

# Prophets without honour at home: A view from the margins

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## **Abstract**

This article is a personal reflection on how serving as a lecturer of an African language at a multi-lingual South African university has been like thus far for the author. In its narrative and perhaps even autobiographical mode, the article further encapsulates the author's formative influences towards pursuing, studying, teaching and writing in an African language (Tshivenda) within an academic sphere of South Africa. Furthermore, the article foregrounds the challenges faced by a novice lecturer and scholar in marginalised languages such as Tshivenda, which include, among others, the lack of intensive mentorship in the teaching and learning of Tshivenda, limited opportunities to publish in scholarly and accredited journals, students' and lecturers' negative perceptions towards the mother-tongue, minimal reviewers and examiners of journal articles, research proposals, dissertations and theses written in Tshivenda. Apart from airing the author's grievances, the article also vanguards the author's hope that African languages such as Tshivenda will eventually move from the margins to the centre of epistemic and other forms of pedagogic discourse within the South African context, and perhaps even beyond. To this end, some opinions on how this hope can be fulfilled are provided.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Labouring for the recognition, promotion and development of African languages, Tshivenda in this case, has been a lonely journey for me. I must state from the onset that I have not always dreamt of being a custodian or exponent of African languages in the field of teaching and learning, let alone at a university level. When I enrolled for Grade 1 in 2002 at

Tshimonela Primary School, I was not really obsessed with teaching language, although there was a passion for reading and creative writing. Other than that, I had no other ambition except being educated, whatever that meant. Quite frankly, I had no definite dream of what I wanted to be in life, I just wanted to go to school. At some point, I flirted with the idea of becoming a pilot. It did not take me long to abort the idea for the simple

reason that being a pilot required that I excel in both Mathematics and Physical Sciences. I loathed Maths and Science and so, I had to find another probable dream. Whilst in secondary school, some of my teachers advised that I consider pursuing an LLB degree, with their convictions premised on my evident love for essay writing. Since I still did not know what I wanted to be, studying law thus became my obsession.

When I matriculated in 2011, I resolved to study law at the University of Limpopo (UL), because I had applied for the degree a few months prior. However, upon arrival for registration, I was informed that the School of Law had no record of my application. As if that was not heart-wrenching enough, I was informed that there was no longer any space available for me in the School of Law. I was left with either of the following options: to register law at another institution of higher learning in South Africa, take a gap year and then try to register law the following year; or I could take whatever programme was available at UL to avoid taking a gap year. The first two options were undesirable to me and so, I opted for any programme that still had space. That is how I ended up enrolling for a 4-year degree called Bachelor of Arts in Information Studies at UL. I registered for the degree with the belief that I would switch to LLB the following year at UL. Although at first I felt misplaced in the programme, I later realised that the programme would serve as a springboard into an area of my passion.

## **LEARNING TO LOVE LANGUAGES**

Even though Information Studies appeared to be one of the best programmes at UL, with prospects of

employment and growth in the field of librarianship and other fields majoring in both record-keeping and information provision, I was not particularly in love with the programme itself. I was mainly ambivalent about the programme because I still reminisced about the prospects of being a lawyer. It is only now, in retrospect, that I realise enrolling for the programme of Information Studies was essentially a blessing in disguise. I say this precisely because in its first three years, the programme allowed the students to select languages, i.e. English and an indigenous South African language (Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Northern Sotho), as elective modules. Among the elective modules that were available for me were Tshivenda and English. I chose both Tshivenda and English modules and studied them from first year until my third year, which made me eligible to register for an honours in either English or Tshivenda. While studying both English and Tshivenda at UL, I fell in love with the literary and linguistic components of these two languages, so much so that, at some point, I struggled to choose the best language to study at a postgraduate level.

## **LOVE AT LAST SIGHT: ON DEEPENING MY LOVE FOR THE MOTHER TONGUE**

During my undergraduate studies, I had discovered elementary and yet profound, exciting and unique ways of studying language. This was new to me because whilst a learner at secondary school, we, as learners, had no understanding of the word 'linguistics', but at university, we were introduced to it and I was quite fascinated by it. In Tshivenda classes, for example, I was introduced to how one can study the language scientifically, looking

at its phonetics, phonology, morphology, etc., and there were also intensive studies on indigenous literature, which was also my area of interest. Consequently, I started envisioning prospects of attaining a firm grasp of both Tshivenda linguistics and literature. In English classes, on the other hand, I had learnt about the interface of and clash between African and European literature. I could straddle between these two worlds with ease and convenience because I appropriated what I had learnt in my English classes into Tshivenda lessons and vice versa. It was here that I deepened my love for languages and literature. From then on, I wanted nothing else but to study and teach languages, specifically my mother tongue, Tshivenda.

