one who needs to be qualified. *Mukadzi* and *mvana* are therefore separated by marriage, with the former being the proper woman, the latter being the bad woman, the one deviating from the norm. Here is how *mukadzi* is subcategorised, diagrammatically:



Such a feature analysis makes *mumvana* and *mvana* antonyms, the one feature that separates them being the +/-husband. The woman's 'properness' and status are therefore dependent on whether she has a man (marriage) or not in her adult life.

#### *Umvana* (single motherhood)

It is important to emphasize, as mentioned in the introduction to the chapter, that not all users of the language are comfortable with referring to a single mother as *mvana*, because of its connotations of immorality, and because the term at least borders on the coarse. Many, therefore, often avoid the term. Others use the term, regardless of the prejudice or vulgarity in the term. The data do suggest that *mvana* really does belong in the chapter on 'bad language'. In the data, *umvana* is often referred to with sarcastic ridicule and mockery, bordering on thoughtlessness. The explanation given, for example in the interviews, was that societal expectations demand that every woman's aspiration should be to stay a virgin until she gets married, thus preserving herself for her husband. Most of the young men that I talked to during the course of my research said that when they eventually got married, they wanted a virgin for a wife, someone who was really 'theirs' – "*mukadzi akazara*" (a full woman) not *chembere* that already had been 'deflowered' or 'possessed', as the English language would put it (Frank and Anshen 1983). Such women were described as '*magaba*' (empty cans). Some informants described them also as "used or damaged goods". The fact that a woman is the receiver of semen is somehow seen as a humiliation and/or exploitation or a plundering of female resources (the master and victim concept of sexuality) (see, for example, Brothers 1998: 375). Chimhundu (1987: 6) writes, 'the logical conclusion ... is that the Shona view sex as a form of invasion and conquest in which the men annihilate the women who are forced to yield and surrender'.

*Mvana* is mocked as having the *mudzimu* ((in this context) ineffective spiritual guidance, bad luck) to be dumped, and through other sarcastic sayings such as, *zviri kumvana kubara mwana asina baba* (it is up to the sluttish single mother to bear a child who has no father to bear a 'fatherless' child'). In *kunyenga zvimvana ita zviviri, kura-mba kwechimwe, chimwe unosara nacho* (when you date some sluttish single mothers make them two, so that when one dumps you, you have another to fall back on) she is portrayed as lacking trust or worthiness. Being placed in noun class 8 (*zvi-mvana*), a class of things and objects, the form signals objectification, the single mothers or unmarried non-virgins (see 1.3.1 for noun class descriptions). The *zvimvana* expression encourages men that, if they have to have *mvana*, then they should see two at a time, because these women cannot be trusted to commit themselves to a man. The prejudice that comes out of this proverb is that, once a woman has the misfortune of having a child out of marriage, she is labelled as adulterous. This thinking is clearly apparent in more proverbs and corpus concordances. The expressions reveal the society's prejudices against female divorcees, that it is their own doing that the marriage breaks up (see also Gaidzanwa 1985; Chitauro-Mawema 1995). The (single) women are made the dishonest parties, while men become their (potential) victims. Men are even discouraged from sleeping with *mvana* or '*chembere*' as they can make them sick from sexually transmitted diseases and other ailments and misfortunes, which are linked to 'wrong' sex. The same message is also given to young Ndebele men. The Ndebele, also, discourage and control young men from relationships with so-called *mvana* or *chembere*. They have a saying *ungalali lezalikazi – uzamila uboya* (you should not sleep with an old woman – you will grow hair throughout your body) thus portraying the woman



as a risk<sup>21</sup>. The perception that women are the offending party is revealed in such a proverb as *mukadzi akarambwa inhema yokumutsirwa* (a woman who was divorced by her husband is like a rhino that has been agitated or provoked by another) - a woman scorned. She is seen as a charged rhino, ready to attack. The metaphor suggests that the divorcee (female) is believed to be thick-skinned, wild, unpredictable and dangerous in the same way that the rhino is. In the DGR, there is also another proverb, which does not contain the form *mvana*, but which carries the same sentiments. The proverb goes, *ibvapamwe hairoorwi* (that which has left/come from one place should not be taken - i.e., a woman who has left one marriage you should not marry). These proverbs highlight the assumed uncontrollableness, obstinacy and danger of *mvana*, thereby giving reason for society's need to control her (and her sexuality). The data seems to suggest that women who do not conform, i.e., cannot be controlled, like the rhino, are a red light to society; hence the stigmatisation.

#### v) Wifeness and motherhood

Marriage and motherhood are seen as a woman's biggest achievement, the fulfilment of one's womanhood. With the role of wife and mother comes the homemaker gender role. *Musha mukadzi* (A home is a woman) or *kunzi mukadzi ari apa kunatsa munyu* (to be said there is a woman/wife is to be good with salt) acknowledge women for their role as homemakers, a positive gender role for women. The expressions highlight women's domestic role, as the ones who take care of the home on behalf of the husband. The implication is that, while men provide for the home, the home is not a home without the wife - that the wife and husband have complementary roles.

Also suggesting the complementarity and balance of roles is *chakadya ndebvu dzavakadzi ndichowo chakadya mazamu evarume* (that which ate the woman's beard is that which ate the man's breasts). The proverb hints at the need to take a 'different and equal' thinking (Tannen 1990), in the sense that, while the sexes are both different and lacking in some way (the man has no breasts while the woman has no beard), they are all equally human. However, this thinking seems to get buried somewhere in masculinity hegemonic thinking. The thinking is submerged as women are depersonalised when being a woman or doing things the female way is said to be weak and inefficient in *chikadzi*, especially in view of the positive thinking expressed in *chirume*.

*Kuroora mukadzi roora muroyi, unofuma wowana chinokurwisira daka* (To marry a wife marry a witch, this will get you something to carry out your irreconcilable hatred) together with *muroyi haaroyi murume wake* (a witch does not bewitch her husband), show the wife as the base form, the unmarked form in the witching expressions. In the first proverb, she needs to be a witch, i.e., possess some supernatural powers, to be brave. Without these powers she will do things the *chikadzi* way, the weak way. The proverbs could also be complimentary to women, suggesting that women do not involve themselves in fights and hatreds unless they have bad powers; or, that even if they are bad, they are at least protective of their husbands.

<sup>21</sup> My informant said that, as a boy, he used to get the creeps, when he imagined himself unknowingly dating an older woman and getting hairs throughout his body - like a cat. He says that noone likes to look like a cat, so such taboos helped to keep you away from older women. He said that, even when one grows older, their mind would have been set already.



With the emphasis placed on wifhood and motherhood, one would expect this role to be compellingly expressed, but this does not seem to be the case. From the data that I collected for an on-going project on maternity discourse, four verbs,

–*zvara* (give birth), –*sununguka* (lit. be relieved), –*pona* (lit. survive) and –*batsirwa*/–*betserwa* (lit. be assisted/relieved) were given, among other expressions, as the prominent verbs that define the delivery process. It was reported that parents often discourage young people from using the generic term, –*zvara*, which is regarded as taboo for humans. They encourage the use of the other euphemistic three. Some informants explained that the form, –*zvara*, is seen as being too crude and explicit for use with humans, hence it has to be avoided. They thought that the reason was because –*zvara* draws attention to sex and the vagina, a taboo area, hence the use of euphemistic language to avoid mentioning the obscene or upsetting. The term is, however, acceptable for animals. The passive form, –*zvarwa*, is interestingly, used with humans. While the woman is still the subject of

–*sununguka* and –*pona*, the verbs describe an action that happens on its own volition. The last verb, *batsirwa*/*betserwa*, is a passive verb. The tabooed verb, on the other hand, is the active, active verb, which highlights agency. Although some may argue that the use of euphemism is evidence of sensitivity to women's pain, I would like to suggest that, the avoidance of the term –*zvara* has the effect of reducing the greatness and might of a potentially dangerous and brave act that a woman risks. I argue that the avoidance of –*zvara* for the euphemistic terms has the effect of implicitly turning the delivery process into more of a sexual activity or bodily function *inonyadzisira* (embarrassing) than a prominent female role. The *Penguin Dictionary of Language* defines euphemism as:

The use of a vague or indirect expression in place of one which is thought to be unpleasant, embarrassing, or offensive. Euphemisms are typically used to replace expressions to do with death, sexual activity, and other bodily functions; examples include *pass on* for *die*, or *powder my nose* for *go to the toilet*.

The euphemistic forms have the effect, conscious or unconscious, of lightening the magnitude and power of the delivery act, thus marginalizing the woman's role. Euphemism is not necessarily neutral. A non-veiled acknowledgement of the gravity and pain of *kuzvara* (child birth) would make women brave, strong and fearless, rather than the stereotypic cowardly references in some of the *mukadzi* and *chikadzi* senses. Besides, it would seem that –*zvara* is not completely tabooed with humans as it is used acceptably in other human contexts, which do not describe the action per se, as in *mai/baba vakandizvara* (the mother/father who conceived me), or, in *mwana wanguka wandakazvara uyu* (she is a child that I brought forth). Euphemism, neutralization or passivisation, therefore, does not help the 'weak and passive' stereotype image (vis. the male 'active and strong' stereotype).

Neutralization of the female role during labour is not only restricted to Shona, but is reported in other languages as well. The Ndebele also use the euphemistic *ukhulekile* (has been freed) and also discourage the use of –*zala* (the equivalent of –*zvara*), for the same reasons I have highlighted for –*zvara*. Talbot (1998: 163), commenting on the contents of a Sharoe Green Maternity Unit's publication, observes that, in the

pamphlet, a woman is 'never the grammatical subject of the verb 'deliver'. A medical practitioner does the delivery on her behalf.

Women's identities and worthiness are attached to their childbearing role, yet the microscopic scrutiny, allowed elsewhere, is avoided in the delivery room. The euphemistic verbs lighten and dilute the woman's agency in a role that is supposed to be her defining role – her fulfilment (see Spender 1985: 54). I argue that women's work is denied status through tabooing the term that names what she does. Taboos have the effect of silencing. Such uses of language therefore disadvantage women by not openly acknowledging their role. This is even more so, when we consider that, for women, any other achievement, besides wifehood and motherhood, is considered secondary. Or, it is just not seen, much less acknowledged.

#### vi) Perpetual dependents/minors

Unlike boy children who claim their independence early, females, the 'weak sex', continue to want to be supported, see *ane mhuri ndeane mhurikadzi*. ... (one who has a (big) family is one with female children ...). This expression suggests that women are dependents who are fed and taken care of by men. While promoting the broader patriarchal picture that says that men are the heads, the expression fails to acknowledge the significance of the work that, women, even as daughters, contribute to the household. The features highlighted under *musikana* as (potential) homemakers seem to be at odds with the proverb under discussion. In one, the woman makes the home, while in the other she is the baggage. Ndebele provides a more telling term to refer to women and their minor status. The term for women, *abesintwana* (lit. those of the type of children/like children) shows the manner in which women are viewed just like children. What this incompatibility highlights could be the fact that society has a tendency to turn a blind eye to the value of women's contributions in the home. The real job seems to be the guardianship which fathers, brothers, and later, husbands provide, rather than in keeping the home. Such attitudes could be explained as having been entrenched as a result of urbanisation that created 'workers' and 'providers' (men); and 'housewives' (women). The source of such categorisations would still remain, though, a patriarchal one, for how would one explain *abesintwana*?

The same sentiments of the weakness, dependence and helplessness of women come out in the *ini mukadzi* collocation where women are appealing to their men to recognize their roles. (Conversely, the men are asserting their authority in the *ini murume* collocations). Besides, women's roles are determined by men (also seen in Chap 5 where address is determined by males).

#### vii) Subservience

Proper women are expected to know their place, be quiet and listen to their husbands, who are the owners and heads of the households. In discussions, it was revealed that in households and the extended marital family, the woman is seen as a '*mutorwa*' (one who lives with a family though not a kin – an outsider) in her marital family. And, as a *mutorwa*, she has no "voice" in her marital home. As a result, she should listen to the man of the house.

The uncontrollable woman who cannot control her mouth and is 'always shouting' is not *mukadzi chaiye* (proper woman) (see also *jetu* in Chap 7 where the data shows the label as used, wholly, for women).

The metaphorical *mukadzi* meaning for men, which is negative, also highlights female subservience. From my informal discussions and observations at church and social functions, such as baby showers and kitchen tea parties, the church and the Bible, together with tradition, were named as guides for proper womanhood (leading to successful marriages). The women said that it was the men that they expected to respect, as they had paid *roora* and provided for them and the children. The men were “*vanababa*” (lit. the fathers – the household heads) and “*varidzi vemisha yatigere*” (the owners of the homes we live in).

Christianity, through the Bible and church has, in some instances, played a significant role in entrenching certain values in women. It was said that the Bible clearly stated that the woman was to be below the man. The Adam and Eve story (Genesis) was cited, with emphasis on the perception that Eve, literally, came from Adam’s rib, and therefore women are seen as inferior to men because they were made from a man. Such bible passages as, 1 Corinthians 14: 34-5, Ephesians 5: 22 and 1 Timothy 2:12 were quoted to me. It was clear that the verses are taken literally, as the eternal truth of how a proper Christian wife should live. Here is one of the passages:

Sezvinoitwa mumasangano ose avanhu vaMwari, 34 vanhukadzi vose ngavan-gogara vakanyarara musangano sezvazvinoitwawo kuna mamwe masangano ose avatsvene, nokuti vanhukadzi havabvumirwi kutaura asi ngavazvirereke sezvinor-ehwa nomurayiro. 35 Kana vanhukadzi vachinge vane chimwe chinhu chavanoda kudzidza ngavabunze varume vavo vari kumba kwavo. Nokuti hazvina kufanira kuti munhukadzi ataure muSangano (1 VaKorinde 14: 34-5).

Like what happens in all the congregations of God, 34 all females should be quiet in the congregation as happens in all other congregation of the righteous, because women are not allowed to speak but they should humble themselves as is commanded by the commandments/teachings. 35 If females have something that they want to learn they should ask their husbands at home. Because it is not proper for females to speak in a congregation (1 Corinthians 14: 34-5).

The English translation given here is mine.

In my opinion, there is no attempt made to contextualise the events in the Bible to the times and traditions of the people that Paul’s letters were sent to. Also the educational backgrounds of the preachers and elders, and understanding of the Bible and its context, vary from neighbourhood to neighbourhood. The teachings of Paul on women’s subordination to men are convenient and work to the advantage of already existing patriarchal structures, further entrenching male dominance.

As Schaefer (1977) comments, whatever Paul actually intended in this pronouncement 2 000 years ago, we do not know, but what we now know is that the same pronouncement is now used to justify socially constructed domination of women. The modern Christian ‘mothers’ and ‘aunts’, the female leaders, use such verses in baby showers and kitchen tea parties to advise and counsel brides-to-be and married women. One of my informants remarked that such messages, which entrenched male authority, explained why some men encouraged their wives to go to church, while they themselves did not. The men knew that the church did not threaten their position, it was said.

Bing and Bergvall (1996: 8) also make the same observation that the church and other western traditions provided traditional reasons why males should rule females. Greek philosophers preached similar messages. Aristotle, for example, wrote that women should be prevented from taxing their brains with things like political activity, because it would dry up their womb (Talbot 1998: 105), suggesting that child bearing has been the prime female role from time immemorial.

#### viii) The outsider

One of the things that kept coming up in my discussions was that marriage meant women would have to move from their father and his guardianship to another man, the husband's guardianship, to a home where she would be a *mutorwa* (one who lives with a family though not a kin – an outsider). It was explained that she would be a *mutorwa* because her totem is different from her husband and children's. The husband and children share a totem. Consequently, the *midzimu* (ancestral spirits) that protect her are not from her marital family, but from her maternal and paternal families (see 1.2.1.3). Should anything go wrong or happen to her, like even death, her marital family, including the husband, are not allowed to do any last rites, otherwise they will have a *ngozi* (an angry spirit) on their hands. Her birth family takes over to direct what needs to be done. The same happens when the husband dies. The wife is equally sidelined and has to let the real (spiritual) relatives do what needs to be done, except she is required to sit at the head of the coffin throughout the wake. In contrast, tradition keeps the husband away from the wife's corpse.

It was said that, as a *mutorwa*, her marital family never really became hers. She also never becomes theirs. She belongs where she came from, where she is a 'child' under the guardianship of the father or brother(s). Her marital family, including her children, have to tread carefully, where she is concerned, so as not to anger her spirits, which are foreign to theirs, lest the result be *ngozi*. This belief in *midzimu* often deters abuse of mothers and women, in general, by their husbands, children and in-laws. Children are cautioned that, if they abuse their mother in any way, her *midzimu*, which also protect them (maternal *mudzimu*) will not be happy and will give them a difficult time unless the mother or her spirit (if she is dead) is appeased. Many defendants of Shona culture against purported western feminism often highlight this practice to show that Shona culture protected women from abuse. They say that the society had, and still has, safeguards to protect women and wives. The counter argument from feminist circles has been to question why men and fathers were also not, similarly, in need of this protection. They argue that while the belief's end result would be good for women, it still brings out the assumptions, apparent in the chapter, that women are weak and therefore need the society's (men's) protection. And, such protection, they say, borders on patronization.

#### ix) Metaphoric/social/honorary females

Men can be metaphorical females if they are thought to exhibit weaknesses like those said to be associated with women. The corpus (see Appendix 4-II) data suggests that one of the reasons women are said to be cowards is because when they fight, they *futa* or *jumba* (ambush/strike without warning), instead of declaring war, first. Men who do the same are therefore described to be as weak as the women. A metaphorical female is, therefore, a male who is considered less-than-a-male. Such references to a man as *mukadzi* are considered insults.

c) *Chembere*

Since *chembere* is a woman, some of the things that have been discussed in the preceding section also apply to her. Below are additional features highlighted for *chembere*.

i) A fraction of a woman: the disrespected *chembere*

*Chembere*, like the other women, is also defined in sexually charged terms, more precisely, sexually chargeless terms. *Chembere* is old (half a loaf) and at that age she is said to be sexually not as active as *harahwa*. She is regarded as a fraction of a woman (sexually), see *chembere mukadzi, hazvienzani nekurara mugota* (an elderly woman is (still) a woman; she cannot be compared to sleeping alone in the boys' hut. 4.2.1.6). The proverb intimates that, sexually, an elderly woman is no longer whole or complete, but is now a fraction of a woman. The more advanced corpus searches reveal the same findings. Apart from the obvious ageing matter, reading between the lines, the elderly woman's deficiency seems to lie in that she can no longer perform the female defining role, having babies. *Chembere masikati usiku imvana* (an old woman by day a lascivious single mother by night) also talks about sex, where elderly women are referred to as being involved in sexual activities by night. This proverb may suggest two things, depending on one's interpretation; that *chemberes* can surprise you by being sexually good, thereby defying expectations of 'dead and gone' performance. This interpretation captures the youthfulness of *mvana* compared to *chembere*; or, that it is a shame or disgrace for an elderly woman to be sexually active. This explanation captures the 'improperness' and ridicule that comes with sex and older women. Considering the explanation given for the proverb in the DGR Part II, that people can hide the bad things that they do when in public but do those things when alone (see 4.2.1.6); and the daytime and nighttime imagery in the proverb, which associates *uchembere* (old womanhood) with daylight and *umvana* (single motherhood) with nighttime, I am inclined to take the latter explanation.

The other senses of *chembere* that emerge, besides the old woman, are also sexually inclined. An (young) unmarried woman (*musikana*) becomes *mukadzi* (woman (not a good thing for a girl to be *mukadzi*)) if she is thought to be sexually active, and *chembere*, a 'used woman' if she is perceived to be "too" sexually active. She is also described as *chembere* if she is an older girlfriend/woman to a younger boyfriend/man, thus giving her assumed more sexual experience. (the suggestion is that the man is the one who needs to be more 'experienced'). Such references to a woman portray the ever-present desire, subtle or not so subtle, to control women's sexuality. The need, as mentioned before, seems to come from the view that sex makes women deteriorate and age, as their resources are plundered by men who are not their husbands. Girls and unmarried young women are often given advice to stay away from men, because *varume vanochembedza* (men cause aging). As with *mvana*, there are also stereotypical assumptions about these women being bad and controlling. The DGR Part I has an entry:

*chemberendiani ... mushonga unoshandiswa, zvikuru nevakadzi vechipfambi vakura, kuti kana vakarara nevakomana vechidiki vanobva vana-kidzwa zvokusaona kuti vari kurara nechembere.*

Who is *chembere*...(charm(s)) that is used, usually by women who prostitute, so that when they sleep with young men/boys these will enjoy themselves to the extent of not seeing that they are sleeping with 'old(er)' women.



The only way a younger man can want an older woman, it is believed, is if she has given him *muti* (portion – usually herbs), hence the danger. The young ‘*chembere*’ are stigmatised as old and dangerous. This control of sexuality, for both women and men, is also apparent in the corpus data where there is talk that *vana vemazuva ano havachatya* (children (male) of today are no longer afraid) to be involved with such (dangerous) women. The message seems to be that men should not put themselves in positions where women manipulate them. Men are, as a result, conditioned and controlled in a way that they see older women as a danger to their health and manhood, which would explain the negative attitudes and the ridicule of such women.

ii) The guardian of culture and tradition: the respected *chembere*

In contrast to the sexual *chembere*, the corpus contexts also reveal a *chembere* ‘acting her age’, the wise old *chembere*. The contexts emphasize both gender and stereotype meanings of *chembere*. Unlike with *mukadzi*, who is expected to be quiet, *chembere* is granted a licence to speak by virtue of her role at the centre of children and women’s affairs. Such verbal expressions as *-tuka* (scold), *-gogodzera* (knock sense into), *-ridza tsamwa* (make a click sound that shows displeasure and contempt), show how she is indulged and allowed to say what she has to, to correct women and children. Children here refer to anyone who is a potential son or daughter, of whatever age. Her role is to guard against the erosion of traditional values. Overall guidance of the family remains with the males, who task *chembere* to do the socialization and counseling. *Chembere* is said to have earned the role of *murairi* (guidance counsellor) by virtue of her age and status as a grandmother. She is also *mureri* (child minder/raiser) as she is seen as an expert on culture and tradition, thus making her the leading person to socialize children into their roles. *Chembere*, being old and conservative, will do the job to society’s (male’s) satisfaction (see also extract from *Broken Pillars* in 7.4.1.1).

Such expressions as, *wakazvarwa chembere dzaenda kurwizi* (you were born when the old women had gone to the river), said to someone, usually a woman seen as behaving in an unbecoming manner, highlights these *chembere* roles. In the dictionaries (the SSD and DGR Part I), these roles that *chembere* have in counselling women and girls and in taking care of grandchildren are not given prominence, as the dictionaries highlight only the biological meaning (cp. *murume*).

It is worth noting that as women get older, the issue of their appendage to men becomes less and less of an issue. Whether they are with husbands, divorced or widowed, as women become *chembere*, the scales of power seem to start to tilt femalewise; or, to not matter so much, as women gain some form of independence and status in their twilight years. This is probably because they are now ‘*chembere*’, no longer presenting a challenge as the *vakadzi* in the fertile and must-be-dominated zone; or, the men are too old to worry; or, have new younger women.

iii) The emotional one

At the same time that she counsels and instructs, she is also painted, in the corpus data, as an emotional wreck, with the shouting, scolding and crying. In the corpus concordances, what sticks out is the way *chembere* collocates with ‘emotional’ vocabulary. Old women are said to *-chema sekandumure* (cry like a baby), and *-pfikura* (sob), *-bova* (howl), thus earning themselves the weepy, emotional and, therefore, weak label.

## iv) The witch

The corpus also highlights the stereotype role of *chembere* as a witch, given also for *vakadzi*, in the DGR Part II, and in general.

## 4.3.1.3 Between the hoods

## a) Women and men

Between *musikana* and *mukomana*, the features that are outstanding are the sexual and dependence features for the female and the independence and headship role for the male. In the strictest 'traditional' sense of femininity a female is either a virgin (*musikana/mhandara*) or not (*mukadzi/mvana/chembere*). The data is, generally, silent on the virginity factor with *mukomana*. Only the DGR Part I highlights virginity as an issue for boys. In the DGR Part II, there is none of the stereotypic general wisdom, imparted to *musikana*, on sex and chastity and the loss of virginity. *Ukomana*, unlike *usikana*, is not constructed as synonymous with virginity. Even the traditionalists in Mhondoro did not think virginity was important for *vakomana* (boys and young men). There do not seem to be any psychological controls (taboos) stopping *vakomana* from sex, either.

*Ukadzi* (womanhood) is given a temporal meaning, the productive years of a woman. Such a definition, again, reiterates the point that being a proper woman is being fertile. *Urume* (manhood) is given a physical meaning – sperm/semen. The DGR Part I defines *uronyo* (sperm/semen), the synonym for *urume*, in 'power' terms. The sperm, in the semen, is understood as a metaphor of the power that men have in themselves, and over women. Descriptions of the sexual act also present the man 'doing' the woman. Some of the terminology used for sex, such as *kutsika* (lit. to crush), *kuranga* (punish/discipline) and *kuboora* (lit. to pierce) suggest aggressive punishing or disciplining and dominance over women. Research that I carried out (for another project) also shows that women's terms for the sexual act present males as either the doers of the sex act, with such references to a man as in eg., '*anondiseva*' (he who dips me) or *anonditohodza* (he who cools me); or the sex act is referred to as a performance or as play as in, eg., *pa(ngoma)* (at the) music/dance), *pabonde* (at the sleeping mat), *(pa)uchi* ((at the) honey), *(pa)mwero* (at the) exact measure, i.e. the place/point of satisfaction). It should be noted from these examples that the female forms that make the man an actor do not necessarily bring in the issue of aggressive male dominance.

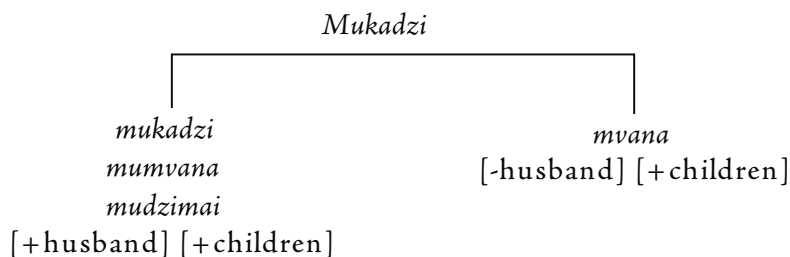
As with *musikana* and *mukomana*, the sex issue also separates *mukadzi* and *murume*. *Mukadzi* is fertile and no virgin. She is fertile and therefore able to carry out one of her main domestic roles, producing babies. The man is virile. For the man, virility reflects the man's strength and sexuality, his traditional qualities.

*Harahwa* is defined as 'a man who has aged to the extent of walking bent, using a walking stick'. Compare this vividly ancient man painted in the *harahwa* definition to the lackluster *chembere* definition, 'a female who has survived for a long time'.

## b) Asymmetrical hypernms

An interesting observation is in the asymmetry portrayed in the way the DGR Part II defines female and male terms or expressions. With female terms, often, the usual hypernym is a gender specific term (*mukadzi*) or *chinhu* (thing), but with male terms, often, the hypernym is either gender specific (*murume*) or *munhu* (human), in the general pattern displayed in the examples below:





See eg.,

*Kuroora mukadzi roora muroyi, unofuma wowana chinokurwisira daka. Dzimwe nguva chinhu chinovengwa neruzhinji ndicho chinozokupa ruyamuro.*

To marry a wife marry a witch, this will get you something to carry out your irreconcilable hatreds. Sometimes a thing hated by many may give you assistance.

The *chinhu* refers to *mukadzi* (*muroyi*).  
*Murume* in the following proverb is generalized to *munhu* in the explanation.

*Kufa kwemurume kubuda maura... munhu haafaniri kukasira kutya kana kuvhunduka kana awirwa nematambudziko, asi kuti anotofanira kushingirira nepose paanokwanisa.*

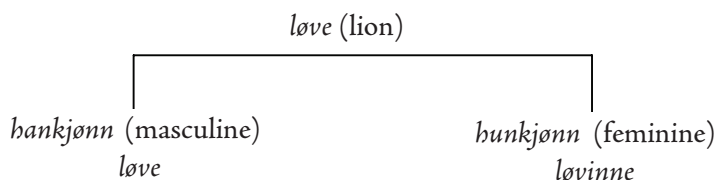
The dying of a man is the coming out (rupturing) of his intestines (from his stomach)...A person should not be quick to be afraid or scared when misfortunes befall, but should be as strong as he totally can be

Out of eight *musikana* proverbs, three carry explanations, while the rest are referred to one of the three. Of the three that carry explanations, the hypernyms are gender specific, *munhukadzi* (female), *mwanasikana* (girl child) and *musikana* (girl/young woman). Out of the five *usikana/umhandara* proverbs, two are referred to other proverbs. Of the three that carry explanations, one hypernym is gender specific, *munhukadzi*, while the other two refer to things, *chinhu* (thing) and *zvimwe* (others – some things). Out of the 13 *-kadzi* proverbs, four are referred to others and two contain both female and male terms and are excluded from the current analysis. Of the remaining seven, two have the generic *munhu* and two have *chinhu* as hypernym while three have gender-specific hypernym – *mudzimai* (woman), *mukadzi* (woman) and *munhukadzi* (female). Of the two *-komana* proverbs, one contains both girl and boy, and is therefore left out. The one that remains has the gender specific *mwanakomana* (boy child). Of the six *-rume* proverbs, one is referred to another. In the remaining five, one has a gender specific hypernym *munhurume* (a male) and the rest have *munhu* (human) as a hypernym. Of the two *harahwa* proverbs, one refers to the other. The one that is explained has *vanhu* (people) as the hypernym. A woman illustrates women (*her*) or things while a man would often illustrate a man (*his*) or a person. A man is used in expressions to illustrate people, making *murume* the generic form. Collocations like *mukadzi we/wo-munhu*, (wife of a person), where *munhu* (person) is made to substitute *murume* (man) confirm this generic role. Such a usage of *munhu* makes *murume* synonymous with the generic form. Pauwels (1998) also highlights this type of asymmetry.

## c) The generic male

Generic male, the benchmark (a term used by Pauwels 1998), means maleness is to be assumed unless otherwise specified. The asymmetry of presenting men as unmarked beings and women as marked beings is shown in the examples cited above and in the definition of *mukadzi* as [- man] in the DGR Part I. Nothing similar is specified under *murume* as would be expected; in that case generic maleness is to be assumed. (The two, *mukadzi* and *murume*, are (part of) a semantic set and are therefore expected to be treated equally). A minus value leads to women's 'marked linguistic treatment' (Lakoff 1987: 60). Hence the argument often made by researchers that '... women are subsumed under the linguistic norm which is based on, or identical to, men's representations, leading to their invisibility. Sometimes they are made visible only to display their difference, i.e. their deviation from the norm' (Lakoff 1987: 60). Goddard (1998), remarking on componential analysis, ponders why the features are conceptualised as [+/- male], giving the positive value to the male, and not the other way around, i.e. [+/- female] which gives the positive value to the female. Outside Shona, an example of a similar tendency to specify for women and not specify for men is observed in English at the Wimbledon tennis competitions played in the UK. In 2000, when Venus Williams was playing Lindsay Davenport in the women's finals, their names appeared on the scoreboard as Miss V Williams and Miss L Davenport. The scoreboard for the men had no titles. Their names appeared as Pete Sampras and Pat Rafter. In 2002, the tradition had not yet changed, with the scoreboard for the women's finals reading Miss V Willims and Miss S Williams, and that for men reading Lleyton Hewitt and David Nalbandian.

The generic male is also seen in gendered animals expressions, also from the DGR Part II, such as, *zvakanakira gwavava nomukadzi wake...* (things are good for lizard and his wife...), where 'lizard' refers to a male lizard while the female lizard is specified for sex in *mukadzi wake* (his wife). Such linguistic phenomena, of nouns or definitions, which appear to be neutral when they are covertly masculine, are not peculiar to Shona only. Naylor (2000: 333) describes how when she was growing up the word "nigger" was a 'bad' word in school, either in reference or address, yet in her home, it meant different things. She realized that when used with a possessive marker by a woman – "my nigger" – it became a term of endearment for addressing or referring to a husband or boyfriend. It 'became the pure essence of manhood – a disembodied force that channelled their past history of struggle and present survival against the odds into a victorious statement of being' (Naylor 2000: 333-4). However, a woman could never be a "nigger" in the singular with its connotation of confirming fortitude and worth. The noun "girl" was its closest equivalent. Fjeld (1998) gives the example of 'løve' (lion) and the feminine 'løvinne' in Norwegian. The *-inne* is a feminine suffix.



Similar observations come from Frank and Anshen (1983), who give the example of a gendered role, 'poet', in English. The form appears to be neutral yet; 'poetess' exists for females while a saying such as 'male poet' is never heard. An observed example in Shona is *muimbi* (singer) (seen in *Kwayedza* and heard on the radio). For example, *Kwayedza* (Ndira 12-18 2001; 15 and 10, respectively) give *muimbi* (singer) for a male and *muimbi wechikadzi* (singer (who is) of female). Looking at ten copies of the *Kwayedza*, from the period 2000-2001, a pattern emerges where male singers are referred to as *muimbi/vaimbi* (singer/s) and women are either the generic *muimbi* or gender specific *muimbi wechikadzi* (singer (who is) of female), or *muimbikadzi* (female singer) (see also *Kwayedza* 22-28 Gunyana 2000, 13; *Kwayedza*, Kubvumbi 20-26 2001). Like 'male poet', *muimbirume* (male singer) is not heard in Shona. Some in the commercial urban discourse, where male singers dominate, seem to have declared the male singer the generic, taking over from cultural practices where both women and men were singers. Historically, urban and other industrial areas in the colonial era were developed as work places for the African male. The cities were no-go areas for African women who stayed in the rural areas while their men went out to work. When the music industry initially developed, it was, therefore, a male only pursuit, and when women joined they were then sometimes 'marked' to distinguish them from males.

#### d) The generic female

As with the generic male, with the generic female, femaleness is to be assumed unless otherwise specified. In line with the women-equals-sex-and-emotions theme, emerging in the investigation, the female becomes the generic gender in sexual and other intimate matters, something also observed in other languages such as Norwegian and English. The common examples are 'prostitute' and 'male prostitute'. *Mukadzi's* sexuality is put under heavy scrutiny, possibly because of her procreation role. In the dictionary entries examined, the female word becomes the base or carries the definition for sexual terminology that relates to both sexes, unlike in the rest of the discourses where the male word is the base (except also for old age and witching). One example has been highlighted, where the female focussed version of the proverb carries the main entry. Compare:

*Murume akanaka asiri wako...* ONA  
*Mukadzi akanaka ari womumwe.*

A husband is handsome if he is not yours...SEE *Mukadzi akanaka ari womumwe*

*Mukadzi akanaka ari womumwe...Iyi itsumo ...*FAN *Murume akanaka asiri wako.*

A wife is beautiful if she is somebody else's. this is a proverb... SYN *Murume akanaka asiri wako.*

Chap 7 also reveals that sexual labels belong to women and are, for the most part, defined as thus in the dictionaries. The female is therefore assumed to be the unmarked sexual being who is the point of reference.

A woman alone is referred to as a failure if she becomes *mvana*. She should know better. The asymmetry in the social fact that (young) men are not disgraced is reflected by the lack of an equivalent term for male '*mvanas*', as well as the lack of proverbs that celebrate virginity in men. It was suggested that because men do not get pregnant and give birth, the (seemingly unconscious) social idea seems to be that such a phenomenon, as a male *mvana* does not exist, that men cannot be 'immoral'. Yet, it takes two, a woman and a man, to conceive. In the case where *umvana* (single motherhood) results from a pregnancy out of marriage, informants reported that it was often said

that it was the woman's fault that the man did not decide to marry her and give her children a father and a totem. The assumption seems to be that the women are, principally, responsible for allowing the sexual encounter and the subsequent pregnancy to occur. A lack of sensitivity towards females is shown when men who impregnate women outside marriage do not seem to be disgraced for their role in creating what turn out to be 'totemless' children. After all, it is the man's family that passes on the totem to the young ones. The man therefore should also be openly stigmatised for not giving his children a totem.

The thinking, tacitly suggested, is that in Shona culture, sex (for women) is for procreation. This seems to suggest that, in actuality, women do not really 'have' the sexual role. They seem to have been given a 'pretence' role, which they are not, in practice, expected to exercise control over. Instead, it is female sexuality that the society controls.

The female term, *chembere*, is also the generic term for old age. This age issue is also observed in the perceptions of the female and male terms. Women 'age' and are 'aged' more, without much consideration of their age in real terms. Once girls become women, then they become women, like any other woman, young or old. *Mukadzi mukadzi* (A woman is a woman), it is often said. The same need to 'age' is not observed with men (cp. also with address forms in Chap 5). The meanings and suggestions of the male terms, sometimes, show a disregard for marital status and general lack of fussiness over the overlapping of *mukomana* with *murume* and the avoidance of 'aging' (see, for example, the DGR definitions of *chembere* vs *harahwa*); the observed example of *vakomana vedu* for the garbage men.

The data also suggests that, while an overlap of *mukomana* and *murume* may not feel like an insult, to men, it is considered so, for women, sometimes, by the women themselves, and by the rest of the society. Respectable women should be attached to some male, rather than be referred to as *vasikana*.

#### e) Differential senses of terms

Differential senses of terms highlight yet another asymmetry. *Chikadzi* (feminine way) is doing things the weak and cowardly way while *chirume* (masculine way) is doing things the brave and strong way. On a scale of positive and negative, the terms would lie on extreme ends, with *chirume* being on the positive and *chikadzi* on the negative ends of the scale, respectively. The basic terms, *mukadzi* and *murume*, also show differential senses following the same patterning: A biological male who is labelled as a *mukadzi* (a metaphorical female) is viewed negatively while a biological woman who is labelled as a *murume* (a metaphorical male) is viewed positively. Metaphorical manhood, the data suggests, is a promotion up the human ladder for women, as being a man, biologically or socially, makes one the dominator. Women have to prove themselves worthy of the title *murume* (metaphorical male).

Men, on the other hand, are born *varume* (men), and the respect is automatic. Thus, being a metaphorical woman is considered a demotion for men, as it connotes subservience as well as emotional, apprehensive and weak behaviour, characteristics believed to be associated with women. Men, as a result, do not take being referred to as *mukadzi* lightly. This is vividly illustrated by what happened in The Parliament of Zimbabwe<sup>22</sup>. A female Independent Member of Parliament, Margaret Dongo, stirred

<sup>22</sup> Committee on Parliamentary Privileges' Report. Tabled in Parliament on 16 February 1999.

controversy, when in a heated session in parliament; she referred to some members of parliament as '*vakadzi vaMugabe*' (lit. (President) Mugabe's wives). The message that was understood by the honourable members was that she had insulted the men as spineless human beings who are dominated by another man (President Mugabe), as if they had been the President's women. A scuffle ensued, during and after the session, to the extent of some male members wanting to punch her. They felt that they had been denigrated by being referred to as somebody's wife. What the data reveals is that being *mukadzi* or doing *chikadzi* means being weak, subservient and dominated (sexually, too). The same violent reaction would not have occurred if she had referred to the female MPs as *varume*. If men react so strongly to being referred to as *mukadzi*, and women do not mind being referred to as *murume*, then being a *mukadzi* must be a disadvantage. Masculinity (even on a woman) always has plus value. A male female is more than a mere female. In contrast, femininity (on a man) has a negative value. A female male is less than a mere male.

This superiority of the masculine is also carried over to talk about gay and lesbian relationships. While there has been much controversy over homosexual relationships in Zimbabwe, it is remarkable that, with the usual disregard or blindness to things female, there is not much talk about lesbian relationships, about 'how wrong it is for a woman to sleep with another woman'. There is talk of how '*umbuka*' (animal nature – uncivilised) it is for a man to sleep with another man, i.e., dominate another (with his penis). And, when it is published that someone is gay, as in the case of the former President of Zimbabwe, Canaan Banana, the question debated in social public places was whether he is the woman or man in the relationships. During discussions, it was mentioned that being the man would salvage him some form of respect as a man. Such definitions highlight the socially constructed categorization of the society along 'normal'/able-bodied/virile (heterosexual) men vs. everybody else; women, weak men and children. 'Normal'/able-bodied men get automatic superiority. If they become less then, they are moved toward into, or even the female category.

The *chembere* and *harahwa* wise sayings suggest that men are allowed to age gracefully and with dignity, while women are not given the same considerations. The same sensitivity does not appear in expressions with *chembere* who is presented as half a woman and as being *mvana*, when they are expected to be chaste. The lack of dignity and respect in the *chembere* proverbs does not seem to reflect the same understanding that aging brings limitations (as with *harahwa*). She is a fraction of a woman. He is virile. This observation leads me to speculate that if the two, *chembere* and *harahwa*, were viewed in terms of fullness, *harahwa* would be aptly described as  $\frac{1}{2}$  full, while *chembere* would be described as  $\frac{1}{2}$  empty. Sex for pleasure makes a *mvana* (a lascivious single mother) of a 'proper' woman. For women, dignity comes with *ukadzi*; thereafter, they are half the women they were.

With men, the sperm is said to be always there, hence their dignity even in old age. *Harahwa* is famed for fraternizing with young women as the numerous corpus examples show. Fathers even give away their daughters to these men (see concordance example in 4.2.2.6). Yet, it is seen as dangerous manipulation when an older woman fraternizes with a younger man. It is not surprising, therefore, that *chembere* is the generic term for old age. As mentioned earlier, gendered animals exemplified in the corpus also reinforce this point, with such examples as *chembere yenzou*, *yembwa* and *yedhongi* (*chembere* of elephant, of dog and of donkey), denoting both generic and gender specific *chembere*.



It has been argued that in traditional Shona there is complementarity of roles (Chinyowa 1997), yet *chirume* is strength and bravery, and, *chikadzi* is emotional and weak (*mukadzi* and *murume* show the same). Such thinking cannot complement the complementarity of roles. This study argues that the thinking in these senses, which ignores women's contributions or portrays women negatively, ensures continued male dominance and female subservience. When women were asked what they thought about these assumptions, that men are strong and women are weak and emotional, whether this was true to their experience, some women answered in the positive. Others said that they did not agree with the assumptions yet, at the same time, did not or could not question, preferring to just 'know in their hearts' and do their work quietly. Others argued that they were also strong as shown through their domestic and childbearing roles. "What about the children we give them?" "What about labour pains?" Some asked. When asked why they themselves were inclined to promote and perpetuate such senses in talking to their children, they said that it was just a bad habit that they, themselves, fed this negative thinking. They explained that these were cultural assumptions, views and beliefs that, unconsciously, negatively influenced attitudes towards the work they did. Some argued that, because of these unthinking habits, their work was just not seen or thought about, resulting in unconscious disregard.

#### 4.3.1.4 A special note on proverbs

The descriptions and references to women's roles and stereotypes in the proverbs, are not unique to Shona, or to Bantu languages, but seem to be a universal phenomenon. Al-Najjar (2002), in a paper on linguistic sexism in Arabic and English proverbs, comes up with similar findings. While the English proverbs that she presents as equivalents to the Arabic may be arguably obsolete or outdated (as indicated by mother-tongue speakers of English participating at the conference), the Arabic ones are, she claims, very much alive. Here are some of the Arabic proverbs and the English literal translations as they are given by Al-Najjar:

The woman as evil

*il-mara ibtil'ab ib-ras irrjaal wi ishaiTan biyil'ab b-ras-ha*

The woman seduces men and the devil seduces her

The woman as trouble

*Il-mara marmara*

A woman is trouble

The women as gossips/ chatterers

*Um Nasser il-lsan Tiwiil w il-Hail gaSir*

Nasser's mother talks too much but cannot do much.

The proverbs also reflect biblical influence, with reference to women ruining paradise and women being snakes. The same comes out in the current topic. Arabic women are also conceived as loud mouthed (cp also *jetu* in Chap 7).

Here are some more examples of descriptions of women:

*um 'shra mashla' ishyara*

(Even) a mother of ten children is as easily uprooted as a tree.

*ma 'inda la mara wa la Hmara*

he doesn't have a woman or a donkey.

Trees in the Arabian Peninsula are easily uprooted suggesting, most likely, that women are not strong. In the last example, the suggestion is that both a woman and a donkey are a man's property (Al-Najjar 2002).

In an abstract for the Language and Masculinities Panel for the 2003 International Pragmatics Association conference, posted on the internet, Amalsaleh (2002) writes about Persian proverbs. She writes, 'I have worked on the depiction of women in Persian proverbs and have come up with interesting thing in some Persian poems in this regard. There women are appreciated with masculine yardstick. That is, women are downgraded except when they possess sort of male characteristics [sic].' These are the same observations that have been made in the *chikadzi-chirume* discussions.

The Arabic observations suggest objectification and trivialization of women and their roles, as wives and children bearers, in the same way the Shona data does.

## 4.4 Conclusion

The chapter has centered on identifying and defining selected main female and male lexical units to explore their meanings and the conscious or unconscious construction of gender identities. The comprehensive amount of verbal data presented here has led to analyses that have exposed that the Shona language maintains and harbours asymmetries ingrained within the basic lexical units. The data highlights that the terms are not strict and fixed categories referring to a specific age-group, but fuzzy. They show that membership is on a continuum, a gradience scale depending on the factor of categorization, be it biological or social.

There are more terms to describe women and their roles than there are for men. *Mukadzi* (woman) can be many things depending on the discourse. She can be *musikana*, *mhandara*, *mukadzi*, *mudzimai*, *mumvana*, *mvana* and *chembere*, while *murume* can be *mukomana*, *murume* and *harahwa*. The *mudzimai* and *mumvana* reference terms would be considered the respectable ones for a woman, with the last two female terms being versions of womanhood that are considered socially illegitimate, when it refers to young people. This is partly because of their inherent sexual connotations. The male terms are, roughly, determined more by perceived age than by perceived marital status. These findings can be compared with Japanese where there are four major terms to denote female persons *onna*, *zyosi*, *zyosei* and *huzin*; and three for males *otoko*, *dansi* and *dansei* (Pauwels 1998: 53). *Huzin*, which refers to a married woman, usually a housewife, has connotations of elegance, and has no male equivalence. *Onna* has sexual connotations, which its male equivalent *otoko* lacks. Depending on the context, the words *zyosei*, *zyosi* and *huzin* are used to avoid the sexual overtones found in *onna*.

The data defines *mukomana*, *murume* and *harahwa* as the (potential) independent heads and providers of the family in the patriarchal framework. The men are the dominant 'doers', both in the private family domain and the public domain. *Urume* and *chirume* denote strength, cleverness, efficiency, bravery and dominance. While the man is described as the main human, womanhood is seen as a subservient role to manhood. The women are 'the done' in the family. The thinking expressed in the language reflects *musikana* (young single woman) and *mukadzi*, metaphorically, as objects of men's desires to meet men's sexual needs, and *chembere* as an object of non-desire. The



metaphor of men's power over women is displayed by the suggestion that in the sexual act a man dominates a woman. The data also suggest that, in the woman's first sexual relations with a man, the man takes *musikana's* virginity to initiate her into *ukadzi* (or *umvana/uchembere*). The literal interpretations of the proverbs about women focus, not on their wisdom and experience, but, rather, on their (hidden) sexual activities and usefulness as sexual objects. She is the sexual creature, the baby producer and the house worker. The *chikadzi* way is cowardly, weak and emotional. *Ukadzi* is the period of fertility when *mukadzi* can now reach her role fulfilment, as a wife and mother. The references to unmarried, young and sexually active women as *chembere* or *mvana* reflect the value placed on virginity and chastity for women.

What emerges from the definitions and contexts of usage is that men are perceived and responded to as individuals, primarily, in terms of their roles as leaders and heads. There are asymmetries within the language which confirm *murume* as the unmarked prototype and dominant form (see, eg., Chitauro-Mawema 1995) to which other forms are made reference. On the other hand, women are perceived with reference to men and responded to, primarily, in terms of their role as sexual females, first and foremost. For men it seems to be important to socialize men into their dominant roles. For women, there seems to be a general need to objectify women, to dictate female, especially sexual behavior' and, to put women's sexuality under microscopic scrutiny and control. Such a division of roles highlights an asymmetry described by Simpson (1993) where what men say and do is valued positively.

Because, in the Shona language, the sex act is perceived as domination of women by men (see, eg., Chimhundu 1987), defining women by sex further entrenches male dominance and female subservience. In vocabulary that refers to sexual relations, the terms that Chimhundu (1987) refers to as 'men's language', men are the initiators and (aggressive) doers of the sex act, while women are the initiated and the done. Women's language presents men as doers of the sex act as well. In the same thinking men are also the 'divorcers' while women are the 'divorcees', and the divorcees (*mvana*) are the problem people who cause the divorcers to divorce them.

That a woman's role as the preserver of culture, guidance counselor and children minder/raiser is acknowledged in her post-prime time, and that rituals are tabooed for women in their prime, but are allowed to pre-menstrual and post-menopausal females, seem like a clearly calculated move to keep the productive and able woman on the sidelines. One may also argue that the point of forbidding women in their prime from talking, when they can influence and change, and allowing them a voice and a leading role when they are old, is a move intended to perpetuate male dominance while giving a façade of power-sharing.

The result of this façade of power-sharing is that there is blindness to women's strength and courage. Women's courage in their traditional roles is lightened or ignored are disregarded, yet these are the roles that define women. From this observation, it is easy to agree with sociologists like Schur (1983: 12) who argue that women typically face a double bind or no-win situation with respect to gender norms. While males are rewarded for success, there is little rewarding of women when they do conform or carry out their proper tasks and roles. Because of their already low status, women are not given attention. Studies have been carried out elsewhere, which show that men rarely bring up the women in their lives or the work of these women in their conversations with other men (Coates 2002). On the other hand, when women talk, it is about, "my husband" or "my children".

Some of the asymmetries emerging in this study, such as presenting a woman as the sexual domesticated being (the virgin, the non-virgin), are also observed in studies carried out elsewhere, as in the English language (see, eg., Pauwels 1998). In the English language, as literature and popular lyrics will show (see, eg., Ivy and Backlund 1994) women are objectified as food, such as fruits, honies, chocolates, flowers, etc., in the same manner that women are fruits, rivers, etc., in Shona, - different examples reflecting different cultural backgrounds - (see also Chitauro-Mawema 1995). In English, the female term is also the unmarked term in sexual terminology (cp. virgin vs. male virgin; prostitute vs. male prostitute in English) in the same manner that sexual conditions and states are a decidedly female domain in Shona.

Linguistic asymmetries reveal the attitudes the society holds towards a certain group of people (Cameron 1991; Takahashi 1991; Matthews 1997: 217). Women are judged, first and foremost as women who are expected to behave in a certain way and who are subservient to men. Men are looked on as the generic. The male as the generic is seen in the proverbs and more and more in current discourses, in nouns, especially in the need to specify, where a woman is concerned, with the same not being done for men. Hardman (1978, 1993) explains that language provides structures for perception, structures that she calls linguistic postulates. She says that these linguistic postulates are powerful and are passed on to children through proverbs and sayings. Proverbs are considered an authority, socializing individuals into their respective roles and identities. Nyembezi (1954: 41), writing from another Bantu language, makes the same point when he writes, '... some models of conduct are embodied in proverbs, which serve the process of instructing the younger and ignorant generations, or serve as reminders to the old, who have been remiss in their observance of the rules of conduct expected in the society.' They project the social values and expectations of the speakers (Chimhundu 1980: 46). And in a culture, which still believes as much in oral traditions as the Shona do, proverbs provide the structures of perception, that build and maintain identities.

In this chapter, I have provided arguments that reveal a general pattern in the way the female gender is depersonalized and socially constructed as secondary and subservient to the generic male gender. Despite having potentially powerful roles, the data suggest that the potential is not fully verbalised. I have also shown, from other evidence such as the proverbs, corpus concordances and collocations, that this thinking is pervasive. There is also a systematic way in which the subservient is equal to the sexual, and the dominating is equal to the 'power' roles and responsibilities and the overriding authority. The male is the reference point in all but a few roles assigned to women such as sex and emotions, old age and witching. The data builds to such a conclusion.

Finally, the findings point to a difference in socialization (Tannen 1990, 1991), as explaining the roles that women and men enjoy in Shona. In the investigation, there are glimpses of what appears to be an old order where the complementarity of roles may be respected as 'different and equal' in the proverbs, although the greater influence is now exerted by the 'different and not equal position', in which the male dominates the female. Girls and women are socialized into thinking of themselves as the responsible sexual providers and homemakers who need the guardianship of their parents and/or husbands. The boys and men, on the other hand, are socialized to think that they have to be responsible and provide for their wives, children and the rest of the family. Although being *mukadzi* and being *murume*, in Shona, have

been described as traditionally complementary roles that are mutually enhancing, the current investigation has shown that the contemporary roles are better described as asymmetrical. While complementarity gives the allusion of sharing, it does not necessarily mean equality. Different roles are brought about by differences in socialization (Tannen 1990, 1991), differences that in turn are influenced simultaneously by a male dominated context. The power dynamics give manhood benchmark authority; womanhood is then defined with reference to manhood. The man and his role are given automatic respect, while women are given automatic lesser respect. Women who excel are promoted to male status. Female contributions go unnoticed or are denied acknowledgement and open respect, as male work becomes the yardstick of worth and respect, thus showing how society uses language to favor one sex over the other. The power and dominance (Fishman 1980, 1983; Cameron 1991) emanating from patriarchal societies and colonial structures dictate that these roles be treated thus differently. Such dictates result in asymmetrical relationships in which 'one set of experiences ... more valuable and more important than the other' (Russ 1983: 40). The result is that womanhood is denied equal acknowledgement or status through depersonalisation, as well as what I refer to as 'denial by trivialization' and 'denial by tabooing', adopted and adapted from Russ's (1983: 49) 'denial by false categorization'.



## Address Forms

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to explore address forms used to and by women, vis-à-vis those used to and by men, to address women and men in contexts where people do not know one another very well or where they are virtual strangers. Address forms are terms that people use when trying to get someone's attention, to initiate contact or when conversing with them.

According to Braun (1988: 7), forms of address in most languages are usually pronouns, verbs and nouns. The forms investigated here are the special nominal address forms that do not involve a person's name. The forms of address include nouns and adjectives, which range from 'generic' forms to kin forms to special titles. It should be stressed that, while this is a special set of lexical items in that the forms have the dual function of address and reference and where 'discourse practices' is a relevant concept, only the address function will be pursued below.

#### 5.1.1 Objectives

The main objectives of this chapter are to:

- a) Explore, describe and categorise the address forms used by a broad spectrum of adult Shona speakers in order to emphasize the diversity in address form choices available to women and to men and used for both adult females and males.
- b) Investigate forms for attitudes towards women and men, thus highlighting another aspect of the construction of gender identities.
- c) Examine how power relations between the sexes dictate the choices among available forms.

Our ways of addressing people often reflect the relative status and power of one group vis-à-vis another. In a chapter entitled "Hey Lady, Whose Honey Are You Anyway?" Frank and Anshen (1983, 6) write,

When we speak to one another, we reveal the nature of our relationship with and our attitudes towards the other person in many ways. One of these is in the forms of address we choose.

Several studies have been published that show that speech may reflect the social relations between an addresser and addressee, especially the relative power and solidarity manifested in the relationship between two people (see Brown and Gilman 1960; Hudson 1980; Pauwels 1998, Tannen 1998). In many languages, address reflects highly stratified social structures that call for a constant reminder of respect, relative power and social status (Fasold 1990). Brown and Gilman (1960), who provide the

guiding theoretical framework for this chapter, examine the use of pronouns *tu* and *vous*, both 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns, in address, in some European languages. For English speakers, the clearest markers of social relations are personal names such as first names (FN), last names (LN) and titles (T) (e.g. Mr, Mrs and Dr). The title that one uses to address someone depends on the social distance between the two, with FN indicating high solidarity while title and LN (TLN) would most likely signal a power relation (Fasold 1984) or what Hudson (1980) refers to as low solidarity. For Shona, this scenario would be observed in official addresses, following on the colonial structures. These are discussed in Chap 6. The focus in this chapter is on address between unacquainted or not so very acquainted people.

'Address forms make the fundamental point in Sociolinguistics clearly: social context is an important influence on language and language use' (Fasold 1990, ix) – and the context in this study is time, space, setting, and more. It is also the presuppositions, assumptions and the cultural institutions organizing Shona society.

### 5.1.2 Materials and methods

The methods that were used to collect data for this chapter included:

- a) the questionnaire-cum-interviews (see Appendix 5-I);
- b) observation; and
- c) informal discussions.

The motivation to do the study arose from experience and observation. I observed contexts of actual usage and carried out mini surveys and discussions with kin, colleagues and friends. The forms in the questionnaire in Appendix 5-I were elicited in the surveys and discussions and observations conducted during the introductory stages of the research program, around the time when the proposal for the thesis was drafted. The questionnaires were, for the most part, administered, in person, as a questionnaire-cum-interview either by my assistants<sup>23</sup>, or me. In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to:

- Say yes or no to whether they used the listed address forms, for women and men, who were non-kin and were either acquaintances or unknown to them;
- Explain why they regarded the forms as appropriate;
- Identify those that were used on them by both women and men, and to comment on them;
- Explain those forms in use but which they themselves did not use; and
- Add any other forms that might have been left out of the questionnaire.

The structured interviews and pre-drawn list provided systematic data. I preferred to use a pre-drawn list of forms rather than to elicit forms from the informants, as it might have been difficult for the informants to remember the forms that they themselves used, or that they heard others use. Fifty-two questionnaires were used in the

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<sup>23</sup> Two Assistants drawn from the local community administered the questionnaires. In Harare, 3 University of Zimbabwe students as well as one employee of UZ carried out the research. One more assistant drawn from outside the university community was used. Responses were sought from the UZ community as well as the wider Harare Community.

study, 21 from Harare and 31 from Mhondoro. While sociolinguistic information was generally provided in the Mhondoro data, in the Harare data the information is scanty. In the rural area there was a healthy balance, between the young and old adults. In Harare, it is difficult to tell because the ages are not indicated, either because the informant refused to give her/his age or the RA overlooked the sociolinguistic information. In the Harare questionnaires, from the responses, it can be deduced that 13 were completed by or on behalf of men and the rest by or on behalf of women, a reasonable balance. From the Mhondoro data, 16 questionnaires were completed by or on behalf of women and the rest by or for males, thereby presenting an excellent balance.

Observations were also made from radio, television and in public transportation and public places such as Mbare Musika, the main long distance bus terminus in Harare, and Mamina Growth Point, a business and social centre. I carried a notebook around in which I recorded my observations.

The data was analysed along Brown and Gilman's (1960) power and solidarity study; as well as for asymmetries (see Chap 3 for more on materials and methods).

### 5.1.3 Definitions of key terms

As a way of determining whether or not a form is an address form, I used introspection, testing each potential form in several phrases such as eg. "*Pamusoroi*, X ..." (Excuse me, X...); *Nhai*, X (Pardon me, X); *Mangwanani/Masikati/Manheru*, X (Good morning/afternoon/evening, X; *Makadiiko*, X? (How do you do, X?), as if I were actually addressing someone.

The address forms investigated here are classified as honorary kin and non-kin. Braun (1988) uses the term 'fictive' for what I refer to as honorary. I have chosen the term honorary, as it seems to be closer to what I think actually goes on culturally. Kin forms are 'terms of blood relations and for affines' (Braun 1988: 9), and in these addresses, being made part of the family is seen as an honour to the addressees. When we consider the Shona kinship system of totems, there is always the potential that the unacquainted addresser and addressee could really (not fictively) be related. Non-kin forms refer to other generics and titles, which include professional, occupational and endearment forms and slang.

In their research, Brown and Gilman (1960), examine the use of pronouns *tu* and *vous*, both 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns, in some European languages. While both pronouns have singular senses, the norms between the use of *tu* and *vous* are the same as choosing between FN and TLN in English (Hudson 1980; Fasold 1984). Brown and Gilman show that the key to power is asymmetry, which is reflected in a non-reciprocal use of *tu* and *vous*. Solidarity, on the other hand, is reflected by the reciprocal use of pronouns or by symmetrical forms of address.

Both power and solidarity arise out of the social distance between the two interacting parties. According to Hudson (1980), what power is is self-explanatory, but solidarity is more difficult to define. With power, the social distance between the two is considerable, leading to the use of asymmetrical forms. Address forms that express formality include those that, according to the generally accepted rules, are used between two people who need to put some distance between each other, i.e., by not being too friendly. But, with solidarity the distance between the two is diminished, suggesting shared experiences (sex, age, occupation, etc.), some kind of intimacy, closeness, togetherness or 'tightness' with the addressee, hence the camaraderie, the



'we are tight' feeling, and the 'we are together-in-this' spirit reflected in some of the address forms discussed below.

In this study, symmetry is reflected by:

- a) reciprocity - the reciprocal use of forms between addresser and addressee, for example, the non-kin 'power' address forms used mutually between men. Reciprocal forms express mutual distance and intimacy; and
- b) the use of equal/corresponding titles (see Figs. 5.1-.4) for women and men, considering the variables named below of which sex, age and marital status are the most significant.

Asymmetry is shown by:

- a) the use of non-reciprocal/non equivalent forms for women and men, forms that point to a power difference between addresser and addressee. Non-reciprocal forms are those that highlight status differences, or distant forms used upwards, or intimate forms used downwards.
- b) the use of unequal/non-corresponding forms when addressing a woman and a man, for example, men-to-men non-kin forms vs. men-to-women kin forms. These result in what I refer to as 'unequal burdens of responsibility.'
- c) the use of age defined titles, where respect and power come with age.
- d) the use of address inversion. Inversion happens when 'features are applicable to the speaker rather than the addressee, eg., a mother addressing a child as 'mama' (Braun 1988: 8). Inversion is what I refer to as special asymmetry in the chapter. This type of address is not covered in Brown and Gilman (1960). According to Braun (1988), the concept of address inversion was first developed by Renzi (1968).

Titles expressing covert prestige are those where positive value is attached to forms that would otherwise presume negative traits.

### 5.1.4 Kin forms for women and men within a family set up

As part of the introduction to the topic, I present, below, a summary of the main kin address forms for women and men and their meanings, as they are used within a real family environment. This is done in order to aid comprehension of the honorary kin terms in the study and to provide a quick referral list.

- a) kin terms used for addressing women

<i>mwanangu</i> *	my child/daughter
<i>munin'ina</i> ((a) <i>mainini</i> )	younger sister (by older sister)
<i>mukoma</i> ((a) <i>maiguru</i> )	older sister (by younger sister)
<i>sisi/sisita</i>	(older) sister
<i>(va)hanzvadzi</i>	sister (by brother)
<i>(a)mai/mhai/mhamba</i>	mother, (sometimes) mother's sister -
otherwise	<i>amainini/amaiguru</i> . See below -)
<i>(a)mainini</i> *	aunt (mother's younger sister)
	younger sister (by older sister)
	sister-in-law (wife's younger sister)
<i>(a)maiguru</i> *	aunt (mother's older sister)

(a)mai mwana/Tombi <sup>24</sup> /Bhoyi <sup>25</sup>	older sister (by younger sister)
(a)mbuya*	sister-in-law (wife's older sister)
wife to uncle (mother's brother)	mother of child/Tombi/Bhoyi
<u>a</u> mbuya*	grandmother
band)	mother-in-law (by daughter's husband)
(v)amwene/(a)mai)	sister-in-law (by husband's sister's hus-
tete	band)
muroora	mother-in-law (by son's wife)
sister-in-law (brother's wife)	aunt (father's sister)
	sister-in-law (husband's sister)
	daughter-in-law

\* The structure of most of the address forms do not need explaining, except for may be:

*mwanangu* (*mwana* + *-ngu* where *mwana* is child and *-ngu* is a possessive stem (1<sup>st</sup> person))

The forms *amainini* and *amaiguru* are morphologically analysed as follows:

(a)mai (mother)

(a)mainini [*amai-* + *-nini*] where *amai* is mother and *-nini* is a diminutive meaning 'younger' in this context – younger sister to mother.

(a)maiguru [*amai-* + *-kuru*] where *amai* is mother and *-kuru* is an augment meaning 'older' in this context – older sister to mother.

\* In the current orthography, *ambuya* is a homograph meaning grandmother (*ambuya* with the tonal pattern LHL) and mother-in-law (*ambuya* with the tonal pattern HLL). In order to be able to differentiate between the two, for the purposes of this study, I have chosen to highlight the initial high tone in mother-in-law by underlining the /a/. Grandmother will be written as (a)*mbuya*, with the parenthesis indicating that the title can be used either as *ambuya* or *mbuya*.

N.B. Still on *ambuya*, please note that, while the term refers to mother-in-law, and sister-in-law (from a husband's sister's husband), I was informed that the role that receives the greater respect in Mhondoro is the mother-in-law relationship. I am also aware that, in some parts of the Shona-speaking community, it is the latter relationship, that is more 'distancing'.

<sup>24</sup> < Ndebele – Intombi - is the 'name' given to a girl child. *Intombi* means girl in Ndebele – like the John Doe of crimes

<sup>25</sup> < English – Boy - is the 'name' given to a boy child - like the John Doe of crimes.

b) kin terms used for addressing men

<i>mwanangu</i> *	my child/son
<i>mukuwasha</i>	son-in-law
brother-in-law (a man's sister's husband)	
<i>munin'ina</i> ( <i>babamunini</i> )	younger brother (by older brother)
<i>mukoma</i> ( <i>babamukuru</i> )	older brother (by younger brother)
<i>hanzvadzi</i>	brother (by sister)
<i>bhudhi</i>	older brother
<i>baba</i>	father
	husband (by some)
(sometimes) father's brother - otherwise <i>babamunini</i> or <i>babamukuru</i> . See below -)	
<i>babamunini</i> *	uncle (father's younger brother)
	younger brother (by a bigger brother)
	brother-in-law (by older brother's wife)
<i>babamukuru</i> *	uncle (father's older brother)
	older brother (by younger brother)
	brother-in-law (by younger brother's
wife)	
( <i>va</i> ) <i>tezvara</i> ( <i>baba</i> )	father-in-law
<i>sekuru</i>	grandfather
uncle (mother's brother)	
<i>tsano</i>	brother-in-law (wife's brother)

\* the analysis for *mwanangu* has been given in a), above.

\**babamunini* / *babamukuru* are also analysed as [*baba*- + *-nini*/*-kuru*] (father + younger/older) – younger/older brother to father - as with *amainini*/*amaiguru*.

Covered in the next four pages (Figs. 5.1-4) are diagrammatic representations of these kin forms as follows:

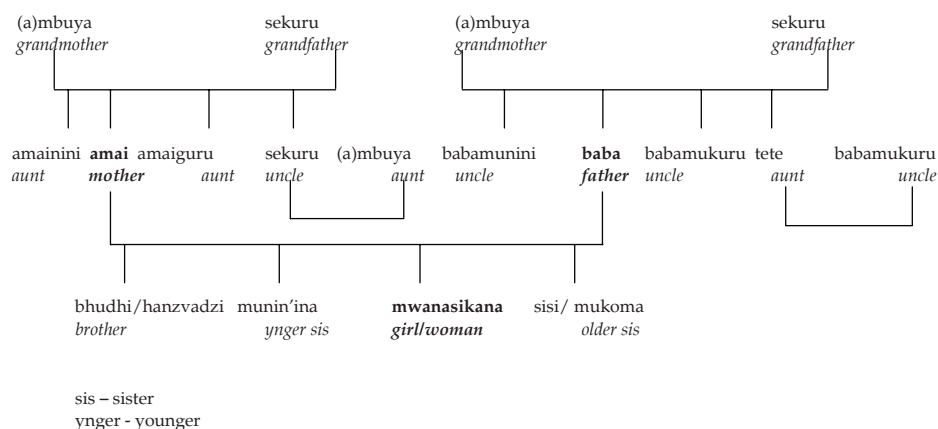


Figure 5.1: Kin address forms used by women in the capacity of daughter

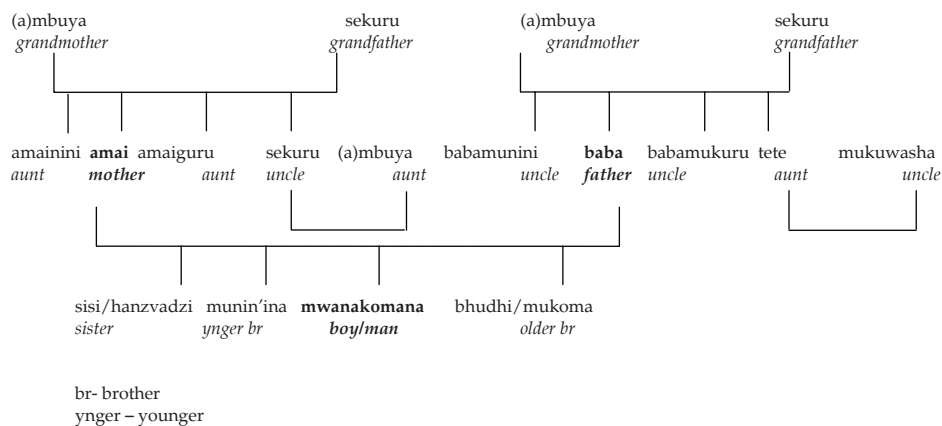


Figure 5.2: Kin forms used by men in the capacity of son

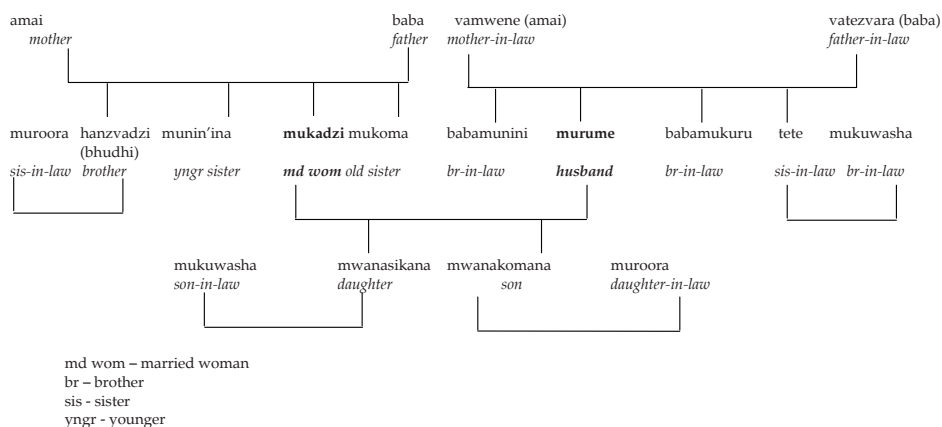


Figure 5.3: Kin address forms used by a married woman in the capacity of wife

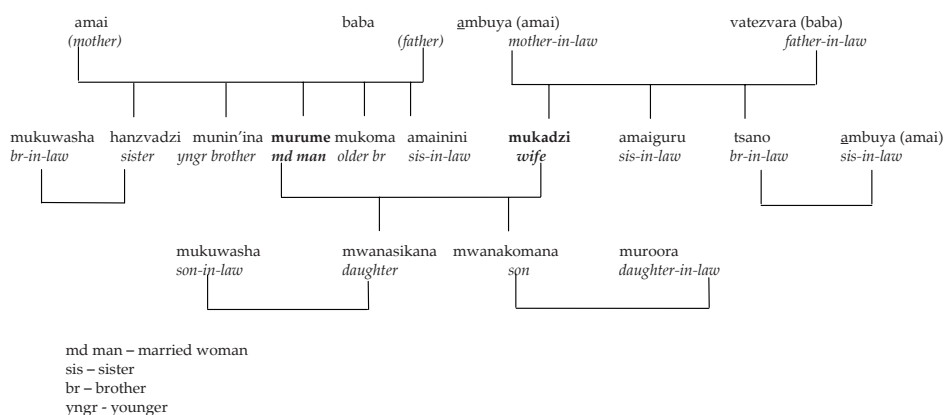


Figure 5.4: Kin address forms used by a married man in the capacity of husband

### 5.1.5 Presentation of chapter

In the next section, which presents the data collected, I give the address forms explored in two sections,

- those that are used by women for women and men;
- those used by men, also for women and men;

I also present those forms that were elicited and not discussed in this chapter, for one reason or another. In the data section, I present responses from the informants. The responses include brief explanations and comments on who addressers use the address forms for, what they think about the forms they use and those used for them. Where addressers and addressees are comfortable with the title, no comment is made. Where they express favourable or unfavourable comments about the form, then I include the remarks. I mention reciprocity where it is relevant, i.e., where it occurs. In the examination of the questionnaire in Appendix 5-I, a 'yes' answer to an address form is when the respondent: (i) clearly states so; or (ii) gives reasons for his or her use of the address form. The answer is taken as 'no' where the respondent: (i) clearly states no, they do not use the form; or, (ii) leaves the questionnaire blank; or, (iii) where reasons are given against the use of the address form. I highlight only the salient differences between the rural and urban folk.

Where the address form is an honorary kin name, any one of the applicable kin names, highlighted in 5.1.5 or demonstrated in Figs. 1-4, can be used. While within the family/home environment, these titles are fixed, as they are determined by how the individuals are related, this study explores the extension of these forms to non-relations. The non-kin forms include, among others, traditional titles and slang terms.

Also included in the results are findings from my observations and discussions. The analysis of the data will involve quantifying by highlighting the percentages of persons who said they used a certain form (from responses 2a and 3a of Appendix 5-I – the rest of the questions solicit for more address forms that they may use). Responses for the other questions are presented together with the comments made about forms they hear being used (which they themselves may not use), or, that they hear being used around that are not in 2a or 3a. The percentages should only be taken as an indication of how many people said they used the form - the acceptability of the form - and not necessarily as an indication of frequency of use. In other words, if a form, like *sekuru* (grandfather) has a higher percentage, it does not necessarily mean that it is used more frequently than a form with a lower percentage. Frequency of use will be registered when the forms are placed in ranked categories (Scholfield 1995: 110), weighing more heavily on reported instances of behaviour and actually observed behaviour. Since the questionnaires were more 'conversational' than 'test-like' (Scholfield 1995: 61), as groups of people discussed a questionnaire together, ranking in this way should be more appropriate as it takes in the informants' comments. This type of quantification also suits the language of the participants as they often spoke collectively as '*kazhinji tinoshandisa...*' (often/generally/usually we use ...) rather than '*ndinoshandisa*' (I use). Other adverbials such as '*dzimwe nguva*' (sometimes) and '*kashoma*' (not often/rarely) were also used. The quantification therefore, represents my own subjective judgement of how the forms are placed in the categories dependent on my understanding of the responses and my own observations.

The discussion touches on all the given forms, while at the same time highlighting prominent address forms for symmetry and asymmetry; suggesting how these build towards the construction of gender identities; and, any other striking features that may emerge. The chapter ends with a conclusion where the findings are summarized and inferences are drawn.

## 5.2 Results: Forms of address used by women to address other women and men

In this section, I present the responses given on the questionnaire on the address forms used by women when they address, first, other women and then men. I highlight where there were differences in the two centres, where no such distinction is made, then the findings apply to both. I also give my own observation-cum-participant-observation evidence.

### 5.2.1 Women-to-women address forms

Below are the titles, first the honorary kin then the non-kin, that women, in both localities, say they use to address other women:

#### 5.2.1.1 Honorary kin terms

Figures 5.1 and 5.3 offer diagrammatic representations of these titles.

*mwanangu* (my child)

This form, solicited in questions 2b and 4a of Appendix 5-I, emerged as reportedly a widely used form for young women in Mhondoro. Older mature women, mainly rural, generally use this title for young women, irrespective of whether they are married or not - 'young' being relative to the addresser's age.

*munin'ina* ((a)mainini) (aunt (mother's younger sister) /younger sister (by older sister) / sister-in-law (wife's younger sister))

These forms, also coming from questions 2b and 4a, were said to be 'often' used by older women for the younger (single) female. The older women would be old enough to be the young woman's older sister.

*mukoma* (*sisi/maiguru*) (big sister)

The form was reportedly used more in Mhondoro (81%) than in Harare (33%). Respondents said they used the form for:

- a) a young woman older than the addresser, or
- b) a young woman about the same age as the addresser.

Women generally said they use this title for the older (single) female. The more traditional *mukoma* is used more in the rural area, whereas *sisi* is preferred in the city. I have observed a few instances of usage of *mukoma* in Mhondoro. I was not able to observe any in Harare.

*sisi/sisita*<sup>26</sup> (*mukoma*)

In Harare, 75% of the respondents and 50% of the Mhondoro people said they used the form for the following:

- a) a young woman older or about the same age as the addresser,
- b) any young woman,
- c) unmarried/single woman, or,
- d) a maid/servant/domestic help.

(a)*mai/mhai* (mother)

There was a total yes response for the use of the form in both Harare and Mhondoro for the following:

- a) an elderly/older/mature woman,
- b) a married woman,
- c) a pregnant woman,
- d) a woman carrying/with a baby/toddler,
- e) a woman older or about the same age as the addresser's own mother,
- f) a woman who looks and acts motherly, or,
- g) church women.

The main qualification for motherhood was seen as marriage and/or offspring.

Some young women said they did not like to be addressed by these titles (see also *mhamba*), especially by older women. Some asked, "*Vanoziva sei kuti ndine mwana kana kuti ndine murume?*"<sup>27</sup> (How do they know that I have a child or that I have a husband?)

*mhamba* (mom)

*Mhamba* was reported to be used in Harare by 37% of the respondents for:

- a) women in such urban settings as churches, hair salons, hospitals, shops, and other business places vis-à-vis the traditional rural contexts where they would be addressed as *amai*,
- b) women dressed in 'modern' attire, such as, jeans, minis, etc. As one informant said, "... *zvinoenderana nekuti vanenge vakapfeka zvazvino here... vari veChirungu here...*"<sup>28</sup> (... it depends on whether she would be dressed in the latest trends ... being the 'modern' women...).

The response in Mhondoro was minimal. The women in rural Mhondoro, said they were familiar with the term, as a substitute for (a)*mai* although they 'never' used it. They labelled it as *chimanjemanje* (modern). One woman even said, "*kwete, handiris-handise asi tinonzarwo tongodavirawo*"<sup>29</sup> (no, I don't use it but if I am addressed as such I just (accept and) respond (accordingly)). The rural women said that, "...*yakafumuka*

<sup>26</sup> <English - sister

<sup>27</sup> VaX Gunje, March 2001

<sup>28</sup> Tarisayi. Harare. March 2001.

<sup>29</sup> VaPhoebe. Mhondoro. March 2001.



..."<sup>30</sup>(it is presumptuous, discredits the language); "... ndeye vechizvinozvino ..." <sup>31</sup>(... it is a modern term...); and "...yevana vazvino ..." <sup>32</sup>(used by children of today).

The responses from the Harare women that I talked to revealed mixed reactions. While some women did not mind this address form, others did not like to be addressed as such by women their age or by those older than them, i.e., where it was obvious that they could not possibly mother such women. This was the same response that I got for (a)mai, discussed above.

I observed frequent instances of usage in both areas. In Harare, observations were made especially from women in the retail industry. In Mhondoro the form was not used as often.

*mai mwana/Tombi/Bhoyi* (mother of child/Tombi/Bhoyi)

This form was reported to be prevalent only in the rural areas, where elderly women use this address form for young mothers, carrying or with a baby/toddler.

(v)amwene ((a)mai) (mother-in-law)

This form emerged from 2b and 4a as an additional address form. It was reported to be used more by women to address girls and old women as a signal of playful talk. Here the roles are inverted, with the younger addressee getting an address, which should be the same as the old addresser's; and older addressees being addressed with appropriate titles but from older persons who would not normally use that address form, considering the age of the addressee. The address expresses a cultural playful bantering, referred to as *jee* in Shona. The SSD defines *jee* as 'playful talk'. The inversion is usually, but not always, done when there are children involved. A thirty-something year old woman carrying a baby boy can be addressed by an older woman as *amwene*, because the older woman playfully sees herself as a potential wife for the boy.

I was also able to observe, on Zimbabwe television, ZTV 1, on the talk show program, *Zvakanangana nemadzimai* (lit. Issues facing women), an instance of usage where the presenter, probably in her 30s or 40s, was addressing an older, mid-to-late fifties woman in the audience as *amwene* (mother-in-law). Their ages were too close for the presenter to be an honorary daughter-in-law to the older woman. There was therefore some kind of playful hierarching going on, leading to an inversion of power.

*muroora [aroora]* (daughter-in-law)

Responses showed that this is a form used more by women to address girls/young women and old women as a signal of playful talk. Here the roles are inverted, with the younger addressees getting an address which should be the old addresser's; or older addressees getting the younger person's address (see *amwene* above for more explanations). Observations in Harare and Mhondoro confirmed what was reported on the questionnaire.

(a)mbuya (grandmother)

<sup>30</sup> VaMartha. Mhondoro. February, 2001.

<sup>31</sup> VaSusan. Mhondoro. February 2001.

<sup>32</sup> VaErnie. Mhondoro. February 2001.

The form drew a 98% response from the two localities. Women from all age groups said they used the address form for:

- a) elderly women, i.e. '*vachena misoro...vane imvi*' (those with white heads...with white hair), and
- b) women who have grandchildren.

However, some women with grandchildren said that they were against the use of this title by women who are older than they are. However, one of the female informants had some remarks for 'such women,' "*vasingadi kunzi mbuya vane apa pakasimuka. Panoda kumbwandirwa. Anodai anenge achida kunyengwa*"<sup>33</sup> (... those who refuse the title *mbuya* are licentious. They need to behave. The one who does this seeks men's attention.)

Other women said that it was such moralistic assumptions that made them grudgingly accept this title. They say they do not want to cause a stir. A few of the older women said they did not use this form as:

- a) 'These women are our mothers', or,
- b) They felt they were too old for anyone to be old enough to be their grandparent.

*tete* (aunt)

In the questionnaires, less than 30% of the Harare females said they used the form. None in Mhondoro said they did. I observed cultural and cross-cultural instances of usage of this form, only in Harare.

### 5.2.1.2 *Non-kin terms*

The following forms emerged from questions 2b and 4a of Appendix 5-I, questions soliciting for more forms that the women heard being used around them or that they themselves used but had not been included in the main question (2a).

*andi*<sup>34</sup> (auntie)

Some Harareans said they used or had heard the form being used from time to time. From what they said in their responses, the term translates to *tete* (aunt) as in father's sister or boyfriend's/husband's sister. *Andi* could also be mother's sister, and it has no age indication. She could also be father's sister - no clue to age as well. While aunt, in English, also refers to mother's sister, it did not seem to be the same here, as a mother's sister was regarded as a mother, too, in Shona society.

I also observed that, as with *mhamha*, this title is used by the urbanites in public female establishments such as hair salons, shops, and other business places, where marital status is not known or is not considered an issue. *Andi* may have gained prominence as a result of the popular 70s and 80s Auntie Jane/Rhoda 'agony' columns in the *African Times* and *Parade* magazines, in which readers' 'burning' questions, often about love and sexual matters, were discussed, topics that one, usually, did not feel free to discuss openly, i.e. even with the *tetes*; or, because the *tetes* were not there

<sup>33</sup> VaAlice. Mhondoro. March 2001.

<sup>34</sup> < English - aunt

in the cities. Some of the magazines still in circulation, like *Parade*, continue to carry such columns.

*madzimai* ((respectable) woman)

It was reported that the form was used exclusively for both young and old female members of the Apostolic church by other members, female and male. Where the first name is known, the whole address form is usually *Madzimai Ngingi* (*Madzimai X*). The form is used reciprocally. I have observed the form being used at Apostolic faith gatherings as well as outside those gatherings church.

*shamwari* (friend)

Women said they used this form for younger ones, especially when they wanted to reduce distance in order to ask for a favour from the younger woman, or when trying to broker some kind of intimacy.

*zimhandara* (big girl)

Older mature women in the rural areas were said to prefer this form to *sisi*, especially when they wanted to reduce distance in order to ask for a favour from the younger woman, or when trying to broker some kind of intimacy, from:

- a) a young (single) woman, or,
- b) a girl of marriageable age.

(*va*)*muchembere* ((respected) old woman)

This form was reported as a form of endearment for old women.

*medhemu*<sup>35</sup> (madam)

In the questionnaire-cum-interviews, this was reported as an address form used mostly by market women or other salespeople trying to get their wares bought, mainly by white women and females who are assumed to be tourists. It was also reported that female employees such as maids, storekeepers, etc., also use the address form when addressing their female bosses, regardless of race. I was also able to observe that, although more often used for white women, the term is also sometimes used for the urban black female on the street or in work places, sometimes as a synonym to *mhamba*. The information that came out of the discussions in the urban areas showed that *medhemu* was seen, by those who use it, as a more prestigious title of respect, bestowed on professional and 'modern' women.

## 5.2.2 Women-to-men address forms

Below are the titles, first the honorary kin then the non-kin, that women, in both localities, say they use to address men:

### 5.2.2.1 Honorary kin forms

Figures 5.1 and 5.3 offer diagrammatic representations of these titles.

<sup>35</sup> < English - madam

*mwanangu* (my child)

The term emerged from questions 4a of Appendix 5-I. Respondents reported that older/mature women use the term in Harare for young men generally. *Mwanangu* is generally reserved for men who are young enough to be sons of the women addressing them. The women said that, in most cases, however, they ended up selecting *mukuwasha* (below) rather than *mwanangu*, as *mukuwasha* is 'safer', in that it creates distance with a man and is not strict on age.

*mukuwasha* (son-in-law)

This was reported as the most commonly used address form by women to men of all age groups by 96% of the respondents in Harare. In Mhondoro, 62% said they used the form. This was said by some to be because "*mukuwasha harinetse kushandisa zvekuti chero zera unongodaro*"<sup>36</sup> (*mukuwasha* is an easy title to use because one can use it with whatever age).

Mhondoro and Harare showed striking differences in the manner in which this form is used in the two localities. In Mhondoro, the mature adults retained the 'true' honorary meaning of *mukuwasha*, agewise. The women said they used this form exclusively for:

- a) young men who had the potential to be *vakuwasha*. This response came from about 80% of the questionnaire responses, or,
- b) men about the same age as the addresser's own son(s)-in-law.

In Harare, however, the answer offered by most was that this was a respectful form of address for:

- a) any adult male of whatever age, except for the very old, '*kubvira pekuti akaroora kusvika panana baba ... vasiri sekuru*'<sup>37</sup> (from the now married to the fathers... but not grandfathers), and also for,
- b) a married man, or,
- c) a young man who has reached marriageable age.

Women say that when they use this title, they are distancing themselves from males who they are not related to. Because the title was being used indiscriminately, as I also confirmed in my observations, some older men said that they were not happy with the use of this form by young girls/women, who were young enough to be their grandchildren. In the same way, a few young Harare women (less than an eighth) expressed strong feelings against the use of this title. These Harareans expressed resentment at using *mukuwasha* for men old enough to be their fathers or grandfathers. No such sentiments were expressed in Mhondoro. The majority of women said that they had not given any thought to what the address form or any other that they used may mean or imply.

*bhudhi* (brother)

(See also *hanzvadzi*)

<sup>36</sup> VaSusan, VaChristina neamwe madzimai. Mhondoro. February 2001

<sup>37</sup> VaN. Harare. April 2001

According to the responses, this form is used mainly in Harare by women for young men (100%).

In Mhondoro only about 10% of the young female respondents said they used *bhudhi*, with the rest saying they preferred *(va)hanzvadzi*. Those who did not like *bhudhi* saw it as a lewd title extending an open invitation to a man (cp *sisi* under men-to-women address forms). One of the young women even said, "... *vanofunga kuti hamheno zvauri kutsvaga*"<sup>38</sup> (they will think that you were looking for something).

*(va)hanzvadzi* (brother)

Though *bhudhi* is used by some, rural respondents indicated that *(va)hanzvadzi* is the preferred form (cp. *(va)hanzvadzi/sisi* under women-to-women forms) in response to questions 3a and 4a of Appendix 5-I. However, there are variations as to when the term is used. Here are the instances of usage, as they were highlighted:

- a) for a(n) (young) adult male,
- b) for a man slightly younger or older or just about the same age as the addresser, or,
- c) for mature males in workplaces, as *baba (vaNgingi)* (father (of X)) is not considered a workplace title. This form is only used between persons who are roughly age mates, and not for persons in positions of authority.

*baba* (father, husband, (sometimes) father's brother)

There were differing responses on the use of this form. In Mhondoro, 95% of the respondents said they used *baba*, honorarily, for:

- a) men about the same age as their own fathers, the emphasis being on 'older than me',
- b) *saimba/samusha* (house owner/head).

In Harare only 30% said they used *baba*. Those who said they did, said they used the title in the manner highlighted in Mhondoro.

In both localities, the informants who said, 'no', said they preferred *mukuwasha*, because they were afraid to address just anyone as *baba*, "...*tinotya kuti baba...*" (...we are afraid to use *baba...*) because:

- a) most said they felt that this was a title reserved for fathers, fathers-in-law and their kin, i.e. those who shared totems with them,
- b) In some instances, this form is also reserved for addressing husbands, hence the avoidance of its use with other men. It might be perilous for a married woman to be found exchanging pleasantries with a strange man<sup>39</sup>, or,
- c) the man might be offended about my presumptions about his age. 'He might think that I was trying to tell him that he is old. Besides, one cannot be heard using *baba (vaNgingi)* (father of X)) at a work place.'<sup>40</sup> It is just not done, as perhaps it is considered too forward for one to do so.

<sup>38</sup> Tambudzai. Mhondoro. February 2001.

<sup>39</sup> VaEfa. Mhondoro February 2001.

<sup>40</sup> Harare woman. Harare. April 2001.

I have also observed that maids also address the male head of the house, in the families they live and work in, as *baba*. Some men said that they did not feel comfortable with being addressed as *baba*, especially by these and any other young women. They said that it made them feel older, especially if the maid was of a mature age. Others (the older) said they did not mind. Outside the homes, I observed that, only the elderly were addressed as such in Harare. In Mhondoro, it was the mature man.

*baba vemwana/Tombi/Bhoyi*

The data suggests that it is hard to use *baba vamwana/Tombi/Bhoyi* (father of Tombi/Bhoyi), across the sexes "... *zvinorema nekuti you can never know kuti ane mwana here kana kwete*"<sup>41</sup> (... it is also difficult since one can never know whether he has a child or not. One cannot just assume.)

*sekuru*

From both Harare and Mhondoro, over 95% of the respondents, said, 'yes', in theory they used *sekuru*, but only for the very elderly - elderly being signalled by white hair and a walking stick. This effectively meant that there were very few men that women addressed as *sekuru*. The women said that, because of its delicate nature, women used the title where it was absolutely crystal-clear they were talking to an old man. They would rather use *baba*, or, better still *mukuwasha*. They thought that most men do not like to be addressed as *sekuru*.

Unlike in the (a)*mbuya* case (women-to-women), there is no mention of grandchildren as a possible reason for addressing a man as *sekuru*.

*vatezvara*

The title was said to be used in playful talk by older women talking to boys and infants.

#### 5.2.2.2 Non-kin forms

The following forms emerged from questions 3b of Appendix 5-I, soliciting for more forms that the women heard being used by other women around them or that they themselves used but had not been included in the main question (3a).

*madzibaba*

This is an address form used exclusively by Apostolic church women to address both young and old male members of the Apostolic church. Where the first name is known, the whole address form is usually *Madzibaba Ngingi* (X).

This form is used reciprocally and correspondingly.

*zijaya*

This is the equivalent of *zimhandara* in the women-to-women forms. The women who responded to the questionnaires said they use this title to address:

- a) a young man, or,
- b) a single man of marriageable age.

<sup>41</sup> VaJestina. Mhondoro. September 2000.

*shewee* (my Chief/ Lord) (*ishe* + *wee* → Chief/Lord + you)

A group of rural women listed this address form as one of respect for men, considering their authority role in society. I have also observed this form in use.

*se*<sup>42</sup> (*sir*)

It was reported in Harare that this is an address form used mostly by market women or other salespeople trying to get their wares bought, mainly by white men or anyone they suspect to be a tourist. Professional-looking black men were also said to be addressed as such in work environments. While I was able to confirm the last two instances, I was unable to do so in the market scenario.

### 5.2.3 A summary of address forms used by women

#### 5.2.3.1 A summary of the women-to-women address forms

Table 5.1: A table ranking the women-to-women address forms on frequency of usage:

F-frequently; O-occasionally; R-rarely; Restr-restrictedly

address form	yng-to-old	age mates	old-to-yng	inverted
Hon kin				
mwanangu (M)			F	
munin'ina/mainini			F	
mukoma/maiguru	O	O		
sisi	F	F	F	
amai	F	F	F	
mhamha (H)	F	F	F	
mai wana/Tombi/Bhoyi			F	
vamwene	R*	R*		R* (old to young)
muroora	R*	R*	O	R*
(a)mbuya	F			
tete	R	R		
Non-kin				
andi (H)	F	F	F	
madzimai	Restr	Restr	Restr	
shamwari			O	
zimhandara			O	
medhemu	O	O	O	

\* playful language

(M) – mainly occurs in Mhondoro

(H) – mainly occurs in Harare

yng - young

<sup>42</sup> < English - sir



### 5.2.3.2 A summary of the women-to-men address forms

Table 5.2: A table ranking the women-to-men address forms on frequency of usage: F-frequently; O-occasionally; R-rarely; Restr-restrictedly

address form	yng-to-old	age mates	old-to-yng	Inverted
Hon kin				
mwanangu (M)			O	
mukuwasha	F	F	F	
bhudhi (H)	F	F	F	
vahanzvadzi (mostly M)	F	F	F	
baba (M)	F	F	F	
baba mwana/Tombi/Bhoyi			R	
sekuru	O	O	O	
vatezvara			R*	R*
Non-kin				
madzibaba	Restr	Restr	Restr	
zizaya			O	
Shewee (M)	R	R	R	
se	R	R	R	

\* playful language

(M) – mainly occurs in Mhondoro

(H) – mainly occurs in Harare

yng – young

## 5.3 Results: forms of address used by men to address other men and women

In this section, I present the responses given on the questionnaire on the address forms used by men when they address, first, women and then other men. I highlight where there were differences in the two centres, where no such distinction is made, the findings apply to both. I also give my own observation-cum-participant-observation evidence.

### 5.3.1 Men-to-women address forms

Below are the titles, first the honorary kin then the non-kin, that men, in both localities, say they use to address women:

#### 5.3.1.1 Honorary kin address forms

Figures 5.2 and 5.4 offer diagrammatic representations of these titles.

*sisi/sista* (sister/cousin)

In Harare, 98% of the interviewed men admitted to using this title for *vasikana* (girls/young women) only. Adult women were not mentioned although observation showed otherwise. A survey that I carried out in Harare in public places such as the clubs,

streets, market, post office, college, etc., showed a prevalent use of this address for both girls and women. In Mhondoro, 50% of the mature adult males said yes while a 100% of the young males said so, but only when addressing single young women. The preferred form was said to be (*va*)*hanzvadzi*. Those who admitted to using the title, as well as observation, indicated that the form is used when addressing:

- a) a single (young) woman,
- b) a 'beautiful and nice girl/young woman' whom one finds attractive,
- c) a girl/woman that the man wants to pursue,
- d) a woman clad in jeans or minis,
- e) a maid/servant/female domestic, regardless of age, or,
- f) a(n) (older) woman labelled as being of loose morals and character.

(*va*)*hanzvadzi* (sister)

Although not on the original list of forms in Question 2a, this form emerged in 2b and 4b as used by men for women. The data shows that (*va*)*hanzvadzi* is used by some for:

- a) the 'sister' with dignity vis-à-vis *sisi*. The men say they prefer to use this form because it carries more respect and dignity than *sisi*. *Vahanzvadzi*'s strength over *sisi* doubtlessly comes from its being the authentic Shona word for a sibling of the opposite sex,
- b) a grown/mature woman by a man of her generation (cp. with *babamunini/babamukuru* under men-to-men addresses).

*ambuya* (mother-in-law)

In the questionnaire, the form is used mainly for:

- a) a woman who looks like she might have children. The man sees himself as a potential son-in-law to such a woman,
- b) '*mukadzi wemunhu*' (a person's wife), as respect for her is also seen as respect for the husband, as would be the wife of X or my wife's brother,
- c) any female whose marital status is not known. In such a case it is believed 'safer' to use this form than any other, in case there is a husband (behind),
- d) a pregnant woman,
- e) a woman at a marriageable age, or,
- f) any (young) woman (where men would use *mwanangu* for a young man).

In Harare, 87% of the respondents said they had used this form at one time or another for all women, thus making it the unmarked address form for women. In Mhondoro, 82% said they had used this form. The point that was emphasized over and over again by both addressers and addressees who were comfortable with the use of *ambuya* was that they saw *ambuya* as a very high form of respect for women, since mothers-in-law enjoy high status and respect from their sons-in-law within families. In the list for kin terms for women, *ambuya* is listed as having a second meaning, 'sister-in-law' (by husband's sister's husband). In Harare, most young respondents explained that they never thought about what the title referred to but had just picked it up as a title for women. Of the mature, those with a Zezuru background (Mhondoro, mostly) said their *ambuya* title referred to the honorary mother-in-law, while others (those with a

Karanga background) said their *ambuya* title referred to the honorary sister-in-law (by husband's sister's husband) rather than the honorary mother-in-law. Both definitions feature in the discussions, although I took the mother-in-law definition, as the unmarked use, because of the Mhondoro influence.

*(a)mai/mhai*

In Mhondoro, 82% of the respondents said they used *(a)mai*, while in Harare, 72% said they did (with *amai* being used interchangeably with *mhamha*). Respondents said these forms are used to address:

- a) a(n) (older/mature) woman,
- b) anyone perceived to be a mother,
- c) a woman carrying a baby,
- d) a pregnant woman, or,
- e) a woman who behaves in a motherly way, i.e., in the manner that she dresses and conducts herself.

*mhamha*

See *(a)mai* above.

The questionnaire and observation show that while *(a)mai/mhai* are the forms that are used by most in the rural area, *mhamha* is used mainly by the (young) urban men,

- a) where *(a)mai* would be used, or,
- b) for the so called 'modern' woman. This includes, among others, women in work places, shoppers, etc. *Mhamha*, like *medhemu*, is seen by some, both addressers and addressees, as a prestigious title. Others said they hated the title, which from my observations, is a favourite with public transport workers.

*(a)mbuya* (grandmother)

It was reported that this address form is used (more frequently) in the rural area by 95% of the respondents. In Harare, 76% said they used the form, though not often for:

- a) an old woman,
- b) a woman with grandchildren, or,
- c) a woman assumed to be old enough to have grandchildren.

Older men (70+) said that, in general, they hardly ever used this form, as there were now few women who were at the age they themselves could call grandmother. Urban men were also quick to point out that they could only do so to the very old, as some women got furious when the men used this form unthinkingly. However this reporting does not seem to agree with actual observations made in Harare at public places such as markets or on public transport, where *(a)mbuya* tends to be used casually and indiscriminately to young women by equally young men, like minibus conductors.

*mwanangu*

The form solicited in questions 2b and 4b was said to be rarely used for young strange women.

*muroora*

The form was reported as rarely used by men for adult females.

*tete*

The form was reported as rarely used for female strangers.

### 5.3.1.2 Non-kin address forms

The following forms emerged from questions 2b of Appendix 5-I, soliciting for more forms that they themselves used but had not been included in the main question (2a). While men reportedly used honorary kin terms for women, a few other solicited forms popped-up, notably for addressing single women, such as *chimhandara*, *bhebbi*, *vamuchembere*, *madzimai*, *muface* (the face), *mumvana* (my daughter who is married), *Muzvare* (Miss), *mukunda* (daughter), *shamwari* (friend). Only four of the forms are discussed here, as these were the ones that were mentioned with relative frequency. The others are not included in the discussion as they are still very much restricted to slang uses.