My love for languages made it easy for me to excel in these modules because I had learnt to enjoy my elective modules more than my major course, namely, Information Studies. Furthermore, my academic performance attracted a bursary from the Department of Arts and Culture which paid for my tuition fees in my first year. This bursary was not only a miracle for a student like me who came from a poverty-stricken family, but also served as one of the formative influences towards my stay at the School of Languages and Communication Studies (LANGCOM) at UL. I eventually gave up my obsession with law mainly because of the bursary and other accolades I received for my academic excellence. I told myself that I would study law after completing my BA degree. However, the bursary motivated me to excel in my studies and this, as already indicated, which afforded me the opportunity to pursue postgraduate studies in either Tshivenda or English.

Upon noticing my academic excellence in Tshivenda, two professors

who were then the only lecturers of Tshivenda within LANGCOM, encouraged me to further my studies in Tshivenda. I conceded. In 2016, I registered for my BA Honours in Tshivenda (for which I graduated Cum Laude). I was motivated to enrol for an Honours in Tshivenda firstly because I noticed that there were only two professors who were lecturing Tshivenda linguistics and literature in the entire Discipline. One of the professors was already a member of the executive management of the institution, which unsurprisingly also made it difficult for him to juggle the two responsibilities. I thought to myself that I could help shoulder some of the responsibility, provided the University hires me. For that to happen, I had to distinguish myself through academic excellence, hence I completed the degree with distinction. To my understanding, these two professors had laboured for years in the promotion and recognition of Tshivenda at local, national and even international levels through their scholarly and creative outputs. We had read some of their literary works at secondary school.

Secondly, studying Tshivenda at a university level was for me an opportunity to be mentored by the people whom we considered as giants in the field. I also noticed that there was a possibility these professors would soon retire because they are quite old and with that, there would be no one with their expertise to advance the language after they are gone. For some reason, it bothered me that their retirement would seriously affect the acknowledgement and advancement of the Tshivenda language as part of the media of teaching and learning at UL. My interest in teaching Tshivenda thus grew intensely. From then on, I made a commitment that I

would glean on the afore-mentioned professors' wisdom and learn as much as I could from them. I studied Tshivenda under their tutelage and in the process, I inherited their passion and vision for the language. My zeal for African languages, although acquired quite late, has never waned and most of my attempts within the scholarly circles have been geared towards asserting the agency, relevance and significance of Tshivenda literature and culture. The desire to promote the Tshivenda language, culture and literature also influenced the scope of my doctoral study, which focuses on the Vhavenda people's selfhood, identity and culture as reflected in the Tshivenda poetry.

### **TOWARDS PRIVILEGING TSHIVENḌA SPACE IN THE SCHOLARLY HORIZON**

I enrolled for my Master of Arts in African Languages, a two-year programme that is inclusive of coursework and research, in 2017. As both a political statement and also an effort to solidify my stance in the promotion of African languages in academia, I wrote my mini-dissertation in Tshivenda. I wrote the dissertation in Tshivenda against the counsel of some well-established scholars. Their premise for dissuading me from writing my dissertation in my mother tongue was that my work would not be known or quoted by other scholars. And sadly, that is one of the predicaments that a custodian of indigenous languages in some of the institutions of higher learning of South Africa often finds him- or herself in. Also implicated in this may be the false belief that African Languages are not grammatically appropriate or economically viable for scholarly writings, as one professor told

me. In contexts similar to mine, African languages are predominantly viewed in a junior light, particularly in comparison to English, as briefly touched on in the subsequent section. Perhaps it might be helpful here to elucidate some challenges than an upcoming African languages lecturer and scholar faces at a South African university.

### **Some Challenges faced by an African Languages Lecturer at South African Universities**

This part of my narrative not only saddens me, but also makes me feel reluctant to share some of the challenges I face as an African languages lecturer. I am reluctant because the largest part of my narrative entails the negative and dissuading attitudes I currently battle in my field. Nevertheless, I am obligated to disclose the details, however uncomfortable, with the hope that the disclosure will propel a discussion on the promotion and valuation of indigenous languages in my context. To begin with, I drafted my research proposal in Tshivenda because my dissertation was to be written in Tshivenda. However, I was later instructed to translate my research proposal into English because none of the members of the Review Committee could read Tshivenda. I must be quick to state that the institution within which I lecture and study recognises Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Northern Sotho and English as languages of teaching and learning. There is, therefore, room for multilingualism in epistemic and pedagogic practices, an aspect worth appreciating, I must say. One would expect that in such an environment, native speakers and scholars of the above-mentioned languages would form the research review committee(s). But,

as it stands, there is currently no one in the committee to read a proposal written in the indigenous languages that are recognised in the institution's language policy. So, the deal is, the postgraduate students who wish to write their research proposals, dissertations and theses in African languages are required to translate their research proposals into English, if they want their proposals to be considered and reviewed by the committee.