*madzimai*

It was reported that the form was used exclusively by both young and old male members of the Apostolic church by other members of the sect. Where the first name is known, the whole address form is usually *Madzimai Nbingi* (*Madzimai X*). The form is used reciprocally. I have observed it being used at Apostolic faith gatherings as well as outside those church gatherings.

*chimhandara* (girl/babe)

The title was reported as used for young women, known or perceived to be single. The data from the questionnaires and discussions show that the addressee's reaction to the title usually depends on her reception/perception of the men. If the addresser is a young man, chances are that she will not mind. If the addresser is an older man, then she may feel offended and ignore him.

Note also the use of the *chi-* prefix (n. 7), which is used here to express a 'special' likeable person. The title here expresses fondness and endearment.

*bhebbi*<sup>43</sup> (baby/babe)

The title was said to be used for 'attractive young women', known or perceived to be single. Generally, the addressees react in the same manner as with *chimhandara*, above.

(*va*)*muchembere* (old girl/woman)

The questionnaire indicates that the title is used interchangeably with (*a*)*mbuya* to address the very old. It is usually used endearingly such that the old woman will not mind being addressed as such. While the main nominal form in this title is *chembere* (old woman), this term may however not be used to address someone. The prefixes *va-* and *mu-* soften *chembere* into an endearing address, to grant the title some kind of covert prestige.

<sup>43</sup> <English - baby

*medhemu/madhamu (madam)*

This is reported as an address form used by market men or other salespeople trying to get their wares bought, mainly by white women or any other females thought to be tourists. Male employees such as maids, storekeepers, etc also use the address form when addressing their female bosses (for further comments see also *medhemu* under women-to-women address forms). Professional women may also be addressed as such.

### 5.3.2 Men-to-men address forms

Below are the titles, first the honorary kin then the non-kin, that men, in both localities, say they use to address other men:

#### 5.3.2.1 Honorary kin address forms

Figures 5.2 and 5.4 offer diagrammatic representations of these titles.

*mwanangu*

From the responses coming out of 3b and 4b of Appendix 5-I, mature/older adult males said they 'mainly' used this title for:

- a) young men who are their (grand)sons' ages, or,
- b) single men.

*muzukuru*

The form was said to be used for boys only, and rarely for young men.

*babamunini/munin'ina* (young brother)

It was reported, in answer to 3b and 4b of Appendix 5-I, that the title is used interchangeably for a young man whom the addresser would have observed to be like a younger brother to him. Otherwise, the addressee might be offended if he is older. Generally, men in such contexts were said not to like to be made to feel younger since this would signal dominance from someone they feel is younger than them.

*babamukuru (mukoma)* (big brother)

In response to 3b and 4b, men said that these two address forms are used interchangeably for a man whom the addresser would have observed to be like an older brother to him. Otherwise, the addressee might be offended if he is younger. Generally, men said that they do not like to be made to feel older than someone they think is older than them. In some instances, the title was reported as used for younger men, without offence.

*mukoma* (big boy/big brother)

In Harare 97% of the men and 75% in Mhondoro reported that *mukoma* is used easily as a form of respect for older males. It could also be used for, younger males, especially when one is asking for a favour, such as asking for directions. This is more so when one considers that *mukoma* was said to be mainly used for an older and wiser brother.

*bhudhi (mukoma)*

In Harare 38% and in Mhondoro 70% of the men, mostly the young men, said they used this form to address young men, though not as often as *mukoma*. I observed a few cases where older men addressed young men as such.

*baba (father)*

The questionnaire responses suggested that usage of this form to non-kin by men seemed to vary with locality. In Harare, 38% percent of the questionnaire respondents said they used *baba*. The majority showed reluctance to address a stranger as *baba*. They would rather use the slang term, *mudhara* (old man) (see below). Those who did said they did so only when they had established that the addressee was as far much older than them or shared a totem with themselves or their father-in-law. They asked, “*ihama yangu here yandinoti baba ...?*” (is this person a relative that I should address as *baba*?). “*Baba musoro wemba*” (*Baba* is head of a particular household), the pinnacle of all address forms, was said to be such an important title that one did not use just for anyone.

In Mhondoro, 77% of the addressees said they used *baba* for:

- a) older and mature *saimba/samusha* (house owner/head), or,
- b) old men. Otherwise, a younger man could be offended if addressed by this term. This is as a result of the connotation of one's advancement in years in the title.

In the other reported cases, *baba* is also used for men in such gatherings as:

- i) churches where the clergy and/or ordinary male members are addressed as either *baba* (father) or *Baba (Va)Nhingi* (Mr X),
- ii) school gatherings and other such assemblies where the occasion is a parents' business.

*sekuru (grandfather)*

The questionnaire responses from Harare indicate that 85% of the informants said that this title is used, but only for the very old, otherwise the old men are rather addressed as *baba*. In Mhondoro, 75% of the informants said they did, but for the very old. I was able to confirm this in the cases that I observed, where the title was directed at the very very old (white hair, walking stick, or generally 'elderly' behaving). As one man said, “*harisi zera rekuti tingati ndisamussha nekuti ava kutochengetwa nevamwe vanhu*”<sup>44</sup> (not at the age where he is head of the household because he is at the age where he needs taking care of).

In Harare, there did not seem to be any 'sekurus'. Although respondents said that they used the title, they agreed there were not many people around to address as *sekuru*. *Sekuru* seemed to imply 'old and unemployed.'

*vatezvara*

None of the people said they used this form in Mhondoro. In Harare, 15% of the respondents said they used the form for men who are their father's age.

<sup>44</sup> VaMunjodzi. Mhondoro. May 2001.

### *mukuwasha*

Harare had a zero response for *mukuwasha*. In Mhondoro, 11% of the respondents said they had used the form at some point. I did not observe any instance of usage.

### *tsano*

It emerged that young males were the ones who used these forms. In Harare, 30% of the respondents said they did. In Mhondoro, 16% of the adults said they did. The rural adults recorded zero. In Harare, I observed a few instances of usage by young males on public transport.

### 5.3.2.2 *Non-kin address forms*

The following forms emerged from questions 3b and 4b of Appendix 5-I, soliciting for more forms that the men heard being used by other men around them or that they themselves used but had not been included in the main question (2a).

### *madzibaba*

Both the questionnaire and observation suggest that this is an address form used exclusively for both young and old male members of the Apostolic church by other members of the sect. Where the first name is known, the whole address form is usually *Madzibaba Ngingi* (*Madzibaba X*). The form is used reciprocally.

The terms highlighted below are used between peers and colleagues. These terms are mainly used in casual contexts, hence the preponderance of slang items:

### *shasha* (the great/wise/expert)

- was said to be used occasionally between men.

### *bhulazo*<sup>45</sup> (brother)

- was said to be used more and frequently by young men.

### *bhururu*<sup>46</sup> (friend)

- was said to be used occasionally between males.

### *chikwata* (peer/associate/member of my clique/my man)

Both the questionnaire and observation suggested that the title is used mutually between men. The implication in the title is that we are one in a 'notorious' or rascalish way, i.e., 'I'm pretty suave and so are you'.

### *gen'a*<sup>47</sup> (member of my clique/associate/my man)

Both the questionnaire and observation suggested that the title is an address form used between young men, who want to express a closeness or solidarity between 'boys' of the same age and mentality.

<sup>45</sup> <English – bros.

<sup>46</sup> <Afrikaans – broer for brother

<sup>47</sup> <English - gang



*shamwari* (friend)

The indications, from both the discussions and observations on the use of *shamwari* were, that, like *zijaya*, the form was used to address a (young) male from whom one would like to ask for a favor.

*zijaya* [*mujaya*] (big, big boy)

Older men in the rural areas said they used this form for young men, where the age difference allows one to address the other as such. Both the questionnaire and observation suggested that the title is also sometimes inverted and used for male infants and boys to make them feel good about themselves by making them believe that they are 'real men'.

*Zijaya* (*zi-* + *jaya*) is derived from *jaya* (big boy/young man). The basic form, however, is only used in a reference capacity and not as an address form.

*muchinda* (youthful/young man)

Older men said they use this title to address younger men in a way that is similar to the use of *zijaya*. This is also a kind of a power term. In a traditional Shona setting, *machinda* are the chief's counsel. Although they are not the ultimate power, they do rule together with the chief, offering him advice and guidance. Younger men would not call an older one a *muchinda*.

The terms highlighted below can be used in both formal and non-formal contexts.

*samusha/saimba* (house/family owner/head)

Both the questionnaire and observation suggested that this is an address form used quite regularly in the rural area between men who are mid-forties and older. In Harare, there were instances observed here and there. The men said that by addressing each other as such they were acknowledging their dominant roles as heads of households.

*mu/vakuru* (senior, big man)

It emerged from both the questionnaire and observation that this is one of the most common forms of address between men in Harare. A trip to public places such as the pubs, the many sprawling garages in the high-density suburbs, service stations, streets, etc., will support this assertion. *Mukuru* [*mu-* + *-kuru*] and *vakuru* [*va-* + *-kuru*] are singular and plural adjectives for class 1 and 2 nouns, respectively. When *va-* is used in addressing an individual, then its use is honorific. From the adjective stem *-kuru*, we derive the nouns *mukuru/vakuru* → *Mukuru/Vakuru*, which are, interestingly, used interchangeably and reciprocally in an address function by men to address other men.

*se*<sup>48</sup> (*sir*)

It was reported, in Harare, that this is an address form used mostly by market men or other salespeople trying to get their wares bought, mainly by white men or any other males perceived to be tourists. I can confirm this usage, from my observations.

Male employees were also reported to use the address form when addressing their male bosses. It is the corresponding form to the female '*medhemu*' and is also used for males in similar contexts to *medhemu*. I have also observed that black men perceived

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<sup>48</sup> < English - sir

as professional (smartly dressed, tie, jacket, etc) are also addressed as such. The form is also used in drinking or other social places to address urban mature adults.

*shefu*<sup>49</sup> (boss/senior)

This adopted term which, in its original language, means 'chief' is generally used in workplaces, for example, to address a person in a position of authority. Outside the workplace, it is used in business where, for example, a male customer becomes the 'boss' because he is the one with the money, i.e., the customer is king. The title was reportedly not applied to women in similar positions of authority.

The title sometimes carries with it political connotations, when it is used to address a 'party heavyweight'.

*sabhuku*<sup>50</sup> (headman)

In the strict formal sense, this is the official title restricted for village headman only. However, when used as an address form, the high respect meaning in the title has been extended to cover ordinary older/mature men (cp. *ishe*, *changamire* and *mambo*).

*vashe/ishe* (chief)

In a strict formal sense, this is an official title used for chiefs. However when used as address forms for strangers, the highest respect meaning in the title is extended to cover ordinary older/mature men, as was reported. The same pattern is seen in *changamire* and *mambo*.

*changamire* (chief/sir)

In a strict formal sense this is the official title for chiefs and other prominent persons. However, as an address form for strangers, the highest respect meaning in the title has been extended to ordinary older/mature men, as was reported. The same pattern is seen in *vashe* and *mambo*.

*mambo* (paramount chief/king)

In a strict formal sense, this is the official title used for kings/chiefs. However, when it is used as an address form for strangers, the highest respect meaning in the title is extended to ordinary older/mature men. The same pattern is seen in *changamire* and *vashe*.

*mudhara* (old man/senior)

Although more often used as a reference form, *mudhara*'s usage as an address form was said to be gaining momentum in Harare, as indicated by 84% of the informants. In Mhondoro 44% said they used or had used the form at some point. Both in Mhondoro and Harare, it was explained that the title meant 'dear old boy'; or, 'respectable and wise (old) man', depending on the context. However, acceptance of the title depended on personalities as some men said they did not like to be addressed as 'old men'. Still, compared to *baba* (father) or worse, *sekuru*, *mudhara* has a youthful and casual edge to it. Most respondents say they use the term to address even their own biological

<sup>49</sup> <Portuguese - shef

<sup>50</sup> < English - 'book' - the keeper of the tax book. In the village the *sabhuku* was (in colonial days) and still is an administrative post.

fathers because it conveys a closeness and endearing quality to it. The title is also used teasingly, in an inverted way, for male infants and young boys.

As in the previous section, there were many other forms that were given, but are not included here for one reason or another. These are forms such as *makeyi*, *muzaya*, *khule*, *biggers* considered slang and still very transitory in nature. Some genuine Shona forms, such as *sahwira* and *wangu*, were left out because they were seldom mentioned in the questionnaire as well as during my observations.

### 5.3.3 A summary of address forms used by men

#### 5.3.3.1 A summary of the men-to-women address forms

Table 5.3: A table ranking the men-to-women address forms on frequency of use:

F-frequently; O-occasionally; R-rarely; Restr-restrictedly; N-never

address form	yng-to-old	age mates	old-to-yng	inverted
Hon kin				
mwanangu			R	
sisi	F	F	F	
vahanzvadzi (M)	F	F	F	
ambuya	F	F	F	
amai	F	F	F	
mhamha (H)	F	F	F	
mai mwana/Tombi/Bhoyi	N	N	N	
muroora			R	R*
(a)mbuya	F	R		
tete	R	R		
Non-kin				
madzimai	Restr	Restr	Restr	
bhebhi			O	
chimhandara			O	
vamuchembere	O			
medhemu	O	O	O	

\* playful language with girls

(M) – mainly occurs in Mhondoro

(H) – mainly occurs in Harare

yng - young

### 5.3.3.2 A summary of the men-to-men address forms

**Table 5.4: A table ranking the men-to-men address forms on frequency of use:**

F-frequently; O-occasionally; R-rarely; Restr-restrictedly; N-never

address form	yng-to-old	age mates	old-to-yng	inverted
Hon kin				
mwanangu (M)			F	
muzukuru			R	
bhudhi			O	
babamunini/munin'ina			F	
babamukuru/mukoma	F		O	
baba (M)	F	F	F	
baba mwana/Tombi/Bhoyi	N	N	N	
sekuru	O			
vatezvara	R	N	N	R*
mukuwasha	N	N/R (H)	N	
tsano (H)	N	N/R	N	
Non-kin				
madzibaba	Restr	Restr	Restr	
shasha	O	O	O	
bhulazo	F	F	F	
bhururu		O	O	
gen'a/chikwata	O	O		
zijaya			O	F*
shamwari			O	F*
muchinda			O	
samusha (M)	F	F	F	
mukuru/vakuru	F	F	F	
se	O	O	O	
shefu	F	F	F	
sabhuku	O	O		
vashe/ishe	F	F	F	
changamire/mambo	O	O	O	
mudhara	F	F		

\* playful language; (M) – mainly occurs in Mhondoro;

(H) – mainly occurs in Harare; yng – young

## 5.4 Discussion

### 5.4.1 General comments on the address forms

Two general types of address forms emerge, which I categorize as, honorary (fictive) kin and non-kin forms; and symmetrical or asymmetrical. The address forms express formality and informality, and power and solidarity. The analysis of the address

forms shows that older rural folks seem to be functioning on different conventions of address choice from the rural young and the urban. The former use kin names, generally, while the latter use more non-kin terms, at the same time de-emphasizing the kin.

Within these two systems, it also emerges that there are differences in the way women and men do and get address. A majority of young rural and urban women avoid address forms as far as they can. In the questionnaires they also said they only used these forms when it was absolutely necessary to do so; otherwise, they used other linguistic forms such as, '*pamusoro*' and the other greetings that I used for testing address forms, and which are mentioned above, without an added address form. Mashiri (2001: 90), in his research on request strategies by bus conductors in urban public transportation, has also made similar observations. He says males use 'relational social honorifics' as politeness markers while 'female conductors do not use the same politeness markers as their male counterparts'. These comments do not necessarily suggest that women are not polite. Mashiri (2001) does not suggest that, either. The behaviour might highlight passive resistance to the titles that they get or those that they are expected to use for men. Or this behaviour might reflect their disadvantaged position to name, i.e. use the titles that they think are befitting rather than take up the titles used by older women.

Among the young and urbanites, the range of terms available for use (to men) is more varied and extensive than that available to women (see also McConnell-Ginet 1978; Kramer 1975). Men create and have a greater repertory of addressing, exhausting the whole range of types highlighted in this study, from kin to non-kin forms.

In addressing other women, women in Mhondoro mostly stay with the traditional (conventional) honorary kin terms as Table 5.1 shows. The forms emphasize family roles such as wifeness and motherhood, their private domain roles. The urban woman uses a combination of kin and non-kin forms. The ruling variable in honorary kin women-to-women address forms seems to be, primarily, age (with marital status), accompanied by a cluster of other variables, such as, dress and religion. Women bunch women mostly into the unmarried and married groups, working from perceived age. The women's addresses are about giving and accepting place, role and responsibility. When the age convention is broken, there is resentment by the addressee, except in the special cases of asymmetry in inverted titles (described below), where the discourse is understood to be *jee* (playful chat). One's behaviour could also be important, eg., does one behave like a married woman or not? The women emphasized that with age comes more respect, hence the use of more formal titles such as (*a*)*mai/mhamba* for older women as compared to *munin'ina/mukoma* for younger women. The main kin terms seem to run in the following ascending age order:

*mwanangu* → *munin'ina* → *mukoma/(sisi)* → (*amai/mhamba*) → (*a*)*mbuya*

Women show solidarity with each other within married and unmarried groups. It becomes a together-as-women address as most use *amai/mhamba* or *ambuya* irrespective of age - 'a we're in this together' as a result of the need to show solidarity; or the 'tendency for interpreting events in terms of relative distance (rather than in terms of relative power)' (see Tannen 1990). Between the groups, relations are hierarchical, with perceived age being the key organizational factor.

The non-kin forms are both symmetrical, (i.e., reciprocal) and asymmetrical. They reflect Brown and Gilman's (1960) power and solidarity findings plus other special relationships. The reciprocal title, *madzimai* shows solidarity among women belonging to the Apostolic faith religious group, irrespective of age. Brown and Gilman (1960) asymmetry is reflected in the power title, *medhemu*; and in *shamwari* and *zimhandara* in their inverted contexts (from senior to junior).

A special kind of asymmetry (outside Brown and Gilman), referred to as address inversion here, is also revealed in the address forms. In the special asymmetry, there is a bridging of, rather than creation of distance, a 'giving away of power' rather than enjoying it, as in *vamwene* and *muroora/aroora*, used by older women to address girls and young women, or younger women addressing the older. *Vamuchembere* also shows intimate asymmetry, with an upwards (agewise) addressing. The intimacy is brought in by the softening of an 'old' title by the prefixes *va-* and *mu-*, both of which reflect deep respect. Use of (*v*)*amwene* in place of (*a*)*mbuya* by mature women for equally mature women, could be speculated as avoidance of the 'aging' and confining (*a*)*mbuya* connotations – *vamwene* has some command - in a situation where there is not a large age gap between addresser and addressee as on the ZTV on the talk show program, *Zvakanangana nemadzimai*, incident, described earlier. The idea that it is a relationship that is not potential or probable makes it clear that this is playful talk. Playful talk lessens the distance and force of the address. It could also be a way to build rapport by distributing the power. In the ZTV program, the presenter is the one with the power, by virtue of her heading the program, but she gives away the power to the audience, reverting to cultural norms, where older people, by virtue of their age, have, nominally, more power. (Men do not seem to display such banter, because the 'potential' for an in-law relationship is always there. Men have been given or gotten very young wives before, so the possibility that a son- and father-in-law could be about the same age is not far fetched.)

In addressing men, women mostly stay, again, with the traditional (conventional) honorary kin terms, as shown in Table 5.2. The forms display both distancing and non-distancing inclinations. The distribution of the main forms, however, varied according to locality. In Harare *mukuwasha* is the form most used by all for both young and old men. In Mhondoro, age plays some role. The young man in Mhondoro is addressed mostly as *mwanangu/mukuwasha* (son/son-in-law) while the older man are addressed mostly as *baba* (father).

Of the titles highlighted below, the addressing would seem to progress according to the age of the addressed one, in the following manner: *mwanangu/mukuwasha* → *vahanzvadzi/bhudhi* → *baba* → *sekuru*

In their granting place, role and responsibility to men, women seem to be directed by their subservient role in the society. The power terms such as *shewee* (my lord), referred to as rarely used in Table 5.2, emphasize male superiority. A special type of asymmetry, which bridges the distance, is evident in forms such as *zijaya*.

While age and marital status are still the appropriate variables, as in women-to-women forms, some of the women-to-men forms downplay the age factor and emphasize the distancing factor, to discourage intimacy, as proper women should, eg., with *mukuwasha*. Women use forms that are meant to create mutual distance, although usage does not reflect this mutuality, due to the power dynamics. There is asymmetry where women show an almost appeasing attitude to men while not doing the same to other women. Most female informants and consultants displayed that they were

generally conscious of the forms that men may not like, and so avoided them. Here is what one of the women had to say,

“..varume hatiti baba nekuti isu hatigone kutungamirira murume kuti zvakati nekuti iye ndiye ane kodzero yekuti zvakati zvikati.. Nyangwe akanditaurira zvandisina kufanira ndinongodaira ... asi kana ari iye anotoita ukasha. Saka ini ndinotogara ndakafunga kuti anozvifarira here kana kwete<sup>51</sup>. (... men we do not address as baba (father) because we cannot tell men to do/say this or that because we cannot lead a man as he is the one with the right to tell us how things should be. Even if he addresses me in a way that I don't think I deserve, I will just accept it ... but if it were him, then he would go on the offensive. As a result, I always have to be cautious and consider all the time whether he likes this or not).

This would explain the preference for *mukuwasha*.

The women also suggested that most men do not like to be addressed as *sekuru*. As one woman put it, old men do not like to be addressed as such because, “*kune vamwe vasingadi kunzi sekuru vachida kupindapinda*”<sup>52</sup> (some men don't like to be addressed as *sekuru* as they are still interested in playing the field) and such a title would suggest they were perceived as being no longer eligible or able to ‘play the love game’. In Chap 4, *harahwa*'s (old man) role and meaning was defined in relation to his liaisons with younger women – the picture of ‘the old young man’. However, what is interesting about the avoidance of this title by older women is that, within the kinship system, *sekuru* also refers to uncle (mother's brother), quite obviously the marked sense as it was reported that this form did not seem to register with those addressed as such. Instead, the unmarked meaning is the grandfather definition, hence the delicateness of the matter. The older men said that they were sometimes unhappy with *sekuru* because their thinking was that the women are calling them ‘old and impotent’.

Women also use non-distancing titles such as *vahanzvadzi* (brother) by younger women and *mwanangu* (my child/son) by older women. Terms like *bhudhi*, were reported as avoided by some in both the rural and urban contexts, as they connote (sexual) interest. Observation, however, showed frequent use of the form.

In men-to-men address forms, the titles used are both honorary kin and non-kin. Male-to-male forms emphasize personhood, brotherhood, colleaguehood, peerhood, leadership and power and authority. The ruling variable here seems to be sex and gender, i.e., a man is a man. Age plays a part only when distinguishing between the younger and the older head or the ‘counsel’ and the ‘king’. The (older) rural men were, predictably, conservative in their address, using mainly kin terms, and in a way which respected the age factor. While older rural men use more kin than non-kin terms, to address relative strangers, the situation with the younger rural male and the urban male is that they use more non-kin than honorary kin terms amongst themselves. Sometimes, they used kin terms in a way male adults did not, as exemplified by their use of forms such as *vatezvara* and *tsano* which the older males said they did not use. Males, often the younger adults, especially minibuses drivers and their conductors and assistants, and the self proclaimed parking attendants at sports events or just in the

<sup>51</sup> VaSusan. Mhondoro. February 2001.

<sup>52</sup> VaSusan. Mhondoro. February 2001.



Central Business District often violate traditional norms of address. What comes out in the choices of address forms is that a man is given his rightful cultural role and responsibility, as the dominant party in a patriarchal society, hence the mutual respect portrayed, even in the non-kin titles. Through the use of *mukoma*, for younger people, deference is also shown for young men, what I would like to refer to as 'pretend' respect. Pretend respect refers to the politeness strategies of using elevating kin or non-kin forms in order to facilitate immediate needs in face-to-face interactions, like when one is asking for a ride from another. The same is seen in the *mukuru*-type forms, which acknowledge a man's dominant role in the society.

In the kin terms, solidarity through brotherhood is typically expressed. Contrary to Brown and Gilman's (1960) French findings, the solidarity is also expressed in asymmetry. The terms *babamunini* (young brother) and *babamukuru* (big brother) are hierarchical, in terms of age, a cultural requirement, but they express solidarity all the same. Among the Shona, brothers share a totem, and so the oneness. While *babamukuru* may have the edge because of seniority, he still does not have complete power. Age creates a hierarchy, within the brotherhood, when the discourse requires a chain of command; otherwise, in other contexts, the roles are leveled, with *baba* being the power.

While *babamunini* and *babamukuru* refer to both father's younger/older brother; and younger/older brother), the data that was examined indicated that men used the brother meaning. The brother meaning means that there is power sharing, as power is distributed across the siblings. The uncle meanings were not reflected in the honorary kin addresses. The *baba*'s (father) brothers, *babamunini*/*babamukuru*, are often regarded just as 'fathers', i.e., their *-nini* or *-kuru* extensions are often dropped, just as they are with the female equivalents, *aminini*/*amaiguru*.

The non-kin forms reflect both solidarity and power. Symmetry is shown in the reciprocal brotherly slang terms, *bhulazo* and *bhururu*, and in *shasha*, as well as in the group addresses *chikwata* and *gen'a*. All these terms reflect solidarity as brothers, friends and pals. Asymmetry, in Brown and Gilman (1960), results from power and hierarchy, as in the non-reciprocal use of the chiefly titles, eg., *ishe*, *samusha* and *mukuru*, proffered to older people by juniors. When these address forms are used between (age) mates, as they often are, then their use is symmetrical and reflects the assertion that "we're all equal", as *samushas* (even if we're not). The inverted forms such as, eg., *shamwari* reflect the asymmetrical top-down (age) intimate relationship, where there is a fondness and a coming together, despite the age, and therefore power difference.

In men-to-men forms, men also use forms expressing covert prestige (see also Milroy and Milroy 1978) with address forms such as *mudhara* (old man) and *gen'a*<sup>53</sup> (gang). Even though *gen'a* is adopted from English, it does not have the same negative connotations. The term, however, maintains its 'group' sense. Covert prestige is expressed when positive value is attached to forms that would otherwise presume negative traits, i.e., this is prestige that is covered up, hidden. *Mudhara* means old, as in aged, yet the title is used to address men still in their 40s and 50s, who are not very advanced in years, and even infant males. The title thereby acquires some prestige from being associated with younger folk.

The young rural and urban male strangers, in their address forms to each other, generally emphasize 'public' domain titles while de-emphasizing 'private' house roles,

<sup>53</sup> < English - gang

such as fatherhood, husbandhood, or grandfatherhood. The titles they use offer no clue to the age or marital status of the addressee. In such man-to-man talk, a man is rarely addressed as somebody's husband or in-law. This seems to be an attempt to present men as eternally available to, or as perpetually searching for women. It could also be to emphasize men's role in the public (rather than family) domain. In a related study, Coates (2002) reports that men rarely talk about significant females in their lives in conversations with other men, outside the home. Such suggestions could explain why, among themselves, men do not use honorary family titles, which relate them to the women in their lives.

In men-to-women addresses, men use, generally, formal (kin) distancing terms when addressing women, except only in a few very restricted settings, say, when addressing very young or very elderly women, who they presume to be 'unattached', as Table 5.3 shows. With men-to-women address forms in Harare, the main variable seems to be, primarily, (perceived and potential) marital status, regardless of age. In the rural areas, the pattern is more or less the same, in line with both the age and marriage factors with *vahanzvadzi*, *ambuya* and *amai* being the most used forms. Age separates the (unattached) girls from the (unattached) 'just ripening' young women and from the (attached) 'already picked'<sup>54</sup> women (*vakadzi*). Thereafter, marital status, plus a cluster of other factors such as context, dress and professional status, emerges as a more determining factor. To be "*mukadzi wemunhu*" (wife of a person) (see Chap 4) and a mother, no matter the age, is a status that deserves 'respect'. Actual age becomes irrelevant after marriage. Marriage is considered feminine fulfilment (see Chap 4). This is why the *ambuya* address in Harare and the *ambuya/amai* addresses in Mhondoro pass as 'respectful' polite titles for women. *Ambuya* is the unmarked form, which covers almost all women. It is the title with 'the heaviest constraint' (Chitauro-Mawema 1995: 36). *Mukadzi wemunhu* is *ngozi* (danger) and fire, hence there is need to create distance, to escape being burnt.<sup>55</sup> In the patriarchal structure, women get their respect from their attachment to men. In that respect, and also the fact that some women did not feel flattered by these titles, the titles can be seen as condescending to the women, on the part of men. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines to condescend as 'behave as if one is on equal terms with (a person), while maintaining an overt attitude of superiority.'

*Sisi*, like *bhudhi*, may have sexual overtones, which would explain men's reluctance to admit that they use the form. *Sisi* might be complementary when used for a young woman, but not so for an older woman. For an older woman, who may or may not be married, the message conveyed, it was suggested would seem to be lewd and suggestive. The other hidden message in the address form might be that, by choosing it, the man is implying that the woman does not want to grow up and act her age, as *ambuya* or *amai*. Consequently, some married women said they did not like to be addressed as *sisi* by members of the opposite sex, as such a title might give the impression that they are available (and of easy virtue). Pursuing a *sisi* is an option, especially since the term may refer to a domestic worker. Some of the instances of use in the men-to-women address forms show that the meaning of *sisi*, in fact, depends partly on the age of the addressee and partly on the context/situation/nature of discourse.

<sup>54</sup> Harare man. March 2001.

<sup>55</sup> Several people, men and women, brought up this sentiment during the course of the investigation.

There is also special asymmetry with *bhebbi*, *chimhandara* and *vamuchembere*, where fondness is expressed with non-reciprocal titles.

*Vahanzvadzi*, when used by those who perceive themselves as of the same generation is symmetrical. *Madzimai* is also used symmetrically.

#### 5.4.2 Address and the construction of female and male identities

The claim advanced in this chapter is that women are granted polite, condescending and distancing 'private' house domain titles while men get, mostly, the 'public' power domain titles, which assume the house domain titles. Women are addressed with titles that make reference to the home and family, while the men get titles that intimate their roles as 'boys', masters and authority figures, not only at, but also in, the public sphere.

The female titles that emphasize traditional family roles of wifehood, motherhood and grandmotherhood, promote what Bennholdt Thomsen (1988) calls the 'housewifization' of women. The female gender is, thus, constructed, mostly in terms of the female's domestic (including sexual) role. This same behaviour is observed in Japanese (Cherry 1987), where (married) women are addressed in terms of their allotted spatial domain (the home), i.e., *okusan* or by the more formal *okusama* meaning 'Mrs Interior/Indoors'. This term, which has no inherent marker of sex, cannot be used to refer to men because the home is not seen as men's general domain. Furthermore, Japanese wives call their husbands, *goshujin* or *dannasan* (cp. *ishewe* (master/chief) in Shona) or sometimes the informal *teishu* (master of an inn or teahouse).

The study argues that the use of such condescending female addresses (*vis-à-vis* males') patronize women. While, generally, forms such as *ambuya* are regarded as formal and polite, the study argues that being treated with politeness is not always equivalent to respect and power. For example, while *mudhara* (old man) and (*va*)*muchembere* (old woman), are corresponding and equivalent on paper, they are not necessarily equivalent in usage. *Mudhara*, in a covert tough love sense, refers to seniority and power; (*va*)*muchembere*, in a covert endearment sense means 'darling old woman'; hence, the patronization argument.

While the 'power' terms that men use for each other connote power and dominance, it is not clear who has the power, as the age factor may even be ruled out, say, between *samushas*. The titles prevent the issue of relative power among members of the group from becoming an actual issue, because with these interactions who is supposed to have power is not as clear-cut as with male-female interactions. *Ishe*, *changamire* and *mambo*, among others, mirror the belief in Shona culture that every man is a chief or king in his own right. This tradition comes from the belief in totems, where a kingdom or kingship does not belong to a king, i.e. to an individual, but to a people sharing a totem. In essence then, any man from the group has the potential to be king at some level or another, hence the loose extension of this address form to the 'ordinary' men in the kingdom. The titles connote dominance thereby constructing a dominant and dynamic male gender. Mawadza (2000: 96) in an article on slang in Harare, confirms these findings, that slang terms used for men such as *mudhara* and *bigaz* are elevating in status, while women's such as *ambuya* (mother-in-law) are 'not elevating in status suggesting that slang may have gendered dimensions about which research still needs to be done'.

Even when women and men both receive honorary kin address forms, women still get the so called 'respectful' titles while the men get largely *mukuwasha* which, des-

pite being a kin name, equally connotes youth and vibrancy (like the non-kin), when compared with *mhamba* and *ambuya* (from men), hence the asymmetry. The argument is made on the understanding that these honorary kin forms are borrowed and furnished on a family system (as illustrated in Figures 5.1-4), i.e. that if she is X then he should be Y all things being equal. Therefore, if a woman is addressed as *ambuya*, her counterpart on the kin scale should be *baba* ((*va*)*tezvara*); should her address be *mhamba/amai*, then the men should also get the complementary title, *dhedhi/baba*, not *mukuwasha*. Here is how one of the informants in Mhondoro explained this behaviour, "... *pamwe kuti murume anzi baba hazviite nekuti anogona kuzoorazve asi vakanzi baba havacharoorazve...* *paChiShona murume anogona kungoroora mumwe mukadzi nyangwe akura sei asi mukadzi anenge asingatarisirwe kuita mumwe murume*"<sup>56</sup> ("... maybe it is because it is not the thing to do to address a man as *baba*, because he can get married again and now if you call him *baba* then he won't get married again ... Shona culture allows a man to marry another wife, if he wishes, no matter how old he is, but a woman is not expected to have more than one husband). They say that men's potency and sexual prowess is forever (*murume haapere* (a man doesn't get finished/spent)). *Mukuwasha* is relatively tactful and diplomatic as anyone from 20 to 70 can be addressed as such. One woman in Mhondoro said, "*Isvu tinovateta nyangwe vari vadiki...*" (We tread softly around them [men] even when they are young). This consciousness of not wanting to offend might explain why young urban women refrain from using address forms with strangers and other non kin, unless it is absolutely unavoidable.

The honorary kin address forms for women used by both women and men compared to those used for men -*dzora* (curtail/restrain), -*dzikamisa* (pacify/calm) and -*chembedza* (age) the women, trapping them in given domestic roles, what Mugo (2001: 17) calls 'domestic entrapment'. Restricted in these roles, the women become less of a threat physically, sexually, socially or otherwise. The roles of *amai/mhamba* ('mother'), and *ambuya* are confining and binding roles. They restrict the individuals in the respective prescribed roles. Wifhood and motherhood entail women's responsibilities, to the spouse, the children and the whole clan. It means *kuzvibata* (behaving, exercising self-control and generally keeping oneself together), *kuzvityora* (soft-spoken, respectful, patient, tender, etc.) and *kudzikama* (soft, calm, unruffled, etc.). The woman finds herself curtailed in these expectations of wifhood and motherhood, which may not foster her womanhood and sexuality or even her career. As Mugo (date unknown<sup>57</sup>) points out, from birth to death, women are not only culturally constructed to reflect their disadvantaged position, but they are also conditioned to engage in acts and pronouncements of self-negation or self-denial.

On the contrary, *mukuru* (by men) or *mukuwasha* (by women) are less confining titles, in terms of the weight of the constraints associated with 'private' house responsibility, and are also not as confining, in my view. It can be any adult male, young or old, a somebody or a nobody. *Mukuru* seems to have the effect of easing the man-to-man address burden of respect and responsibility. *Mukuwasha* is also equally less confining in that the man is assumed to be potentially free of, or free to take on more family. He is the customer here, to whom the woman is saying, 'Yes, you can have my daughter if you want her.' And, as they say, 'the customer is king'.

<sup>56</sup> VaMartha, Mhondoro. September 2001.

<sup>57</sup> A Zimbabwe Mirror article from the mid-to-late 90s.

A separation seems to exist for a man, between his public roles and his private family roles (which may well be assumed and backgrounded). Conversely, the general findings have shown that, more often than not, there is no role separation for women. A woman's perceived private role(s) follow(s) her everywhere, wherever she is addressed, even in contexts where she is not known as an individual. For the most part, women seem to have accepted those 'private' domain roles without question. They said that they had grown accustomed to hearing the titles, they now regarded them as 'natural', or, they endured them as they accepted their position as subordinate to men, or because they did not want to be labelled as not being proper. Some mentioned that, if they refuse some of the domestic titles that are 'insensitively' given to them, such as (*a*)*mbuya*, then they are criticized by both women and men. A group of women in their fifties and sixties related that, although they accept the (*a*)*mbuya* title without question, they did not appreciate this address form and others that 'aged' them beyond their real ages, especially coming from people (men and women) who were older than them. They said the term makes them feel ancient or worn out. One Mhondoro woman questioned the society's insensitivity when she said,

Ini, handizive kuti sei ndiri ambuya wemunhu wese iye zvino, nevamwewo varume vandinoziva vaive mberi kwangu kuchikoro vanongonditi ambuya. ... ehe, ndinoziva kuti ndiri mbuya, ndine vazukuru, asika ivo havasi vazukuru vangu... kana zera navo ini handina, a-a madhara akadaro!<sup>58</sup>

I don't know why most people address me as (*a*)*mbuya*... even some who I know are older than me because at school they were ahead of me still address me as *ambuya*... yes, I know I'm a grandmother as I have grandchildren but I'm not their grandmother... I'm not even their age, a-a, not old men like them.

Some young women, as mentioned earlier, said they did not feel very flattered by the address forms, such as *amai*, *ambuya* and *ambuya*, especially coming from older men, hence the references to patronization. Why not *hanzvadzi*, they asked. After all, men mostly address the other as brother, so why not address women as sisters, they said. As an example, African American culture displays a reciprocal brother-sister address system (same sex and across sex). Some women were reported to resist such titles that they felt were not suitable. These women, it was reported, were often accused of '*kuzviita mwana mudiki*' (to play young) by refusing their 'natural' address.

Address forms for women are dependent on the women's men. An observation that is relevant from a family point of view is that if a younger brother marries a woman who is older than the older brother, the older brother still gets to address her as (*a*)*mainini* (the *-nini* meaning younger); and if an older brother marries a woman who is younger than the younger brother, the younger brother still gets to address her as (*a*)*maiguru* (the *-kuru* meaning older). The males dictate the titles the women get.

As observed in the previous chapter, and as will emerge in Chap 7, sex is used to control women. There is a noticeable preoccupation with sex and sexuality, through either the need to distance or to ensure that a woman's sexuality is not emphasized. If the women resist certain 'aging' address forms, preferring the younger forms, then

<sup>58</sup> VaGladys. Mhondoro. March 2001.



they are accused of being loose giving weight to the argument that address is about power and control. And, sexual freedom for women seems to imply not behaving.

The older women conceded that, occasionally, there is an advantage to being addressed by such family role titles. They say that, sometimes, the titles such as (*a*)*mbuya* or (*a*)*mai* protect or shield them from unwarranted and unwelcome approaches by men because, "...*varume vanotyana kana ukati uri mukadzi wanhingi*" (...men are afraid, if you tell them that you are someone's wife, i.e., they maintain their distance once they know). Usually, men do not, therefore, address a woman in a way that would be seen as a challenge or disrespect to her man.

The other favourable thing the women mentioned was that, culturally, (*a*)*mbuya* entitled them to long-overdue respect, as persons in their own right. (*A*)*mbuya* is seen as the one bearing everyone, the one with all the wise ideas (...*ambuya vanoremekedzwa nekuti ndicho chinhu chose, mazano ose, - kuzvarwa kwevese vari mumburi ...*(*ambuya* is respected because she is everything, all ideas, - the one who brought into the world all in the family...)). Because of this high esteem that (*a*)*mbuya* has, the women could now do things or run things without reprimand from the men or the society at large. For women, *ambuyahood* brings more power. She can now take more family responsibility, i.e., do 'male' things such as making decisions and getting official credit for them and being consulted by the family on family matters, things that were 'not her domain' as a mature woman in her childbearing years. In her post-menopausal age, she can also now engage in important traditional rites, such as brewing beer for important sacred rituals, that she could not before when she was 'dirty' from the menstrual blood 'coming out of her' (see also 4.3.1.2).

There seems to be an (unconscious) awareness of the 'housewifization' of the traditional forms for women as seen in the attempts by the young adults, in both rural and urban areas to differentiate between traditional mothers (*amai*) and 'modern' mothers (*mhamba*), respectively. *Mhamba* is not only a mother, but also a professional, working or not-so-traditional (in terms of clothing, status, bearing, etc) mother. Such an attempt does confirm the argument suggesting the lack of power in female domestic titles. Older rural women said they did not like the *mhamba* title, as it was used by urbanites. They said that it belittled the *amai* role. Rural people see themselves as the harbingers of culture, compared to adulterated urbanites.

The study argues that, as a result of the attitudes which motivate the selection of the main address forms for women, and which emphasize family roles, in the construction of the female gender, psychological controls are put on women to affirm those aspects of their titles through their behaviour and negating (sexual) aspects of individual womanhood. The effect of such asymmetries seems to me to be to affirm men's personhood and belief in themselves, while on the other hand restraining women's femininity, sexuality, individual capacities and talents and motivation.

### 5.4.3 Address and female sexuality

More evidence that women's identities are tied up in their childbearing capacity or motherhood, and therefore wifhood, are the addresses women get, from men, when they are pregnant. In the investigation, it was revealed that they were almost always addressed either as *amai* or *ambuya* (not *sisi* nor *vahanzvadzi*), irrespective of age, for maximum distancing. Kiær (1990) in a study on the discursive construction of maternity tells of her experiences, the contrast between her identity as a scholar and a 'mum-

to-be'. She says she had the uneasy feeling of being turned into someone else, as people started addressing her differently (see also Freed 1996b). In discussions, Shona women related the same observations, of how interactions and relations became uneasy, even awkward, when they were pregnant. Some said that their own fathers and brothers treated and addressed them differently. This they said made them feel like they had become some sort of deified object. Besides the *amai* or *ambuya* address forms, they also get such non-kin forms as *VaMutedede* (the one who walks with laboured steps) or *VaTumbwa* (the one with the tummy) (see Chap 6). Such forms carrying the prefixed respect form *Va-* made them feel constantly conscious of their bodies and sexuality.

#### 5.4.4 Asymmetrical uses of address forms

This section elaborates on salient forms of address, discussed above. It:

- a) contrasts the forms, *ambuya* and *mukuwasha*, forms that have emerged as the unmarked forms for women by men and for men by women, respectively,
- b) highlights honorary kin address forms used by women only to strangers when, in the reality of family structures, they could be used by both women and men, and
- c) highlights kin forms which are rarely used or not at all, honorarily, in acquaintance or stranger interactions.

These forms are highlighted to illustrate gaps in symmetry in the uses of address forms for and by women and men.

##### 5.4.3.1 *Mukuwasha-ambuya: the unmarked forms of address by either sex*

As the discussion above indicates, *mukuwasha* and *ambuya*, are unmarked forms of address for men (by women) and women (by men), respectively, as observed especially in Harare. The point that was emphasized over and over again by men was that women should not complain at all because the men-to-women unmarked address form, *ambuya* is a very high form of respect for women, as mothers-in-law enjoy high status and respect from their sons-in-law. But does *ambuya* really mean respect for women? On the surface it might look like it does, but, on further examination, it becomes clear that what is expressed is pseudo respect for the woman, i.e., respect that is no respect at all. Observations made in the questionnaire (Appendix 5-I) and discussions were that there is a 'respect' relation going on, but it is not specifically for the woman. It was explained to me that men are socialised to distance themselves from non-kin women because of '*kutya mhosva*' (fear of crime/offence) as *mukadzi wemumwe ndiambuya* (another's wife is *ambuya*). Thus, the form offers a kind of 'shield/protection' for the men from other men. The 'respect' is really meant for the man who 'possesses' the woman, i.e., the one who wields the power. What women then get is the pseudo respect from their ties with men while the men/husbands get the real respect. The man does not want to be seen as coming on to some other male's woman, hence the use of *ambuya*, to keep public distance. The argument that has been made earlier is that, *ambuya* is, in that respect, a patronizing polite and 'respectful' expression of social distance, a 'put-in-place' for women.

While it can also be said that *mukuwasha*, by women-to-men, is equally distancing, the reasons for distancing, as suggested in the discussions, are not the same. Women said they did so because they were either afraid of their men or what society would



think if they were seen as inviting men (see also *mukadzi wemunhu* 4.2.3.1). Markedly, they did not mention that they were distancing themselves from married men.

Although it is said that *ambuya* is one of the highest respect forms that men can bequeath on women, in practice, women do not have power over *mukuwasha*. *Ambuya* has no direct control of *mukuwasha* (as opposed to *vamwene's* (mother-in-law's) role with respect to her *muroora* (daughter-in-law); *ambuya* is a mother-in-law to a son-in-law; *vamwene* is a mother-in-law to a daughter-in-law. In the latter relationship, (*v*)*amwene* exerts direct control over *muroora*.) In a family context *ambuya* and *mukuwasha* rarely have contact. Theirs is a relationship of distance. If she has an issue with *mukuwasha*, her power lies in being able to report her case to (*va*)*tezvara* (*baba*) (her husband – the man's father-in-law) who can then take up the matter on her behalf. Moreover, a *mukuwasha* is a *murume* (man), a *baba* and a *samusha* (house owner/head), in his own right, and *ambuya* is a *mukadzi* (woman), an *amai*, and has a subservient role to *baba*, the head of the household.

#### 5.4.3.2 Address forms used by women and avoided by men

The argument that is presented in the following two examples is that avoidance of these forms (*mukuwasha* and *mwanangu*) by men has to do with (sexual) power and dominance.

##### *mukuwasha*

As noted above, *mukuwasha* is the unmarked title that women typically use for males of all ages. In this part, I consider the case of *mukuwasha* (son-in-law) and try to come up with an explanation for why women only use this form (see Table 5.2), yet both sexes have the potential to do so. Both females and males, in the kinship scheme, have sons-in-law. Both women and men have the same age group senses of *mukuwasha*. For women, as Figure 5.3 shows, these are:

son-in-law, or  
sister-in-law's (husband's sister) husband.

For men, as Figure 5.4 shows, *mukuwasha* refers to:

son-in-law, or  
brother-in-law (sister's husband).

Yet, men do not use this address form with male strangers (see Table 5.4). If we were to go by Figure 5.4, then for any adult, male or female, addressing a young man as *mukuwasha*, the equivalent address form for an equally young woman should be *hanzvadzi* (sister) and *tete* (sister-in-law), respectively. I contend that the covert reason seems to relate to the concepts of power and dominance, including sexual dominance. Sex and the fear of it being 'inflicted' on loved and 'protected' plays a part in the choice of titles men use. As highlighted earlier (Chap 4) sex is seen as male power and dominance. The imagery used in some of the terms depicts sex as a violent activity where the man punishes or disciplines, jumps on or plunges into the woman. The penis is seen as a weapon that brings the females total subjugation, thereby indirectly affecting their male folk. If your people and especially 'your women folk' are dominated, then it means that you, as the man, have been dominated, too. Addressing another man

with honorary *mukuwasha* would, therefore, mean accepting or condoning that the addressee could actually 'discipline' one's sister or daughter. This thinking would seem to account for the territorial complex that the men have around 'their women'. From what the men said, it was clear to me that they are generally very 'protective' of their female folk against being 'sexually assaulted' by other men. There were suggestions of harboured feelings of, at the least, resentment or awkwardness for other men, for 'doing it' to their mothers or sisters.

Another possible explanation as to why men do not use the honorary *mukuwasha* form for other men could be because it creates a hierarchy, a vertical pairing, where the addresser is (metaphorically) understood to be (*va*)*tezvara* (*baba*) (father-in-law). The (*va*)*tezvara* dominates *mukuwasha*. Figures 5.3 and 5.4 show that the father-in-law role is a level above the one of the son-in-law, i.e., one male above the other, hence the dominance of (*va*)*tezvara* over *mukuwasha*. Besides, in the marriage ceremony, the *mukuwasha* pays (*va*)*tezvara roora* (bride wealth) for him to let his daughter go. It would mean, culturally, *mukuwasha* would have to put his hands together and bow his head when addressing (*va*)*tezvara*. It is apparent from the titles that men do not like to put themselves or other men down. The preferred situation is one where they respect each other while somehow each one continues to enjoy power in his own right, hence the popularity of *babamunini* and *babamukuru*, titles that ensure power sharing and other titles like *mukuru* and *vashe*, which are used reciprocally. The men do not seem to want to be in situations where the question of who has the power is clear-cut (even if it is), since they like to pretend they all have it and they respect the other, what has been referred to here as 'pretend respect'.

Women, on the other hand, are more accommodating and use *mukuwasha* with men of whatever age. Literally, a *mukuwasha* is also a *baba* and a *samusha* (house head). The women, who use *mukuwasha*, seem to be saying that they do not 'mind' giving their daughters away because the daughters are never theirs to give in the first place. Hence, their 'giving' is really giving that is no giving at all. It is pretend giving.

#### *mwanangu*

In this part, I address the issue of *mwanangu* which men say they rarely use for addressing young women yet use frequently for young men. Also, when, on the contrary, older rural women said that they frequently used *mwanangu* with young men and women in the situations in which men could not use the term to address young women. Some of these women said that they used *mwanangu* and *mukuwasha* interchangeably.

An observation was made that men used *ambuya* for young women in situations where they would use *mwanangu* for young men. A 53-year-old male informant<sup>59</sup>: from Mhondoro said that he had always seen the titles as 'natural' with *ambuya* (for women) and *mwanangu* (for men). This is an instance where, for example, you have a 21-year old single woman being addressed by a 50-year old man as *ambuya* while a single young man of the same age or more is being addressed as *mwanangu*. The argument often made by some is that the man is not necessarily saying that the woman has a child he can marry, but he could be using the address on behalf of his sons. Still, the point remains that the impression created is one of (prematurely) *kudzikamisa nekukudza* (curtailing and aging) the women. I would like to argue that the kin-forms-symmetrical thing for men to do would be to address young women and men either

<sup>59</sup> VaFani. Mhondoro, February 2001.

both as *mwanangu*; or as *ambuya* and *baba/(va)tezvara*, respectively. When asked if he did not see a young woman as a child, one male participant said (about young couples),

*ehe mukadzi wake iyeye wandinoti ambuya mwana wangu futi asi zvingori nani kuti mukadzi wake aite ambuya iye oita mwana pane kuti mukadzi woita mwana murume achiita mukuwasha. Kwete, hazviite kuti nditi mukuwasha kumwana wechikomana...*<sup>60</sup> (Yes, his wife whom I address as *ambuya* is also my child, just like him, but it is better that he is my child while she be the in-law rather than that she be my child and he be my in-law. No, it will not do for me to address a male child as son-in-law...)

In this response the informant introduces another *ambuya* meaning where a man may sometimes address his *muroora* (daughter-in-law) as *ambuya*, again to distance himself from another's (his son's) wife. Interestingly, this meaning now emerging here did not come up in the discussions, even with the said informant. It was explained that *ambuya* compared to *mwanangu* is a 'safe' enough address term for them to use, even for their own daughters. They said it was because the woman is some man's (potential) wife. And, because within the culture, grandfathers have a joking husband-wife relationship with little girl granddaughters, the mother (who is the man's daughter) therefore metaphorically becomes a mother-in-law. The men said that addressing a young woman as *mwanangu* brings in the question of paternal intimacy, or involvement, and moral responsibility with an adult female (where *ambuya* brings distance). Such behaviour could be described as a phobic response to incest. On the possibility of *ambuya* being a phobic response to incest, it is said that even at the real family level, once a daughter has blossomed into womanhood, an awkward relationship sets in between daughter and father, which leads to the lessening of closeness or intimacy between the two. The address forms, therefore, tend to 'graduate' from intimate forms, such as *mwanangu* or first or praise name, when the daughter is a young girl to 'polite,' 'respectful' and distancing forms such as *ambuya* or *Va-* + praise name, when she is older and matured or when she is taboo, i.e. married. Noticeably, men do not usually engage in intimacies such as playful talk with women they are not familiar with (unless they are interested). In the summary of men-to-women address in Table 5.3 there is no record of playful talk with young women. The underlying reason seems to be that men want to protect themselves from themselves and from other men (the women's husbands). Again, sex seems to be a major preoccupation. And, sex with a young woman is highly imaginable, hence the distancing. *Ambuya* constructs a taboo that protects both addresser and addressee.

Also, *ambuya* to a stranger could be seen as a subconscious attempt by men to avoid awkwardness should they decide to show interest in the young woman. A man (who is deemed responsible for her) would not pursue a daughter.

Addressing young women and young men with unequal, supposedly reciprocal, address forms reflects asymmetries. These further illustrate the attitudes that men are the sons and women are the wives and mothers.

<sup>60</sup> VaFani. Mhondoro. February 2001.

### 5.4.3.3 Potential honorary kin address forms avoided by both women and men

These are kin forms of address which record a rarely to never response in Tables 5.1-5.4. They are *vamwene*, *muroora*, *tete*, *vatezvara* and *tsano*. I would like to refer to these forms as 'masculine', and to their corresponding female forms as 'feminine' forms. The research suggests that feminine forms are used as honorary address forms frequently and 'naturally'. 'Masculine' terms/titles in this study refer to:

- paternal titles, and
- terms naming in-laws on the husband's side (hereafter referred to as 'male-in-laws').

'Feminine' terms/titles in this study refer to:

- maternal titles, and
- terms naming in-laws on the wife's side (hereafter referred to as 'female-in-laws').

In customary rites, rituals, activities and performances, there is a level at which both female and male kin folks on the father's side are regarded as 'male'; and, there is a level at which both female and male kin folks on the mother's side are regarded as 'female'. In other words, kinfolks on the mother's side are regarded as 'mothers', while those on the father's side are regarded as 'fathers'. The main example of a female paternal title is *tete* (aunt). An example of a male maternal title seen in this same light is *sekuru* (uncle – mother's brother). Some languages, in their kinship terms, capture this pattern. Ndebele captures these gender relationships in the forms used for addressing the 'masculine' *tete* as *babakazi* (*ubaba* (father) + *-kazi* (feminine)) and the 'feminine' *sekuru*<sup>61</sup> as (*malume* (*ma-* (feminine) + *-lume* (masculine)). Norwegian also captures the sex differentiation (not gender differentiation). They refer to this *sekuru* as *morbror* (*mor* – mother; *bror* – brother, hence mother's brother), and the *tete* as *farsøster* (*far* – father; *søster* – sister, illustrating what I am referring to as the 'maternal male' and the 'paternal female', respectively).

Below, I elaborate further on the avoided forms.

#### a) The case of paternal titles

*baba* (father) (see Figures 5.1 and 5.2)

*Baba* as *musoro wemba* (head of household) has the most superior rank in the household. In a patriarchal society, *baba* is the pinnacle of all kin forms. As already mentioned, in Harare there was a general reluctance to admit using such a powerful address form to strangers, with a marked preference for slang terms expressing the same power and solidarity. In Mhondoro, where a majority claimed they did, closer investigation shows that *baba* is not used just as an opposite of *amai* (mother). In this social context *baba* emphasizes the 'head' meaning. *Amai* is marriedhood and motherhood while *baba* is headhood. *Baba* is, therefore, used, when it is, more as an authority figure title rather than in its 'father' meaning.

<sup>61</sup> It is interesting to note that, while there is, apparently, a need to have an exclusive term for father's sister, *tete*, there is no exclusive term for mother's sister. They are all *amai*(*nini/guru*) - 'wives' to father!

A borrowed term meaning *baba*, *dhedhi*<sup>62</sup> (dad), was said to be never used to address strangers, although its feminine equivalent (also borrowed) is used frequently by both women and men in Harare. They said that the use of *dhedhi* would mean taking too many liberties with men. In the ZAOGA church congregation, women are addressed as *amai* (mother) or *mhamha* (mom) while the men are addressed as *baba*. When I asked if *baba* was ever addressed as *dhedhi* (daddy) as in *mhamha* (mom), my informants laughed and said, no, nobody would use such a term unless they were the men's children. Some said it was too intimate – that there might be a 'come-on' implication or an implication of an intimate relationship. Others thought it was ridiculous.

*tete*

While a few young urbanites said they used *tete*, hence the 'rarely' score, the traditional rural people raised quite strong feelings against its usage as an honorary address term with strangers. When denying use of the form, the informants would ask rhetorically,

"... *ihama yangu here yandinoti tete?*" (... why would I address a non-relative as *tete*?)

Or, "... *kuti mutupo wangu wakafanana newake here?*" (... do I share the same totem with her?)

*Tete* is important, because, culturally, she is also presented as *baba* since she is one's father's sibling. There are occasions where *tete* can stand in for her male folk, should they not be available. In marriage matters, she is also close in rank to *baba*, as she is the one who facilitates things between the *vanababa* (fathers) and the prospective son-in-law (*mukuwasha*), up to the point where *vanababa* can then take over. *Tete* can also be referred to as a husband, culturally, (to a *muroora*).

In Harare I observed a few instances of *tete* usage. In a number of incidences this title was used in cross-cultural contexts by black men for white women that they had been introduced to and worked on a project with. The white women obviously do not carry the same totem with the men. Nevertheless, it seemed alright to use this form of address. The men said that they used *tete* to show respect for the women, in the same manner that they respect their *tetes*, those who have the role of counselling them. It is interesting that these women are addressed with a 'masculine address', and not as (*a*)*mai* or *ambuya*, as is done with black women, who share the white woman's age. There seems to be a subconscious 'power thing' going on. I have argued before that such titles as (*a*)*mai* or *ambuya* patronize women. The *tete* example grants further weight to the argument that address form choices are a power issue. Considering the history of Zimbabwe, where, following the colonization of Zimbabwe, whites generally had power over blacks, one could argue that the white women are subconsciously perceived to have more power than the black women hence the non use of (*a*)*mai* or *ambuya* for women who would otherwise be addressed as such, if they were black.

*Tete* is also distancing, sexually, as a young man would not dream of messing with his father's sister or his own sister, metaphorically, his own child.

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<sup>62</sup> < English - dad

It is also worthy of note that while the traditional term *tete* is almost taboo for most, the borrowed equivalent, *andi*, is readily used in the female environs of Harare. *Andi* is a slang word which provides a way around the formal form *tete*. The adoption of the new term and the urban setting works to neutralize the force of the traditional cultural term. For the women who use *andi*, it seems to assert their independence from cultural expectations and bounds as confirmed by their employment in the urban sector, previously a man's world. *Andi* seems to carry the same connotations of freedom to name women as individuals, marital-status-irrelevant. It makes the addresser and addressee potential daughter-in-law and sister-in-law, respectively, or an aunt and niece.

### b) Male-in-law titles

For the woman, male-in-law titles include the father-in-law ((*va*)*tezvara*) and mother-in-law ((*v*)*amwene*); the sister-in-law (*tete*) and other husband's relatives (see Figure 5.3). For the man, male-in-law titles include wife's male relatives, such as father-in-law ((*va*)*tezvara*), brother-in-law (*tsano*) (see Figure 5.4). Below, I elaborate on two of the forms, *vatezvara* and *muroora*.

((*va*)*tezvara* (*baba*))

*Vatezvara* is the antonym to *ambuya*, the term used frequently for women. When asked if people ever used ((*va*)*tezvara*) as an address form for adult acquaintances, one woman in Mhondoro said, "...zvakaoma kuti munhu wemurume wausingazivi umuti vatezvara"<sup>63</sup> (It is difficult to just address a stranger as ((*va*)*tezvara*)). A man said, "No. Hazviite. Ndikati vatezvara vanozoti, ari kutamba neni."<sup>64</sup> (No. I could never address him as *vatezvara* as he might think that either I was playing with him or I was not taking him seriously). The few times men use *baba* for older men, they say that they would be honorarily giving the addressees the role of their own fathers, not fathers-in-law. Some women said they used *vatezvara* in a special kind of address inversion with boys.

It is worth noting that men do not use ((*va*)*tezvara* (*baba*)) for men when they extensively use the female equivalent form, *ambuya* for women. In an honorary family structure, if one is the other's mother-in-law then her man should be the father-in-law. There is asymmetry in usage for adults. One young man explained it as, "Ndinofunga vanhu vanoona zvakareruka kuti kumunhukadzi *ambuya* pane kuti ((*va*)*tezvara* kumunhurume, vanhurume vanongotyisawo"<sup>65</sup> (I think people generally find it easier to address women as *ambuya* rather than men as *vatezvara*, since men tend to be rather fear inspiring). It was explained that, yes, she is an *ambuya*, a respectable person. But, she is also a woman. *Vatezvara* is a big title with a lot of potential power, too much to 'give away' to an acquaintance. One cannot take a stranger, or acquaintance, and make him head of the family. The *vatezvara* (*baba*) is the dominant form from which the *ambuya* role is derived, not vice versa.

*muroora*

Rarely do women and men use *muroora* (daughter-in-law) to address strangers that are adults, yet its antonym *mukuwasha* (son-in-law) is the unmarked address form for

<sup>63</sup> VaEfa. Mhondoro. September 2000.

<sup>64</sup> VaFani. Mhondoro. February 2001.

<sup>65</sup> VaXXX (kuDondoshava) March 2001



men by women. A glimpse at Figure 5.3 will show that *muroora* is horizontally on the other extreme end of the *mukuwasha* level. The two are marrying into one family, one getting the girl and the other 'getting' the boy. *Muroora* belongs to the man. It is worth of note that the boy's 'asset', *muroora*, is not touched while the girl's, *mukuwasha* is, at least by other women. According to one informant,

*"ukazoti mukadzi ari kufamba nemurume wake muroora vanhu vechirume ava vanongofungira-fungira zvekuti vanozoti asi waimbenge wakaroorwako here? ... asi mukadzi wacho ukati murume wake mukuwasha haambozvibvunza kuti asi waimbenge wakaroorako here... whether achibhowekana nazvo hambeno."*<sup>66</sup>

if you address a woman in the company of her husband as *muroora*, these men they get so overly suspicious that they might query their wives as to why this person should be addressing them as such – and might ask the wife if she has been married before ... but the woman doesn't ask about whether he had married into the family before... whether she is irritated by this or not.

Like the woman who, when she marries a king, becomes royalty, so does *muroora* when she marries a man. This would probably explain why both women and men avoid the address form, and only use it with children and young girls/women in inverted addresses. The use or non-use of an address form is therefore about who 'owns' and who is 'owned'.

One explanation could be reflected in the difference between *ambuya* and (*va*)*mwene*. The two in-law roles are asymmetrical even within the family. Unlike in the *ambuya* to *mukuwasha* (mother -in-law to son-in-law) relationship discussed elsewhere in this chapter, in the *vamwene* to *muroora* (mother -in-law to daughter-in-law) relationship, *vamwene* (and indeed all the male-in-laws) has power over *muroora*. Everybody seems to have more power than *muroora*. *Muroora* is therefore not really a 'free' title to take.

The other explanation is the one that has been given before. The woman should not mind, as, culturally, one's man is never really hers alone. Polygamy is always a possibility or potentiality, hence men's perpetual *mukuwashaness*. On the other hand, the woman is expected to marry one man, once and for all, otherwise she falls. She, therefore, has a slim potential to ever be someone else's (outside the family) *muroora*.<sup>67</sup>

## 5.5 Conclusion

From the address forms that were collected for both women and men, the overall guiding variables for choice of address displayed were sex, age, perceived marital status, professional status, appearance (eg. pregnant or not, dress, etc.), religious sect as well as the discourse. There is variation depending on how these variables support or interfere with each other. In the data examined, there is, often, a noticeable divide between the levels of formality between the rural and the urban folk although young rural men

<sup>66</sup> VaChristina. Mhondoro. September 2001.

<sup>67</sup> VaXXX. Dondoshava, Mhondoro. March 2001



tend to behave more like urbanites. Rural folk tend to see, and say they treat, the meanings of honorary kin address forms more literally than the urbanites do. On the other hand, urbanites also tend to use more non-kin forms than rural folk. The rural still, to some limited extent, maintain traditional forms. The 'true' honorary meaning of forms such as *mukuwasha* and *ambuya* are maintained, for the most part.

Address forms show distance and intimacy highlighting power and solidarity, respectively. They function to indicate respect.

The power issue across the sexes seems to be more apparent in Harare. Urban and other industrial areas have received the brunt of colonisation, and the resultant class systems based on the superiority of the male 'wage earner' over the 'housewives'. The 1990s have seen an influx of mostly young men into the increasingly privatised transport (and related services) industry. The men are the drivers, conductors and rank marshals of minibuses, the *hwindi*<sup>68</sup>s at the markets, and the unofficial parking attendants on the streets of Harare, at stadiums and other public functions. These men, due to their numbers and daily contact with millions of urban dwellers, have become a dominant force in influencing address in Harare. Harare highlights the extension of old forms of address as well as the creation of new ones by the young men. The new forms construct and entrench, further, a dominant male gender. Thus, language carries with it a social and cultural history (see also Duranti 1988). Young rural and urban women, on the other hand, generally avoid using address forms with strangers. I have explained this behaviour either as passive resistance to the forms in use; or, the women's not being able to name as a result of their powerless position. When they do name, they name each other (not men), as in the *mhamha* and *andi* forms. The new forms remain 'family' titles, as with the conventional ones.

The investigation reveals that terms used in female-female (and male-female) interactions are mostly formal (see, eg. Brown 1980) and centre on women's expected roles within the family as wives, mothers and grandmothers, i.e. their 'private' domain roles. The forms reflect a solidarity in their domestic roles as wives and mothers, where they are used among (potential) wives and mothers. The *andi* (aunt) form, used, reciprocally, by both young and mature women mostly in urban areas and typically in female environments, does, indirectly, reflect solidarity in sisterhood. Power relations are also expressed through asymmetric addresses between the young and the old, and the bosses and the juniors.

Address inversion, which signals an intimacy that diminishes the power hierarchy in asymmetrical relationships is observed in young-to-old forms, and vice versa. This bantering occurs between (older) women and young girls/boys and women/men. Such special asymmetry is meant to reduce distance, to soften and to make it easier to make requests. The address expresses a cultural playful intimacy, referred to as *jee* in Shona.

The address forms preferred in male-male interactions highlight more personhood, manhood, brotherhood and men's dominant roles within the society, rather than within familyhood. Solidarity is associated with such uses of reciprocal forms of address. The use of such forms prevents the issue of relative power among the group becoming an issue, because it is not clear who has the power, hence the references to pretend respect. Addresses that highlight a hierarchical relationship are avoided.

<sup>68</sup> These are men who help carry luggage, bags and parcels, charging the owners a fee.

Terms used in opposite sex interactions create distance between the two sexes. They project a formalness that seems to assert in public, 'we are not intimate', arising out of the need for men to demonstrate their distance from married or 'possessed' women; and, especially, married women's need to demonstrate public distance from men who are not their husbands.

Women tend to use titles for men which offer no clue to their age or marital status and which recognize men's dominant roles. Men use address forms for women irrespective/regardless of approximate age or professional status, as the women are divided into married and unmarried. The main form, offers pseudo respect to women as the women are respected for the (potential) men in their lives. The forms are mostly formal and highlight women's expected home domain roles as sisters, wives, mothers and grandmothers. While some would see the use of these polite forms of address as mere formality, the study argues that the (too much) politeness, clearly demonstrates a power difference in favour of the addresser and is a subtle way of patronizing women, hence the references to condescension. Power is enshrined in 'masculine' titles such as paternal and male-in-law kin titles. 'Masculine' titles, compared to 'feminine' titles, seem to have this intrinsic power in them, too powerful to use in non-legitimate discourses. This could be compared to what happens with the monarchy in the King/Queen example. When a King gets married, he gets himself a Queen. But, when a Queen gets married, she does not get herself a King. She gets a Prince or a consort, instead. While queenship can be acquired through marriage, kingship is too important to be acquired in such an upstart manner. One has to truly belong. Such titles as 'king' in English and the 'masculine' titles in Shona are reserved for family only.

The asymmetries in address forms for women, vis-à-vis those for men, are experienced at three levels through:

- a) implications of the use of supposed symmetrical forms, such as the *ambuya - mukuwasha* example exchanged between a woman and man, and non symmetrical *ambuya-mwanangu* address forms by men for women and men, respectively, where a huge age difference is implied; and where female sexuality is suppressed; and
- b) the use of 'public power' domain forms for men vis-à-vis house/family/private domain forms for women, eg. *mukuru* vis-à-vis *ambuya*; and,
- c) gaps such as the avoidance and rare use of 'masculine' forms while the equivalent 'feminine' forms are used frequently.

Because of the distribution of the kin forms and the use of non-kin 'power' forms for men by other men, there is no power reciprocity between the sexes. Asymmetrical power relations between the sexes lead to these non-reciprocal/non-corresponding forms of address. As Cameron (1998: 262) puts it, '... power governs asymmetrical relationships where one is subordinate to another; solidarity governs symmetrical relationships characterized by social equality and similarity.' One could further argue that, in these pairings, women are controlled within tradition while the men are expanding their horizons to roam outside the confines of tradition. Examining the use of address forms is one way through which gender identity construction and attitudes may be studied. The data suggests that public Shona setting addresses, both honorary kin and non-kin, are fashioned around a traditional Shona community model, where females are the wives and mothers, the dominated. Conversely, men are the heads, who have (and share) the power. Address reflects relative status and power. The man is seen as

a dominant individual in and outside the home. A woman is a family person. There is no role separation for women as they are 'trapped' in given family roles. The address forms, then, are an expression of the dynamics of power and status in everyday interactions. If women force reciprocal use of address, they run the risk of surprising, puzzling or offending the addresser, or of being accused of behaving badly, craving male attention. The system of address reflects women's subordinate social status.

This part of the study has shown how language in its content and daily usage, reflects empty conventions. Users use and continue to use forms of address that everybody around them uses without thinking about their meanings and implications until they are asked to. The research has also shown language as a convention that is untidy in its naming and addressing, but also that the untidiness is tidy, as there is a pattern to the untidiness whose result is to reproduce and maintain gender disparities. By examining the address forms, their possible meanings on the power and social status scale, the research has found 'large meaning in small events' (Goshgarian 2000: 368). The investigation has revealed that our use of language,

... also reflects the prejudices of our society in more subtle ways.... we are often unaware of this and we go on speaking "naturally" until someone brings it to our attention (Frank and Anshen 1983, 6).

## Va-: The Address and Reference Title

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to investigate the meaning of the prefixed title of respect *Va-* in order to learn about *Va-*'s patterns of usage and its meaning(s). The title is also recognized as *A-*, as individual or regional variation. The forms function in both reference and address discourses. The research presents a diachronic study of the form through examining data from the ALLEX Shona corpus (see extracts in Appendix 6-I); observation (primarily, a case study); literature (from novels); and the weekly newspaper, *Kwayedza* (see also Appendix 6-II for extracts), to learn about *Va-*'s patterns as gleaned from these arrays of discourses.

#### 6.1.1 Objectives

This part of the thesis attempts to answer the following questions:

- a) Which types of forms does *Va-* inflect?
- b) What does the use of *Va-* with these forms mean?
- c) Do the data show a change in the types of forms that *Va-* inflects, over time?  
And,
- d) If there has been a change in patterns of use, how has it been manifested?

I should also mention that besides the *Va-*, other traditional titles such as *Sa-* and *Nya-* are also used as titles in address and reference discourses. However, these other forms do not seem to have been elevated into current discourses as much as *Va-* has been, at least in the area that I focus on here.

#### 6.1.2 The forms *va-* and *Va-*

It is important, at this point, to draw a distinction between *Va-* (n. 2a), a title that attaches itself to mostly proper and common people nouns (although it may attach to other nouns outside these) and the other *va-*s appearing in this investigation. The differences in these *va-*s are word category and tone. Tonal differences are easily identifiable in speech. As mentioned earlier (1.2.2), two phonemic tones are recognized, the High (H) and the Low (L). Here are brief descriptions of the forms:

- a) *va-* L n. 2 pre. This is the prefix for class 2 nouns (the plural prefix of class 1 people nouns). Examples are *vakadzi* (women) and *varume* (men), which are plurals of *mukadzi* (woman) and *murume* (man), respectively.
- b) *va-* H n. 2a pre. This is the prefix for kinship and other titles. I have divided this prefix into i) and ii) following on current orthography which follows Fortune's

(1967) convention, and not because of anything inherent in the language. For the purposes of this research, I have, separated the two forms as I perceive a difference in function, which I register through the capitalization of one of the 'v's.

i) *va-* - this is the prefix for kinship titles, such as *vatezvara* (father-in-law) and *vamwene* (mother-in-law). This *va-* is honorific, compared to a) which shows plural number.

ii) *Va-* - this is a title prefixed to general people nouns, as in eg., *VaMakanika*, where a common noun, *makanika*, is converted to a proper noun.

Both the DGR and the SSD do not seem to differentiate between the two, as they both record one form. The DGR has a capitalized form, which it defines as, "... *chivakashure chemazita emupanda 2a...*" (... a prefix for class 2a nouns...). On the other hand, the SSD carries a small 'v' as in b), above, which it defines as "... prefix *va-* [H] is honorific and does not necessarily indicate pl number..."

The capitalization of the 'V' and the first letter of the common noun, in the *Va-Makanika* example is debatable. It is not a subject that, to my knowledge, has been raised before, hence the lack of standardization that is clearly demonstrated in the two dictionaries, as well as in the ALLEX corpus. For example, how are the following forms, referring to ancestor(s), to be written? Should the forms read *Vababa* or *Va-Baba* or *vababa* (the Fathers) and *Vamai* or *VaMai* or *vamai* (The Mothers)? Again, should it be *vasahwira* or *Vasahwira*? All these forms turn up in written documents. In the ALLEX Shona corpus *va-* appears for both reference and address.

The capitalized *Va-* and the capitalized first letter of the common noun are adopted for the purposes of this study following the understanding that the morpheme is a title that attaches itself to common nouns in order to 'make' them proper nouns. Reference forms may appear without the capitalisation.

- c) *va-* H/L agreement marker. This is the agreement or concordial agreement marker for nouns in classes 1a, 2a, 2b and 2 and is found in verb phrases, and in noun qualifiers and pronouns.
- d) *va-* H possessive prefix. This is the possessive prefix for possessed nouns in classes 1a, 2a, 2b and 2. The form which appears as *va-* with proper nouns (including common nouns that have been cliticized to proper nouns) may also appear as *ve-* and/or *vo-* in complementary environments, with common nouns.

Here are illustrations of c) and d):

*Ndaona mai vaChenzira vadya.* (lit. I found mother of Chenzira she ate – for – I found Chenzira's mother having eaten)

*mai* n. 1a

*vaChenzira* (*va-* + Chenzira) → possessive pre for possessed 1a noun + first name

*vadya* (*va-* + *-dya* → agreement marker for *mai* + verb

*Vashandi vedu vaenda.* (lit. Workers of ours they went – for – Our workers left)

*Vashandi* (worker) n.2 (*va-* + *-shandi* → noun pre + stem)

*vedu* (*ve-* + *-du* → possessive pre + pronoun stem)

*vadya* (*va-* + *-dya* → agreement marker for *vashandi* + verb stem)

### 6.1.3 Materials and methods

As highlighted earlier, the study investigates data from the ALLEX corpus, from a case study, from literature and from the weekly newspaper, *Kwayedza*. My initial plan had been to present the corpus and the observed case study as my evidence. However, I soon realized that these two alone had limitations. The ALLEX corpus, collected from both oral and written texts, provided both old and contemporary instances of usage of *Va-*, thus providing a context for investigating the meaning of the morpheme as well as its growth, or lack of it, over time. It provides examples of how the *Va-* is used in real life. The corpus searches for the title *Va-* proved quite tedious. The agglutinating nature of the language presented one of the difficulties in isolating and separating the title *Va-* from the other *va-* forms. Typographical errors, such as, mistakes in word division and capitalization, among others, also worsened the problem. Moreover, in writing, *va-/Va-* are high frequency items. The corpus software, as mentioned earlier, operates in a maximum '1 000, same 1 000' principle, thereby restricting my access to the uses of *va-/Va-* much too heavily.

As already mentioned (3.3.1.3), the case study is a recollection, primarily, by an old woman, who shall be called *Tete* (Aunt). *Tete* is believed to be in her early 70s, and lives in Mamina, a village in the Mhondoro area. *Tete*'s contribution is also enriched by contributions from other mature adults, also living in her village, who sat in on the interviews, giving her moral support. It is, however, limited in that it is not a study that has been made and recorded over time, throughout the four generations covered. However, the history of writing in Shona is quite recent, dating back to the beginning of the last century. Orality is, therefore, still very much alive, although the literacy rate is now quite high. The information given by my main informant may appear to make the system tidier than it is, partly because of the lack of written evidence for her or me to fall back on and also partly because of the unconscious need to make her family structures conform to expectations. I should stress that, despite these unavoidable shortcomings, I am confident that the limited data that I got presents a pattern that can be generalized to other families within the community. The advantage is that, among the Shona, where history has been mostly preserved through orature, until recently, elderly people, especially women, have been entrusted with the responsibility of carrying forward and passing on the culture and traditions. *Tete* is therefore the best choice under the circumstances.

The case study considers names found in three large families in Mamina Village in Mhondoro. In this investigation, specifically, I look at *Va-* names for females and males that have lived (or died) four generations back. The research question that was presented to *Tete*, the main informant, was to recount the names of the people, women and men, whom she had lived with or known in their village. Because of the totem system, the village is like one big extended family where members are all related, in one way or another. Hence, in a village situation, such as Mamina, everyone knows or remembers everybody, her/his parents, grandparents and other relatives. The case study was originally spurred by informal observations that I have made over the years.

The case study, like the written literature, is meant to provide a rough guide for the examination of the use of the *Va-* form over four generations. In other words, the case study offers a diachronic study of the usage of the title *Va-*. It is hoped that data from this community can represent what occurs in the rest of the Shona-speaking population through what Gomm, Hammersley and Foster (2000: 103) propose as



'empirical generalization'. In their words, empirical generalization 'involves drawing inferences about features of a larger but finite population of cases from the study of a sample drawn from that population'. The study is carried out both to describe and understand the phenomenon and to generalize the findings from this study of a sample population, a village in Mhondoro, to the larger Shona-speaking population.

Because of the anticipated limitations of the corpus and observation materials, I felt that there was need to bring in more data from a survey of Shona literature and the weekly newspaper, *Kwayedza*, to buttress and complement these materials. The novels that were chosen are those that capture events in pre-colonial Shona society as well as in colonial and post-colonial Shona times, including works that are set in post independence times. The reference to works that 'capture' pre-colonial times rather than 'written in' pre-colonial times comes because there are no Shona novels from that time. The first Shona novel was published in 1954, over half a century after colonization. The division is by colonization<sup>69</sup> - before and after -, in order to show the development of the use and meaning of *Va-* from traditional pre-colonial Shona through to current times. Colonization and the resultant acculturation is generally viewed as a defining moment of the transformation of Shona culture and traditions (see eg. Kahari 1986). It should be noted that, while the *Va-* appears in other literature such as poetry, and especially in love and clan praise poems (where, for example, such terms as *VaChigumbate*, *VaMupanedende* occur.) (see e.g. Pongweni 1996) this investigation limits itself to data from novels. As tempting as the poetry data might be, poetic language has its own style that is different from normal everyday standard language use.

I have sampled novels by some of the best Shona writers, the most widely studied Shona novels in high schools and at the Department of African Languages and Literature at the University of Zimbabwe. The literature is, therefore, felt to be representative of the genres in Shona writing. The list also features a couple of new titles. The data has been deliberately selected to present mainly male writers' picture of the situation, lest somebody argues that the research is a feminist ideological presentation. As far as I know, there is no female writer who has written a novel on pre-colonial times. Besides, there are too few female authors writing in Shona to allow for much of a comparison of the two views.

The literature data also presents the same 'weakness' as the case study to the extent that both novels set in pre-colonial and early postcolonial novels are written by writers who were born much later than those times. Their picture of these times is fed by what has been passed down to the writers orally, in much the same way that *Tete's* (case study) has been.

The research highlights the address or reference *Va-* used with characters' names in the novels in order to examine the types of names that *Va-* inflected in pre-colonial as well as in post-colonial Shona, without going into who used what form for who. In each of the subsections, pre-colonial and postcolonial, I give the characters in the book as the author presents them. The data therefore presents the author's view of how the *Va-* was used in address or reference forms, in general. It is hoped that the authors' views will be representative of the Shona-speaking community, as well as representative of actual names being used at the time of the novel's setting. Where an individual character is addressed or referred to by more than one form, depending

<sup>69</sup> The British colonized Zimbabwe in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (1890). Independence and majority rule then came in 1980.



on the context, I present all the possible forms. My task is to examine these forms, irrespective of who uses them, and say who gets the *Va-* and who does not and the meaning that can be interpreted from this use or non-use of *Va-* by Shona speakers. Because of the need to draw the meaning of *Va-* from its context of usage, some of the character names are presented with brief notes/comments/ about the kind of persons the names belong to, where this is thought to be relevant.

The weekly, *Kwayedza*, is the only major newspaper written in Shona. It presents a variety of news and other items. The newspaper provides instances of *Va-* as it is used in current discourses.

Having adopted the four sources of data, I found there was need to rearrange the data in order to develop a more coherent argument, recounting the occurrences of *Va-* through time. As a result, my presentation of data develops in the following way:

- a) The investigation starts with the literature data, which theoretically, covers all the other data, as it depicts pre-colonial (before 1890 – the colonization year) through to post colonial (including post independence) times (i.e., after 1980).
- b) The observation evidence, i.e. the case study, which stretches roughly over a hundred years, beginning around the same time as the colonization times, which are represented in the literature.
- c) The presentation of data from the corpus, which is a collection of data that is 'old' (a century +) and new, as well as oral and the written, then follows.
- d) Finally, *Kwayedza*, the only publication that qualifies as a newspaper in Shona, presents a new kind of writing, non-fiction compared to the fiction of the novels, from which it was possible to survey additional occurrences of *Va-* in contemporary everyday Shona.

I must also emphasize that the study is not so much a historical chronicling of *Va-*, as it is an interpretive analysis of the selected occurrences of *Va-*.

## 6.2 Shona literature

In this section, I highlight the use of *Va-*, and its occurrences, as well as any other like alternative forms of address or reference, as presented in the novels.

The data is presented in two broad 'age' groups labelled as, i) the young and ii) mother/father-aged or grandmother/father-aged<sup>70</sup>, following the generally practiced ways of differentiating people among the Shona, i.e., the difference between *musikana/mukomana* (girl, young woman/boy, young man) and *mukadzi/murume* (woman/man), respectively, (see Chap 4). The young group usually includes children and young adults who, usually, share the [- married] feature. The young and married may also be included. The mother/father-aged or grandmother/father-aged group includes mature or elderly adults who, at some point, have shared the [+ married] feature. The groups in between, the young mother/father or the older non-mother/father are lost somewhere in between these two groups, and may find themselves falling into

<sup>70</sup> There are no terms in English that capture the concepts of mother-/father-aged and grandmother-/father-aged, as already observed in Chaps 4 and 5; therefore, I will use these coinages to refer to women/men in their mature productive years and those beyond productive years, respectively.

either one of these two broad categories, depending on the context. The characters' names are highlighted under the relevant sex category.

### 6.2.1 Literature set in pre-colonial times

In this section, I highlight the main characters from two novels, which, though written in post-colonial times, are said to capture the events of pre-colonial Zimbabwe. The novels were written in the 1960s. The period covered is before 1890. I believe that the two novels provide sufficient data to highlight ample *Va*- scenarios, as well as to highlight the other forms.

Giles Kuimba - *Tambaoga Mwanangu*

a) The young

female:

Chandisaita (King's daughter)

male:

Tambaoga (King's son)

Tapiwa

Tamuka

b) Mother/father-aged or grandmother/father-aged

Female:

*Va*Takanongwa also *mai va*Tambaoga (mother of Tambaoga) (she is the king's first wife)

Male:

*Va*Mupakaviri also *Mambo* Mupakaviri (King Mupakaviri).

*Va*Pfumojena (chief's counsel)

*Va*Manyengavana (chief's counsel)

(*Va*)Zinwamhanga (chief's counsel - a bad guy)

(*Va*)Mombeshora (chief's counsel)

Patrick Chakaipa. 1961. *Pfumo Reropa*

a) The young

Male:

Tanganeropa

b) Mother/father-aged or grandmother/father-aged

Female:

*Va*Munhamo (She is the King's wife and a mother).

*Va*Handidiwi (Another of King's wives).

Male:

*Mambo* Ndyire also Ndyire also Changamire (he is the chief/king).

Chirisamhuru (chief/king)

Mutota (chief/king)

*Va*Haripotse (he is an old wise man who is good with the spear, also chief's counsel)

Nhindiri (he is the chief's counsel)

Shizha (he is the chief's counsel)

### 6.2.1.1 Summary of findings of literature set in pre-colonial times

When is *Va-* used?:

- a) *Va-* attaches to first names (FN)s, nicknames (NN)s, totems (T)s and clan praises (CP)s, as a respect form. It cuts across sexes.

It is not within the scope of this research to define or differentiate between FN and NN, as it is often difficult for the period described above to tell between the two. Both names were not names that were registered under the colonial administration. Furthermore, some NNs often developed into FNs<sup>71</sup> or into last names (LNs). Briefly, totems (Ts) are a clan identity, usually an animal or part of body, an identity by which all members of that clan are known. Clan praises (CPs) complement the T. There is a male and a female side of the CPs. These Ts and CPs can be used by any member of the extended family as her or his identity in the same manner that FN/NNs are used. Children get their Ts from their father (see 1.2.1.3 for more on Ts and CPs).

- b) The data reveals another level where *Va-* + FN/NN/T/CPs is used for 'good' or 'true' male adults who are father or grandfather-aged vis-à-vis the 'not good' or 'special' ones, whose identities are not prefixed with the *Va-*.
- c) In contrast, to b) all grandmother and sometimes mother-aged women get *Va-* irrespective of how good, bad, ordinary or villainous they are.
- d) The King's wives get the *Va-*, where, eg., some males do not. The Kings themselves also get this title sometimes, although usually the title *Mambo* is the most frequently used.

From these examples, we could, therefore, say that, in its unmarked uses, *Va-* marks (royal) respect for age and for merit. It inflects names (FN/NN/) and other identity markers, namely, Ts and CPs for both women and men.

Who does not get the *Va-*?:

- a) The young people, both female and male.
- b) While generally, 'good' adult males get the title (see b. above), others do not. Two types of males do not carry the title (sometimes). These are:
  - i) *machinda* (chief's counsel) - may sometimes be referred to without the *Va-* or be addressed by other *machinda* without the *Va-*.

<sup>71</sup> The giving of nicknames was a common thing and still is a common thing among the Shona. Many surnames today started as nicknames for patriarchs of a particular generation. Then they were carried on to the next as LNs. The NNs were earned from the personality of individuals and from experiences or whatever was going on around them. Here is what Hunt, a native commissioner in colonial Rhodesia had to say about nicknames in the Shona context, "You asked about my nicknames. One had several, as one moved around the country and earned them ...your African informants will no doubt hotly deny it, but it is so – one was liable to have two names ..." (Noel Allison Hunt (National Archives Oral 240) "Native Commissioner Hunt's views on Shona people 1930s-1960s.") At one time, Hunt himself was called Bvunzawabaya (ask after you attack) and Kanyuchi (the little bee).

- ii) The villains in the stories, eg. In *Pfumo Reropa*, VaZinwamhanga becomes Zinwamhanga in the later chapters of the novel, when he is behaving badly, as when it is thought that he might have murdered his brother, the King, and then accused the son, who is the heir to the throne, of the murder thereby positioning himself to take over.
- c) Friends/peers/colleagues in the novels address each other without the *Va-*, but with FNs or NNs or LNs or T/CPs only, irrespective of how old they are.

On the whole, the data shows a general distinction in both address or reference between two groups, namely the younger and the mature, confirming the merit of the division between the two, except in the case described in b) above, where older people's names appear with no *Va-*, just like the young people. Except for this case, it can be said that, in these novels, age is the rough guide and determining factor in address and reference, as marriage (but, especially, parenthood), which comes with age, earns one a *Va-*.

Other forms of address or reference emerging from the novels set in pre-colonial times:

- a) The data also highlights traditional ways of addressing or naming, used within the private family context, such as, the use of *mai va* Tambaoga (mother of Tambaoga) (for VaTakanongwa), (mother. poss. FN (child's)). This form seems to be used for young mothers. This use of the *va-* reflects the possessive function<sup>72</sup> mentioned earlier (see 6.1.1.1).
- b) The use of titles for people in positions of authority as in eg., *Mambo* Mupakaviri which can be summarized as Title + FN/NN.

## 6.2.2 Literature set in colonial and post-colonial times

The examples highlighted below capture early colonial times to the present. More works are cited here, compared to the section on pre-colonial works. This is due to growth of the literature and also to the need to capture the variety of forms now in use. These novels, again, present the author's view of how things were and still are, in the way the individual authors refer to their characters as well as the way characters within the books address or refer to each other. Most of the novels, discussed below focus on colonization or urbanization and their negative effects on the lives and morals of the men and women who left their country homes for 'greener' urban pastures.

Solomon Mutsaers. 1988. *Mweya waNehanda*

- a) The young

Female:

Nyamita (FN) (young adult)

Male:

Bute (FN) (young adult)

<sup>72</sup> The 'producer', in this case, the *mai* (mother) (n. 1a) determines the possessive prefix *va-*. The *-a-* part of this *va-* is there because the 'produce' is a proper noun, Tambaoga. Another noun, *mukadzi* (woman) (n.1) will give us eg. *mukadzi wa/wekwaLN* (of husband).

Mutsakadzi (FN) (young adult)

Musaruro (FN) (young adult)

b) Mother-/father-aged or grandmother-/father-aged

Female:

VaHaruna (Va- + FN/NN) (mature female adult)

Male:

VaBiri (Va- + FN/NN/LN) (*samusha*- head of household)

VaZamuguru (Va- + FN/NN/LN) (*samusha*- head of household)

VaNyakotyo (Va- + FN/NN/LN) (*samusha*- head of household)

VaBakasa (Va- + FN/NN/LN) (*samusha*- head of household)

Pollard (LN) (white man)

John Marangwanda. 1959. *Kumazivandadzoka*

a) The young

Male:

Saraoga (FN) (young man – main actor)

Zindoga (FN) (young man)

Chipeni (FN) (young man)

b) Mother/father-aged or grandmother/father-aged

Female:

VaChingwani (FN/NN) (an adult female)

VaNyaya also *mai* vaSaraoga (Va- + FN/NN also Mother of FN (of child))

VaMurwandimire (va- + FN/NN (adult female)

Male:

VaSadzajena (this is a *samusha* and therefore name is now LN)

Mandebvu (a white man) (NN)

Patrick Chakaipa. 1963. *Garandichauya*

a) The young

Female:

Muchaneta (FN) (a young woman at the beginning of the novel)

Matirasa (FN) (young adult)

Male:

Matamba (FN) (adult – is a young boy at the beginning of the novel)

Gwerengwe (FN/NN) (young adult)

b) Mother-/father-aged or grandmother-/father-aged

Female:

Raiza (FN/NN) (unmarried urban woman)

Male:

Handisumbe (FN/NN) (urban man – one of Raiza's suitors/partners – with a dubious marital status)

Charles Mungoshi. 1975. *Ndiko Kupindana Kwamazuva*

a) The young

Female:

Ranga (FN) (young girl)

Male:

Sameri (FN) (young boy)

Caston (FN) (young boy)

b) Mother-/father-aged or grandmother-/father-aged

Female:

Magi (FN) (unmarried urban woman who has an affair with best friend's husband)  
Rindai also *Mai* Rex Mbare also *mai* (*va*)Ranga (FN also Mrs husband's FN LN)  
also mother of Ranga) (married, mother))

Koni also *Mai* Garapo also *mai* (*va*)Sabhina (FN also Mrs husband's LN also  
mother of Sabhina)

*Mai* Masaga (Mrs husband's LN) (young, married, mother)

*Va*Rwaringeni (*Va*- + FN/NN) (old rural woman)

*Va*Manyemwe (*Va*- + FN/NN) (old rural woman)

*Va*Kwiripi also *mai* (*va*)Rex (*Va*- + FN/NN also mother of Rex) (old rural  
woman)

Male:

Rex also Rekisi also Rex Mbare also *baba* (*va*)Ranga (FN also Mr FN LN also  
father of Ranga) (married to Rindai)

*Va*Mbaimbai also *baba* (*va*)Rex (*Va*- + FN/NN also father of Rex) (old man)

*Ticha* Maswera also Maswera (Job title Maswera also LN) (professional male)

Zacks Munyati (FN LN) (urban bad guy)

Godfrey Nekati. 1996. *Paumire Mudiwa*

a) The young

Female:

Hilda Zariri also Hilda (FN LN also FN) (young adult)

Male:

Tonderai (FN) (young adult)

Charles Moyo also Charles also Moyo (FN LN also FN also LN) (young adult)

John Ngoma also *Va*Ngoma also Backyard also *mudhara* Backyard also *Shasha*  
(FN LN also *Va*- + LN also NN also Title NN also NN) (young adult)

- b) Mother/father-aged or grandmother/father-aged

Female:

*Mai* Moyo (Mrs LN (of husband)) (Charles' mother)

Male:

*Va*Moyo (*Va*- + LN) (Charles' father)

Million also Shava (by family) also *baba va*Sairasi (by family) (FN also T also father of Sairasi (child)) (young father)

Charles Mungoshi. 1970. *Makunununu Maodzamwoyo*

- a) The young

Female:

Monika (FN) (young adult)

- b) Mother/father-aged or grandmother/father-aged

Female:

*Va*Chingwaru (*Va*- + FN/NN) (old woman – Monika's mother – rural woman)

Male:

Mujubheki FN/NN (unmarried older man)

*Va*Mushayazano (*Va*- + NN/LN) (old man)

#### 6.2.2.1 Summary of findings of literature set in colonial and postcolonial times

When is *Va*- used?:

- a) As with the literature set in pre-colonial times, *Va*- attaches (still) to first names (FNs), nicknames (NN, totems (Ts) and clan praise names (CPs) of the few older women and men characters living in the rural areas.
- b) A new pattern emerges, i.e., one not seen in literature set in pre-colonial times, the *Va*- + LN pattern reserved for men, eg., *Va*Ngoma (Mr Ngoma). This 'new' *Va*- attaches itself to the new name category of surnames or last names (LN)s (of *samushas* (heads of households) or potential ones (i.e. both married and unmarried men). This is the *Va*- form that corresponds to Mr in translations. It is also used for titles such as Dr and Professor, for men in positions of authority such as company bosses, church people, etc. In novels set in current times, *Va*- is used for both married and unmarried men, thus bridging the gap between married and unmarried men.

In addition to the forms inflected in pre-colonial literature, *Va*- now also inflects last names (LNs).



When is *Va-* not used?:

- a) Friends/peers/colleagues address each other with FNs or NNs or LNs or T/CPs only (without prefixing the names with *Va-*), irrespective of how old they are.
- b) In novels set in urban areas, generally, no *Va-* is used with FNs or NNs, even for mature older people. Both groups seem to see each other as mates, colleagues or peers.
- c) Sometimes, in more traditional settings, older and married people are denied the use of *Va-* by authors because they are villains in the stories or they lack *unhu* (proper human beingness), as in the pre-colonial practice.
- d) Adult whites and other aliens do not get *Va-*, even when they have been given Shona NNs. They are referred to in their FNs, NNs and LNs.

New forms (i.e., not seen in literature set in pre-colonial times):

- a) *Mai* (FN) LN (husband's LN) (literally, Mother (FN) LN) or *Mai* FN (of husband) LN (husband's LN). Married women now have this stand-alone new title, which goes with their husbands' (FNs) LNs, e.g. *Mai* (Rex) Mbare (Mrs Mbare, Mrs Rex Mbare), respectively. This is the form that corresponds to Mrs in translations.
- b) *mai/baba va*FN (of child) for mothers/fathers.
- c) Job Title + LN as in *Ticha*<sup>73</sup> Maswera (Teacher Maswera). While pre-colonial literature carries this same pattern for traditional titles, such as, e.g., kings, the current pattern extends the form to job titles and professions.

### 6.3 The case study

In this section, I present a case study, which considers address and reference names in three large families in Mamina Village in Mhondoro. The names, which are presented in four columns corresponding to the approximate generation, go back four generations, dating back to the beginning of the last century. The younger Mhondoro research assistant<sup>74</sup> (RA), who is in her thirties, is used as the reference point. In sessions with her aunt, *Tete*, she wrote down the names of three neighbouring extended families (including hers), as they were referred to or addressed, from what *Tete* and the others<sup>75</sup> could recollect. She collected a substantial number, more than sixty names of women and men from her village. Only a sample of the population that narrows down the families to her close vicinity is presented here. In earlier informal discussions that I had had with the aunt, together with her other relatives, both young and old, I had elicited enough data to see the merit of pursuing this subject further. Another assistant and I, had also talked to her and her male cousin after the interviews<sup>76</sup> to check and crosscheck data. The table below is, therefore, constructed with data from first, the case study, then informal discussions and observations that I have made over the years, having been part of this community from my childhood.

<sup>73</sup> < English - teacher

<sup>74</sup> Daina. May 2001. Mamina. Mhondoro

<sup>75</sup> There were always other locals supporting and sitting in with *Tete* when she was being interviewed and recounting the names. The people changed in the sessions, coming in and going when they wanted.

<sup>76</sup> Yvonne with *Tete*, who is her grandmother and sekuru VaEphraim. Mhondoro. September 2001.

I should also stress that, like the literature data, this study is not about who used what forms and for whom, but about the various ways one was or is addressed or referred to, by the various parties in the community.

**TABLE 1: A CASE STUDY OF THREE EXTENDED FAMILIES IN MAMINA VILLAGE**

Four generations back means: Group A – RA's great great grandparents' generation (all dead); Group B – RA's great grandparents' generation (all dead – most in the 70s); Group C – RA's grandparents' generation (some alive, but most dead in the 90s and as late as 2000); Group D – RA's parents' generation (most living)

	A (dead)	B (dead)	C (70 + but most dead)	D (50 +)
Women <i>Va-</i> + FN/NN	<i>Va</i> Zvichandidini <i>Va</i> Rowesai <i>Va</i> Mandifusa <i>Va</i> Mazvigona <i>Va</i> Pamhidzai	<i>Va</i> Zhinji <i>Va</i> Ruzabeta <i>Va</i> Mandinika <i>Va</i> Matikunda	<i>Va</i> Mandinema <i>Va</i> Heridha (Hilda) <i>Va</i> Mawaya <i>Va</i> Vheresero <i>Va</i> Ndambi <i>Va</i> Chakadonha <i>Va</i> Tangwanda	-- --
<i>Va-</i> + T/CPs	( <i>Va-</i> ) T/CPs	( <i>Va-</i> ) T/CPs	( <i>Va-</i> ) T/CPs	( <i>Va-</i> ) T/CPs
Old forms (extended to new contexts)			( <i>a</i> )mai/( <i>a</i> )mbuya <i>va</i> FN (mother/ grandmother of (grand)child) ( <i>A</i> )mai/( <i>A</i> )Mbuya LN (of husband) → Mrs <i>mudzimai wekwa</i> LN (the woman of husband's LN)	(Sisi) FN/NN ( <i>a</i> )mai/( <i>a</i> )mbuya <i>va</i> FN (mother/grandmother of child) ( <i>A</i> )mai/( <i>A</i> )Mbuya LN (of husband) → Mrs <i>mudzimai wekwa</i> LN (the woman of husband's LN)
Men <i>Va-</i> + FN/NN & <i>Va-</i> + NN/LN (begin col B).	<i>Va</i> Chiungwe <i>Va</i> Muchodho <i>Va</i> Muketiwa <i>Va</i> Zvoutere <i>Va</i> Muketiwa	( <i>Va</i> )Nyama also <i>Va</i> Gibson <i>Va</i> Junhiya also ( <i>Va</i> )Chida- majaya <i>Va</i> Gadzikwa <i>Va</i> Philimon	<i>Va</i> Matewu (Matthew) also ( <i>Va</i> )Mugidha <i>Va</i> Machipisa also ( <i>Va</i> )Ndawana <i>Va</i> Zekiya (Ezekial)) also ( <i>Va</i> )Mugidha) ( <i>Va</i> )Efuremu (Ephraim) / ( <i>Va</i> )Chidamajaya <i>Va</i> Toendepi also ( <i>Va</i> )Mamina) ( <i>Va</i> )Nyama <i>baba va</i> FN (father of child) ( <i>Va-</i> ) T/CPs	( <i>Va</i> )Muketiwa ( <i>Va</i> )Mamina ( <i>Va</i> )Majaya ( <i>Va</i> )Ndawana ( <i>Va</i> )Mugidha ( <i>Va</i> )Nyama ( <i>Va</i> )Chidamajaya
Old forms (extended to new contexts)				
<i>Va-</i> + T/CPs FN/NN	( <i>Va-</i> ) T/CPs	( <i>Va-</i> ) T/CPs		<i>bhudhi/mukoma</i> (FN) (NN) <i>baba va</i> FN (father of child) ( <i>Va-</i> ) T/CPs Jayirosi Ticha <sup>79</sup>

Here are some of the totems and clan praise names given:

For women: (*Va*)Mamoyo, (*Va*)Mapofu, *Va*Masibanda, (*Va*)Mushava, (*Va*)Mhara, (*Va*)MaDube

For men: (*Va*)Nyakudirwa, (*Va*)Zuruvi, (*Va*)Mhazi, (*Va*)Museyamwa, (*Va*)Gurundoro, Shumba, Mhofu

N.B. It should be remembered that the focus of this study is on *Va-*, as one of these forms, and not on all the possible forms. The table, above, does not, therefore, present an exhaustive list of all the forms or combinations of forms that occur in Mhondoro, but only the major forms highlighted by *Tete*.

### 6.3.1 Summary of findings

When is *Va-* used?:

- a) In the earlier generations, A, B and C, *Va-* is used with Shona FN/NNs, for both women and men.
- b) From generation B the *Va-* adopts new English or other foreign FNs just like local FNs, (*Va-* + Shona/English FN/NN), eg., *VaRuzabeta* (for Elizabeth) (see, for example, column B).
- c) *Va-* is used with T/CPs for both females and males, in all the generations.
- d) A new pattern emerges in Columns C and D which begins to show a transformation where the unisex *Va-* + NN/FNs in the earlier generations develops into *Va-* + LNs in later generations (the FN/NN having been transformed into LN through the colonial administration). This becomes a 'men only' use.

When is *Va-* not used?:

- a) While, generally, adult males now get the *Va-* with LNs, they may now be addressed with just the LN or FN/NN by colleagues, as exemplified in columns C and D.
- b) People outside the bounds of what is considered 'normal' or 'proper' do not get the *Va-*. They get FN/NN. These are people who, in the community, are 'special' in some negative or positive way, for example, are alleged thieves, or, are without a spouse when they are perceived to have long passed the age to have one, or, are nicknamed with job titles (which they may or may not have), as in the Ticha (teacher) example.

New forms:

- a) Columns C and D also begin to show a change through the introduction of new forms for women, to fill the gap left by the *Va-*. These are what I refer to as extended forms. The changes are from:
  - i) *VaNN/FN* to *amai/mbuya vaFN* (mother/grandmother of (grand)child), an old private form (extended family) now adopted and extended to the 'broader' family, or *amai/mbuya vekwaLN* (of husband);
  - ii) *Mai/Mbuya LN* (Mother/Grandmother husband's LN – Mrs) - identity now refers to husband;
  - iii) *mudzimai wekwaLN* (of husband) (woman belonging to LN family) – identity now refers to husband's family.
- b) Young (single or divorced) mothers are referred to either as *mai vaFN* (mother of child) or (Sisi) FN, etc.
- c) Young fathers are referred to either as *baba vaFN* (father of child) or LNs or (*bhudhi*) FN.

These last two examples, (b) and (c), as well as (a i) were described as previously used only in a private family context, but were now being used by even people outside the family circle.

Outside the names of extended family members, informants also gave other interesting *Va-* examples, such as *VaMutege* (The one who walks with unsteady steps), *VaTumbwa* (the one with the tummy), address and reference forms for pregnant women.

## 6.4 Data from the ALLEX corpus

In order to extract the various occurrences of *Va-*, I had to do a number of searches that would maximize the results. As mentioned earlier (6.1.3), the agglutinating nature of the language presented one of the difficulties in isolating and separating the title *Va-* from the other *va-* forms. I had to do searches for *Va.\**, *.\*Va*, as well as another for *.\*Va.\** to get at all the possible concordances. I could have done just *.\*Va.\** but that would not have given me enough data. With the high frequency of *Va-* and the shortcomings of the software, it was not possible to get a ‘thorough’ manual comb-through. Recognizing standardization shortcomings, highlighted earlier (6.1.3), I also had to do similar searches with a small ‘v’ to ensure that I captured representative data. Here are examples of the corpus concordances of *Va-*, extracted from a 1000 hits. I am presenting these for illustrative purposes (see also Appendix 6-I for more examples).

*Kana zhizha rapera , neliosha (sic – for hosha) yake yapera . Pamusana pokuita kwavo uku vokunze vaiti , VaMurwarazhizha*

When the growing season ends, her sickness also ends. Because of this behaviour outsiders called her (Title) Murwarazhizha (NN) (The one who gets sick in the growing season)

“ *Nhai purazi rino nderani ?* “ “ *Ndera VaGarwe*  
by the way, whose farm is this? It is Mr Garwe’s

*kunoti VaA.T . Murombedzi , D.P . Dumukwa*  
we have Mr A.T. Murombedzi, D.P . Dumukwa

*VaMugabe naVaSamora*  
(Title)/Mr Mugabe and (Title)/Mr Samora

*Ndakawana ave na-ne chose zvekuti VaChiremba vakandibvumidza*  
I found her/him feeling better that Mr Doctor/Healer allowed me

*Vahera (sic) vauye vauye torima , ye , ndosara nani*  
...The Heras (totem) they come they come so we grow, ye, who am I going to stay with

*’Vashe vangu imi taitaura tichidya sadza.*  
My Mr Chief – Poor guy! We were talking while we ate.

*Vasabwira vanoenda , kunoenda kunoona chitunha*  
The/Mr/Mrs Ritual friend goes, to go to see the corpse.

“ *Tafara kukuzivai , VaSajeni..* ”  
We are happy to know you, Mr Sergeant...”

The results below are gleaned from all of the concordance sets I gathered, which for reasons of space, could not all be included here or in Appendix 6-I, where I show additional (but not all) tokens identified in the *Va-* searches.

### 6.4.1 Summary of findings

Because I only did narrowly focused searches for *Va-*, there will not be a subsection with new address forms occurring in the corpus (as in the literature and case study examples sections, above).

When does *Va-* occur?:

- a) *Va-* with people names
  - i) *Va-* + FN/NN (f/m) eg., *VaSamora* (FN – for Samora Machel, the late Mozambican President) and *VaMurwarazhizha* (NN).
  - ii) *Va-* + FN + LN eg. *VaJulius Nyerere*
  - iii) *Va-* + LN eg., *VaMugabe* and *VaGarwe*.

These are the structures that are used strictly for males and can be translated to mean Mr, Dr, Professor, etc.

- b) *Va-* + T/CP eg. (*Va*)Maromo, (*Va*)Chihera and (*Va*)Museyamwa.
- c) *Va-* in traditional titles, 'professions' or roles for both women and men, for example,
  - Ishe* (King/Chief) (n.1a) → *VaShe* (The/Mr King)
  - hosi* (first wife) (n.9) → *VaHosi* (The/Mrs first wife in a polygamous marriage)
  - sahwira* (ritual friend) (n.1a) → *VaSahwira* (written also as *vasahwira*)
  - ganda* (skin) (n.5) → *VaGanda* (written also as *vaganda*) (close friend)
  - nyamukuta* (midwife) (n.1a) → *VaNyamukuta* (written also as *vanyamukuta*)
- d) *Va-* with the non-traditional professions. This is a context where common professions or other nouns are 'titled' for individuals.
  - makanika* (mechanic) (n.6) → *VaMakanika* (n.2a) (Mr Mechanic)
  - sajeni* (sergeant) (n.1a) → *VaSajeni* (n.2a) (Mr Sergeant)
  - dhiraivha* (driver) (n.1a) → *VaDhiraivha* (n.2a) (Mr Driver)
  - mufundisi* (teacher/priest) (n.1) → *VaMufundisi* (n.2a) (Mr Teacher/Priest)
  - mutengesi* (seller) (n.1) → *VaMutengesi* (n.2a) (Mr Salesman)
  - utsanana* (hygiene) (n.14) → *VaUtsanana* (n.2a) (Mr Health worker)

The forms without the *Va-* are used both for reference and address. The *Va-* forms with this type of noun are used more for address than referencing. The forms are used for males only. In other words, a female health worker would not be addressed or referred to as *VaUtsanana*.

The following occurrences highlight more of functions of *Va-* (rather than form as seen above):

- e) There were also double respect forms, such as, *Baba VaLN* (Mr/Reverend Mr X),

which still carried the *Va-*, used especially for clergy or other authority figures and other influential males/men.

f) *Va-* in euphemisms.

*Va-* + people common nouns naming types of people, for example, *chembere* (old woman) (class 9 noun (n.9)) → *muchembere* ( (n.1)) → *Va-Muchembere* (n. 2a) [*Va-* (n. 2a) + *-mu-* (n.1) + *-chembere* (n.9)]

This *Va-* can carry the special characteristics of endearment, as in the *VaMuchembere*,

*VaMudhara* examples with the *Va-* being used to counter old age and make aging a 'cute' thing.

Still on jobs, as in e), euphemisms here refer to 'job titles' that, for political correctness, are given prestige even though in real life the jobs may not be that prestigious.

Examples of this type are:

*mukaka* (milk) (n.3) → *VaMukaka* ('Mr' Milkman)

*madhodhabhini* (garbage work) (n.6) → *VaMadhodhabhini* ('Mr' Garbage man)

*bhotoro* (bottle) (n.5) → *VaMabhotoro* ('Mr' Bottles - for the man who moves around on a bike on high density urban streets collecting bottles for recycling. He gives back token cash or kind to the children who give away the bottles.)

Again, these uses are male, as *Va-* affixes itself usually to jobs that men do (even the non-prestigious), in line with other changes that are making *Va-* more and more masculine. Such forms as *\*VaMusika* ('Mrs' market woman) or *\*VaMadhoiri* (Mrs' Madhoiri - the crocheter) that might highlight what women do, outside of other professional contexts, do not occur.

Other euphemistic occurrences include the following,

*masare* (n 1a) (antisocial person) → *VaMasare* (n.2a) (both female and male)

*bharanzi* n.5 (geek) → *VaMubharanzi* (Mr/Ms Geek)

*n'anga* (n.9) (traditional healer) → *VaMun'anga* (Mr/Ms Traditional Healer – for a phony healer).

*gerofurendi*<sup>77</sup> (n.9) → *VaMugeroofurendi* (Mrs/The Girlfriend – for an older woman or one not liked).

*bhoyifurendi*<sup>78</sup> (n.9) → *VaMubhoyifurendi* (Mr/The boyfriend - for an older man, especially a 'sugar daddy' or one not liked).

*hure*<sup>79</sup> (whore) (n.5) → *muhure* (n.1) → *VaMuhure* (n. 2a) (female)

[*Va-* (n. 2a) + *-mu-* (n.1) + *-hure* (n.5)].

The last example, *VaMuhure*, can be explained in the following manner:

*Hure* (whore) is the main noun that is usually used in everyday 'normal' references. *Hure* is not considered a good type of human being. The speakers then 'make' an individual *hure* 'human' by adding *mu-* (prefix n.1). Then the users grudgingly or

<sup>77</sup> < Eng - girlfriend

<sup>78</sup> < Eng - boyfriend

<sup>79</sup> < Eng - whore

mockingly accept the professional status, with a sarcastic tone, by giving 'respect' through *Va-* as with the not so prestigious male jobs. This *hure*, a bad type of person, has been promoted to a level above others possibly because of the good things the individual does, things that are not expected considering the 'profession' and sex; things like sending her children to school, dressing 'properly', etc. This use of *Va-* carries sarcasm.

- g) There were also cases of what I refer to as 'condescending' or mocking or pitying uses of *Va-*, where a bad person or a pitiful person is addressed or referred to with *Va-*. This type of *Va-* is more often seen in folktales where an animal/person being exposed for 'who they are' are often told '*nhasi zvakuwanai VaMungwaru*' (you've been caught, 'Ms/Mr' Clever) and '*VaNhiya, imi ...*' (Oh, the poor thing...).
- h) There were also other unusual occurrences such as,  
*huku* (n.9) → \**VaHuku* (n. 2a) (*Va-* + *huku* (n.9) ('Mr' Chicken)  
*imbwa* (n.9) → \**VaMbwa* (n. 2a) (*Va-* + *imbwa* (n.9) ('Mr' Dog)

In these odd examples, respect is sarcastically given to animals such as dogs and chickens to the point of making them almost human.

When is *Va-* not used?:

- a) With FNs, except in the case of popular public people, such as the late President of Mozambique, Samora Machel, who are referred to, sometimes, with *Va-* + FN. Although someone might argue that the people who use Samora might see it as an LN, the argument can be defeated by the fact that Samora yields 10 hits in the corpus, all of which come from a revolutionary speech/song. Freedom fighters knew who Samora Machel was. It is more likely it was the fact that Samora sounds more Bantu than Machel, and, therefore, worked well with Shona, without the complication of the -l in Machel. Or, it could be because of his active revolutionary bearing that endeared him to the young. I have examples, from observation, that show that the Samora example is not unique.
- b) Those considered villains are sometimes presented, addressed or referred to with LN only. Their names appear as FN or just LN, compare the Chirau (a chief who became unpopular for supporting the internal settler government) and Muzorewa (the unpopular Prime Minister of the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia regime) examples with the *VaMugabe*, *VaNyerere* and *VaSamora* (all founding 'Fathers' of independent African nations) examples, as in the following extract of a revolutionary speech/song, which sees the latter as heroes and the former as sellouts of the revolution,

*VaSamora naVaNyerere ndisahwira muhondo ...*

*VaSamora and VaNyerere are our friends in the war ...*

*... kupanduka kwa...Muzorewa naChirau...*

*...the rebelling of ... Muzorewa and Chirau*

## 6.5 The weekly newspaper: Kwayedza

The weekly newspaper, *Kwayedza*, provides contemporary examples of uses of the form *Va-* in current written discourse. The examples have been drawn from the co-



lumn “*Nhau Dzomuno*” (Local News, which contains such news items as court and parliamentary reports, entertainment news as well as other news from around the country (see Appendix 6-II, for sample extracts taken from the period covering 1995, 2000 through to 2001)

### 6.5.1 Summary of findings

When is *Va-* used?:

*Va-* in *Kwayedza* is only used for men, in the following contexts.

- a) *Va-* + (FN) LN is used for the ordinary men, both married and unmarried, both black (and some white) men (eg. in “*Aimbova Chamangwiza weZimpapers akatisiya*” *Kubvumbi* 27 – *Chivabvu* 3 2001, 2). Part of the story reads:  
*Mumwe chamagwiza we Zimpapers, VaGeorge Capon...VaCapon*  
A well known Zimpapers expert, Mr George Capon... Mr Capon
- b) In court examples, when professional men are mentioned, this title is sometimes expanded to,  
(Job Title +) *Va-* + FN + LN  
eg., (*Muchuchisi/Mejasitiriti*) *VaFN LN* ((Prosecutor/Magistrate) *VaLN FN*)  
(e.g., *Muchuchisi VaWhisper Mabhaudhi* in the story “*Baba vakaita makunakuna nevanasikana vavo ndokuvapa vana vatanhatu*”, *Gunjana* 22 - 28 2001, 2)

When is *Va-* not used?:

- a) It is not used for young men.
- b) It is not used to refer to women.
- c) In the court reports, it is not used with the accused, their alleged accomplices and the convicted, both female and male, i.e., the ‘bad guys’. They are referred to either as FN + LN or just LN (eg., names of alleged offenders are referred to, at some point, in the following manner ‘Sibanda (46), Khumalo (24), Murindagomo (24) uye naLemi Sauramba’ in “*Mapurisa matatu anonzi akaba zvinhu zvinokosha \$100 000*”, *Chikumi* 22-28 2001)

### 6.5.2 New forms in *Kwayedza*: consequent to the demands of the new context

- a) Young, unmarried women are referred to, as, *Muzvare* (FN) LN (eg., *Muzvare Rose Nyamande wepaJuru*, in story headliness, *Chikunguru* 13 – 19 2001, 1). This is in parallel with English uses of Miss.
- b) Sometimes *Sisi* (Sister) (FN) LN is used for young women (eg., *Sisi Ruth Tiribhoyi* in story headlines, *Ndira* 12 – 18, 1).
- c) Married women appear with the title(s), *Mai/Mbuya* FN + LN (e.g., *Baba na-Mai Cleopas Chigubu*, in story headlines; and *Mbuya Joyce Kenard Makwanya*, a picture caption; both in the *Kubvumbi* 27 – *Chivabvu* 3 2001, 1 *Kwayedza*)
- d) In the court reporting, when professional women, such as prosecutors and defense lawyers are mentioned, their titles are, Job Title + FN + LN

For example,... *mejasitiriti* FN LN (Margistrate (FN) LN) (eg., ..*majisitiriti* (sic) Stella Kwidini in “*Akazviroodza nemari yemombe yokuba*”, Chikumi 22 – 28, 2001, 2)

Or with the *Mai* included, as in,  
Job Title + *Mai* + FN + LN

For example, *Muchuchisi Mai* FN LN (Prosecutor Mrs FN LN) ( eg., *Muchuchisi Mai* Benhilda Manyowa in “*Shanje dzakaurayisa mukadzi nemwana wake*”, Chivabvu 25–31 2001, 2)

Since there is no information on the marital status of the female legal persons referred to here, one might hazard a guess and say that unmarried women are the ones who are addressed with the former combination, and the married with the latter.

- e) Other academic and professional titles, such as Ishe, Dr, Col, Registrar General, Cde (for Comrade) also appear in the paper for both women and men but without Shona translations (for the English titles).
- f) In the entertainment pages, entertainers (young or old) are referred to as, eg., (*mukoma*) (NN) (FN) LN for males and (*sisi*) (FN) (LN) for females  
These titles are expanded as follows,

Women:

(*Sisi*) FN (Sister FN) eg., Sisi Ruth *Muimbi wechikadzi*, (frontpage, *Kwayedza*,  
Ndira 12-18 2001).  
(*Sisi*) FN LN  
(*Mbuya*) FN LN

Men:

(T/CP) (FN) (NN) (LN) eg., “Mukanya” Thomas Mapfumo in the story,

‘*Mamwe mabasa anoitwa nevanhu*’, Kubvumbi 20  
– 26 2001.  
*mukoma* (FN) (NN)  
*sekuru* (FN) (NN) (LN)

A singer, like Thomas Mapfumo, who is in his 50s, a ripe father-aged age, is often addressed or referred to as *mukoma*. Very elderly male singers, with white hair and all, do get the *sekuru* (FN) (NN) (LN) address or reference, eg., *Sekuru* Gora, (see, the story, “*Sekuru Gora vaamudzidzisi*”, *Kwayedza*, Gumiguru 6-12 2000) most likely because this is his adopted stage name. Another example of an elderly male singer, *Sekuru* Gweshe, comes to mind.

When is *Va-* used?

It is used to address or refer to ‘normal’ respectable men, irrespective of marital status. The *Va-* has now become the dominant and official title for men.

When is *Va-* not used?

- a) For men, *Va-* is not used when they are accused of a crime or where they are seen  
to have done an inhumane thing.
- b) The other special circumstance where *Va-* is not used is with entertainers,  
who are often addressed or referred to with 'young' titles.
- c) *Va-* is not used at all to refer to females.

## 6.6 Discussion

### 6.6.1 A summary and analysis of the findings

The literature data suggests that in pre-colonial times *Va-* was prefixed to FN/NNs for mature mother-/father- or grandmother-/grandfather-aged individuals to indicate respect for mature age and married status. Bad men did not get the *Va-* with their names. The 'bad' women got a sarcastic *Va-* as shown in the literature and corpus examples. A cynic might say that this unconscious differentiating between 'bad' women and 'bad' men, in general, might be because not much is expected of women, anyway, so there would not be any need to separate between the good and the bad. Women are women, and they are all the same and hence should be 'respected', not because of who they are as individuals, but for being or having been someone's wife, or having carried someone's children.

The *Va-* was also prefixed to T/CPs.

However, when we move on to literature about later times in the colonial period and about post-colonial times, the respect-titling system changes. Comparisons of the occurrences of the *Va-* in the two periods begin to show a transformation in the use of the *Va-*. The *Va-* is now prefixed to LN and has been gradually converted to a masculine title of respect, power and ownership. *Va-* in writing has become the official title for men (both married and unmarried).

For women new titles have now emerged to fill the gap, one of which is *Mai*, which in written Shona has become the official title for the married woman. In summary, here is how the picture looks:

From:

*Va-* + FN/NN/T/CP (for both women and men)

to:

→ *Va-* + FN/NN/T/CP (for both women and men) and

→ *Va-* + LN (for men only)

and,

the other 'new' titles,

*mai/baba va*FN of child (old title extended outside the private domain of the family)

*Mai* (new title for married women)

*Muzvare* (new title for unmarried women).

Another interesting phenomenon shown in literature about colonial and post-colonial times is where adult male whites, mostly farm owners, in both novels and drama texts,

have no *Va-* affixed to their names. In the novels, whites are referred to with NN or LN (with no accompanying title). An explanation could be because the whites in the novels, more often than not, were portrayed as mean, cruel and stingy racists, who held blacks in contempt and worked them to exhaustion for very little pay. The whites portrayed do not show the locals much respect, addressing even 50 year olds as *'iwe* FN (you (singular) FN), instead of *imi* (you (honorific plural) FN). The Shona, resenting these paternalistic attitudes shown towards them, deliberately withhold respect from the whites, and so the whites also get the same treatment back. The removal of the *Va-* prefix from the names of whites who are presented as people with no *unhu* (proper human beingness) or *chiremera* (authority to command or dignity) highlights the respect for proper humanness and decorum inherent in *Va-*. This behaviour of viewing themselves as the proper humans, is also seen in how the Shona label all the other peoples around them using the prefix *Ma-* rather than the *Va-* as in eg., *maNdevere* (the Ndebele) and *maSutu* (the Sotho). According to Berlitz (2000), this phenomenon could be explained by the basic and ancient idea that one's own group is the only 'real' or 'proper' people – at least, the only friendly non-dangerous ones. Berlitz (2000) says that the phenomenon is found among many groups throughout the world, the Bantu being no exception. Berlitz (2000: 344) says that Sub-Saharan Africans consider the Bantu dark colour the 'people color' while the whites to them look to be somewhat without colour. Among the Shona, for example, the Shona people are considered the *vanhu* (the people/humans) and their ways are *chivanhu* (the people's). I would like to theorize that it is from this form *vanhu* that we ultimately get the *Va-*.

The case study data also indicates that, as with the literature, three to four generations ago, both women and men in the mother-/father-aged as well as grandmother-/grandfather-aged group were addressed or referred to with a *Va-* + FN/NN. The *Va-* also appeared with T/CPs for both women and men and still does now. Young adults, as in the literature, are referred to with NN/FN, or with their special totem or kin names. The data also reveals a change in address or reference systems in the second, third and fourth generations with the *Va-* shifting position to the adopted system of LNs and being used primarily for *samushas* (house/home heads) or potential *samushas* (except in the few cases where *Va*-FN, in current generations, is used to refer to older unmarried women and, sometimes, to widows, especially in rural areas like Mamina).

Consequent to this shift, new public titles are then introduced for women to make up for the gap, some being formerly private home titles, now being taken outside the home. The data in Mhondoro revealed the use of *mai va*FN (of child), *mbuya* (va)FN (of grandchild), *amai vekwa*LN, *mbuya vekwa*LN for women, while the men were addressed or referred to as *Va*-LN and sometimes *baba va*FN (father of FN) for the young man. Informants commented that the parallel forms for men, *baba va*FN (of child), *sekuru* (va)FN (of grandchild), *baba vekwa*LN, *sekuru vekwa*LN were not used as often for men as they were for women. One of the reasons mentioned was, "*murume ndiye muridzi wemusha*<sup>80</sup>" (he is the owner of the household) or "*baba vemusha*<sup>81</sup>" (father/master of the household). As a result, his fatherhood or grandfatherhood or belonging is so obvious that it does not need specifying. Women are given or taken into men's homes to receive these roles.

<sup>80</sup> VaMunjodzi. Dondoshava. Mhondoro, February 2001.

<sup>81</sup> VaJestina. Mamina. Mhondoro. May 2001.

When asked how the use of *Va-* could have faded from women's names, *Tete* and some of the Mhondoro informants gave the following reasons:

- a) The gradual loss with FNs/NNs for women and men come as a result of the changeover from the use of FN/NNs to accommodate the new LNs.
- b) New registration requirements for both women and men, such as birth, baptism, confirmation and national identity cards - these documents, appearing in the introduced official language, English, made the *Va-*+FN/NN redundant. Besides in the early days of Christianity, the missionaries refused to use traditional names. The church had a tendency to criticize and label customary ways of doing things, even naming systems and Shona names, as heathen and primitive and unworthy of proper people. Being a converted Christian, therefore, meant doing away with the old 'heathen' Shona names and taking up 'good' Christian names. With this new system came also the new need to specify sex, a requirement that had not been there before, *Va-* having been unisex.
- c) With new forms having been introduced for women, forms that spelt their (un)attachment to men, their NN/FNs became 'sacred' and it was now considered as shameful, shocking even, to use FN for a married woman. Even the women themselves refused to be addressed or referred to with FNs/NNs. They said *zvinonyadzisa* (it is a shame). They preferred to be *amai/ambuya vekwaLN*, *mai/mbuya vaFN* (of child) or *Mai/Mbuya LN* (of husband) because that was what they felt gave them status. FNs were now to be used for girls and young unmarried women.

The informants also said that things started to change gradually with more and more people going to school and being converted to Christianity. The new 'English' names, which, though at first were compatible with the *Va-* (as shown in the case study) were gradually divorced from the *Va-* which had found a new attraction to the LNs. The LNs were more or less the same names that, previously, had been FN/NNs.

When we move on to the corpus data, which is a mix of the old and the new, from oral and written sources, the traditional and the new *Va-* both occur. *Va-* occurs with FNs, NNs, Ts, CPs and LNs. As with the literature and the case study, new environments adopted and adapted from the old, have emerged where *Va-* is prefixed to LNs (for men) and to 'professions'. Still, the modern *Va-*, which designates a position of authority or influence, now seems to be more closely linked with men than with women, even with professions, as it tends to affix itself more to 'male' professions' than to 'female' ones. A snap survey that I conducted while on a research trip in Mhondoro, and in Harare with colleagues and students at UZ, confirmed this development. The speakers said that while they could address a male shopkeeper as *VaMutengesi* (Mr Shopkeeper), they could not do the same if the shopkeeper was a woman. A woman would have to be *Mutengesi* or *ambuya* or any of the other address forms used for women (see also Chap 5).

*Kwayedza*, which provides a sample of current language, confirms the 'masculinization' of the *Va-*, which is now, officially, being used for men only. Women have new forms of address or reference, as registered in the other data. These new forms, or new ways of using old forms, have come as a result of what one informant says,

“*kupindana kwetsika*”<sup>82</sup> (the tangling and intertwining of customs and traditions), and the consequent “*kukurirwa kwetsika yedu*”<sup>83</sup> (defeat of our culture/custom).

In summary, this is how the picture looks, by sex, with the *Va-* and other titles:

For men:

- a) *Va-*(FN) LN → married → unmarried (Where *Va-* translates to Mr – may also translate to other titles in English, such as Dr, Professor, Commissioner, Justice, etc.)
- b) *Baba* (*Va-*) LN (Mr Mr LN or Father Mr LN). The double titles are used more in contexts such as churches and schools. *Baba* (FN) LN, as reported in Mhondoro, was used mainly for priests, and other various clergymen in both address and reference contexts, where the *Baba* could easily translate to Father, Reverend, Deacon, etc.

These Shona findings (double respect) compare with Tonga<sup>84</sup>, where an article published in *Makani Mucitonga* (March 1977), a Tonga newspaper accessed at the National Archives of Zimbabwe, shows such reference forms for the Tonga as, *Ba* Mr (FN) LN (for men); *Ba* Mrs (FN) LN (for women); and Mr (FN) LN (for white men).

The corpus shows *Baba* being used in a way that translates to Mr as in *Baba* (FN) LN (Mr LN) or *Baba naMai* LN (Mr/Dr/etc. and Mrs/Dr/ etc. LN). Besides the clergy titles and Mr, *Baba* also translates to some form of male address of respect, like Sir and Head.

- c) *Va-* + T/CPs
- d) *Va-* + NNs
- e) FN or LN with peers or colleagues
- f) *Mukoma* (lit. big brother) FN is used sometimes, though, for artists, who would, otherwise, be referred to as *Baba/Va-* (Father/Mr).

For women:

- a) *Va-* + T/CPs – as with men
- b) *Va-* FN/NNs – a few

The dominant titles are,

- c) *Muzvare* (FN) LN → unmarried – equivalent for ‘Miss’ where *Muzvare* can address or refer to any young unmarried women – may also be used for titles in English, such as Dr, Professor, Commissioner, Justice, etc.
- d) *Sisi* FN (LN) (Sister - for unmarried women (sometimes also young married)). Also used for entertainers.
- e) *Mai/Mbuya* LN (of husband) - Mrs → young or old married women (where *Mai/Mbuya* can be used for any female respect title in English such as Mrs, Dr, Professor, Commissioner, Justice, etc.). The *Mai/Mbuya/Muzvare/Sisi* titles are used more in modern contexts such as workplaces, church groups, etc.
- f) *mai vaFN* (mother of child)/*mbuya vaFN* (grandmother of grandchild)

<sup>82</sup> VaMunjodzi, Dondoshava. Mhondoro, February 2001.

<sup>83</sup> VaSusan. Muzvezve, Mhondoro. September 2000.

<sup>84</sup> Tonga is another Zimbabwean Bantu language.



- g) *amai vekwa*LN (Mother/wife of LN family)/*mbuya vekwa*LN (Grandmother/wife of LN family).

## 6.6.2 The meaning of *Va-*

Taken together, the data collected suggest that, when [*Va-*] is used in addressing an individual, its use is honorific, the highest form of respect offered to an individual. The argument that this investigation has led to is that the meaning of the morpheme is much more complex than just human (mostly male nowadays) and (honorific). The research suggests a definition of [*Va-*] that posits the human and respect elements as global elements, then definitions of meanings that allude largely to respect for roles and statuses, as teased out below.

*Va-* can be explained by drawing attention to its meaning in traditional and ‘modern’ Shona, in light of the data presented here. The first place to go in search of definable meanings might be to look at where *Va-* is not used. To the extent that *Va-* is not used with children, it seems to mark adulthood. But is adulthood enough to qualify one for *Va-*? The data suggest no. The data suggest that, if an adult, especially male, was viewed as lacking in his *unhu* (proper human beingness) by, for example, being bad, cruel, rough, a criminal or a gossip, then he did not deserve respect, as the referent would not be ‘real’ or ‘proper’. In such cases, the *Va-* was and continues to be withdrawn, at least as a reference term. *Va-* can therefore be said to signal not only adulthood, but also the possession or attainment of *unhu* (proper human beingness) or *chiremera* (authority to command or dignity).

Next, the data further show that *Va-* is also not used for otherwise ‘good’ or ‘normal’ people in cases which I label as showing ‘covert’ prestige’, where male FN or NN were used without the *Va-* but such men still managed to command respect, for example, the chief’s counsel. They are, in some of the novels, referred to with FN or NN with no apparent loss of respect. The removal of the *Va-*, instead, gives them youthfulness and potency as the King’s ‘boys’. Even chiefs themselves are also, sometimes, not referred to with the use of *Va-* in novels. Their names, alone, show enough greatness and command respect. This issue of youthfulness and potency might also explain why, in the entertainment column of *Kwayedza*, male singers are referred to with (LN) (FN) or NN, thereby maintaining the myth of perpetual youthfulness, as seen also in international trends. I would like to argue that this is a ‘special’ non-use of *Va-*, and it further strengthens my argument that, the use of *Va-* “bestows” one with *unhu*. *Va-* is redundant, and therefore not necessarily needed to mark overt recognition of *unhu* in cases such as the prestige of being attached to the King or Chieftom (as shown in the references to chief and their counsel), or, the prestige of belonging to the ruling revolutionary party (cp. the use of the titles Cde (FN) NN/LN for members of the ruling ZANU PF party and the use *Va-* (FN) LN for members of the opposition MDC party in *Kwayedza*). In the English publications, eg., *The Herald* and *Sunday Mail* the titles Cde and Mr are also observed, with members of the ruling and opposition parties, respectively, as in *Kwayedza*.

Next, *Va-* is also not used with white or other people alien to the Shona, often presented in bad light, either as oppressors (whites) or simply dim-witted or uneducated (other black groups). The justification seems to be that, because these people, according to Shona thinking, do not know *chivanhu* (the people’s way), the way the Shona do, their human beingness is therefore far surpassed by the Shona. As a re-



sult, they should not get the *Va-*, the unmarked title for proper humans. The other groups are the marked groups that need to be identified by name. Our definition of *Va-* now extends, not to all 'good' adult males, but to 'good' adult Shona males, who know *chivanhu*.

My informants in Mhondoro made the observation that the titles that are used for women and men are asymmetrical as they felt that the previously private (family) addresses of *mai vaFN* (of child), *mbuya (va)FN* (of grandchild) or *Mai/Mbuya LN* did not equally fill the gap. They said that people (not close family) who visited households were often heard to ask for *(Va-)LN/T/CP* or *FN* when looking for a man, and *mai/mbuya vaFN* (of (grand)child) when asking for the wife or *Sisi FN* for the daughter. They were not heard to ask for *baba/sekuru vaFN* (of ((grand)child)) when they speak or refer to the males. The informants argued that the man still has a 'name' and own identity but the woman is now addressed by or talked about with reference to marriedhood and familyhood, i.e. wifehood, motherhood and grandmotherhood. Women's titles are now seen more in terms of the home private space, while the male title covers both private and public space. The woman is seen, not as an individual, but as an appendage to the man. In the public sphere, men are seen more as *samushas* (heads of families), i.e. 'LNs', 'power' individuals (as shown, especially in Chap 5), and less in terms of husbandhood, fatherhood and grandfatherhood.

And, when *Va-* is used, what does it signal? To the extent that it is, sometimes, used for both good and bad people, it seems to signal the feature 'human'. Compare for example, *VaSahwira* (ritual friend) and *VaMasare* (antisocial person), occurring in the corpus, which reflect the good and the bad or the positive and the negative, respectively.

The data collected from novels and the case study suggest that the *Va-* is used to mark mother/father or grandmother/father age group, thereby also signalling age as an important factor. This *Va-* is therefore good, because in Shona thinking, age brings wisdom. The wisdom is believed to give one a powerful standing within the community.

In its 'modern' usage, *Va-* can be loosely translated to mean the basic title for men, as in 'Mr' in English, as well as the other ones, such as eg., Sir, Professor, Justice, etc. The *Collins Cobuild English Dictionary* gives two meanings of Mr:

1. Mr is used before a man's name when you are speaking or referring to him
2. Mr is sometimes used in front of words such as 'President' and 'Chairman' to address the man who holds the position mentioned.

Both of these senses are fully demonstrated in the Shona data. The same dictionary also gives the following meanings for Ms and Mrs, respectively:

Ms is used, especially, in written English, before a woman's name when you are speaking or referring to her ... are not specifying if the woman is married or not...

Mrs is used before the name of a married woman when you are speaking of or referring to her ...

Miss carries several meanings, one of which is,

1. You use Miss in front of the name of a girl or unmarried woman when you are speaking to her or referring to her ...

From these definitions, it can therefore be concluded that Mr is a title of respect for men, in general, as well as for persons in positions of authority. However, the same dictionary gives one meaning for Ms and Mrs, and no equivalent sense 2. of the Mr entry. While Miss carries several meanings, like the others, it still does not carry a parallel sense 2 of Mr. In the definitions of the three female titles, the ruling feature for women is marriage or the lack of it, while, with Mr, no marriage is mentioned. The female title gets its validation from its relationship with the main male title. The same is noted in Shona with the LNs, a differentiation between the sexes, which was not there in traditional Shona.

The use of the *Va-* and *Mai* titles, arguably, means more than just mature older (married) men and women. The data suggests that respect is intrinsically inbuilt in *Va-*, see for example the *VaMbwa* ('Mr' Dog) example referred to earlier on. This intrinsic respect is either a way to:

- a) mark status;
- b) acknowledge standing or power;
- c) create distance;
- d) mark the wisdom brought with age in the mature mother/father-grandmother/father-aged status; or,
- e) mark maleness, eg., as a parallel to Mr in English. This shift means that *Va-* now means, not just adult humanbeingness, but male adult humanbeingness.

The intrinsic respect is also highlighted in the use of *Va-* with NNs or euphemisms for pregnant women. Pregnancy is considered a great achievement for women, a way towards fulfilling their most respected role as mothers. This *Va-*, therefore, shows the woman's momentary transcendence to significance through her pregnancy.

The *Va-* seems to go hand in hand with the position a person has in society or to her/his personality or behaviour. As a status marker, the form signals position in society, position of authority and worthiness of occupation. In acknowledging standing and power, the form signals a hierarchy in which the addresser acknowledges that the addressed or referred to person enjoys a position of authority or superiority in a particular context. The DGR, a 2001 publication, acknowledges the traditional generality and neutrality of this title, as it defines *Va-* (while not calling it a title) as merely:

Chivakashure chemazita emupanda 2a  
A prefix for class 2a nouns

Distance is created when the use of the *Va-* creates a formal environment between the addresser and addressee, as in, for example, formal situations such as church assemblies, etc.

Here is what one of my RAs<sup>85</sup> writes in an essay which sums up his findings on *Va-* in literature and why the form is now being used for men, "... In our society males/men hold more respect than women. Women are regarded as inferior to men

<sup>85</sup> Morgan Mahanya. University of Zimbabwe. 2001.

hence there is no need to use the prefix when addressing them". With this line of reasoning in mind, echoing other patriarchal voices in Shona, what interpretation can we reach about the way women are now viewed as opposed to men? The main questions to be asked now are: Does this shift to LNs (married/unmarried males) and the withdrawal of *Va-* from female names mean anything, at least where roles and statuses are concerned? Does the shift in titles for women also signal a shift in attitude – i.e., are older women still as respected or as revered as older men. Does *Mai/Mbuya* LN (of husband) carry the same and opposite essence, or the same weight, as *Va*LN does for men? Is *Mai/Mbuya* LN merely the biological opposite of *Va*-LN?

The results lead me to argue that *Va-* and *Mai/Mbuya* are not equal correspondences. *Va-* is the basic one, the unmarked one, while the others, *Mai/Mbuya*, get their life from this main one. Such 'dependence' reflects an asymmetry. It can be inferred from this investigation that, in the Shona mind, *Va-* evokes connotations of Shonanness, humanity, individuality, adulthood, proper human beingness, age and wisdom, authority, power and respect. One needs to look at the discomfiture, almost shock, that Shona people show on their faces when in a cross cultural misencounter with a Ndebele, as often happens, the Ndebele addresses the Shona male acquaintance or colleague as LN instead of *Va-* + LN. To the Shona, overlooking the *Va-* shows a lack of respect for the man, while the Ndebele who do not have this feature in their language may not be aware of the impact of this omission. Conversely, *Mai* evokes, primarily, connotations of motherhood and marriedhood, acquired as a result of a union with a man, and the children that resulted. *Mbuya* carries with it connotations of grandmotherhood, more than anything else. In this respect, the female and male titles are not equal, in terms of the respect that they command. *Va-* carries with it an inherent or intrinsic respect in both private and public contexts, the kind that *Mai/Mbuya* does not exude.

## 6.7 Conclusion

I have highlighted the occurrences of *Va-* in traditional and present day Shona. The four sources, a selection of novels, a case study, the ALLEX Project corpus and *Kwayedza* all, generally, show a similar picture where, traditionally,

*Va-* → + NN (both women and men)  
→ + T/CP (both women and men)

for the mature-to-elderly.

Currently, the picture looks roughly like this,

*Va-* → + NN (both women and men – a few examples were cited in the Data)  
→ + T/CP (both women and men)  
→ + (FN) LN (for men only – both married and unmarried – and of all races and citizenship - the now the dominant and official structure)

i. + Profession

ii. + some common nouns

I have interpreted that, from its instances of usage, *Va-* is a title with an intrinsic respect value, previously given to both women and men in the mature mother-/father- or grandmother-/father-aged group. This inherent respect appeal comes out even more with the *Va-*'s use with FN/NNs for kings and their wives, as illustrated in the litera-

ture highlighting pre-colonial times. The literature also reveals that ordinary women, even the bad ones, got a *Va-*, albeit a sarcastic one, but, for men the *Va-* was deliberately withdrawn if they failed to meet certain criteria of *unhu* (proper human beingness). Whites and other non-Shona males' FN/NNs did not carry the *Va-*. Neither did the accused and their accomplices.

I have further highlighted how this picture has changed over time with *Va-* becoming a male preserve. In the usage of *Va-* in both traditional and contemporary contexts in speech and fiction, we can distinguish between the + *Va-s* and – *Va-s*.

+ *Va-s* are used for ordinary or 'normal' adults, who coincidentally, happen to be men, the 'real' men, while,

– *Va-s* are used for everybody else, children, women, and the 'lesser' male.

*Va-*, as it is used more and more now, has come to reflect this asymmetry of the real Shona men vs. everybody else (children, women, the 'lesser' male). This development has created a gap for women, which has been filled by formally private home titles and 'new' ones such as *Muzvare* (Miss) and *Mai/Mbuya* (Mrs). The claim that this investigation has made is that the loss of the unisex form of respect *Va-*, which marks *unhu* (proper human beingness) from use for women, reflects an erosion of the respect that adult females as mother-aged or grandmother-aged women enjoyed. I argue that the power forces of patriarchy together with colonization and the socio-economic changes brought about 'naturally' dictated the steady loss of the morpheme with FN/NN for women and its gradual monopolization by men and their LNs, leading to the existing asymmetrical situation, as evidenced by the diachronic study. The 'masculinization' of *Va-* seems to reflect influence from the English and other western languages impacting on Shona. The English began using surnames (male ownership and dominance of last names) about the 13<sup>th</sup> Century (Hudson 1980). This is the system that has transformed the traditional Shona unisex structure into the new address in the *VaLN* (Mr LN) and *Mai LN* (Mrs LN) or *mudzimai waVaLN* (woman/wife of Mr LN), replacing the husband and wife's individual identities. Pongweni (1983), citing the arrival of the pioneer column in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, also argues that the history of Shona nomenclature is closely related to the political history of the country. The treatment of men's and women's space in the language has undergone significant change, partly as a result of this history.

While patriarchy within traditional systems already insured men's dominance and women's inferiority to men, the new system of address or reference brought into effect by colonial systems demands signalled further entrenchment of men's dominance. Internally, other institutions and spiritual beliefs such as totemism, have further buttressed male dominance and still continue to do so. Historically, colonialism, with urbanisation, industrialisation and Christianity and the resultant socio-economic changes, have played a part in further entrenching this picture of male dominance within the traditional patriarchal Shona society. The forces have combined to further prejudice women to be perceived as appendages of men.

The evidence presented in this chapter lead me to the same conclusion that I reached earlier in Chaps 4 and 5, that address and reference forms for women emphasize their expected roles within the family as wives, mothers and grandmothers, i.e. their private domain roles, while those for men emphasize their central and dominant roles in both private and public domains. In addition, women's titles, such as *Mai/Mbuya* are obtained from the now basic male form, *Va-*.



## Bad Language

### 7.1 Introduction

In line with uncovering assumptions, expectations and attitudes towards the roles of women and men in Shona language use, I also explore 'bad' language targeted at the individual or used to refer to the individual. This topic, which comes at the end, is distinctive from the previous subjects in that, it attempts to understand attitudes from what is criticized, rather than from what is expected or assumed in the normal case. The language examined in this chapter is included in the broader definition of what Jay (1992) refers to as 'cursing' or 'dirty' words. Jay (1992: 68) describes the 'dirty word phenomenon' as arising from description-evaluation and from anger/frustration. This is language spanning from the 'common' to the 'obscene' insult (Jay 1992). In his study of 'dirty' words in American English, Jay (1992) covers topics such as cursing, profanity, blasphemy, taboo, obscenity, vulgarity, slang, jokes, epithets, insults and slurs, and scatology. I characterize the insults covered in this chapter as 'bad' rather than 'dirty', 'bad' being a subcategory of 'dirty'. 'Bad' emphasizes the heaviness, coarseness or offensiveness in the insults. 'Dirty', though, can have a playfulness and light-heartedness to it, as one can laugh at a dirty joke. The insults and curses under discussion are a serious matter due to the obscene nature of the language.

#### 7.1.1 Presentation of chapter

In Part I, I examine 'description-evaluation' common insults. These are insults, which border on the obscene, vulgar and offensive, and which result from a need to evaluate or describe someone's unacceptable behavior. They are often regarded as part of the socializing discourse. Apart from the family, the 'instruction of children, among the Shona, is done unofficially' by other members of the community (Chitauro-Mawema 1995: 5). As the saying goes, 'a child is a product of the village'. The socialization then produces cognitive, affective and behavioral responses, in short, attitudes, that prevail towards women and men. In Part II, I examine the coarse obscene 'street remark' (Mashiri 2000) and the grossly coarse 'fighting' insult (Jay 1992), language that would not appear in standard Shona texts. These are referred to as fighting insults, or rather curses, due to their violence and profanity, and because they often arise from extreme anger or frustration. The words are so strong that they take on 'the power of weapons to their users' (Jay 1992: 24). These curses include the aggressive and offensive insults that make specific reference to female sexuality.

Both parts I and II are self-contained subdivisions that present background, data, an analysis and discussion, making part of a whole chapter on bad language. The nature of the insults dictates the split, although some of the common insults, the sexual ones in Part I, could easily be discussed in Part II. At the end of Part II, a conclusion covering both subdivisions is presented.

## Part I: The Labels

### 7.2 Background

In the first part, I explore the so-called social corrective common insults, which were said to be uttered for the purpose of highlighting and changing deviant behavior of, usually, a younger person. Where these insults are uttered as street remarks, they tend to be seen as abusive, rather than corrective. Part I insults are hereafter referred to as labels. *The Collins Cobuild Dictionary* defines a label as:

... 4 If you say that someone gets a particular label, you mean that people show disapproval of them by describing them with a critical word or phrase ...

Labelling is, thus, a designation, a way of characterizing or evaluating behavior. It is a social construct, relative to the 'eye of the beholder' (Schur 1983: 22), the society. When people are labelled, the labelling presents perceptions and ideas that dominate in the society. Becker (1963) argues, 'social groups create deviance by making rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and by applying these rules to particular people'. The labelling perspective, therefore, refers to stigmatization. From my experience, it is clear that the labelling is seen as having a chastising effect, inducing shame in and having disciplining and educational effect on younger people, being part of socializing young people into proper humanhood, in the same manner that proverbs and other idioms are also seen as instruction to 'the younger and ignorant, or reminders to the old who have been remiss in their observance of the rules of conduct expected in the society' (Nyembezi 1954: 41). The society 'allows' older people to use the labels to induce shame, what sociologists refer to as devaluing (Schur 1983) in order to correct the behavior of younger people cultivating or reaffirming the values of the society. The age-old wisdom, resulting from their advanced years, gives the older the license to sometimes use such language, for the good of the individual and the community.

#### 7.2.1 Objectives

The research provides another exploration of Shona terminology aimed at defining, albeit indirectly, womanhood or manhood through examining lexical items portraying the lack of proper values or conduct. For lack of a better Shona term, these are lexical terms that one might refer to as *zvituko* (insults), or, *zvitsvinyo* (terms that show contempt or disrespect). The study attempts to answer the following questions:

- a) What is the core meaning in the insults?
- b) How do the labels characterize women and men's space?
- c) Are there any gender differences in the choice of the forms?
- d) If so, how are the labels distributed along gender lines?
- e) And, if they exist, what does the splitting along these lines tell us about assumptions of 'proper' *ukadzi* (womanhood), *urume* (manhood) or *unhu* (humanhood)?

#### 7.2.2 The materials and methods

Part I uses, primarily, the results of a questionnaire (Appendix 7-1) that I administered in both Mhondoro and Harare.



### 7.2.2.1 *The questionnaire*

I compiled the questionnaire (see Appendix 7-I) from an earlier pilot project in which I solicited the labels from Mhondoro youths, to whom most of these terms would be targeted at by the older and more senior. The questionnaire has two main questions:

- i) 1a - An open-ended question asking for definitions or explanations of listed labels; and,
- ii) 1b - A closed question asking the respondent to think along gender lines and, reduce the labels to those used either, solely, for females or males or for both.

All in all, 62 structured interviews were conducted using the questionnaires, 36 in Harare and 28 in Mhondoro. Of the urban 36 informants, 15 were males, nine were women, and for the rest, the sex is unknown, as no name or sex was indicated. Twenty-six of these were used in the analysis for reasons explained later. In the rural data, 13 informants were males and 11 were females. For the other four completed questionnaires, the sex or name is unknown. All 28 were used in the analysis.

I should also explain, that though the exercise (as with the others) had been intended to be an individual filling-in exercise, it ended up, technically, being more of a structured interview, with the interviewer often talking with more than one person. As with the earlier exercises, most of the respondents, especially in the rural areas, were more comfortable just doing the talking while somebody else did the writing. Again, as before, while women preferred to do the exercise in a group, men did not seem to mind a face-to-face structured interview with the researcher.

### 7.2.2.2 *Other materials*

While the study focuses mainly on the questionnaire-cum-structured interview, the investigation also draws on materials from observation, the DRC, DGR and the SSD, as well as the ALLEX Shona corpus.

### 7.2.2.3 *The definitions*

I have compiled the sample definitions from the various responses that were received from the Mhondoro and Harare areas, but mainly from the former because of reasons to be soon made evident in the course of this presentation of results. The three dictionaries, the DRC, DGR and SSD have also been used to help with definitions and translations, respectively. As noted earlier, the first two are monolingual Shona dictionaries, while the SSD is bilingual (Shona and English).

### 7.2.2.4 *Presentation of Part I*

The labels and their meanings are presented in an ordering, which reflects their semantic field (through the use of both synonyms and near synonyms). The main tables of results for both Mhondoro and Harare are presented in the same order, highlighting semantic field, the label and the statistics of the categorization of the responses by targeted sex, for easy comparing and contrasting along semantic lines.

The analysis and discussion of the data has been done, mainly, along gender lines, *mukadzi* (woman) and *murume* (man). The third division *vese* (both/all) that takes those labels felt to be used for both sexes is briefly discussed, but not as the focus of the study. Apart from the 'genuine' *vese* scores, this section also carries the scores of

those who were not quite sure of whether such-and-such a label was used solely for women or for men, and, so decided to do the 'safe' thing and check *vese*.

## 7.3 Results

### 7.3.1 The definitions for question 1a of the questionnaire

Below, are comprehensive sample answers for Question 1a of the questionnaire (see Appendix 7-1), i.e., the labels with their Shona definitions and English glosses. In the glosses, literal, or almost literal, translations into English are made in parentheses. I also include, sometimes, rough equivalents in English, where I think they are needed to aid comprehension. Here is 1a:

*Tsanangura kuti rimwe nerimwe remazita aya rinoreva kuti chii kwauri:*  
Explain what each of these nouns/terms mean to you:

The labels that needed to be explained in the questionnaire were (presented alphabetically): *benyumundiro*, *benzi*, *bhinya*, *dzenga*, *fende*, *gube*, *hure*, *jetu*, *joki*, *koronyera*, *kuruku*, *mbavha*, *mburu*, *mhengeramumba*, *ndururani*, *nhubu*, *nhundiramutsime*, *ny-enairwa*, *nyin'anyin'a*, *nyope/tsimbe*, *nyumwanyumwa*, *nzenza*, *pfambi*, *rombe*, *sasikamu*, *tsotsi*, *zeeretsi* and *zungairwa*.

Below, are the labels and their sample definitions and glosses, grouped by features/semantic field. Where synonyms or near synonyms occur, I indicate so at the bottom of the examples. I use this  $\approx$  symbol to indicate near synonymy:

*benyumundiro*

Munhu ane usimbe, anongwarira pakudya.

A person who is lazy, more keen on eating (than s/he is on working).

*nyope/tsimbe*

Munhu asingafarire zvebasa kana zvekushandisa pfungwa dzake.

A person who does not like work or is one who does not want to use her/his brain to do useful things – a lazy person.

*benyumundiro*  $\approx$  *nyope/tsimbe* - laziness

*bhinya*

Munhu anobata vakadzi chibharo kana mhondi; anotogona kunge achigara mu sango.

A person who rapes women or is a murderer; may be roaming around with no fixed abode.

*mhengeramumba*

Munhu anoti kunze anenge ari munhu kwaye asi achipenga kana angosvika mumba make.

A person, who is good to outsiders, but goes crazy when he gets home  
Both indicate elements of violence.

*benzi*

*Pane benzi re- i) munhu ane pfungwa dzakarasika; ii) munhu anoita kunge anopenga iye ari munhu kwaye.*

This is i) person whose senses have been lost - is mentally ill; ii) a person who acts like they are mad when they are mentally fine – a crazy person; foolish

*sasikamu*<sup>86</sup>

i) Munhu asina njere dzakakwana; ii) Munhu anoita zvinhu zvisina maturo zvinaita sekunge haana pfungwa.

i) A person with not enough brains; ii) A person who behaves without sense like s/he has no brains.

*zungairwa*

Munhu anoda kufungirwa; rema.

A person who likes to have others think for her/himself; idiot/utter fool.

*dzenga*

*Munhu asina chekubatsira, anogara achiita kunge asingazive chekuita, akangopusa.*

A person who moves around like he has no brain in his head – foolish; stupid

(In some of the responses the label is defined as *zimunhu* (big person) ..., to demonise the person).

*zeeretzi*

*Munhu anogara upenyu hwechirombe achiita kunge asina hanyin'a neupenyu hwake.*

A person who lives like a tramp, not taking responsibility for her/himself.

*nyumwanyumwa*

Munhu akavhangedzera anongoti paaenda kana paarara ndipapo, asina pfungwa dzekudzokera kwaabva.

A person who is loud and useless, who just hangs around and/or sleeps anywhere, without thinking of going home – an irresponsible person.

*rombe*

i) Munhu akarasika pfungwa achingotenderera nenyika; ii) Munhu asina chaaina-cho, zvichikonzerwa nekusada kushanda.

i) A person whose brains have been lost, who just roams the country - tramp; ii) A person with nothing, as a result of not liking to work.

*benzi ≈ sasikamu ≈ zungairwa ≈ dzenga ≈ nyumwanyumwa ≈ rombe ≈ zeeretzi*

All indicate an inability to take responsibility and perform as a useful, intelligent, responsible and productive person.

<sup>86</sup> The metonymic representation, with Shona spelling of, SASCAM Centre – the name of a place where people with mental problems were institutionalised, was used to refer to the patients.

*gube*

*Munhu asingataure zviro kwazvo, anongoita zvekutsvetera.*

A person who does not speak the truth but likes to use smooth words – deceitful.

*nhubu*

*Munhu asingagone kugarisana nevamwe, anoda kupaza.*

A person who cannot stay well with others, likes to destroy – stirrer/mischief-maker.

*nhundiramutsime*

*Munhu anoshinwa; ane utsinye.*

A person who is mischievous/malicious; with cruelty – destroyer.

*nyn'anya'a*

*Munhu anofurira vamwe kuita zvakaipa.*

A person who likes to stir others into doing bad things – likes to lead others astray.

*gube ≈ nhubu ≈ nhundiramutsime ≈ nyn'any'n'a*

All indicate levels of deceit and/or (malicious) mischief.

*ndururani*

*Munhu ane misikanzwa zvikuru.*

One with lots of disobedience – insubordination/mischief.

*jetu*

i) *Munhu asingatsiurike nevamwe zvakanaka vachinzwanana asi anoda kutaura zvenhoro nezwi riri pamusoro; anochenama.* ii) *mukadzi asingateereri murume, achingopindura.*

i) A person who cannot be reprimanded amicably, without arguing; talks and gesticulates angrily; ii) a wife who does not obey her husband, always answering back, insubordinate.

Both indicate insubordination.

*fende*

*Mukadzi ane uchapa, asingakwanise kuzvigeza zvekuti kana paanogara anenge aine tsvina.*

A woman who cannot clean or wash herself and her surroundings, living with dirt – slattern/slut.

An unclean woman.

*pfambi*

i) *Mukadzi asingakoshese muviri wake anongochinjanisa varume, dzimwe nguva achipunza dzimba dzevanhu, anoita zvemabhawa;* ii) *Mukadzi anonyengwa nevamwe varume.*

i) A woman who does not respect her body and sleeps around, selling her body, sometimes destroying people's homes, and who likes to frequent pubs – prostitute; ii) Wife who is courted by other men.

*hure*<sup>87</sup>

*Munhu anongonyengwa asingasarudze varume, achingoda pasina rudo, achitengesa muviri achitsvaga mari.*

A person who likes many men and sleeps with them, indiscriminately, where there is no love, selling her body for money – whore/prostitute.

*joki*<sup>88</sup>

*Munhu anoda kuzvifadza nekurara nevarume vakawanda achipihwa mari, vanoita zvemabhawa.*

A person who likes to have fun sleeping with many men (i.e. riding many men), indiscriminately, for money, and who likes to frequent pubs.

(In some of the responses the label is defined as *zimunhu* ..., the class 21 *zi-* prefix being used to demonize the person – so the *zi-* in *zimunhu* here refers to a characterless person).

All three indicate promiscuous behavior.

*nzenza*

*Munhu i) asingagone kuzvichengeta chimiro chake achingova nhimba nepasi; ii) munhu anongoseka-seka zvisina maturo; iii) anongosekererana nevarume zvisina unhu; iv) ane vasikana kana vakomana vakawanda.*

i) A person who is unable to take care of her/his character who just loiters aimlessly – with no character; ii) A person who giggles all the time for no apparent reason – giggle - attracting attention to themselves; iii) A person who likes to flirt with men; iv) A person with many girlfriends or with many boyfriends.

*nyenairwa*

*Munhu unongoseka zvisina unhu (nevanhu vechirume).*

A person who laughs and plays unbecomingly (with males) - a giggler/flirt.

*mburu*<sup>89</sup>

*Munhu i) anoda zvekungonyadzisira; ii) wemukadzi anozvinzwa, asingazvibate, uye anongoda zvevarume.*

i) A person who likes to use coarse sexual language; ii) woman who is haughty with no respect for herself, who likes men – flirt.

(*pfambi, hure* and *joki*) ≈ *nyenairwa* ≈ *nzenza* ≈ *mburu*

All six indicate sexual immorality, promiscuity and flirtation.

*koronyera*

*Munhu anotora zvinhu zvevanhu asingadzosere, anopamba zvevamwe, achiita zvechitsotsi.*

A person who takes other people's things, without paying them back, who plun-

<sup>87</sup> Possibly <Afrik - hoer or <Eng - whore

<sup>88</sup> <Eng - jockey

<sup>89</sup> <Nd - imbulu

ders or takes by force, a cheat.

*kuruku*<sup>90</sup>

*Munhu anonyengedza vanhu achitora zvinhu zvavo nekutaura chete.*

A person who crooks or deceives others of their property – rogue.

*mbavha*

*Munhu anobira vamwe.*

A person who steals from others – thief.

*tsotsi*

*Munhu anofamba achibvutira vanhu zvinhu zvavo; kana kuvabira nenhema.*

A person who snatches other people's things; or who scams them - bag snatcher/pickpocket; conman.

*koronyera ≈ kuruku ≈ mbavha ≈ tsotsi*

All four indicate thievery or chicanery of some sort - criminal behavior.

The labels are mostly used to scold or discipline young people, who:

- a) Fail to use their hands to work for a living;
- b) Fail to use their brains/minds for productive purposes, as if they had no brains, when they do;
- c) Live irresponsibly, neglecting their responsibilities;
- d) Live immorally like prostitutes, sluts, and mischievous and malicious persons;
- e) Talk back or talk loudly and angrily, i.e., impertinently, especially women;
- f) Are unclean – slatterns/sluts;
- g) Disobey elders; and
- h) Do unlawful things, like stealing, engaging in fraudulent activities and violent behaviour of sorts.

### 7.3.2 Question 1b: classification by sex

The question reads:

*Zvino chinyora kuti kana zvikanzi, “Ngingi i...”, unofunga kuti munhukadzi, munhurume kana kuti vese here. Isa X pasi pemhinduro yako.*

When people say, 'So-and-So is ...' tell me whether you think this person is a female, male or both. Put X underneath your choice.

CHITUKO	MUKADZI	MURUME	VESE

Below, I present findings, compiled first from Harare then Mhondoro responses to Question 1b of the questionnaire (categorizing the labels by sex and their distribution by center). However, under some labels, fewer than 26 (Harare) or 28 (Mhondoro)

<sup>90</sup> <Eng - crook

responses appear because some labels are left uncategorized. The discrepancies in the total responses per label do not, therefore, mean that a whole questionnaire was dropped but that that particular part of the question was not answered.

### 7.3.2.1 The urban data

Table 7.1 A summary of the distribution of the Harare responses by sex

	CHITUKO	MUKADZI	MURUME	VESE
Lazy behaviour	benyumundiro	1	14	8
	nyope/tsimbe	3	2	18
Violent behaviour	bhinya	-	21	3
	mhengeramumba	3	10	12
Inability to perform as intelligent beings	benzi	-	-	25
	sasikamu	1	1	20
	zungairwa	4	-	17
	dzenga	-	16	9
	zeeretsi	5	2	5
	nyumwanyumwa	-	6	14
	rombe	-	15	8
	gube	1	15	3
	nhubu	1	9	11
	nhundiramutsime	1	14	9
	nyn'any'n'a	1	3	13
Impertinence and insubordination	jetu	15	0	2
	ndururani	1	16	6
Slatternly behavior	fende	17	2	3
Sexual immorality	pfambi	23	-	-
	hure	22	-	2
	joki	20	5	1
	nzenza	19	-	4
	nyenairwa	10	3	4
	mburu	3	3	10
Thievery and chicanery	koronyera	-	18	7
	kuruku	-	10	14
	mbavha	-	8	16
	tsotsi	-	10	13

n= 26

NOTE: A dash (-) under *mukadzi* or *murume* indicates that there was no response to suggest that the label is used solely for the particular sex. A dash under *vese* (both) indicates that the voting was either 100% for one sex; or, that the respondents were divided between *mukadzi* and *murume*.



From the 26 questionnaires *fende*, *hure*, *jetu*, *joki*, *nyenairwa*, *nzenza* and *pfambi* are used (more) for women. Based on the same data, the labels that are used (more) for men than for women are *bhinya*, *dzenga*, *gube*, *koronyera*, *kuruku*, *rombe*, *mhengeramumba*, *ndururani*, *nhundiramutsime*, and *nhubu*, *tsotsi*.

### 7.3.2.2 The rural data

Table 7.2 A summary of the distribution of the Mhondoro responses by sex

	CHITUKO	MUKADZI	MURUME	VESE
Lazy behavior	benyumundiro	-	3	20
	nyope	-	-	28
	tsimbe	-	-	24
Violent behavior	bhinya	-	24	-
	mhengeramumba	1	3	19
Inability to perform as intelligent beings	benzi	-	-	25
	sasikamu	-	1	23
	zungairwa	-	-	24
	dzenga	-	15	8
	zeeretsi	1	12	13
	nyumwanyumwa	-	11	12
	rombe	-	17	7
Deceit and/or malicious mischief	gube	1	17	4
	nhubu	-	8	14
	nhundiramutsime	-	6	18
	nyn'any'n'a	1	1	23
Impertinence and insubordination	jetu	23	-	-
	ndururani	-	9	14
Slatternly behavior	fende	17	1	6
Sexual immorality	pfambi	19	-	6
	hure	15	1	9
	joki	23	1	2
	nzenza	13	-	11
	nyenairwa	4	-	20
	mburu	2	6	14
Thievery and chicanery	koronyera	-	16	6
	kuruku	-	11	11
	mbavha	-	3	23
	tsotsi	-	13	11

n= 28

NOTE: A dash (-) under *mukadzi* or *murume* indicates that there was no response to suggest that the label is used solely for the particular sex. A dash under *vese* (both) indicates that the voting was either 100% for one sex; or, that the respondents were divided between *mukadzi* and *murume*.

From the 28 questionnaires-cum-interviews *fende*, *jetu*, *joki*, *hure*, *nzenza*, and *pfambi* emerge as used (more) for women. Based on the same data, the labels that are used (more) for men than for women are *bhinya*, *dzenga*, *gube*, *koronyera*, *kuruku*, *nyumwa-nyumwa*, *rombe*, *tsotsi* and *zeeretsi*. *Ndururani* and *nhubu* also show potential.

### 7.3.3 Brief comments on the results

The Harare data displayed some irregularities. As I mentioned earlier, 26 out of 37 questionnaires were selected for use in the Harare data. In question 1a, the definitions were often too brief, too sketchy or too general to provide a satisfactory and clear definition (most Harareans, especially UZ students, completed their questionnaires on their own while Mhondoreans worked through the questionnaire with a research assistant asking and prodding for more). Here are typical examples of the unsatisfactory Harare definitions:

*koronyera – vhevhe*

*Vhevhe*, supposedly a synonym to *koronyera*, provides a very brief and uninformative definition.

Here is one more example of defining by synonym, taken from another questionnaire,

*tsotsi*

*munyengedzi*

*kuruku*

Then there are also cases of a respondent giving general and uninformative statements (that leave one unsure of whether the respondent was sure of the meanings of the words or not) such as, eg.,

*ndururani*

*koronyera*

*gube*

*kuruku*

*munhu anoita chitsotsi*

*Munhu anoita chitsotsi* is a person who does behaviours of *tsotsi* (criminal, thief, gang member, trickster). This definition does not bring out the fine shades of meaning in the nouns.

Then there are also circular definitions (by synonym) such as,

*gube – tsotsi*

*tsotsi – mbavha*

*mbavha – munhu anoba*

Then there is also the question that there were some imprecise or vague answers given in 1a which were then classified in question 1b, in the same manner that comprehensive responses were classified in the Mhondoro data. It then becomes difficult for one to take the answers to the second question as being responses that are to the same level of understanding as in the comprehensive rural definitions. Sometimes a label is not defined in 1a but is categorized in 1b.

Besides the brief, sketchy and incomplete definitions, 11 questionnaires that I deemed very incomplete were dropped from the analysis. The 11 had five or more unanswered questions (left blank). I kept those that had four or less unanswered questions in line with the findings in the rural data, where uncompleted questions varied from 4 to 0 from questionnaire to questionnaire. What made the situation even more complicated was that the undefined or unknown labels varied from questionnaire to questionnaire.

It was also reported to me that some of the respondents, especially UZ students, were not happy with the questionnaire as they ... 'complained that ... the questionnaires were too long and too demanding'<sup>91</sup>, or, 'complained that most of the words had the same meaning, and they felt that were only dialectical differences on these words'<sup>92</sup>. As a result, some of the respondents did not give the exercise the seriousness it deserved. Scholfield (1995: 40) writing on methods of quantifying language provides insight into such observations. He writes, '...it is also found that some kinds of subject only respond seriously if they think that they *are* being individually assessed – otherwise they leave a lot of blanks on tests and questionnaires and give 'humorous responses.' Scholfield's explanation would seem to suit the academic environment at UZ. The other reason could just be that a questionnaire culture has not quite developed. The general economic hardships at UZ were also contributing factors. Some of the RAs<sup>93</sup> wrote in their reports that some of the students had wanted to be paid for the exercise.

Because of these reasons it became difficult to make a 'statistical' decision that some of the informants were comfortably familiar with the word, its meaning and usage, or whether these were just remote recollections. Remote recollections might indicate that urban social structures are diverging from the village social structures where "a child is raised by a village". While I take that the general meanings as in the *ndururani* to *kuruku* examples above might mean a move towards a conversion of meaning in the four words, more research in Harare would need to be done before such an explanation is accepted. For these reasons and those named above, the graphical presentations will rely on the rural findings, while using the Harare data as supporting data.

#### 7.3.4 Mhondoro results split by sex

The following two graphs show these same results from Table 7.2, split by sex, for easier scrutiny.

<sup>91</sup> extracted from report by Benson Bokosha. UZ. March 2001.

<sup>92</sup> extracted from report by Atchy masvanhise. UZ. March 2001.

<sup>93</sup> Patricia Chimutanda, Felix Mubhawa, Atchy Masvanhise and Benson Bokosha. UZ. March 2001.

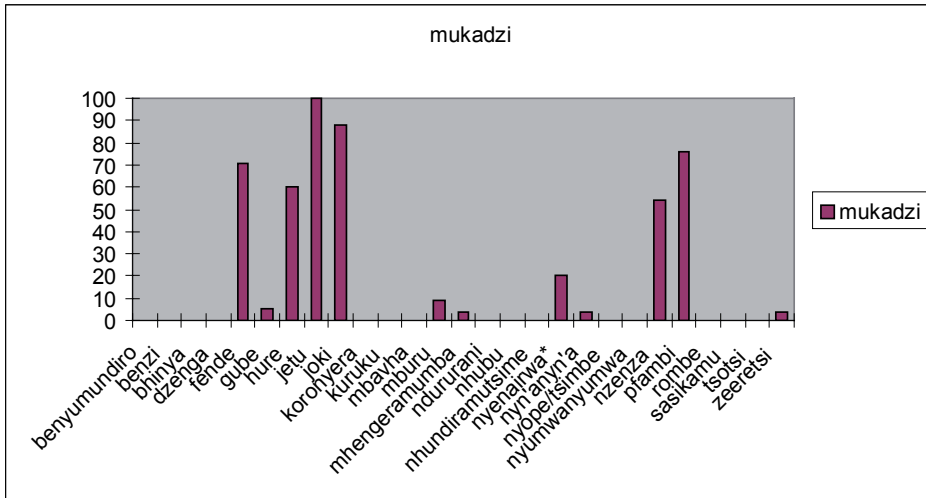


Figure 7.1: An overview of the labels as they are used solely for women in Mhondoro

The *mukadzi* figure brings to prominence six main labels, *fende*, *jetu*, *joki*, *hure*, *nzenza*, and *pfambi* as used overwhelmingly and clearly for women. Another label, *nyenairwa* also shows potential, although its percentage is relatively lower. (The Harare data gives *nyenairwa* even more weight).

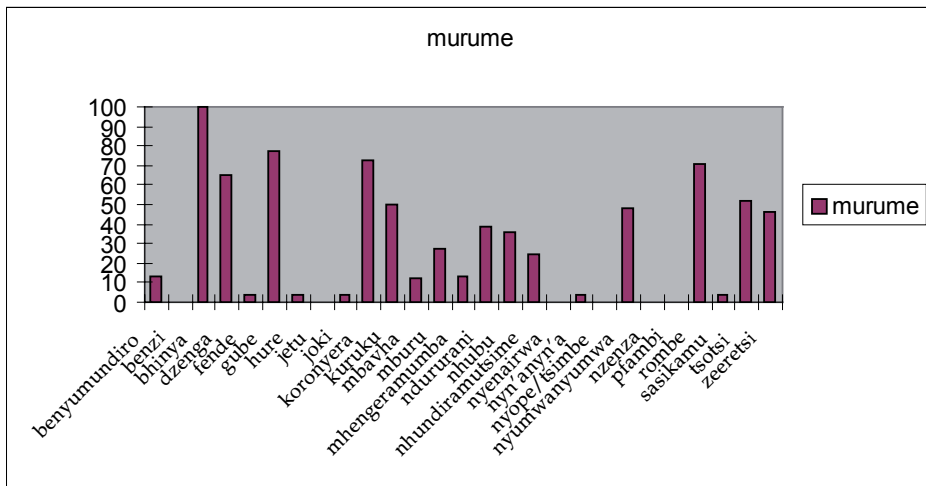


Figure 7.2: An overview of the labels as they are used solely for men in Mhondoro

Unlike the *mukadzi* graph, the *murume* graph is fuller. It has more forms to denote bad men or more nuanced language, most likely highlighting their extensive roles or broader area of operation. The figure brings to relative prominence eight labels, *bhinya*, *dzenga*, *gube*, *koronyera*, *kuruku*, *nyumwanyumwa*, *rombe*, *tsotsi* and *zeeretisi*, with more than 50% of the responses. *Ndururani* and *nhubu* also show potential (clearly male in

the Harare data). *Mhengeramumba* which records lower statistics here is highly ranked as male in the Harare data.

Next, Figures 7.3 and 7.4 show the main labels (highlighted above), for women and men, respectively, and how they are spread between the sexes.

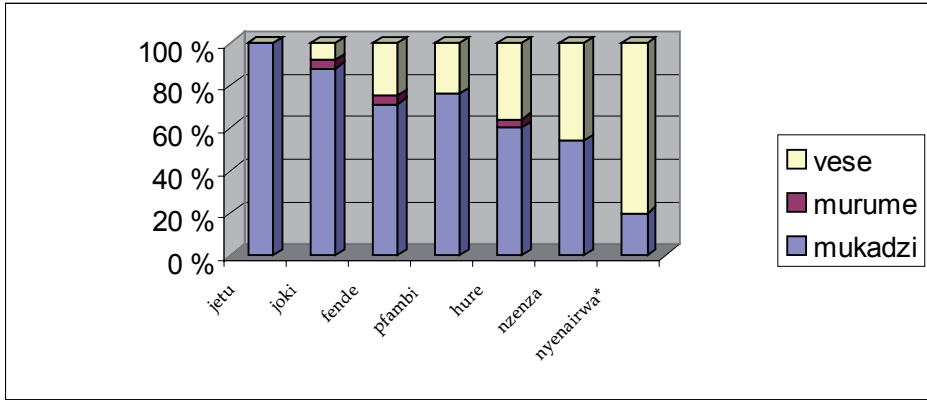


Figure 7.3: The six main labels for *mukadzi*

Figure 7.3 shows how the seven main forms for *mukadzi* compare in their usage, if any, with *murume* (men) and *vese* (both). *Nyenairwa* has been included among the main forms because it appears as a potentially female form not only in number, but also meaning. Its meaning is closer to those of the six labels named here than to the rest. It has also been included because it emerges as a female form in Harare. *Jetu* is totally *mukadzi* while *joki* scores over 80% (meaning that there is little -  $\approx 20\%$  - doubt in people's minds that this label strictly applies to female space). What comes out in the tables is that the scores for the forms are mainly divided between those who say *mukadzi* only and those who say both and very little of *murume*.

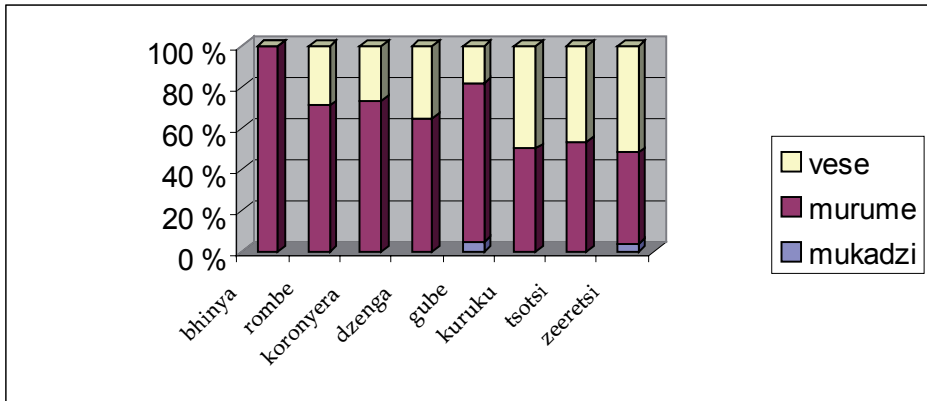


Figure 7.4: The eight main labels for *murume*

*Bhinya* is at 100% *murume* while *gube* is close to 80%, meaning that there is little or no doubt, in some people's minds, that these labels strictly apply to male space. Again, as

with Figure 7.3 for *mukadzi*, the graph is clearly either *murume* or *vese*, with very little *mukadzi*.

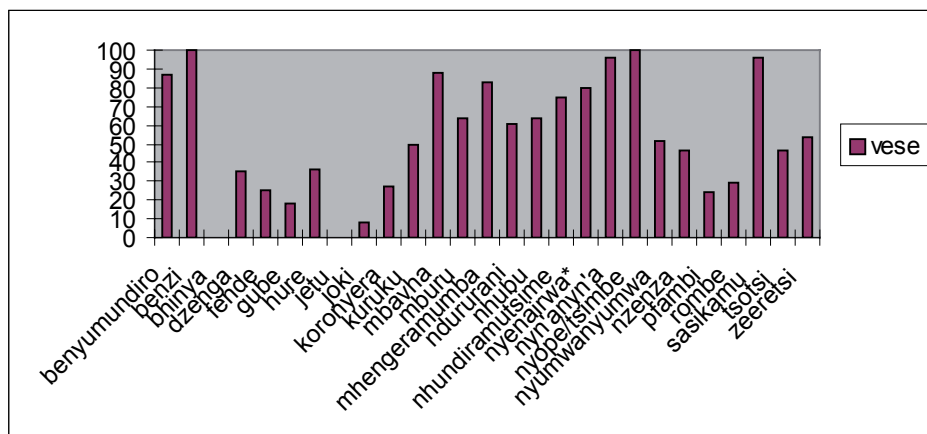


Figure 7.5: Labels used for all

The graph in Figure 7.5, representing labels used for both women and men, irrespective of sex, is 'busier' than 7.1 (female) and 7.2 (male). The *Vese* response means that the label is classified as unisex. The labels seem to overwhelmingly extend to all, except for *bhinya*, *jetu*, *joki*, *gube* and *fende*, which are at the zero or just above zero percentage points. The *vese* labels indicate failure in the areas generally allotted to both, things to do with proper decorum, state of mind and respect.

### 7.3.5 A summary of results

The data suggests that the labels principally used for women (only/mainly) discourage:

- Answering back or talking 'impolitely' (*jetu*);
- Insubordination (*jetu*);
- Generally unbecoming behaviour, especially attention seeking, behavior in public (*nzenza*, *nyenairwa*);
- Flirting – enjoying men's attention (*nzenza* and *nyenairwa*);
- Promiscuity, i.e. sleeping around either for pleasure or for money (*pfambi*, *joki*, *hure* and *nzenza*);
- Slattness/Sluttiness (*fende*).

On the other hand, men (only/mainly) are discouraged from:

- Violence or aggression (*bhinya*);
- Thieving; i.e. crooks, bag snatchers, pick pockets (*kuruku*, *koronyera*, *bhinya*, *tsotsi*);
- Unseemliness (*rombe*, *zeeretsi*, *kuruku*, *koronyera* and *gube*);
- Mischief (*gube*);
- Not being honest with the truth (*gube*, *kuruku*, *koronyera*);
- Serious dereliction of duty - not providing for themselves or their 'dependents' (*zeeretsi*, *rombe*);

- g) Dependence (*rombe, dzenga*);
- h) Lack of intelligence or sharpness of mind (*dzenga, zeeretsi*);
- i) Lack of success (*rombe, dzenga*).

Briefly, Vese (both), results show that both women and men are expected to desist from the universal evils of:

- a) Laziness (*tsimbe/nyope, dzenga, zeeretsi, nyumwanyumwa*);
- b) Gluttony (*benyumundiro*);
- c) Craziness (*benzi, sasikamu, mhengeramumba*);
- d) Thievery (*mbavha, kuruku, tsotsi*);
- e) Stirring/troublemaking/malice (*nhundiramutsime*);
- f) Insubordination (*ndururani, mburu*).

## 7.4 Discussion

The data points to an allocation of expected responsibilities where the women-only/-mainly responsibilities are restricted to the domestic sphere while men-only/-mainly's extend from the domestic to the public sphere. Thus, the results give credence to the expression that labelling is stereotypic derogation (Schur 1983). For women insults, the responsibilities are concentrated in three main areas. For men, there are few labels that record a dash (-) as the responsibilities seem to be more spread, covering four main semantic fields (see Table 7.2). Figures 7.6 and 7.7 below show the distribution of the concepts by sex.

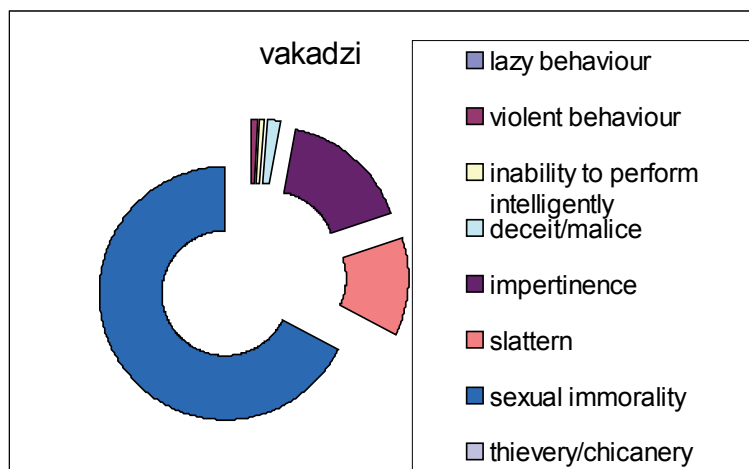


Figure 7.6 A distribution of the concepts for *vakadzi*

As seen in Figure 7.6, girls and (young) women are cautioned against being sexually immoral (promiscuous, flirtatious); being impertinent and confrontational and for being slatterns. Flirtatious or solicitous behaviour that reflects enjoyment of men's attention or sex is not considered proper for women. As clearly reported in the questionnaire, women are also expected to keep the home clean and peaceful (*fende* and *jetu*). The hundred-percent response for *jetu* raises the inference that silence is expected from women, but there is no mention of the same where men are concerned.



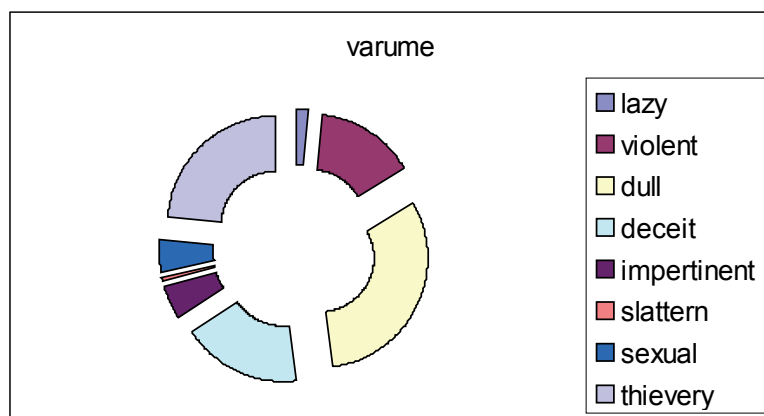


Figure 7.7 A distribution of the concepts for *varume*

As seen in Figure 7.7, boys and young men are cautioned against an inability to perform intelligently, thievery and chicanery, violence and insurbodination, among other irresponsible behaviours which result in them neglecting their families and their roles as providers and leaders. Their roles are more spread than women's. Men's responsibility should be to succeed at whatever they do, providing for their families and keeping away from criminal behavior, otherwise they get labelled as stupid or foolish or they are referred to as dummies. They are expected to have the brains to take care of themselves and their families, as well as to resist the tendency towards violent and criminal behavior. Success and physical strength is what defines them, as in western cultures.

The unisex responsibilities emphasize that all should make efforts to work for a living and guard against idleness, greed and malice. What the society promotes for all (*vese*), apart from the individual sex responsibilities, is hard work, moderation and proper decorum, respecting other people and their own property, as well as to have a sensible and sane mind. Since *vese* is not the focus of this discussion, I will not discuss the labels highlighted in this section at length.

What follows below is a discussion of the main labels for women-only/-mainly and for men-only/-mainly, on how the insults reveal what the society discourages and expects in the two genders, thereby implicitly bringing out the values being promoted in the youths.

#### 7.4.1 Women

Figure 7.6 provides a graphical presentation of the concepts that have been highlighted for women in Tables 7.1 and 7.2. Below is a more detailed discussion of the evidence that energies in the tables and graphs.

##### 7.4.1.1 Sexual immorality

Of the seven common labels for women, five (*pfambi*, *joki*, *hure*, *nzenza* and *nyenairwa*) have a connection with sex: flinging, flaunting or offering it for money or merely flirting with men. In the words of one informant, all this is seen as '*kusakoshese muviri wake*' (not valuing her body). The first three of the five sexual labels, (*pfambi*, *joki*, *hure*) can be regarded as synonyms although there might be a slight shade of meaning de-

pending on who is using the term. *Pfambi* is the more traditional term, while *joki* and *hure* are more 'modern' terminology, loaned from English. The fourth label, *nzenza* can be used as a euphemism for all the other four. It has to do with flirting and making obvious one's interest in men and sex. Some informants mentioned that it was immoral for women to expose their bodies to pre- or extra-marital sex, as even the church and the Bible spoke against it. The fifth label, *nyenairwa*, also has a 'sexual' sense to it. The meaning that is emphasized in Harare, where it received more scores than Mhondoro, is the 'flirting sense', whereas, in Mhondoro, it is the sense of laughing for no apparent reason. This 'giggly' sense, when used for women, acquires teasing and flirtatious connotations. Hence, when they are cautioned with *nyenairwa*, young women are being discouraged from active solicitation of men's attention. Both the 'flirting' and 'giggly' senses make *nyenairwa* a synonym for senses ii) and iii) of *nzenza*. *Mburu*, while having a sense of flirting has other senses that make it more of a unisex term, especially the part about using coarse sexual language.

It would seem that flirtation is 'bad' because it gives the woman some kind of control and upper hand in an area where she is expected to wait for men to make the move. Women are scolded when they go outside the private domestic (family) realm to infiltrate the outside public world (prostitution/flirtation) or when they try to take control in a male dominated society. Aside from tradition, some of those I held discussions or interviews with, referred to the church and the Bible as their inspiration. They said that the Bible had already shown that women were 'sensual sinful creatures' (1 Corinthians 7:11). Some of them made a play of words with *vakadzi* (women) and *vataadzi* (sinners). *Vakadzi vataadzi* (Women are sinners), they said. The Adam and Eve story was also referred to, to emphasize women's sensual sinfulness potential; hence, women needed to be on guard against appearing to be tempting and sensual. One more example is 1 Timothy:

14 Adamu haasiye akanyengedzwa kwete, asi munhukadzi ndiye akanyengedzwa akabva अपरा मhosva yokudarika murayiro (1 Timoti 14).

14 Adam is not the one who was deceived, no, but the female human is the one who was deceived and then committed a crime/offence to jump the command (1 Timothy 14).

It became clear during the course of my fieldwork that the Bible and Victorian principles brought in by colonization have had a significant effect on both women and men and how they view sex as well as their roles in society. Sex, especially outside marriage, is seen as a surrendering to sinful flesh. Sex in marriage is seen as a male prerogative, as a man is the deciding partner. Prostitution is not tolerated as the result of an unjust world or the lack of a choice but as a conscious choice that some women make to victimize men and their families. The responses on these 'sex' labels show that men are rarely seen as being sexually immoral, even if they are the ones sleeping with the women who are said to be sleeping around. Chastity is meant to be a virtue for women and not for men. Women are the ones who are insulted for perceived looseness, and such insults are sometimes used as rude forms of address or reference on the street. For women, sexual misbehavior is, therefore, the one charge that can be relied upon to stick, as chastity is an issue (Russ 1983: 106).

Preston and Stanley (1987) also found that insults of sluttishness were directed only to women, while a man is rarely insulted for parallel behaviors. Interestingly, with the current data, *hure*, a 'modern' term seems to have picked up relatively more male scores in both Harare and Mhondoro than either *pfambi* or *joki*. However, one can still argue that while *chihure* (prostitution) is understood to be there among men, it is not lexicalized.

The need, in the society, to control women's sexuality and make them wholly responsible for sex and 'punishing and disciplining' them in the event of a sexual 'sin', reported during the fieldwork, has also been demonstrated in a recent publication, *Broken Pillars* (Kahari 2000), a novel written in English, while set in a Shona context. The following excerpts from the novel illustrate amply perceptions and assumptions that strengthen the argument presented here: that the value of a woman is placed on her body, what it can produce and how she conducts the production. Sex and sexuality are what defines the woman. I have broken the extracts into three sections, under my own headings:

i) The kiss

Here's what Nyasha (the young woman) says, after she and Tendai (the young man) have just kissed. The two are cousins.

"Tendai, what we just did is despicable. We are worse than animals. You have an excuse, you are a man. I have none," she was in pain.

"What do you mean?" He was puzzled by her comment.

"I am supposed to know better than this. Why do I let this happen? Grandma told me that if these things happen, it is because I want them to..." (67).

ii) The pregnancy

After Nyasha and Tendai deliver the news to their grandmother of Nyasha's pregnancy, Nyasha weeps and says,

"I am so ashamed of myself. I should have known better. Remember you once told me that women are the pillar of culture and society? If we rot then our society and culture rots because men are basically instinctual. You said God gave us the responsibility of right and the ancestors make sure that we do right. Do you remember?" ...

"I tried, Grandma, I tried so hard! ... I kept giving myself that lecture about the pillar of society. But, I was too weak and I fell" (84).

ii) Grandma's response:

"It is a shame when a brother seduces a sister. It is even more of a shame when a child is the result of such an act. I feel I should say this to you, Tendai, because it is Nyasha who is going to be giving up a lot, including her dignity. You will always be excused because you are a man, but not

her. Society will look upon her as a whore...Nyasha ... You the female, the pillar of society, let go of her duties..." (84).

Grandmother states, categorically, that Nyasha abandoned her duty, hence the pregnancy was her fault, even when grandmother questions the unfairness of the situation where women are concerned. As Mugo (90s publication – exact date unknown) points out, from birth to death, women are not only culturally constructed to reflect their disadvantaged position but they are also conditioned to engage in acts and pronouncements of self-negation or self-denial. Mugo explains further that some people who are disadvantaged are also against change. They believe so strongly in their inferiority and their status in life that they feel they need the guidance and leadership of the advantaged people. They say the family would fall apart or immorality would be widespread, if things changed. *Broken Pillars* displays such thinking through both Nyasha and her grandmother. The grandmother even admits that the practice of blaming and censuring the young woman for sexual 'failures', what she calls "the evidence" (pregnancy) is unfair, when it is the men who take their pleasure and run; yet this should be done to protect the family. *Broken Pillars* portrays the harsh reality of negative attitudes towards women who "open their legs" without thinking, with the result that the society looks upon them as whores. The severity of the situation in *Broken Pillars* is compounded by the fact that the two lovers in the novel, Nyasha and Tendai, are cousins, born of sisters. Nyasha, who is forced to cut ties with her family feels the brunt of blame for having a baby with her cousin.

Mtandwa, a columnist for a weekly newspaper, has this to say in her review of the novel:

In the true fashion of a patriarchal society that believes men are allowed to fall by the wayside because they cannot control their desires and that women deserve everything that happens to them because they should know better, the grandmother banishes Nyasha to a life without her family. (The Financial Gazette January 25-February 1 2001)

It is even more ironic that sexual 'irresponsibilities' are seen as women's responsibility when the society has given men more power than women, through patriarchal and linguistic structures. The women are nature (the rivers, fruits, stones, etc.) (see Chap 4). Nature is exploited by people. It seems to be that there is a realization that men are the ones who lead in sexual decisions, although the labels lag behind. In a speech to mark World AIDS Day, heard on ZBC Radio 3, (12 Dec 2001), The Governor and Resident Minister of the Midlands, Cephas Msipa, said men, because they are the decision makers in sexual encounters, the ones who determine where, how and when sex should take place, should take more responsibility to stop the spread of AIDS and other STDs.

An interesting observation is that while, in most languages, as in Shona, the male word is, often, the base form or the unmarked form (from which the female one is derived) e.g. English cp. 'prince' with 'princess'; in areas dealing with sex and marriage, the female word is the base or the more powerful word and, again, cp. 'virgin' or 'prostitute' with 'male virgin' or 'male prostitute' (Russ 1983), as the male term equivalents. When the prostitutes are male then they are referred to as 'male prostitutes', the marked form – a qualification, which usually occurs, more generally, with female

terminology. Norwegian also shows the same tendencies as shown in the following example, taken from Fjeld (1998: 133),

Even at the end of a marriage, the women still get the base form, cp. 'widow' with 'widower', used for women and men, respectively. *Mvana* (single mother) is a woman (discussed in Chap 4). There is no term for a single father, nor is there a lexicalized sense or a term for a promiscuous male.

Findings from previous studies in Shona (eg., Chimhundu 1987, Chitauro-Mawema 1995) and other languages have shown that there are few words to describe sex from a female perspective, i.e. as a function of female needs and desires rather than those of men. Yet, there are more words or metaphors designating women as prostitutes, or more words referring to women with sexual overtones, than there are for men, and as Jay (1979, 1985) says males use more offensive language than women. There are also multiple words to describe women's sexuality (see, eg., Frank and Anshen 1983, Stanley 1977, Schulz 1975 for similar work in English). Stanley, for example, analyzes 220 terms used to describe sexually promiscuous women in English. Schulz lists more than 500 English slang terms for 'prostitute', but only 65 for 'whoremonger'.

#### 7.4.1.2 Impertinence and insubordination

The sixth label, *jetu*, was explained as one, "*asingadi kutsiurwa*" (does not like to be criticized); "*anongopindura zvaanoda*" (just says whatever she wants); "*asingateereri murume*" (does not obey her husband – is insubordinate); and "*anotaura zvine hasha achideedzera*" (speaks angrily and loudly). From these data, it can be drawn that good and proper women are generally expected to be on the quiet and humble side, rather than being 'loud'. Or they should learn and know 'how to talk properly', "*vakazvirereka*" (humbling themselves), what Spender (1985) summarizes as 'speaking rationally'. Men are expected to speak. Women are expected to listen to their husbands. The same is seen in other Bantu languages. In an article on Ndebele culture, Nyathi, in a column in the *Mirror*<sup>94</sup> (2002) writes that, *ithalathalazana* or *uwawama uyanqinelwa* (a chat-box was avoided) by suitors as *unguthathawese* (she loves rumour-mongering).

Such findings suggest that feistiness might not be encouraged for Shona women. Or, this might be an attempt to silence women and stop them from voicing opposing views. Or, it might be a question of (the bad women's) talking being measured against (the good women's) silence for their talking will be loud (see also Spender 1985). If it were bad for all to speak loudly, then the response to *jetu* would not be totally female (100%). To my knowledge, there is no male equivalent to *jetu*. In the same thinking, the English language has/had a variety of terms for vocal women such as shrew, scold, nag, fishwife, and gossip, some of which may have gone out of use (Talbot 1998: 105). Victorian protest for such attitudes is registered in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847: 125), in the words of her main character, Jane, who says,

Women are said to be very calm generally; but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer...

<sup>94</sup> Based on interview with Msongelwayizizwe Khumalo. 14 June 2002. Makokoba, Bulawayo.

The explanation to 'silencing' in Shona lies in patriarchy where the male is the decision maker. In the home, the decision lies with the husband. The *dare* (traditional court) was and still is a male world, where the men deliberate on issues and make decisions. Although, in theory, women are part of the *dare*, in practice, what they do is to listen to the proceedings, to ululate and give moral support, and replicate men's decisions. A woman who dares speak a different view therefore goes against the grain and is likely to be labelled, more so if she speaks against the status quo. Such a woman may be considered trouble and humiliation for the husband. Christianity and the Bible have further entrenched these values, with the biblical verses being taken literally. A number of women said they looked to the Bible and church for guidance quoting such verses as *1 Corinthians 11: 3*, where Paul refers to a woman as inferior to men and has therefore to remain silent in the community. The Bible that most use as inspiration and affirmation, literally, says that the good woman is quiet and knows that her position is below her husband's (Schaefer 1977: 72). Another example of Paul's letters, *1 Timothy*, in which reference is made to women and how they should humble themselves before their husbands, was also cited. Here are some verses:

Asi ngavave vane zviito zvakanaka nokuti ndizvo zvinodikanwa pavanhukadzi vanonamata Mwari. 11 Kana paine zvinenge zwichidzidziswa munhukadzi ngaangodzidza chinyararire akazvirereka chose. 12 Asi ini hapana munhukadzi wandinobvumidza kuti adzidzise kana kuti atonge munhurume kwete. Ndinoda kuti mukadzi agare akanyarara (*1 Timoti 2: 10-12*).

But they should have good deeds because this is what is wanted from women who pray to God. 11 If there is anything being taught a woman should learn very quietly and humbly. I want that a woman stays quiet: (*1 Timothy 1: 10-12*).

Such verses are also often quoted for a bride or bride-to-be by the senior church elders, like the 'mothers' and 'aunts' who are entrusted with the role of teaching young people about relationships in marriages. In the urban areas, kitchen tea parties and baby showers are also platforms for such teachings. Another favorite at such gatherings is Proverbs 31 that talks, again, about the humble woman who knits quietly. The main messages in these, the informants said, was that God meant for things to be that way, as clearly seen in both the Old and New Testaments.

#### 7.4.1.3 *Slatternly behavior*

Finally, in *fende*, the cleanliness that is emphasized for women is for their bodies as well as their surroundings, as they do their traditional domestic chores. The echoes from Christianity also resounded again and again when *fende* was mentioned with informants mentioning that the woman's body was like a temple that needs to be cleaned and preserved from sin. Slattern, the word that is given as an equivalent to *fende* in the SSD, is defined in the *Collins Cobuild Dictionary* as,

A slattern is a dirty untidy woman; an old fashioned word.



An old-fashioned word possibly portraying old-fashioned values, at least where English is concerned, but not so in Shona. The concept naming *fende* is alive.

The suggestion is that young women are scolded for not carrying out their time-honored role as homemakers. Cleanliness is not made much of an issue for men. The explanation given is that men can afford to be dirty, seeing as they work outside all the time. Also, it is, again, the woman's responsibility to ensure that the household is clean, the husband included.

One of my informants<sup>95</sup> also brought in a 'sexual' angle to *fende* when he told me that this association between cleanliness and women is also related to other 'macro domestic' issues of menstruation and sex. *Ufende* (slatternness/sluttishness) is also understood to result from careless and unsanitary handling of menstrual and sexual fluids. He says that, traditionally, menstruation has been viewed with awe and mystery, hence the ambivalence shown towards women during their menstruation periods and the taboos imposed on them during their menstruating years. The women were seen as 'dirty' and therefore were not allowed to engage in certain rituals or even brew beer<sup>96</sup> for traditional and customary rituals. The belief was that they would make the beer they were brewing unclean, sour or just unpalatable. To avoid such mishaps, only the women beyond menopause could brew beer for certain rituals. There was, also, a grudging fear, of women during their menstruation, because of the powers they were thought to have to interfere with or to disturb the karma, the balance of certain things. A *mbonga* (a woman who would not get married but would be dedicated to the service of the group) was tasked to take care of the *mishonga* (charms and medicaments) of the clan (DGR Part I). Among the Ndebele people, it has also been reported that women who were menstruating were used in the frontline in times of war, to neutralize the *mishonga* and strength of the opposing army. Women having their menstruation were also said to have the power to weaken the powers of *n'angas* (traditional/spiritual healers) and hence were not allowed to visit *n'anga* during 'their time of the month'. Through their sexuality, women were and are still believed, then, not only to control but to damage as well. Also, among the Shona, the time of the onset of menstruation is/was also believed to be powerful enough to dictate one's personality. The season when one first began menstruation was said to affect the type of personality one would have in the future. Women who started their menstruation in summer were considered 'normal' whereas those who did so in winter were said to become *jetus* because they would have *-panda chirimo* (break up the hard surface of winter). Winter is a dry month hence the 'hard surface of the dry soils'. *-panda* also means to be in heat, as in a dog being in heat. Such an interpretation would also be equally applicable, as women who are menstruating tend to have high temperatures. To *-panda chirimo* was said to make such women difficult, loud and uncontrollable. It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that the dominant sex feels threatened by this biological 'power', which women have and men do not, hence the need to curtail or blemish it.

*Ufende* from sex, for both parties, is seen as a woman's failure. It is the woman's duty to see to it that, after sex, she and her husband are cleaned up. Women still get instruction on this (see Chitauro-Mawema 1995). There is ambivalence about the way sex is viewed. It is good for procreation. Yet, it also seems to be a shameful and

<sup>95</sup> VaFani, Mhondoro.

<sup>96</sup> Beer was and still is an integral part of Shona rituals, where the beer is used to mark the occasion or as a libation.



dirty act where women are concerned, as shown earlier in, eg., *chembere masikati, usiku imvana* (an elderly woman by day, a lascivious single mother by night) proverb. A psychologist, Brothers (1998), says there is ambivalence about sex. Brothers quotes the poet, Yeats, who says, 'Love has pitched his mansion in the place of excrement' (cited by Brothers 1998: 376), as an explanation for such thinking. Brothers says that this is what still muddles feelings about sex. He says that at an unconscious level, we might therefore feel there is something dirty or soiling about sex, because we view semen and vaginal liquids as body wastes.

## 7.4.2 Men

Of the eight most common derogatory labels for men, what is clear is that the attack is on irresponsibility as family heads, and violence and chicanery in the outside world. As *misoro yemba* (heads of households) and society at large, men are expected to behave accordingly. Patriarchy gives them that role. So do Christianity, the Bible and Victorian values. Unlike with Figure 7.1, the *mukadzi* graph, Figure 7.2, the *murume* graph is fuller, most likely revealing more expectations from men than women or reflecting more responsibilities for men than women - assumptions of patriarchy. Because men have wider operations, they can fail in a wider number of ways, and this is linguistically reflected in the fact that there is a broader lexical assortment available for chastising males (see Figure 7.7).

### 7.4.2.1 Violent behavior

As the warriors and protectors of their folk, men are warned against abuse of their physical strength with such terms as *bhinya* and *mhengeramumba* (emerging as more of a male term in the Harare data) as they have this predisposition to violence. Aggressiveness seems to be socially expected from men, hence the argument that it is partly socially constructed. See, again, the following proverb (quoted earlier in Chap 4), which highlights this characteristic,

*Kuyarutsa mwanakomana kuzvikohwera mapfumo mumba. Mubereki oga oga anofanira kuziva kuti kana mwanakomana akura anoita zvinhu zvakasiyana-siyana zvinogona kupinza iye nevabereki vake mumatambudziko.*

To raise a boy child is to harvest and bring spears into your household.  
Every parent must know that when a boy child is growing he will do things that may cause affliction or pain to him and his parents.

Even the male reproductive organ is sometimes referred to with such violent terminology as *pfumo* (spear) or *chombo* (weapon). A show of power is expected (even condoned) of men, being the warriors and protectors of the families, but it should not be used for criminal deeds, hence the use of such labels to instill restraint in the young.

### 7.4.2.2 Thievery and chicanery

Alongside with violence, other forms of criminal behavior to which men can be exposed to in their public roles and in their quest to provide for their families, are discouraged. Young men are scolded for being dishonest (*kuruku, koronyera, tsotsi*). Working outside or away from the home, herding cattle (rural) or running errands, finds them

operating away from the eyes of the parents and the community. The temptation to slide from the narrow path and get into all sorts of unseemly behavior is high. (What is interesting is that in both Harare and Mhondoro statistics for *tsotsi* and *mbavha* is that the two labels record zeros for women-only/-mainly, while men-only/-mainly record an almost equal number of scores as in the both column).

Also since they are the ones who have to do the talking on behalf of the family, it would make sense for men to be cautioned against smooth talking or against stirring up trouble for others (*koronyera*, *kuruku*, *gube*).

#### 7.4.2.3 Inability to perform as intelligent beings (dull)

Boys and young men, as potential heads, are cautioned against dependence and dereliction of their duties as heads of families in the labels *dzenga*, *rombe* and *zeeretsi*. Men have to be trained to be sharp and capable to succeed in their role as providers and protectors and to not neglect their families. A real man cannot afford the luxury of not being able to provide for his family, just roaming around without seeing to his responsibilities as head of the family.

#### 7.4.2.4 Impertinence and insubordination

Impertinence, of the crafty and sly type in *ndururani* (rather than women's loud type), is discouraged in men.

### 7.4.3 The definitions

One observation to be made from the definitions (Part I of the Questionnaire) and the dictionary entries is that female labels are treated as being marked for sex, while those that apply to men are not. In some of the questionnaire responses the definitions of female labels contain *mukadzi* (woman) (or contain some other indication that the person is female), as a hypernym while the male ones contain *munhu* (person) as a hypernym. Similar observations have also been made in the DGR Part I. For example, out of the five labels classified as female (the sixth, *nyenairwa* does not appear in the dictionary), four of the labels make direct or implicit reference to the term applying to females. *Jeti* (a variation of *jetu*), *pfambi* and *nzenza* (sense 2) make specific reference to the term applying to females. The femaleness of *joki* is implicitly implied in *pfambi*, the hypernym. Only the fifth label, *hure*, is characterized as either female or male. Of the eight most common labels classified as male here, seven appear in the DGR Part I (*kuruku* does not appear). All seven labels have *munhu* as hypernym. There is no sex/gender reference indicating that the labels are used (mostly) for males, not even with *bhinya*, which in the questionnaires got a hundred percent response as a male label. These observations lead to the same conclusion as in Chap 4, where, in the DGR Part II explanations of *-kadzi* and *-rume* containing proverbs, male terms are explained with either gender specific or generic hypernyms, while female terms are explained with gender specific or 'thing' hypernyms.

### 7.4.4 Informants

Other observations that I made were on the informants and their attitudes to the common labels for women and men. When I looked at how many women or men had selected the labels as being used for women or for men, suggestions were that women,

especially the older women (like the grandmother in *Broken Pillars*), seem to be a little bit more uncompromising about applying these terms. The women are 'harsher' in their judgment of what is expected of women and men. They see themselves as having a duty to maintain traditional values and expectations. On the other hand, their male counterparts, show some flexibility, with all the labels, except two, *jetu* and *bhinya*. In the cases where names and/or sex of respondents were provided women had an edge over the men with 80–100% being sure that most of the common labels above applied either to women or men. This was seen more in the older rural women, the ones entrusted with the socializing of the younger ones to ensure conformity. With men, the percentages of those who are sure about applying these terms to both women and men range between 55% or less (mostly less) scores for both female and male application of the most common labels. For example, while 80% of the female respondents said *hure* was a female label; 22% of the male respondents said it was female while an overwhelming 78% said the term was used for both women and men. Men appeared to present a 'fairer' picture of the events around *chihure* (prostitution) than women. It takes two people, they said. My observations, though, do not confirm that *hure* or *chihure* is lexicalised or verbalised for men (see also., Mashiri 2001). Out of a random selection of 60 concordances of . \* *hure* in the ALLEX Corpus, all showed *hure* as being female. Even in the expression *mwana wehure* (child of a prostitute), the parent is understood to be female – the mother, although in other discourses such a possessive phrase would indicate a father as the parent. Such practice is not peculiar to Shona, as the same thing happens in English and Norwegian. See the Norwegian example below, adopted from Fjeld (1998: 133),

Women have been socialized to accept that only they have the potential to become *hures*. As a result of the socialization process, it is, therefore, not surprising that women are conservative and harder on themselves. The woman is the one who gets paid for sexual favours. The buyer is not seen as being immoral. The issue of payment has also been compounded further by the colonial labour history, which made men the workers. Comments such as, "*varume vane basa here?*" (do men really count – can we really consider men as liable to that kind of scrutiny?); "*Vanoteedzerwa?*" (Can they be followed? – Does anyone take them [men] seriously?), highlight an asymmetry where men's bad behaviour is turned a blind eye on while women are made accountable.

## Part II: The Curses

### 7.5 Background

Part II highlights the most avoided and impolite (sexual) words in Shona<sup>97</sup>. It can be seen as 'a record of the usage of prohibited words and expressions' (Spears 2000: vii). As highlighted earlier, research on sex in the Shona language and culture has highlighted sex as an act of aggression and dominance, where the man is perceived as the dominating 'doer' (subject) of the activity, and the women as the dominated 'done' (object). It is against this background that Part II examines offensive curses, whose focal point is women's intimate or private parts.

The curses, especially those that are tabooed - *zvinonyadzisira* (shamelessly refer to intimate parts), almost always have to do with women. As an illustration, males

<sup>97</sup> A draft of Part II was presented as a paper entitled, 'Women and sexuality in Shona' at the Interdisciplinary Seminar on *Language, Love and Sexuality*, at Kingston University, UK, 8-9 April 2002.

making passes at women use them when they feel that their attempts at chatting up the females are being ignored. Some, in moments of extreme anger, aggravation and frustration use the extremely coarse and obscene ones. I have observed some people who seem to use such language, easily, with little provocation.

### 7.5.1 Objectives

Part II attempts to answer the following questions:

- a) What do the obscene insults tell us about society's attitude towards women and female sexuality?
- b) And, for those insults that are specific to the mother, what do they reveal about attitudes towards the role of the mother?

### 7.5.2 Materials and methods

Due to the sensitivity of the materials, data on such insults is not easily available or availed. These tabooed forms are not found in written or published form. In speech, children are absolutely forbidden from using such language. Adults are expected to be responsible and morally upright enough to refrain from using such abusive expressions in public (especially, in contexts with both women and men) although some do, necessitating such a study as this one.

The materials were collected from:

- a) Graffiti.

This graffiti is mostly visible in toilets in rural areas, written or painted with chalk, but mostly with human excrement. Urban public toilets do not carry much of the graffiti, probably because they are too busy to allow one time to scribble such messages, or, perhaps urbanites have other forms of expression, like street remarks (see, eg., Mashiri 2 000 for a description and discussion).

- b) Questionnaire (see Appendix 7-II)

I surreptitiously tucked in a question soliciting *zvituko* (insults) containing (*a*)*mai* (mother) and *baba* (father) terms, in a shell questionnaire on terminology related to marriage and non-marriage for another study (see, Appendix 7-II). Even though I did not specify that I wanted *zvinonyadzisira* (coarse terms), most respondents provided the insults, with much inhibition though. Here is how the relevant parts of the questionnaire read:

- b) Tipei mazita/mazwi, kana aripo, anoshandiswa pa:-  
Give us words/nouns, if they are there, that are used on/for:

*zvituko nezvamai*  
insults about mother

*zvituko nezvababa*  
insults about father

.....

Ndezvipi zvituko zvakaawanda? Unofunga kuti sei zvakaadaro?  
Which of these insults are many? Why do you think that things are like that?

.....

- c) *Pane dzimwe nzvimbo dzamatadza kuzadzikisa, dzisina mazita mumutauro medu. Dzokerai kunzvimbo dzakadai idzi motsanangura kuti chii chiri mumagariro edu chinoita kuti mashoko aya asawanikwe.*

There are some places that you failed to complete, with no words/nouns in our language. Go back to such places and explain what it is that is in our culture/society that makes it such that these words/phrases do not exist.

While some were willing to cooperate (reservedly or hesitantly), others felt offended by being asked to talk about “unchristian” and “too vulgar and insulting”<sup>98</sup> things, as indicated in reports that UZ research assistants<sup>99</sup> submitted at the end of their fieldwork. The respondents, from both Mhondoro and Harare, were mostly willing to give reasons why women’s sexuality is attacked, rather than what is said.

Sixty questionnaires, 30 in each locality, were used.

- c) Beer parties

Again, in the rural areas, beer parties provide conducive arenas for settling previous disputes or grudges, the ideal contexts to bring in offensive language, under (at least the guise of) the influence of alcohol.

- d) Interpersonal conflicts

Everyday conflicts, outside beer parties, such as, for example, a road accident scene, may also, for some people, culminate with offensive abuses being hurled at each other.

## 7.6 Results

Data collected through the questionnaire and observation mostly highlighted insults about female and male sexuality. A few common ‘non-sexual’ insults such as those about the mother or father’s big ears/nose/mouths, etc., were recorded. This section focuses only on the overshadowing ‘sexual’ ones.

The responses showed far more coarse insults referring to a mother’s or any woman’s sexuality than to a husband’s or a man’s. Mashiri (2000: 55) makes the same observation with street remarks. He says that they ‘are stereotyped in nature and often refer to female sexuality’. Even though the question specifically asked for ‘mother/father-containing’ insults, responses also included ‘woman/man-referring’ insults. For men, one coarse one stands out, about his *kanhu* (little thing - penis), which was said to come from frustrated lovers/wives who were exploiting the ‘usual’ male fears about the size of the penis being a measurement of one’s manhood. The rest of the *baba*-containing insults were of the Part I common non-sexual type such as, *zeeretsi sababa* ((you) are useless like (your) father), *baba rombe* ((your) father (is a) tramp). Or, as in the majority of cases, the *baba* answer space is just blank. The *mai*-containing insults also included the common type, discussed earlier, in Part 1 of this

<sup>98</sup> Atchy – report on fieldwork. UZ. March 2001.

<sup>99</sup> Felix, Atchy, Patricia and Benson. UZ. March 2001.

chapter. I will not dwell on these Part I-type insults but, instead, move on to present the coarse insults, attacking female sexuality.

Here are some of the offensive insults, with literal glosses:

*mazikumbo (amai)* - fat legs (of mother)  
*mazizamu ((anenge) amai)* - big breasts ((like) mother's)  
*mazitako/garo (amai)* - big buttocks (your mother's)  
*mukosho (wamai)* – anus (of your mother)  
*(zi)(pa)mhata ((ra) (pa)mai)* - (at) your mother's (big) anus  
*pamai* - at your mother's (anus)  
*mazitinji amai* - your mother's big clitoris  
*musatanyoko<sup>100</sup>* - your mother's vagina/cunt  
*pany(w)o pamai vako* - your mother's vagina/cunt  
*(zi)beche ramai vako* -your mother's (big) vagina/cunt.

The insults, which mainly refer to female genitalia and other 'sexual' body parts, show the patterns:

your X (to a woman)  
 X of your mother  
 your mother's X

where X refers to an intimate private part.

## 7.7 Discussion

The insults, ranging from the offensive to the coarsely offensive, from the bare mentionables to the grossly taboo, concentrate on the woman's intimate feminine space, the space that is believed to be the center of womanhood. I am reminded here of a small poem that we, as girls, used to recite and enact, to celebrate our femininity– a poem that we were often severely reprimanded or punished for when and if we were caught. The poem, which clearly objectified the female body, was recited while pointing to or touching the X. It went as follows:

*Aya maorange* (These are the oranges - breasts)  
*Aya mafatcook* (These are the fat cookies – bottoms)  
*Iri igaba reuchi* (This is the can of honey - the vagina)

Even though our mothers forbade us to do so, we chanted it more and more. We all had no idea about the implications of the poem, except that it was taboo, which made it all the more exciting. As children we loved all the three foods. Oranges were the seasonal 'children's' fruits, that our parents bought from the market or that some people grew in their backyards. Our mothers made cookies for us, occasionally. They were expensive, requiring a lot of oil and commercially made flour, instead of the regular cheaper maize meal. Honey was sweet and an extremely rare treat. These are the same areas that the 'X of your mother' insults target, and more.

With this little poem in mind, I can now rank these curses as ranging from the euphemistic oranges to the euphemistic honey, the coarse to the grossly coarse (the 'oranges', 'cookies' and 'honey' are regarded here, not on their strength as forms for

<sup>100</sup> < Ndebele – *msathanyoko* (mother's vagina)



objectifying but in their childlike euphemistic sense, so that I do not keep mentioning taboo expressions):

coarse	coarser	grossly course
<i>mazamu</i> <i>gumbo</i>	<i>magaro/matako</i>	<i>pambata</i> <i>matinji</i> <i>panyo</i> <i>beche</i>

The coarseness scale is determined by how expressly or 'inexpressly' the X is tied to sex. This would explain why *mazamu* (breasts) and *makumbo* (legs) are on the edge of the 'coarse' mark, the 'oranges' and 'cookies'. Besides, *mazamu* lose their mystery when mentioned in the context of childbearing and breastfeeding. Even young ones in the playgrounds talk about their mother's bosom. School and village bullies would often employ the 'breasts pre-fight challenge' to start a fight (see also Chitauro-Mawema 1995). The bully builds two little mounds of soil or sand representing the breasts of the mothers of the two to-be-fighters. Then she/he asks the would-be-fighters to challenge each other by demolishing and flattening the other's mother's breast. If one's mother's breast is demolished then she/he also has to destroy the other breast, to show that she/he is not a coward. It is also to show that one is prepared to die, fighting for her/his mother. As children, it was explained to us that we were fighting for our mother's milk, the milk that nourished us and gave us life. However, for an adult the act starts to have a deeper meaning. The demolishing and flattening of the mother's breast seems to symbolize *kuputsika* (collapsing – sagging) of the mother's breasts, from being fondled by a lover. The flattening of the symbolic breast in a fight challenge, therefore, points to the defiling of the mother, sexually, by a person not one's father. For how does another person, not one's father, touch one's mother's breasts, unless if she has been promiscuous? Only one's father should have man-like access to one's mother's breasts. One therefore fights to protect her/his mother's honor, because the breast represents an intimate side of one's mother, which is taboo. The *mazizamu amai vako* curse presents a similar challenge as the fight challenge of childhood, arousing the same emotions.

The coarser and grossly coarse curses show an intent to defile the other's mother, at a more crushing magnitude. The power of the curses is derived from the taboo nature of the curse and from the value and emotion placed on these body parts by the society (see also Montagu 1967, Jay 1992). In Shona, these body parts are considered the most sacred, as they are considered at the heart of womanhood, with mention reserved to the most intimate contexts. Even in intimate love poetry, as in Pongweni (1996), such Xs are never mentioned by name, but through euphemisms. A woman's X reflects her intimate self and her value as a woman. One's mother's 'cookies' and 'honey' are too sacred to be mentioned, as they represent the value that society places on her. Therefore, an attack of these is an attack of her womanhood, of her worthiness as a woman. It means reducing her to a receptacle for the penis for man's sexual pursuits. One's mother should be seen as the epitome of virtue and chastity. The obscenities are therefore based on sexual looseness. To a woman who is attacked in this manner, the curses induce sentiments that her 'cookies' and 'honey' are dirty, disgusting and whoring, and also bring a sense of powerlessness.



Female informants mentioned how they are ‘almost always’ made to feel ashamed of their ‘cookies’ on the streets. A well-known figure in literary and academic circles, the Zimbabwean Secretary for Education and Culture, was quoted as having declared that female teachers should not wear trousers unless they wear a long jacket or jersey over the trousers. In other words, the Secretary was not saying that it is not cultural or not proper for a woman to wear a pair of trousers, but that it would be improper dressing if the jacket did not cover the ‘cookies’. He was reported as having defended his position by explaining that, “We are not saying there is anything wrong with a woman’s body but young boys will admire too much and become a problem,” (*Financial Gazette* – internet page, 9/19/02).

From the ensuing argument, it is clear that the Xs metaphorically represent the women’s essence and personhood, thereby vividly crowning what has been evident throughout the thesis, the woman’s sexual role. The Xs define the core of womanhood and motherhood.

### 7.7.1 Verbal aggression

It is clear that these insults constitute a verbal attack, revealing a violent exclamation of anger, which is why I refer to them as curses. This use of taboo terms to express anger is described by some as a substitute for violence (Jay 1985, Goodenough 1931, Montagu 1967). The curses reflect a verbal aggression meant to thoroughly crush and devastate the receiver of the insult. Insults to do with intimate body parts, with sexual material, were said to be the most offensive of them all. Jay (1992), for example, reports insults with a ‘sexual content’ as being among those rated highly offensive in the American context. The more offensive an insult is, the more likely it is going to be taboo. In these curses, the one who insults intends to hurt the other by implying dominance of his mother through implied promiscuity since the sexual act is said to reflect domination of women by men. So, if another man, who is not the father, talks about one’s mother’s X, the question that hangs in the air is, how does he know? The implication is that he, too, might have ‘dominated’ her.

The tendency to insult each other through insulting the other’s mother does not seem to be exclusive to Shona only, as other Bantu languages also show the same trend. Ndebele has *msathanyoko* (fuck your mother) and *msunu kanyoko* (clitoris of your mother). These are referred to as ‘*inhlamba yamaNdebele*’ (the insults of the Ndebele) such that if one says she or he gave me the *inhlamba* Ndebele people know that it is one of the two. Outside Bantu languages, observations of similar verbal abuse have been made by Montagu (1967) among the Aborigines who may insult the other by suggesting they ‘go have sex with your mother’. Jay (1992) refers to ‘verbal dueling’, referred to in ghettos as ‘sounding’ or ‘playing the dozens’ where insults about each other’s mother are thrown back and forth, among African Americans. The American film industry also brings such similar obscenities as ‘motherfucker’ and ‘fuck’. In the film, the *Nutty Professor*, there is an episode where Dr Love (Eddie Murphy) exchanges mamma insults/jokes with a stand-up comedian. I have also watched on TV Norge, an American verbal dueling game show, *Wheel of Dozens*, where African American contestants compete to come up with the biggest mama insult/joke. The ‘fatter’ the insult/joke is, the more points one gets. They do insults like, ‘Your mama is so fat that ...; Your mamma is so skinny that ...’, among many others.

### 7.7.2 Why women?

Several questions can be raised in response to the curses and the comments, questions like:

Why women's Xs and not men's Y's? Why mothers and not fathers? Why do men not insult the other with their own intimate privates? In my experience, it is mostly males who use these forms. Jay (1992: 185), writing about cursing in America also makes the same observations. He writes, 'Both males and females agree that males use obscene speech more than females.' There are also more obscene terms for women than there are for men (Frank and Anshen 1983: 74). On a related topic, Mashiri (2000: 55) writing about street remarks (including insults) says that urban men are the ones who initiate them, as they 'seem to capitalize on anonymity and the absence of institutionalised forms of speech censorship'. Are such insults, therefore, an indication of the deference that the society has towards women, as some claim; or, do they show disrespect, as others argue?

The curses were said to raise much emotion because they attacked 'prized' female sexuality. The reasons why the curses aroused so much emotion were highlighted as:

- a) The mother is the one who gave birth to you, fed you, and cared for you – Chinua Achebe's 'mother is supreme'.
- b) You are where you come from, and we all came from the mother's womb, most through the mother's X. Hence if your mother is attacked in that way, it means that the X is who you are as well since you are your mother's child.
- c) In general, children spend more time with their mothers than with their fathers. Mothers are more involved with the children, nursing them through illnesses. It was said that they sacrificed a lot for their children. They are the children's special people, friends even.

These perceptions of the mother's role vis-à-vis that of the father are also revealed vividly by the following proverbs, as explained in the DGR Part II. The literal or near literal glosses are mine:

*Mai vevana kufa, pwere dzinorezvwa (sic) naani?*

(If) The mother dies, who will play with the young ones?

*Mai kunatsa muroyi, ziso riri pamwana. (Munhu wese anenge abereka anowanazoda kutambudzika iye kuitira kuti vana vake vafare, kana kuti vasapinda mumatambudziko.)*

(Mother to be nice to a witch (while at the same time) watching the child) Anyone who is a parent would rather suffer her/himself so that the children can be happy or so that they do not have problems

*Baba muredzi, mwana kuchema anodaidza mai.*

(Father is a minder, if the baby cries he (the father) calls for the mother)

The wounded reactions to the attacks, where children, young and old, get angry on behalf of their mothers and fight to protect their mother's honor would be the reason why some argue that the insults show deference for women. It is often said that *kutuka*

*mai ingozi* (insulting (your) mother is (asking) for *ngozi* (danger/trouble (believed to have spiritual repercussions on one))), as mothers should be preserved, *vanokosha* (valuable/cherished). So, if one is going to insult your mother, then that should hurt and torment at the core.

The mother's X insult (as opposed, presumably, to the relatively not so strong *baba rombe* (father tramp)) suggests a strong respect, an admiration for and almost sacredness of the 'proper human mother' role (which, presumably, a person's mother is expected to fulfill, and there is a lack of the same expectation from fathers). The data here suggests that a proper mother is honored or respected for her morality and chastity, (but is silent on male morality and chastity) to the extent that chastity is almost synonymous with womanhood.

The other reasons given for why women are referred to in/with such insults are reflected in the woman's role vis-à-vis the men's, and the power structures between women and men. It was suggested to me by some of the informants that the prevalence of the *mai* curses, and the avoidance of *baba*-containing curses, was mainly because the father (or any male) is the most powerful and feared person in the patriarchal society. It would thus seem that power relations determine the roles of the Xs and the Ys, and therefore whose 'oranges', 'cookies', 'honey' and 'things' can be violated for maximum effect. The men 'own' the women (through *roora* and other patriarchal institutions), and would therefore be the wounded parties. Here is what other informants had to say:

- a) Compared to fathers, mothers are seen as softer targets. The father is *mukwidza* (an uphill slope), while the mother is a *mutserendende/materu* (a downhill slope).
- b) Mothers are also easy targets in that, when they do a small thing, it is often blown out of proportion, whereas men's actions are easily tolerated and forgiven.
- c) One other reason given was in the form of the infamous pun *vakadzi vatadzi* (women are sinners).

This latter group of informants, while agreeing that fighting for your mother's virtue may show deference, are more interested in what they see as the disrespect shown to women by picking on their sexuality in fights that women are not involved in. Their query was about how such disrespect could be seen as respect. The curses reflect love and protectiveness for a mother while, at the same time, they disrespect women in general.

## 7.8 Conclusion

The distribution of the insults have been shown as:

- |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Insults/ curses about women | → common (labels)                            |
|                             | → taboo, attacking female sexuality (curses) |
| Insults about men           | → mostly common (labels)                     |

As part of their socialization, females get the labels that are intended to discipline them on domestic matters such as sex, cleanliness and the need to be quiet and humble (especially to husbands). The curses are also sexual, attacking female sexuality. Males get labels intended to discipline them on their conduct, domestically and publicly.

Again, as in the other chapters, the female gender is constructed as a sexual one. That sexual responsibility is a duty for women is reflected in the women-only insults about looseness and messing around, which include respect for other women and their husbands. One way of women's being disrespectful is to violate the 'be sexually responsible' duty. The sexual element also comes out in the curses that disparage female sexuality. Women continue to be expected to fulfill this role in their day-to-day life. Women are expected to fulfill their 'sexually responsible' goal on behalf of mankind.

For men, the tendency to be violent and deceptive violates their '*musoro*' (head(ship)) duty. They are criticized for not being able to provide for the family or for showing no potential. There is also a call for 'respect' for others, in both private (family) and public realms, built into the male insults. One cannot murder or steal from or rape someone, respectfully. Also, men cannot provide and protect well if they behave stupidly, foolishly or if they are totally helpless.

The investigation suggests that, there may be i) special responsibilities for women and men, plus ii) a second intersecting thread for all, reflected in the labels. The respect, by each sex, is shown by behaviors in their typical spaces. The data suggests that the public sphere/private-sphere dichotomy operates with insults, just as it does with address forms (Chap 5). It is a question of different domains, different responsibilities and different insults. Women's responsibilities and roles lie in the private domestic space, i.e., things considered domestic. Men's responsibilities and roles lie in the private and public spheres. As a result, when women fail in their specific roles, the family is damaged? And, when men fail, the damage is done to 'outsiders'. Damage is done to 'outsiders' when it happens outside the family. Men can murder, steal, rape within the family, but that is not as expected as doing these things outside the family. Women's showing disrespect is, therefore, primarily a disrespect which is shown to the family, the home being her sphere, whereas men's ways of showing disrespect are primarily shown outside the family, the outside world being his sphere.

The pattern of the curses, 'woman/mother's X' (not, 'man/father's Y') reflects the asymmetrical power relations between the sexes which allow men to judge and denigrate women and their biology. Although the 'X of your mother' curses have also been said to reflect a profound love for a sacred mother, still, the fact that the question arises about why this love should be shown through disrespect of the woman's intimate self shows women's weak position. Spears (1982, 2000) commenting on the use of 'cunt' in the English, says that it is 'the most elaborately avoided word in the English language'. The Shonas and the Ndebeles say the same about the 'fatcookies' and the 'honey' in insults. How then can such language reflect respect? Mazrui (1991) writing about the complexity of the African female's role, has this to say,

We have learned to: revere her as a mother, honor her as a wife, value her as a sister, love her as a daughter, but it is not clear whether we see her as an equal.'

## Conclusion

### 8.1 Introduction

The aim of the study as set out in the introduction was to study words in context in order to investigate the social construction of gender in Shona, primarily the female gender in both those settings in which Shona traditions are supposedly adhered to, as well as those in which they are supposedly not. Such a study would seek to reveal attitudes towards women vis-à-vis men.

In this concluding chapter, I revisit the investigation for a final evaluation and comments. First, I evaluate the theoretic and methodological issues. The evaluation is then followed by a discussion of claims made in the study leading to a final conclusion that closes the study with suggestions for future research.

### 8.2 Theoretical frameworks and methodology

The outlook on gender and language that I have investigated here has been a qualitative study conducted chiefly within the dominance-difference framework. Even though dominance and difference frameworks have evolved in western cultures, they have also proved useful in the current study. Dominance acknowledges socialization as the most gender constructing process, something that we see being done and done recurrently in the topics covered in the thesis. Difference highlights the two 'subcultures' into which Shona females and males are socialized.

Because of the complexity of the topic, a number of theoretic orientations, besides dominance-difference, have been utilized. These include the markedness theory; the theory of power and solidarity; and the contextual semantic theory within lexical semantics. The features and relations have offered analyses that have enhanced the descriptive study by providing a rough guide to meaning. The features could not adequately be tamed to comply with a neat +/- binary features, and, as a result, I used multi features. Even these could not be neatly presented.

Solidarity and politeness, where dominance/power figures strongly, provided a useful framework to explore address forms. Some of the findings fit well in the Brown and Gilman (1960) framework, except in the case of inverted titles.

The methods of collecting additional data, particularly, the fieldwork, the weekly newspaper, *Kwayedza*, and the literature provided ample data for investigating the relevant questions. Adopting and administering the questionnaire as a structured interview (the questionnaire-cum-interview) and conducting it in groups helped in getting information from people who would have otherwise found it difficult to write or talk on their own. While the 'literate' Harare population fared well on their own in some of the questionnaires, the long questionnaires (Appendix 5-I and 7-I) were unpopular with some of the urban respondents because of their length. The result was too general, too brief and sketchy answers which, in the context of Appendix 7-

I, led to my reliance, at least statistically, on the Mhondoro data. Notwithstanding these minor setbacks, the questionnaires did prove, for the most part, to be a valuable source of data.

The methods of analyses that were employed in the thesis proved effective and illuminating in the data analyses. The methods included corpus and lexicographic analyses, and language-attitude research methods, such as native-speaker introspection, analyses in Lexical Semantics, clusters and stereotype categorization and markedness analyses. The last two proved particularly useful in analyzing the word forms and their meanings for highlighting attitudes towards women and men. In the corpus analyses simple searches of the ALLEX Corpus were done successfully over the Internet. However, advanced searching was limited, as I had to rely on the corpus administrator, who upon my requests would do tasks for me and bring back results. The requests included such tasks as collocations and frequency counts, and the quantification of data. Still, the limitation did not take from the generalizations that I made from the corpus findings.

### 8.3 A summary and discussion

In Chap 4, definitions of female and male terminology have shown gender identity construction where there is a clear demarcation of social roles and responsibilities expected of females and males. The masculine gender is defined as the dominant and leading gender in the traditional roles of providers and protectors (as shown also, for example, in Gray 1992). Masculine hegemony is evident in the language used to describe and define males and male roles. Women who are perceived as doing male roles are 'promoted' to masculine status. The definitions are asymmetrical, with the masculine gender bequeathed with the positive attributes of bravery, strength and brains, while the feminine gender is seen as the negative gender: the weak and cowardly; the (house)wife and mother; and the subservient sexual being (see also Chitauro-Mawema 1995). Female work and female space are dominated by that which men do, resulting in a trivialization, marginalization or blindness to women's work. Because in the Shona language, the sex act is perceived as domination of women by men (Chimhundu 1987), defining women by sex further entrenches male dominance and female subservience. Society promotes male sexuality where it curtails female sexuality. The need to control female sexuality is revealed rather blatantly and overtly, one can be excused for referring to the curtailment as some kind of 'psychological circumcision'.

Asymmetries are also evident in the definitions that present men as the unmarked generic being while the woman is presented as the marked being in the linguistic postulates provided by the proverbs.

Chap 5 investigates forms of address used between non-relations or unacquainted women and men. The descriptions indicate that terms of address used in women-to-women interactions are mostly domestic honorary kin titles. The forms reflect solidarity and asymmetries, respectively, among the women in their expected societal roles in the private home domain. Those used in men-to-men interactions are both domestic honorary and public titles, addressing males as individuals, heads and kinsmen. These forms, again, reflect men's solidarity in their leadership roles. The issue of power and who has it is suppressed or neutralized in the reciprocal forms that men use for each other, as shown in the non kin power terms. Age and seniority are respected often in a brotherly than fatherly way, especially among the younger



men. In cross-sex addresses, the forms employed create distance, to avoid a show of intimacy between the two parties. Sex seems, again, to be an issue in female-to-male or male-to-female interactions, even in address. In women-to-men forms, women use formal titles that depict men's dominant position. In men-to-women forms, men use polite distancing address forms which offer pseudo respect for women. It is 'pseudo' because the respect is not for the woman as an individual but as a married woman. The titles have been described as patronizing, placing women in their assumed wife-hood or motherhood roles in the domestic sphere, no matter how young the women addressees are and how old the male addressers are. These cross-sex titles, therefore, help perpetuate asymmetrical relationships between women and men. Use of domestic titles, between women and men, give men power. Men are the (potential) heads of households and clans. It is this headship role that is understood, shared and spread in solidarity in men-to-men interactions. Masculine kin forms are rarely used in honorary kin addresses, as compared to feminine kin forms. Asymmetrical power in the patriarchal setting leads to non reciprocal address.

Chap 6 highlights the address and reference title *Va-* in traditional and modern discourses. The title, which has traditionally been used for older or married women and men, is now progressively being constructed as a male title. As a title for women, it now remains mainly in traditional institutions such as in praise poetry and also in nicknames. The progressive usurping of this title, with its intrinsic respect and power, due mostly to structures introduced with colonization, has further eroded women's position and power in their own individual right. The emerging naming system, as in for example, *Mai/Mbuya Ndingi* (Mother/Grandmother (Mrs) X), now makes married women appendages of their husbands, thus further creating and entrenching asymmetrical power relations between the sexes. The woman has been placed in a position where she gets her identity from her husband, whereas, traditionally, she, at least, had her own name and shared the powerful *Va-* with the man. The *Mai* title does not seem to carry the intrinsic essence that comes with the authority and respect that the *Va-* commands. Such developments have, in turn, negatively helped influence societal attitudes towards women, their role and the work that they do.

In Chap 7, the data again highlights the special roles and responsibilities of women and men that recur throughout the study. The labels point to young people's socialization into expected gender and joint responsibilities. The female is insulted if she is seen as failing in her domestic responsibilities (private). Outside the home she is expected to be sexually responsible, yet another 'domestic' role. The male insults reflect both private and public domain responsibilities. As heads, men are discouraged from violating their leadership roles by violence, deception and stupidity. The curses highlight mixed meanings. They highlight the significance and respect for a mother's role, the sacred sexual role the women carry and the depersonalisation of women, in general. These curses, seen by many as the worst insults, go to the core by attacking what is thought to be the core of the power and strength of womanhood. A woman is believed to have power and respect through her womanhood. Besides violating the woman, the assault is also an attack on the child (the target of the insult) and the husband in the sense that it insinuates that the mother and wife is a whore, because how else would one know about her 'core'. This means total failure of her responsibility.

It is apparent that these insults and curses continue to follow through with the theme of the woman as the sexual being, as also seen in previous chapters. Past research on Shona language and literature (eg., Gaidzanwa 1985) has also shown the



same, that a 'proper' Shona woman is given the sexual-policing role, the good wife vs. the urban promiscuous woman. For women, sexual misbehavior is, therefore, the one charge that can be relied upon to deeply insult, as morality and chastity are seen more as female than male domains. It would also be safe to conclude, therefore, that there seems to be quite a preoccupation with female sexuality in Shona language use. It is evident that the control of female sexuality begins to be cultivated, with attitudes beginning to be formed even at an early age and through adult life, as shown by the labels used exclusively or predominantly on girls and women. The insults and curses have shown how (bad) language mirrors, and in turn supports and reinforces, roles and the overall disparities in power between the sexes. Orbaugh (1996: 122), making observations from Japanese literature writes, 'Women in a patriarchal social economy constantly experience themselves as objects of the gaze, the speech, the judgments, the violence of men.'

## 8.4 Conclusion

The topics covered in this study have shown the role of language use in creating, maintaining and changing aspects of people's social identities that are specifically linked to gender. The study reveals that language use reflects societal and cultural systems in ways that speakers of a language may not be aware of. It has been useful in illuminating what Glesne and Peshkins (1992: 6) describe as a qualitative conclusion in social research, the 'coming to understand and interpret how the various participants in a social setting construct the world around them.' A thread that runs through all the data and discussion chapters is the portrayal of females in relation to men and to sex; and to domesticity. The woman is defined in terms of her sexuality. Women are perceived and responded to, primarily, in terms of their roles as females, first and foremost, what has been referred to throughout the study as 'house-wifization' (Bennholdt-Thomsen et. al 1988). Sex (marriage) and production of offspring define a woman. Wifhood and motherhood are seen as feminine fulfillment (see also Spender 1985). Motherhood, achieved via wifhood, receives great deference. Other interpretations of motherhood, such as *umvana*, are seen as socially illegitimate.

It is also evident in the chapters that manhood dominates womanhood. The male gender is seen more in terms of it being the leading and dominant gender. Fatherhood is not brought to the fore. The assumption is that men's private family roles are a given. Titles in use in current discourses further entrench male dominance, with the respect title *Va-* now having been constructed into an almost exclusively male title.

man's role → domestic and private as the main human, head, protector and provider

woman's role → domestic as the secondary human, mother, wife and sexual being

Unlike the man, the woman continues to be considered in her traditional role, despite her changing environments. A separation exists for a man between his public roles and his traditional family roles (which may well be assumed and backgrounded). Conversely, a woman's perceived private role(s) follow(s) her everywhere wherever she is addressed even in contexts where she is not known as an individual. Womanhood is socially constructed with reference to manhood, thereby making men the main human

beings while women are depersonalised or socially constructed as secondary and subservient to the generic male, except in sexual matters. Patriarchy and its institutions, and colonial structure with Christianity have promoted masculinity hegemony, giving man (including, sometimes, women who become social males) automatic respect and power, while women are given less. These institutions have produced what Ranger (1993) refers to as 'invented customary laws'. Ranger (1993) writes that, 'what were called customary law, customary land rights, customary political structure, customary marriage and so-on were in fact all invented by colonial codification'. Roberts (2000, 19), rightly points out, 'language development is best understood if we examine historical change' - a claim that is validated in this study. The invented 'customary' models were then manipulated to benefit those who wanted to appeal to 'tradition' or 'culture' to justify their dominance over women. Thus men are able to justify dominance over women, to an extent which women had not been subjected to in a traditional Shona setting. As a result, there is a blindness to, or passivisation of, women's work that leads to its non-recognition. Equal status is denied through what I refer to as denial by trivialization; avoidance through tabooing; and distancing. Findings in English have revealed the same results of male dominance and the trivialization of women's space (e.g. Fishman 1980, 1983; Cameron 1991; Russ 1983; Coates 1998).

The sex element, in one way or the other, so pervasive that it is often apparent, overtly and covertly, subtly and not so subtly, was reflected in all the topics examined in this study. Wifeness is a role believed to be sexually dominated by husbandhood. In the definitions of the main female forms, *musikana* (girl/young woman) is synonymous with virgin (has had no sex); she becomes a woman when she loses her virginity (has had sex). The expected meaning for *mukadzi* (woman) can be summarized as [+adult] [+sexually 'activated' woman] [+married]. The man dominates her by sexually activating her; *mvana* is bad because she is not a proper woman; because she defiles her body (likes/enjoys sex - it is presumed) and *chembere* is half a woman (cannot give much sex). If they indulge (in sex), then they are shamed. The asymmetry lies in the unequal sexual definition of females and males. There is silence and/or tolerance on sexual morality where men are concerned. While *usikana* (girlhood/young womanhood) entails virginity, the same cannot be said of *ukomana* (boyhood/young manhood); and while *mvana* (divorcee/single mother) is female, there is no male equivalent form. The attitude is, 'never mind what men do, women should do what is proper, anyway', something which any young woman or wife is sure to have been counseled to do at some point.

Women are conceived as objects of men's desires thus reinforcing the construction of the female gender as the sexual gender. This observation would explain why a sexual insult targeted at a woman is the worst; and, why men choose to keep women at a distance, boxed in subservient domestic roles. In the insults, there is often an imputation of sexual immorality to referents of the woman's term, with the man's term carrying general implications. In the forms of address, men maintain their distance from 'other men's (potential) wives' and women maintain their distance because they are 'someone's (potential) wife', lest they be accused of being interested. There seems to be an assumption that where a man and a woman are, sex hovers there too, and therefore women should behave responsibly as *amais* (mothers) and *ambuyas* (mothers-in-law), lest they lose their respect and be labeled as *nzenza* (flirts) or *pfambi* (whores). Such ideas seem to underlie a belief that relations between non-related females and males are assumed sexual.

The general findings here reflect, to varying degrees, what I have glimpsed in other Bantu languages, as well as other non-Bantu languages. In the discussions, the study has provided examples from Ndebele, Tonga, Norwegian and English. The woman as sexual domesticated being (the virgin, the non-virgin) and the man as the generic human, the rational head and leader, reflect the same findings as studies carried out, elsewhere, within the English language (see eg., Frank and Anshen 1983; Pauwels 1998, Cheshire 1985, 1982). Women are defined by gender and sex. Men are seen as the main human beings. In Shona, women are objectified as fruits, rivers, etc., in the same manner that the English language portrays women as fruits, honeys, chocolates, flowers, etc., different examples reflecting different cultural backgrounds. In English and Norwegian, the woman is the base in sexual terminology (virgin vs. male virgin, prostitute vs. male prostitute); it has many more sexual terms referring to sexually promiscuous females than to males (see e.g. Stanley 1977; Schulz 1975), in the same manner these sexual matters are made women's responsibility in Shona.

In linguistics, such asymmetries as those highlighted in the study say a lot about the attitudes that a group has towards certain sections of the community (Cameron 1991; Takahashi 1991, Matthews 1997: 217). The study has shown that the way we 'naturally' and unconsciously use language reflects the prejudices of our society in subtle ways (Frank and Anshen 1983). These prejudices only become apparent when our own consciousness is raised through studies such as this one. The attitudes revealed in the study are that a woman's primary role should be the traditional subservient domestic role (home, children, husband and sex) – 'child rearers and homemakers' (Chitau-ro-Mawema 1995), with anything else outside being secondary and unimportant to her role as a Shona woman. The woman who performs over and above this role is rewarded (made man) or ridiculed, depending on whether she comes across as a *jetu* (a loud and uncontrollable one) or not. Women are expected to be the humble carriers of traditional culture and the society's moral conscience – thus maintaining themselves in Jespersen's ([1921] 1964: 248) 'central field' of culture. Men are expected to be the leaders domestically and in the new discourses outside the home. Through studying address and reference forms, as well as labelling and insulting, the study has highlighted what are often referred as the 'weak' and 'stronger' views of the relationship between language and gender, the language as a mirror, and the language as reproductive. The 'weak' (mirror) view says that language use simply reflects gender differences while the 'stronger' (reproductive) view says that language use does not just reflect gender divisions, it creates them (Talbot 1998: 14). The 'masculinization' of *Va-* does, for example, reflects the productive role of language. The asymmetrical (definitions of) reference forms, the asymmetrical address forms and the stereotypic insults and curses reflect and actively create and sustain inequality in gender roles, which, as a result, affects attitudes towards women and men. The study validates the argument that 'language provides us the necessary structures or postulates for perception (Hardman 1978, 1993). The study has exposed the Shona society as a patriarchal one, which promotes masculinity superiority and hegemony, while paying little or no attention to or trivializing subservient femininity. The Shona society, through its language use and institutions, depersonalizes and marginalizes women and women's roles. The study also acknowledges colonialism, with its physical dislocation, urbanisation, commercialization and de-villagisation, as yet another force providing new discourses that, invariably, affect the construction of gender identities as well as the subsequent attitudes towards different genders. Because of the colonial

history of Zimbabwe, Shona women suffer the double tragedy of indigenous patriarchy and colonial paternalism (see also Chitauro-Mawema et. al 1994, Ranger 1993, Chinyowa 1997). Colonialism provided men with access to new forms of power and authority, the result of which was the further erosion of advantages that women had enjoyed traditionally. Consequently, unlike men, women were and still are, for the greater part, as Ranger (1993) puts it, not defined in terms of their changing historical circumstances, but in accordance with an unchanging indigenous set of values as well as an oppressive colonial structure.

#### **8.4.1 Future research**

The current study has established generalizations in several areas, a crucial step in exposing patterns of gender identity construction, its inequities and attitudes towards the genders. As (Bucholtz 1996: 270) writes, generalizations are necessary 'in order to clear a space in which their [women of African descent] diversity can be explored'. In other words, there is need to create general space before we can be specific. It is hoped that future research shall explore the topics more deeply; and also look into the emerging strands of diversity in gender identities construction, going beyond the sexual woman and reproduction/ the dominant man and power frame, exploring fuller (fe)male experiences. Apart from studies of lexical units, research could move to studies in critical discourse analysis, studying interactions in various discourses. It would also be fascinating to see how the general implications of the findings here might compare and contrast with findings in other Bantu languages. Finally, it is hoped that the current study might have an impact on lexicographic work, particularly in the sensitive construction of definitions.



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## Appendices

### Appendix 4-I

#### Dudziro - Definitions

1. ZITA:  
NAME:

MUNHUI:  
SEX:

MAKORE:  
AGE:

DZIDZO:  
EDUCATION:

BASA:  
JOB:

Makaroor(w)a here?:

A. hongu

B. kwete

*Marital Status:*

*A. married*

*B. unmarried*

Kana mati kwete, taurai kuti:

A. makamboroor(w)a here

B. hamuna zvachose

*If your answer is no, state whether:*

*A. you have ever been married before*

*B. never been married*

Kana makaroor(w)a basa remumwe wenyu:

*If married – spouse' job:*

Munogarepi?:

*Place of Residence:*

Heanoi mamwe emazita, anoreva vanhukadzi nevanhurume, nedudziro dzawo. Aongororei mozoenderera mberi muchipindura mibvunzo inotevera.  
*Here are some examples of nouns, that refer to women and men, and their definitions. Study them and then go on to answer the questions below.*

chikadzi 1 *Chikadzi* maitiro evanhukadzi, kana kuti zvimwewo zvinhu zvinoshandiswa nevanhukadzi, sezvakaita midziyo. 2 *Chikadzi* maitiro asina ushingi anotarisirwa kuitwa nevanhukadzi.

*Chikadzi is the way/manner of female humans or other things that they use such as utensils. 2. Chikadzi is the way/manner without bravery expected of female humans.*

chirume 1 *Chirume* maitiro evanhurume. 2 *Chirume* kuita zvinhu wakashinga sezvinotarisirwa vanhurume. 3 *Chirume* munhu anonyenga vasikana chaizvo.

*1 Chirume is the way/manner of male humans. 2 Chirume is to do things bravely as is expected of male humans. 3 Chirume is a person who is always asking girls out.*

gadzi *Gadzi* munhukadzi kana mhuka hadzi ine mutumbu mukuru chose.  
*Gadzi is a female person or an animal with a very big body.*

mimba *Mimba* idumbu remukadzi ari kutarisira kusununguka mwana kana vana. *Mukadzi waFani ane mimba yemwedzi mishanu yaakanzi achasununguka mapatya.*  
*Mimba is a tummy of a woman who is expected to be relieved of (deliver) a baby or babies. Fani's wife had a pregnant of 5 months when she was said would deliver twinces.*

mudzimai *Uyu* munhu wechikadzi anenge aine mhuri yake, kana kuti angove wechikuru kunyangwe asina mhuri. *Kuita mudzimai chinhu chinounza rukudzo chaizvo munyenyu hwemunhukadzi.*

*This is a human female who has her own family, or who is mature even though she might not have family. To be a woman is a thing that brings respect in the life of a woman.*

mukadzi 1 *Mukadzi* munhu anogona kukwanisa kuumba mwana mudumbu make, uye ane mazamu anogona kuyamwisa mwana uyu. 2 *Mukadzi* wemunhu ndiye anenge akaroorwa, ari amai vemba yake yaanochengeta zvese nemhuri.

*1 Mukadzi is a person who may be capable of creating a baby in her uterus, who has breasts that may breastfeed this child. 2 Mukadzi of a person is a married woman who is mother of a household that she looks after along with the family.*

mukomana *Uyu* munhurume wechidiki, anenge akura asi asati ava baba.  
*Mukomana is a young male, grown but not yet a father.*

Murume 1 *Uyu* munhu anogona kuburitsa urume hunoti, kana hukasangana nezai remukadzi, mukadzi oona kuchiumba mwana mudumbu make. *FAN munhurume 1. 2 Murume wemunhukadzi anenge ari munhu wechirume akamuroora.*

*Murume ... is a person who can produce sperm that, when it meets a woman's egg, the woman may then create a baby in her stomach. SYN munhurume 1. 2. Murume of a female human is a male person she is married to.*

musikana Musikana munhukadzi anenge ava pazera riri pakati pehwana neukuru, asati aroorwa.

*Musikana is a female person who is at the age between childhood and adulthood, not yet married.*

nhumbu 1 Nhumbu inhengo yomuviri womunhu inogamuchira nokuzeya chikafu chinenge chadyiwa. FAN dumbu 5. 2 Kana mukadzi achinzi ane nhumbu anenge akatakura mwana waanenge achitarisira kuzozvara.

*Nhumbu is a part of a body of a person that receives and digests food that would have been eaten...2. If a woman is said to have a nhumbu she will be carrying a child whom she will expect to eventually give birth to.*

pamuviri D- z 16. Munhukadzi anonzi ava napamuviri kana ane mwana mudumbu asi asati azvarwa. FAN mimba 9.

*A woman is said to be now with pamuviri when she has a baby in her stomach but not yet delivered.*

rume Rume munhu wechirume ane muviri wakakura.

*Rume is a human male with a big body.*

2. Zvino chiongororai zvakare dudziro dziri pamusoro idzi, muchidzitarisa imwe neimwe. Munooni sei pfungwa nemafungiro zvinobuda mududziro (nemifananidzo yeshandiso) dzinotevera? Dudziro idzi dziri kuburitsa here zvadzinofanira kuratidza?

i) Sarudzai, nekuisa nyora pabhokisi riri pana A, B kana C, mhinduro yamunofunga kuti ndiyo inoenderana nemaonero enyu.

ii) Kana muchinge masarudza A tsanangurai kuti chii chamafarira padudziro iyi.

iii) Zvakare, kana masarudza B kana C mungatsanangurawo here kuti chii chamusina ku(nyatso)farira padudziro iyi?

*Now, look closely at the above definitions, examining them individually.*

*What is your comment on the ideas expressed in the following definitions [and examples].*

i. Tick the box, between A, B or C, which you think is an accurate reflection of your conception of the meaning of the lexical item.

ii. If you choose A please explain why you think that the definition is good.

iii. Again, if you choose either B or C, could you explain also why you think the definition is not good/not good enough.

1. a) musikana Musikana munhukadzi anenge ava pazera riri pakati pehwana neukuru, asati aroorwa.

A Ndizvozvo (good)

B Ndizvowo (not good enough)

C Handizvo (not good)

b) mukomana Uyu munhurume wechidiki, anenge akura asi asati ava baba.

A Ndizvozvo (good)

B Ndizvowo (not good enough)

C Handizvo (not good)

2a.i) mudzimai Uyu munhu wechikadzi anenge aine mhuri yake, kana kuti angove wechikuru kunyangwe asina mhuri. *Kuita mudzimai chinhu chinounza rukudzo chaizvo muupenyu hwemunhukadzi..*

A Ndizvozvo (good) (definition.)

B Ndizvowo (not good enough)

C Handizvo (not good)

A Ndizvozvo (good) (example.)

B Ndizvowo (not good enough)

C. Handizvo (not good)

a.ii) mukadzi 1 *Mukadzi* munhu anogona kukwanisa kuumba mwana mudumbu make, uye ane mazamu anogona kuyamwisa mwana uyu. 2 *Mukadzi* wemunhu ndiye anenge akaroorwa, ari amai vemba yake yaanochengeta zvese nemhuri.

A Ndizvozvo (good) (Dudziro 1.)

B Ndizvowo (not good enough)

C Handizvo (not good)

A Ndizvozvo (good) (Dudziro 2.)

B Ndizvowo (not good enough)

C Handizvo (not good)

2 b) murume 1 Uyu munhu anogona kuburitsa urume hunoti, kana hukasangana nezai remukadzi, mukadzi ogona kuchiumba mwana mudumbu make. FAN munhu-rume 1. 2 *Murume* wemunhukadzi anenge ari munhu wechirume akamuroora.

A Ndizvozvo (good) (Dudziro 1.)

B Ndizvowo (not good enough)

C Handizvo (not good)

A Ndizvozvo (good) (Dudziro 2.)

B Ndizvowo (not good enough)

C Handizvo (not good)

3 a) gadzi *Gadzi* munhukadzi kana mhuka hadzi ine mutumbu mukuru chose.

A Ndizvozvo (good)

B Ndizvowo (not good enough)

C Handizvo (not good)

b) rume *Rume* munhu wechirume ane muviri wakakura.

A Ndizvozvo (good)

B Ndizvowo (not good enough)

C Handizvo (not good)

4 a) chikadzi 1 *Chikadzi* maitiro evanhukadzi, kana kuti zvimwewo zvinhu zvinoshandiswa nevanhukadzi, sezvakaita midziyo. 2 *Chikadzi* maitiro asina ushingi anotaririrwa kuitwa nevanhukadzi.

A Ndizvozvo (good) (Dudziro 1)



B Ndizvowo (*not good enough*)

C Handizvo (*not good*)

A Ndizvozvo (*good*) (Dudziro 2.)

B Ndizvowo (*not good enough*)

C Handizvo (*not good*)

b) chirume 1 *Chirume* maitiro evanhurume. 2 *Chirume* kuita zvinhu wakashinga sezvinotarisirwa vanhurume. 3 *Chirume* munhu anonyenga vasikana chaizvo.

A Ndizvozvo (*good*) (Dudziro 1.)

B Ndizvowo (*not good enough*)

C Handizvo (*not good*)

A Ndizvozvo (*good*) (Dudziro 2.)

B Ndizvowo (*not good enough*)

C Handizvo (*not good*)

A Ndizvozvo (*good*) (Dudziro 3.)

B Ndizvowo (*not good enough*)

C Handizvo (*not good*)

5 a) mimba *Mimba* idumbu remukadzi ari kutarisira kusununguka mwana kana vana. *Mukadzi waFani ane mimba yemwedzi mishanu yaakanzi achasununguka mapatya.*

A Ndizvozvo (*good*)

B Ndizvowo (*not good enough*)

C Handizvo (*not good*)

b) nhumbu 1 *Nhumbu* inhengo yomuviri womunhu inogamuchira nokuzeya chikafu chinenge chadyiwa. FAN dumbu 5. 2 Kana mukadzi achinzi ane *nhumbu* anenge akatakura mwana waanenge achitarisa kuzozvara.

A Ndizvozvo (*good*) (Dudziro 1.)

B Ndizvowo (*not good enough*)

C Handizvo (*not good*)

A Ndizvozvo (*good*) (Dudziro 2.)

B Ndizvowo (*not good enough*)

C Handizvo (*not good*)

c) pamuviri Munhukadzi anonzi ava *napamuviri* kana ane mwana mudumbu asi asati azvarwa. FAN mimba 9.

A Ndizvozvo (*good*)

B Ndizvowo (*not good enough*)

C. Handizvo (*not good*)

## Appendix 4-II

### Simple Concordances of Main Female and Male Nouns

[Unlike in the main body of the thesis, the corpus examples in this and the other appendices have been normalised to meet standard Shona orthography (word-division, punctuation, etc). The exact contexts can still be gotten in the ALLEX corpus by searching with the relevant nodes]

#### Musikana

*vachiri vasikana here? Vakaona usisiri musikana, votokubvunza kuti ndiani akakudai?*  
are they still virgins? If they see you are not virgins, they then ask who did this to you?

*Paakabvisa rusambo musikana akanzi chiswedera ubvise zvaunoda.*

When he paid *rusambo* (part of bride *roora*), the girl was told to move closer to remove (take) what she wanted.

*Doro rinobikwa novanhu vachembere, ndivo vobika nomusikana asati ageza.*

The beer is brewed by elderly people, they are the ones who do together with a girl who has not yet menstruated.

*Muchato usati waitwa kekutanga shamwari dzemusikana uyu dzinomuitira Kitchen Party.*

The wedding before it happens at first the friends of this girl/woman will hold a kitchen party.

*Mukomana wobvisa hembe vatete vopa uya musikana, musikana wobvisa nduma pamwe yedhirezi.*

The man gives clothing/a shirt and the aunt gives to the young woman, the young woman gives love token, maybe a dress.

*Hii kwazvarwa musikana.*

Yes, a (baby) girl has been born.

*Kana paimba pano musikana anoshanda, mai vanogona kuti*

If at a home there is a girl who works, the mother (female boss) can say

*kana kuti aonekwa kuti ange ari musikana chaiye chaiye chii chaitika?*

If she is seen to have be a real girl/woman (virgin) what would happen?

#### Mukomana

*Mushure mekumborambaramba kuti handina mukomana, ndipo pavazotaura voti,*

After having refused that 'I do not have a boyfriend', (she) then said

*e-mukomana wotsvaka gwevedzi rake woti ndinodawo*

so the boy/young man would look for his go-between (courtship) and then says he wants

*Aiwa mune mudumbu menyu mune mwana mukomana*

No, in your stomach there is a baby boy.

*Mushure mekumborambaramba kuti handina mukomana , ndipo pavazotaura voti ,*

After having denied all along that she had a boyfriend, she then (finally) said,

*mukomana anodzidzisa kuWedza anonzi Cephaz Mbeu*

the young man who teaches in Wedza is called Cephaz Mbeu

*mukomana uyu kuri kuchemera mukadzi wake kuti*

this young man crying to/for his wife that

*achikunyenga ukamutaurira kuti ndine mukomana wangu anokuudza kuti chii handisi*

courting you and you told him that, "I have a boyfriend" and he tell you that

*mukomana wethirteen years*

a boy of thirteen years of age

*Asi wakanga akadane nemukomana wekufudze mombe?*

Was she in love with the boy/young man who herds cattle

*takabirwa mombe nemukomana wekwadriver uya*

our cattle were stolen by that boy at the driver's (the driver's son, or the boy who works for the driver)

*nomukomana mumwe chete gotwe*

with one boy/son, the last one in the family

### Mukadzi

*Murume ndiye anotanga kuenda kumukadzi kuroora.*

The man is the one who starts to go to the woman's to marry.

*Handina basa nazvo . Value uone kukosha kwamukadzi wacho. Usaone kukosha kwe-mari. Ndozvendioona zvakakosha panyaya yekuroora ipapo.*

I do not care. The value is in the worthiness of the wife. You should not see (think about) the cost of the money. That is what I see as important on the issue of marriage.

*Zvinhu (zvakaiva) zvakakwezverwa nemudzimu yokumusha kwemukadzi here kana kuti ndoyo kwangu?*

Were the things pulled by the spirits from my wife's home or from mine?

*Masibanda anenge ari mukadzi , murume anenge achinzi Mhazi .*

Masibanda will be a woman/female, a man/male will be called Mhazi

*Hatisati tazwe chidhoma chemukadzi.*

We have not heard of a female/woman familiar.

*zvazonzi naana nhingi handiroore **kamukadzi** kakadai so.*  
it was said by certain people that I don't marry such a small woman.

*Zvino kuzobva ipapo kuti achidzokera **kumukadzi** hapasisina chichaitika.*  
Then when he leaves there going to the wife nothing happens.

*...kana tichiti **ngozi yemukadzi** ingandanzara ...*  
... when/if we say the avenging spirit of a married woman brings poverty/hunger

*ndakambokuyambira kuti **vakadzi** vevanhu **ingozi**.*  
I warned you before that other people's wives are a danger – you dare not approach.

*sezvo **mukadzi** , ainzi mutorwa , aizomuka **ngozi** . Ngozi yaipfukira hama dzose,*  
as the wife was said to be one not a kin (not share a totem – an outsider), she would rise  
as an avenging spirit that would haunt and turn against all relatives (the husband's)

### Murume

*Wedding Gown renyu imini nesuit **yemurume** wenyu*  
wedding gown of yours and a suit for your man/husband

*Mwari ndiye anoziva. Asiwo **ini murume** handichadi. Zvikoni zvikoni . Ndakamboedza .*  
God knows. But, me, the husband I no longer love/need/want. What has failed, has failed. I tried.

*paanondofamba nemvura hama **dzemurume** dzichigeza panoda chinu .*  
when she moves around with water with the husband's relatives washing there is needed a gourd (for oil).

*Ndiri **murume** ane makore 40. Ndakawana mukadzi*  
I am a man with 40 years. I found a woman/wife.

*Zvikanzi, maonaka, sekuru, ndiri **murume** ini .*  
And it was said, you see, grandfather, I am a (real) man me.

*Ndiri kuda kutsvagira **murume** ini ndega . Kwete kuti aroorwe nemurume ..*  
I want to look for a man/husband (for her) myself. Not for her to be married by a man ..

*Munyai vanotsvaga munhu ane ukama nehama **dzamarume** kuitiria kuti mashoko arege kunyanyonetsa.*

(For) The go-between in marriage, they look for a person with relationship with relatives of the husband so that talking is not very difficult.

### Chikadzi

*Kana musikana ava kuenda kune zvetsika **dzechikadzi**, pamwedzi woga woga, vakuru vanotarisisira*

When/If a girl/young woman is now into females things/rituals for females, every month, elders expect

*chirwere chezvirona chiye ichi , chesiki yechikadzi chairapwa..*  
the disease of wounds, the STD of women was treated..

*ane shamwari dzechirume kana neshamwari dzechikadzi dzaimbouyawo kuzodongorera*  
has male friends or female friends that used to come in and check on him.

*Dzaiva mbiri uye dziri dzechikadzi*  
They were two and they were of female

*nepfambi dzingave dzechirume kana dzechikadzi; kuwanza vokurara navo usingashandise makondomu*  
and/with/by prostitutes whether of male or of female; having too many of sleeping with without using condoms

*vamboseka zvavo vachitaurirana nyaya dzechikadzi dzakaita sezvirukwa, mapatani namadhoiri*  
they laughed discussing matters of the females such as knitting things, patterns and doilies.

*vanorara neshamwari dzechirume kana dzechikadzi dzakasiyana-siyana mwana aripo,*  
they sleep with various friends that are male or that are female when the child is present.

*kuridza mbira kunokukanganisa mabasa ako echikadzi*  
playing mbira (musical instrument) disturbs your female jobs.

*Ganda renzou rinoshandiswawo mabhegi echikadzi neechirume aya anonzi bhirifikesi*  
The skin of elephants is used (for making) bags of females and males those called briefcases

*vakomana veyunifomu navamwe matikitivha echikadzi vaende nesu pamwe .*  
boys of (in) uniform and other female detectives come with us together

*Kazhinji varoyi ndevechikadzi vakafirwa nevarume uye vakanyanyoshata*  
Usually witches are females who are bereaved of husbands and who are very ugly

*Dhirezi rechikadzi , mujiza waitaima nohunirinyiti*  
A feminine dress, a long shiny and glittering garment

*Wava kuti ibasa rechikadzi . “ Iro risiri here ?”*  
You now say its female work. “Isn’t it?”

*nezwi rechikadzi .*  
with a feminine voice

*Vhudzi rechikadzi ... Murume unofanirwa kuva nevhudzi refu*  
Feminine hair ... A man must have long hair

*Vanhu vechikadzi hameno kuti vakaita sei, chokwadi .*

People of female (females) do not know what they are, surely (do not know what is wrong with them).

*kunyanya vechikadzi kuti vanhu vanopinda muchihure*

especially females that they are people who enter prostitution

*Zvino vechikadzi vanongoringa padivi vachinyara-nyara zvedzwe ataurwe naye*

Now the females they just dart their eyes shy when being spoken to

*Zvino sehana yechikadzi mukuzaririrwa imomo maizomupa kubvotomoka*

Now as is the case with the female heart (fearful, apprehensive, weak) being closed in might lead her to talk without thinking

### Chirume

*pakurairwa kwemukomana kuti azoita tsika dzechirume. Mati anonyatsokumuvudza chaiko*

on the boy/young man being advised on male ways/manners. Mati will tell him really well.

*Vaitaura nyaya dzechirume , dzokuvhima makare kare nokungwara kwedu*

They were talking stories of males, about hunting and their cleverness

*kumutaridza kuti akanga asina shamwari dzechirume.*

to show him/her that he/she did not have male friends

*kusangana nepfambi dzingave dzechirume kana dzechikadzi; kuwanza vokurara navo*

to have sex with prostitutes, be they male or female; to have many to sleep with (partners)

*naamai kana baba vanorara neshamwari dzechirume kana dzechikadzi dzakasiyana-siyana*

with mother or father who sleeps with various male or female friends

*ndokupfeka mabhurugwa neshangu dzechirume uye hembe .*

then wore trousers and shoes of males and shirt/dress

*kwaive nematunhu aive nemasvikiro echirume*

there were areas with male spirit mediums

*Unei namazita echirume? Iti vhuruvata somukadzi.*

What do you have to do with names of males. Be steady, in character, like a woman

*Vaive vaine mafriends avo echirume vari seven vaine motikari.*

They were with their friends, seven of them with a car.

*nobuye huso hwechirume hwainge hwakashongedzwa nemeso manaku*

with that male face that was decorated with beautiful eyes.

*kanyararisa richinzwa kutaura nokutonga **kwechirume** .*  
being very quiet listening to talking and ruling of men

*Mugodhi uyu wakacherwa, unocherwa **nevechirume**. Ndivo vanokwanisa kuchera .*  
The drinking hole was dug, it is dug by males. They are the ones who can dig (the hole)

*kungozivawo matongerwo anoitwa mhosva **pachirume**, kwete zvokunovhiiswa mbudzi pa-dare*  
to know the way offences are heard and ruled on the male way, not the skinning of goats at the courts (men who do not behave like 'real' males are made to skin goats and roast meat for the court).

*Havafungi **pachirume**.*  
They do not think as males (like males should).

*hama yangu , zvinhu zvinoitwa **pachirume** izvi .*  
my relative (friend), these things are done as males (the male way)

*Vanhu vaienda padare vanhu **vachirume**. Apa ndipo pavaiudzwa mitemo yose .*  
The people who went to (traditional) court were male people. This is where they were told all the laws/rules.

*Vanhu **vechirume** hatifanirwi kuitirana zvakadaro.*  
We male people should not do that to each other.

*Moitawo chimbi chimbi **zvechirume** .*  
Please do fast like men (men are fast workers as compared to women who are slow)

*Mwoyo wangu wakanditi chitoita **zvechirume** pano. Enda kugomo reChidzura.*  
My heart told me to do things the male way now (the strong and fearless way). Go to the mountain of Chidzura.

*VaRwizi vakazoita **zvechirume** vakasimuka namakumi maviri amadhora.*  
Mr Rwizi did things the male way (the wise way) and stood up with twenty dollars.

*Zvangu zvandinoita kunze uko **zvechirume** zvinei nekuroorana kwedu izvozvo?*  
What I do outside of males (is not your business) what does it have to do with our being married?

### Chembere

*Musi wokuvambiwa kwedoro todanazve vaduku vava vanochera mvura vava vachipa mvura kumadzimai aya **chembere** dzaguma dziya , chembere dziya dzinobika doro dziya.*  
On the day when they start to brew the beer the young ones will fetch water for the women, while *chembere*, those who have stopped (menstruation) brew the beer.



*zvayo yapera ura ikadaro ndiyo ingabva yakutora mwoyo ukadaro here ? "Shamwari mwana uya haisiri chembere. Pamwe kuda pane wauri kureva hako iwe Gibson. Handibvume kuti Angeline angave mvana."*

such (an old old woman) whose intestines are finished to have taken your heart like so? "Friend this baby is not *chembere*. May be you are referring to someone else. I don't accept that Angeline is a *mvana*."

*'Mai Ndaizevei vakabva vangoitsenura mhururu. Chembere yakati simu ichibva yatanga kuimba*

Mother of Ndaizevei then broke into ululating. The old woman immediately rose and broke into song.

*Haachadi afirwa nemurume. Haachadi kugarwa nhaka. Dzangova chembere chirikadzi dzoga dzoga .*

She refuses the one whose husband is deceased. She refuses to be inherited (be made a wife by brother or relative ). We now have old women (and) widows only (all over).

*Musi wokuvambiwa kwedoru todanazve vaduku vava vanochera mvura vava vachipa mvura kumadzimai aya chembere dzaguma dziya , chembere dziya dzinobika doro dziya .*

On the day of commencing to brew the beer, we call the young ones to fetch the water to give to the mature women, old women who have stopped (menstruation), the old women who brew the beer.

*Ndakanga ndoti , 'Amai , Amai ! 'Kune chembere dzaivapowo.*

I was now saying, 'Mother! Mother!' to the women who were also there.

*kungoti mwana kana oroowa, anoroowa iri mvana. Asi kare kare, vaiinda nevana kurwizi kuchiinda chembere dzichinoona anenge ari mwana kwaye .*

It is only these days that a child when she is getting married, she is married when she is not a virgin. But, long ago, they went to the river with the children, the old women seeing who would be a good girl (inspecting the girls to see whether they were still virgins)

*'Ndofireikowo !' chembere yakabva yachema sakandumure.*

'Why am I dying!', the old woman then mourned like a baby.

*Iyo food for work. Anotipa mahara isu chembere , vana vadiki ndivo vanoshanda.*

The food-for-work (program). He/she gives us old women for free, the young ones are the ones who work.

*Chembere dzanga dziri shanu. Chembere idzi dzairoya.*

The old women were five. These old women were witches.

*Kunosvikwa nevanhu vasisabereke chembere idzi. Ndivo vanosvika ipapo.*

It is visited by people who can no longer have children, the old women. They are the ones who get there

*“Nyika haigume nekufirwa shamwari, kana kupinza **chembere** iyi mumba mako isu tinovitsigira .”*

The world does not end with your being deceased/bereaved, friend. If you get this old maid into your house (marry) we will support you.

*Tsinhirai pfungwa yokuti **chembere** neharahwa dzatigere nadzo dzinogona kutipa ruzivo ruzhinji rwatisingagoni kuwana mumabhuku .*

Support the thinking that the old women and the old men that we live with can give us a lot of knowledge that we cannot find in books.

Basa redoro iri, kubva pachiri pakunyika mumera kusvikira pakubikwa kwaro, rinosh-andiwa

***nechembere** dzisati dzichagara navarume; dzisati dzichaenda kumwedzi.*

The work for the beer, from sprouting the millet to the brewing of the beer is done by old women who no longer live with (sleep with) men; those who do not menstruate any more.

#### Harahwa

*Kwakanga kwabva izwi gobvu, vakaona ino **harahwa** hohonwa yaive namatama awira mukatikati*

where the deep voice came from, they saw this old old man with sagging cheeks

*Ndingori namakore 13 uku ndinofanira kusiya chikoro kutindinoroorwa **nezibarahwa** riya rinavakadzi vaviri nechakare.*

I am only 13 now I have to leave school to go and get married to an ugly old man with two wives already.

*Kuzvibata uye nyara dzaiva naYuna, zvaigona kunyevenutsa mapundu **eharahwa** .*

The composure and quiet disposition that Yuna had, were capable of making less sore an old men's rash.

*Kana chiri chifumi chezuva rebira, **harahwa** dzakafumorova nhetserwa dzichisvaya dova mumidzimu.*

Early on the day of the ritual feast, old men went at the break of dawn to offer to the ancestors.

*Nzwisisa mwanangu, muchinyakare chedu taiti **harahwa** dzinochembera nourozvi hwadzo . Asi pakusarudza musikana wokuwana dzinorunzwisiso kudarika majaya .*

Listen, my child, in the old days we would say old men grew old together with their brains. But, when it comes to choosing a girl to marry they understand (do) better than young men.

*Dziya **harahwa** dzokuramba kuchembera, vanaGoremucheche dzainge dzirimo. Idzo tai dzakanga dzakatinyn'ai nyn'ai .*

Those old men who refuse to grow old, the every-year-we-are-young (ever young) were there. They were sporting ties.

Ndiroorwe *neharabwa* yakadai here ? Hamuoni kuti yachena musoro here ? “ Asi unopenga , hauzivi here kuti *harabwa* ndidzo dzinochengeta munhu ? Asi unoti ini navasekuru vako tiri vezera rimwe chetesu?”

“Me be married by such an old men? Can't you see that his head (hair) is all white? “Are you mad? Don't you know that old men are the ones who take care of people good? Do you think that I and your uncle are of the same age?”

“Chinyakare chedu chaita asi mazuva ano kumuti vatete vafa chienda unogara nasekuru vava vava munhu *harabwa* vava kuti aite murume wake anokutaurira kuti murume aiva watete.”

Our old way did (worked well) but these days to tell her your aunt (father's sister) has died go and live with the old man who is now an aged man to be your husband, she will tell you that he was aunt's husband (therefore not mine).

Kuti isu *harabwa* tingadiwewo ipapa ? Ndingataurewo naye akandidavirawo iyeyu ? Izvi ndezvekukarodirwa mweya nepwere.

Could it be that us old men can be loved here (do I stand a chance with her, as old as I am)? Could I possibly talk to her and have her respond to me? This is asking to be poured bad air by a child (this is asking for disparagement).

ndokubva atangisazve kuombera zvaisiririsa kunge *harabwa* yaingunopira midzimu . then he started clapping his hands in a heartrending way, like an old man offering to the ancestors.

Kana zviru zvachibvumirano ikaka ini ndingatovifanandiza nomuchato *weharabwa* inorota ichiparika kwava kubva yongotora zvimhandara zvayo zviri zvitatu .

If you are talking about this minor (silly) agreement, I might equate it with the wedding of an old man who dreams of contracting a polygamous union, taking three young virgins.

## Appendix 4-III Collocate Concordances

“\*ni” “murume”

”*Ndini murume* wake. Tanga tichigara tese ,  
I am her husband. We have been living together;’

Kurevaka kuti atowana zvake zvimwe zvinomufadza kudarika ini? Zvaangawane zvin-gamufadze kupinda *ini murume* wake zviri zvei zvacho, kunze kwokuti akanga awana mumwe murume ? Ya-a , ndizvozvo chete.

Meaning that she has found things that make her happy more than I (do)? What could she (possibly) find to make her happy more than I, her husband, unless she has found another man? Ye-h that must be it.

Vakuonei? Havazivi here kuti uri mukadzi wemunhu, he-e? Ko mburi yako vanoti inosara nani? *ini murume* wako, ndinobikirwa nani ? “

what do they see (why you?)? Do they not know that you are the wife of a person? Who do they think will stay (look after) with your family? I, your husband, who will cook for me?

“\*ni” “mukadzi”

*Nhaiwe Hilda ? Kunditsotsa pano ini mukadzi mukuru pamusana pemunhu akasunga baba vako?*

Really Hilda? Conning me, an older woman (real woman vs. young and naïve) because of the person who arrested your father?

*Zvino ndakaona kuti handisi ini mukadzi waaifungidzira paakandinyenga .*

Now I saw that I was not the woman that he thought I was when he courted me.

*Kurara kudoro ini mukadzi wako ndiripo ?*

Sleeping at the beer place with me, your wife, here (for you)?

*Musandivanza ini mukadzi wenyu. Nhambetambe yamunoita nepwere iyi baba vomwana, muchazondibata ruoko rimwe zuva.*

Do not hide things from me, your wife. This playing around that you do with children (girls/young women), father of (my) child, you will regret one day.

*Iyeni mukadzi wamambo ?*

Me, the wife of a King?

“\*uri” “mukadzi”

*Kana usiri mukadzi wagomirira kure sei ? Inga uri kutiza wani ? Kana uchifunga kuti uri murume, uya pano.*

If you are not a woman why are you standing/waiting there? Isn't it you are running away? If you think that you are a man, come here.

*Tawanda uri mukadzi, wandifuta, kuita zvokundijumba .*

Tawanda, you are a woman (fight like a woman), you took me by surprise, to take me by surprise.

*Ita zvaunoita kumba kwako tizive kuti kumba kwako uri mukadzi anotsvaira.*

Do what you do in your home so that we know that in your home you are a woman who cleans.

*Hazvanzi ... Kana uri mukadzi wakanaka, wakachena , mutsvene pamberi paMwari,*

Sister ... If you are a good woman, clean, pure in front of God,

*Iwe uri mukadzi wakanakazve. Unonyengwa nevamwe varume saka ini ndauya kuzonyenga.*

You are a beautiful woman. You are courted by other men so I have come to court you.

*“ Ndikati , “ Chinhu chokutanga , sezvo uri mukadzi wakaroowa nomurume,*

And I said, "The first thing, since you are a woman who is married by a man,

*Iwe haunditonge pane izvozvo uri mukadzi wandiri kuda kutoroora. Handifunge kuti une kodzero yokunditaurira izvozvo sendisingazive zvandiri.*

You, you do not rule me on those things, you are a woman that I want to marry. I do not think you have a right to tell me those things like I do not know what I am (myself).

*Saka ngozi iyi inototi uri mukadzi wayo .*  
So the avenging spirit says you are its wife?

“\*uri”“murume”

*Mangate uri murume. Ndauya kuokupa hanzvadzi yangu Njapa, Kuti agowa mukadzi wako .*

Mangate, you are a (real) man. I have come to give you my sister Njapa, so she can be your wife.

*“ Ndibate mwanangu , uri murume , uri murume . “*  
Take (shake) my hand, my child, you are a (real) man, a (real) man.

*Iwe kana uchiona chakaipa taura kuti chakaipa zvisinei kuti iwe uri murume*  
You if you see anything bad say that it is bad regardless that you are a man

*Kuramba umbwende huda umhare; kunzi mhare hunge wakotamisa mhandu pasi; kana wadaro unganzi uri murume.*

To refuse cowardice is to want bravery; to be called a hero/brave man is because you would have bent (killed) the enemy; when you do that you will be called a man.

*Saka iwe ndiwe wandada kuita naye iri basa nemhaka yokuti ndakuona uri murume akatsiga, murume asingatyane chivindi.*

So you are the one I have wanted (selected) to do this job with because I have seen that you are a man who is steady, a man who is not afraid, who is courageous.

*Wakaratidza kuti uri murume chaiye. Dai usiriwe,*  
You showed that you were a real man. Were it not for you,

*Irwawo, uri murume iwe! Dzorera mwanangu! Ndigoregawo kuti hwangu ura inhuru-ramarema!*

(Go ahead) fight, you are a man you! Fight back, my child! So that I will not say that my intestines (tubes/uterus) let out fools.

*Anotoenda kunokumban'arira asi uri murume wake .*  
She (dares to) go(es) to report you, yet you are her husband.

“\*mukadzi”“wemunhu”

*kumuudza kuti aizomumban'arira kwashe kana akaramba achimutaurira zvisina maturo iye achiziva kuti mukadzi wemunhu.*

to tell him that she would report him to to Chief if he continued to talk nonsense to her knowing that she was someone's wife.

*zvanzi ndinokuda kunyange uri mukadzi wemunhu.*  
(he) says he likes you eventhough you are someone's wife.

*Ho nhai? Zvino kubvira ikozvino chizviziva kuti iwe Hilda uri mukadzi wemunhu.*  
Is that so? Now, beginning now, know that you, Hilda, are someone's wife.

*Chokwadi chinoti Hilda ave mukadzi wemunhu .*  
The truth is that Hilda is now the wife of a person.

depending *nokuti waenda kubhawa ripi e - e kune mamwe mabhawa okuti haunga expecte kuwana kana kana mukadzi wemunhu ari decent ari ikoko.*  
depending on which bar you go to uh-uh there are some bars that you don't expect to find the wife of a person who is decent there.

*Munongomhoresa chete so haikona kubata mukadzi wemunhu havaite.*  
You just greet (like this/verbally) only not hold (hands of) the wife of a person

*"Kubangoti ndiri mukadzi wemunhu kunge wakabvisirwa pfuma, basa rokuchaya mapoto*  
You call yourself the wife of a person, as if roora has been paid for you, when all you do is cook for him.

*“\*murume” “wemunhu”*  
2 hits only – both in the mainbody of the thesis.

*“\*murume” “chaiye”*  
*“Chokwadi iwe ndiwe murume chaiye. Ndinofara nokuti wakaita izvi usati watanga kundidza nokuti dzimwe nguva ndaizoramba kuwirirana newe.*  
Honestly you are a real man. I am happy that you did this before you started to tell me because perhaps I would have refused to agree with you.

*Kana aizovawo nomukadzi, ndizvo zvaizoita kuti ave murume chaiye akakwana.*  
If he would get a wife then that is what would make him a real full man.

*a nadhiraivha wangu Chikandachegudo. Uya ndiye murume chaiye anoziva kubata vakadzi nenzira kwayo.*  
a with my (boyfriend) driver, Chikandachegudo. That there is a real man who knows how to treat women the right way.

*“Maita zvakanaka chose baba vaEnjula. Mafunga somurume chaiye. Iye zvino zvoda kunaka .*  
You have done well, father of Enjula. You have thought like a real man. Now things are about to be ok.

*akamutanga zvisvishoma nezvisvishoma achimuudza kuti munhu womurume chaiye anoonekwa pazviedzo. Akatizve vanhu vavarume vanoshingisana vachiti, "Usaite semukadzi . "* S/he started with her slowly, slowly, telling her that a real human male is seen by trials and tribulations (that he grows through). S/he also said human males strengthen each other saying, "Don't be like a woman".

*"\* mukadzi" "chaiye"*

*mugoti netsambakodzi ? Kongoti isu vanaMakandionei takaita ropa rakaipa. Dai Svinurai ainge aroora mukadzi chaiye , ungadai mukadziyo asati agere pano pamusha achindishan-dira ?*

*cooking stick and the sadza cooking pot? Just that us (me) Makandionei have bad blood (bad luck). Had Svinurai married a real woman, would the wife not be sitting (living) here at home working for me?*

*Ndinoda kutsiva rufu rwehama dzangu dzakapondwa. Ndikasadaro zvingareve kuti ndiri mukadzi chaiye . "*

*I want to revenge the death of my relatives who were murdered. If I do not do that then it might mean that I am a woman (coward).*

*Ndakazvara mwana musikana kutanga. Zvino iye akati aida mukomana kuti aone kuti ndaiva mukadzi chaiye. Asi ndakazvarazve mumwe musikana.*

*I gave birth to a baby girl the first time. Then he said he wanted a boy to see that I was a full woman. But, I gave birth to another girl.*

*Dai tanga tisingamudi, taiti ngaaende zvake. Zvino hatingadi kudaro . Vida mukadzi chaiye .*

*If we did not love her, we would say let her go. Now we do not want to do that. Vida is a proper woman.*

*"Chiombo, chisara zvako zvakanaka. Asi uri mukadzi chaiye. Noukadzi hwako ndarasa simba rangu , upenyu zvole noupfumi hwangu . Makandifuta.*

*"Chiombo, stay well. But, you are a woman (coward). Because of your femininity I have lost my power/authority, life and wealth. You (all) ambushed me.*

*Normally mukadzi chaiye chaiye anofanirwa kuve 32,36 ,28 .*

*Normally, a real (marriageable?) woman be must be 32, 36 or 28.*

*Tinoona nyange ukatarira kare zviya izvi unoona kuti munhu awane mukadzi chaiye ndokunge achigona zvinhu zvakaitsa kupfura shiri kana kuvhima.*

*We see, when we look back, that for a person to find a proper woman/wife would be when she is able to do things like hunting birds (and animals).*

*Nemiwo munofunga kuti munhu womukadzi chaiye wezera raRindai riya, norunako rwese rwuya, ndokungogara zvake pamusha ega ega asina hanya.*

*Do you really think that a real female human of Rindai's age, with all that beauty, would just stay at home alone without having a wish (for a man?).Appendix 5-I*



## Mazita Ekudanwa Nawo - Address Forms

1. ZITA:

NAME:

MUNHUI:

SEX:

MAKORE:

AGE:

DZIDZO:

EDUCATION:

BASA:

JOB:

Makaroor(w)a here:

A: hongu

B: kwete

Marital Status:

A. married

B. unmarried

Kana mati kwete taurai kuti A. makambororwa here

B. hamuna zvachose

*If your answer is no say: A. have you ever been married before*

*B. never been married*

Kana makaroor(w) basa remumwe wenyu:

*If married – spouse's job:*

Munogarepi?:

*Place of Residence:*

2. Vanhukadzi vanowanzotaudzwa kana kusheedzwa nevanhu vavanosangana navo kana vavanoziva, asi vasiri veukama, nemamwe emazita anotevera:

*Women are often addressed or referred to by acquaintances and strangers using some or all of the following titles:*

2a. Sarudzaiwo amunoshandisa; zvino motsanangura nepamunokwanisa kuti kana muchishandisa zita rega rega ramadoma munenge muchirevei? Chii chinokubatsirai kusarudza kuti apa ndinoshandisa iri kana roro?

*Please identify and explain as far as you can that if you use any of the forms that you choose what do you mean? What is it that helps you to say here I use this or that?*

sisi

([big]sister) .....

mukoma ([big]sister) .....

tete  
(aunt) .....

amai  
(mother) .....

mhamha  
(mother) .....

ambuya  
(grandmother) .....

ambuya  
(mother-in-law) .....

muroora  
(daughter-in-law/sister-in-law) .....

(v)amwene  
(mother-in-law) .....

muzukuru  
(grand daughter) .....

2b. Ndeapi mamwewo mazita amunoshandisa pakutaura nevanhukadzi asina kudomwa pamusoro? Tsananguraiwo nepamunokwanisa kuti munenge muchirevei pamunoashandisa.

*Besides the ones named above, what other titles do you use to address women. Please explain as far as you can what each of the titles means to you*

.....

3. Vanhurume vanowanzotaudzwa kana kusheedzwa nevanhu vavanosangana navo kana vavanzova, asi vasiri veukama, nemamwe emazita anotevera

*Men are often addressed or referred to by acquaintances and strangers using some or all of the following titles:*

3a. Sarudzaiwo amunoshandisa; zvino motsanangura nepamunokwanisa kuti kana muchishandisa zita rega rega ramadoma munenge muchirevei? Chii chinokubatsirai kusarudza kuti apa ndinoshandisa iri kana roro?

*Please identify and explain the ones that you use; now explain as far as you can that if you use any of the forms you choose what do you mean? What is it that helps you to say here I use this or that?*

bhudhi  
([big] brother) .....

mukoma  
([big] brother) .....

tsano  
(brother-in-law) .....

baba  
(father/father-in law) .....

vatezvara  
(father-in- law) .....

sekuru  
(uncle/grand father) .....

mukuwasha  
(son-in-law/brother-in-law) .....

mudhara  
(old man) .....

muzukuru  
(grandson).....

3b. Ndeapi mamwewo mazita amunoshandisa pakutaura nevanhurume asina kudomwa pamusoro? Tسانانگurai nepamunokwanisa kuti munenge muchirevei pamunoashandisa.

*Besides the ones named above, what other titles do you use to address men. Please explain as far as you can what each of the titles means to you*

.....

4a. Ndeapi mamwe mazita amunonzwa (vamwe) vanhukadzi vamunosangana navo vachikusheedzai nawo?

*Besides those named above, what other address forms do you hear (other) women that you meet use to address you?*

.....

4b. Ndeapi mamwe mazita amunonzwa (vamwe) vanhurume vamunosangana navo vachikusheedzai nawo?

*Besides those named above, what other address forms do you hear (other) men that you meet use to address you?*

.....

## Appendix 6-I

### Corpus Concordances Of “\*Va-”

“Nhais purazi rino nderani ? “ **NderaVaGarwe**”

“By the way whose farm is this?” “It is for Mr Garwe”

**nezvehondo dzanga dzichitika pakati paVaShona naMandevere**

about the wars that were happening between the Shona and the Ndebele

**paMurombedzi dzinza rekwaZvimba kunoti VaA.T . Murombedzi, D.P . Dumukwa.**

At Murombedzi the clan of Zvimba is Mr A.T. Murombedzi, D.P. Dumukwa.

**Ndakawana ave nane chose zvekuti VaChiremba vakandibvumidza kuenda**

I found her/him a lot better that Mr Doctor/Healer allowed me to go

**VaHera** vauye vauye torima , ye , ndosara nani

The Heras (totem) they come, they come, whom am I going to remain with

**Ndasvera hangu nenzara , mai vaSandra. Vashe vangu imi taitaura tichidya sadza**

I am just surviving, mother of Sandra. “Mr Chief – Poor guy! we were talking as we ate sadza

**Vasabwira vanoenda , kunoenda kunoona chitunha.**

Mr/Mrs Ritual friend goes, goes to see the corpse.

“Tafara kukuzivai , **VaSajeni** “

“We are happy to know you, Mr Sergeant”

**naVaMufandaedza. Nomusa naVaMufandaedza vakanga vareva chokwadi**

with Mr Mufandaedza . Nomusa and Mr Mufandaedza had told the truth

**VaDumbuzenene-ne . Ndichambofamba ndichitarisa dzimwe**

Mr Dumbuzenene. I am going to move around looking for other(s) (Dumbuzenene could either be LN or NN)

**vahombarume** Vakati vambanya-mbanya namasango vahombarume

Mr Hunter was running and running in the forest (Va- is for respect; hombarume (n9) refers to someone who has had a successful hunting outing)

”**Vamupurisa** , davidzo yomubvunzo wenyu inonetsa.

Mr Policeman., the response to your question is difficult. (Va- is for respect; mupurisa (n1) is a policeman.

**Vamukwambo** mogara marara,

Mr Son-in-law (mind) you are sitting on rubbish, (Va- is for respect; mukwambo (n1) is son-in-law)

*Hamuna kuda kuti maita chikonamombe Vamaromo.*

You did not want to say thank you Chikonamombe (title)Maromo, Va- + CP (Va- is for respect, Maromo is a clan praise name)

*Vamunyai vangu vakanditsvata, kutizisa mukadzi wenge vakagara muimba yaanopinda iyoyo .*

Mr Go-Between of mine... (Va- is for respect; munyai is a male intermediary in marriage proceedings)

*ndobviswa muchizarira naRose. Vamuhure ava vainge vasingaitiki.*

Being let out of the cage by Rose. This Ms Whore was something (Va- is for respect; mu- (n1pre); hure (n9) is a whore).

*yawo nomudonzwo wawo, nobhutsu dzawo. Vamai vanopiwa bhutsu nedhirezi .*

with her/his walking stick, with her/his shoes. The mother(s) are given shoes and a dress. (Va- is for respect; mai (n1a) refers to mother (and/or her sisters and cousins))

*Vamai vomusikana uyu . Saka vanobvza (sic) vazoti a-ongedzerwawo zvaunoenda nazvo kwakowo .*

The mother(s)/ancestors of the girl. (Va- is for respect; mai (n1a) refers to mother (and/or her sisters and cousins))

## Appendix 6-II

### Kwayedza Extracts

The following extracts come from stories and headlines in *Kwayedza*. The relevant titles have been highlighted.

Rimwezve dambarefu rechitendero naM'tukudzi

NaPatrick G Shamba

Chipo cheKirisimasi neGoredzva chakapihwa vanofarira nziyo dzechitendero naOliver M'tukudzi hachisi chekukanganwa neDambarefu idzva ra" Tuku" rinonzi Ndotomuimbira... (Kwayedza, January\* 6 – 12 1995 p. 15)

Aya ndiwo anonzi madomasi chaiwo. Sisi Melody Matekenya (kuruboshwe) vaina Mukoma Paul Makwete vekuGache Gache ... (Kwayedza, September\* 29 – October 5 1995 – picture caption on front page)

\* dates written in English back then.

Baba vakaita makunakuna nevanasikana vavo ndokuvapa vana vatanhatu

neMunyorori weKwayedza

Mumwe murume anoshanda mugadheni kuHillside muguta reBulawayo akatongerwa kupika jeri kwemakore makumi maviri achishanda zvakaoma mushure mekubatwa nemhosva yekuita makunakuna nevanasikana vake vaviri vaakaitisa vana vatanhatu pakati pa1985 na1999

Murume uyu uyo ane makore. 46 okuberekwa akaudza mejasitiriri VaJamesMutsauki kuti akanga afurirwa nen'anga kuti aite izvi.  
VaMutsauki vakaramba kuderedza mutongo wavo...  
Muchuchisi Wisper Mabhaudi vakati murume uyu...  
(Kwayedza. Gunyana 22 - Gunyana 28 2000 p. 2)

Yava tanga wandida ndigokutengesera parafini muHarare

NeMunyorori weKwayedza

Mai Abigail Garandi vemumusha weGlen View vakati vari panguva yakaoma zvikuru nekuti magetsi.....

Mai Garandi vakashora zvikuru.... (Kwayedza. Gunyana 22 – Gunyana 28 2000. p. 3)

Sanganai naMbuya “Mukanwa” avo vanofarira kurova sadza nyenya yehuku

(Kwayedza. Gumiguru 13 – Gumiguru 19 2000. Frontpage highlights)

Sisi Ruth Tiribhoyi muimbi wechikadzi ane mukurumbira ane zvakanwanda gore rino.  
(Kwayedza. Ndira 12 – Ndira 18 2001. Front page highlights)

Nhau Dzomumatare Edzimhosva

Mapurisa matatu anonzi akaba zvinhu zvinokosha \$100 000

MAPURISA matatu epakamba yePumula kuBulawayo ayo ari kutongwa nemhosva yekupaza muchitoro achiba zvinhu zvi nokosha \$100 000 akarambirwa kubvisa bhero namejasitiriri wemuguta iri. Vatatu ava chikwata chembavha shanu dziri kufungidzirwa kuti ndidzo dzakaita basa iri. Vachimiririrwa negweta ravo, VaGreyson Nyoni veJames Moyo-Majwabu and Nyoni, Jabulani Sibanda, Nkosilathi Khumalo Brian Murindagomo vakaramba kuti vakange vaba sezvaifungidzirwa. Asi mejasitiriri VaAnza Dube vakati vatatu ava vaifanira kuiswa parimandi kusvikira nyaya yavo yatongwa. Sibanda (46), Khumalo (24) Murindagomo (24) uye naLemi Sauraimba vakabvisiswa bheri re\$2 000. Mumwe wavo Stephen Mhlobo Nkomo uyo akange asina gweta akabhadhariswa bhero re\$300 uye akanzi apote achienda kukamba yePumula kamwechete pasvondo... (Kwayedza. Chikumi 22 – Chikumi 28 2001 p. 3)

Akazviroodza nemari yemombe yokuba

neMunyorori weKwayedza

UMWE murume anonzi Shephard Zendera ane makore 28 okuberekwa anogara mumusha wekwaNzirasanga munyika kaShe Rusike mudunhu reGoromonzi akamiswa pamberi pamejasitiriri Stella Kwidini achipomerwa mhosva yekubaombe imwechete.

Muchuchisi, VaJimson Mpandari vakaudza dare kuti nomusi wa20 Chikunguru gore rakapera, Zendera akaenda kudanga remuvakidzani wake achibva asvikobaombe yetsiru imwechete. Murume uyu anonzi akazoenda nemombe iyi kunoitengesera munhu ari pedyo nepaJuru Growth Point...  
(Kwayedza. Chikumi 22 – Chikumi 28 2001 p. 3)

## Appendix 7-I

### Zvituko - Labels

1a. Tsanangura kuti rimwe nerimwe remazita aya rinoreva kuti chii kwauri:

*Explain what each one of the following nouns mean to you:*

benyumundiro.....

benzi.....

bhinya.....

dzenga.....

fende.....

gube.....

hure.....

jetu.....

joki.....

koronyera.....

kuruku.....

mbavha.....

mburu.....

mhengeramumba.....

ndururani.....

nhubu.....

nhundiramutsime.....

nyenairwa.....

ny'nanya'a.....

nyope.....

tsimbe.....



nyumwanyumwa .....  
 nzenza .....  
 pfambi .....  
 rombe .....  
 sasikamu.....  
 tsotsi .....  
 zeeretsi .....  
 zungairwa.....

1b. Zvino chinyora kuti kana zvikanzi, “Nhingi i...”, unofunga kuti munhukadzi, munhurume kana kuti vese here. Isa X pasi pemhinduro yako.  
 Now, write that if it is said “X is...”, do you think (that X) is female or male or both. Insert X under your answer (choice).

.....

zita  
*noun*

mukadzi  
*female*

murume  
*male*

vese  
*both*

benyumundiro .....  
 benzi .....  
 bhinya.....  
 dzenga .....  
 fende .....  
 gube .....  
 hure.....  
 jetu .....  
 joki .....  
 koronyera .....  
 kuruku.....  
 mbavha .....

mburu.....

mhengeramumba .....

ndururani .....

nhubu .....

nhundiramutsime.....

nyenairwa.....

nyin'anya'a.....

nyope/ tsimbe.....

nyumwanyumwa .....

nzenza .....

pfambi .....

rombe .....

sasikamu.....

tsotsi .....

zeeretsi .....

zungairwa.....

## Appendix 7-II

### Kuroor(w)a/Kusaroor(w)a - Getting Married/Not Getting Married

[only sections relevant to the study are extracted and translated from the bigger questionnaire]

1a) Tsanangurai kuti kuroor(w)a kana kusaroor(w)a chinhu chinorevei muupenyu hwemunhukadzi kana munhurume.

*Explain what getting married or not getting married means in the life of a female or male*

b) Tipei mazita/mazwi, kana aripo, anoshandiswa pa:-

*Give us words/nouns, if they are there, that are used on/for:*

munhukadzi asati aroorwa  
asi iye apfuura zero rinotarisirwa

munhurume asati aroora  
asi iye apfuura zero rinotarisirwa

munhukadzi ane mwana/vana asi  
iye asina kuroorwa

munhurume ane mwana/vana asi  
iye asina kuroora

vana vemukadzi vaanoita  
asina kuroorwa

vana vemunhurume vaanoita  
asina kuroora

zvituko nezvamai  
*insults about mother*

zvituko nezvababa  
*insults about father*

Ndezvipi zvituko zvakawanda? Unofunga kuti sei zvakadaro?

*Which of these insults are many? Why do you think that things are like that?*

c) Pane dzimwe nzvimbo dzamatadza kuzadzikisa, dzisina mazita mumutauro medu. Dzokerai kunzvimbo dzakadai idzi motsanangura kuti chii chiri mumagariro edu chinaita kuti mashoko aya asawanikwe.

*There are some places that you failed to complete, with no words/nouns in our language. Go back to such places and explain what it is that is in our culture/society that makes it such that these words/phrases do not exist.*