Secondly, a novice African languages lecturer and scholar rarely receives any meaningful and sustained mentorship in the area of scholarly writing and publication. There are a few mentors and most of them are either indifferent or too busy to mentor the upcoming generation in African languages scholarship. Thus, the upcoming scholar in African languages has to learn through trial and error until he or she eventually makes it. Connected to the former observation is also the lack of meaningful relationships between well-established scholars and upcoming scholars in the field of African languages across South African universities. Such relationships would be helpful, not only in the cross-pollination of ideas on the development of African languages, but also in determining whether all indigenous languages taught at South African universities are at par with one another in terms of epistemology and pedagogy.

Another challenge is that, at our school, there is currently no undergraduate degree offered purely in an African language, i.e. BA in Tshivenda, Xitsonga or Northern Sotho, although there are BA degrees that allow the students to choose these indigenous languages as elective modules. A degree in an indigenous language would not only be reflective of progressive steps

towards the recognition and promotion of indigenous languages, but would also empower the students in the knowledge of their identity, culture and heritage. Furthermore, the spectrum of multilingual studies would be virtually broadened beyond its present status at my institution. At this juncture, one must also mention, however, that all is not dark and gloomy as it may seem, my institution has a degree in Contemporary English and Multilingual Studies. Although this is worthy of commendation, the saddening reality about it is that the programme only considers one African language and excludes the other two indigenous languages that are recognised as media of teaching and learning at my institution.

Also augmenting the challenge is that, we do not have an independent department or centre of African Languages at our institution, as it were. African languages (Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Northern Sotho) are currently classified as Disciplines under the Department of Languages, which is basically the English department. One can only be grateful that his or her mother tongue is at least given some place in the department. However, it does not dismiss the fact that African languages are still mere appendages of the English language. Seemingly, the inability to establish an African languages department is ascribed to the fact that we (Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Northern Sotho speakers) do not have a large number of students whose statistics might be deemed adequate to constitute a department. Furthermore, since our students only study indigenous languages as electives, when they progress to the next levels of study, they are compelled to 'drop' these elective modules and remain with only their major courses.

Our students can only study indigenous languages as elective modules

to their final year, only if the students are willing to study these modules for non-degree purposes, although they will be charged for these modules. As a result, most students, however interested they may be in continuing their studies in an African language module, are forced to drop the module either after the completion of their first-year or second-year modules. This reduces the number of students in the Disciplines of African languages. Another challenge faced by a lecturer of African languages in my context is that there is a strong belief that there are no job opportunities for the graduates in African languages. This leads to many students populating the School of Education at our university where they enrol for a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). This migration depopulates our Disciplines and leaves us with a few or no postgraduates at all in some academic years. They leave because they hope that they might be employed as teachers at secondary schools upon the completion of their PGCE.

There is also a belief or perception that if one is fluent in the English language, such a person is intelligent, compared to a proficient speaker of an African language. Thus, most of our students tend to equate fluency in English with intelligence, which leads to the marginalisation of or disdain of indigenous languages. Thus, our students are ashamed of their mother tongue and this negative attitude towards the mother tongue(s) somewhat enhances the prominence of English in our context because it is perceived as a language of prestige and intelligence. There are rarely any bursaries or scholarships provided to our undergraduate students who select indigenous languages as their elective modules, as a means to encourage them

to study African languages.

An upcoming African languages lecturer who works at a previously disadvantaged university such as mine often finds it difficult to access current and relevant resources which may abet the effective and efficient teaching and learning of African languages. Recent, scholarly or scientific textbooks on Tshivenda linguistics are not only rare to find, but in an instance where they are spotted, they are highly classified in scholarly journals and therefore quite difficult to access. As a remedial intervention, one often has to search for textbooks written in English and materials published in other indigenous languages and attempt to adapt such materials into Tshivenda, where possible. This scarcity of literature on Tshivenda linguistics and literature also contributes to the students' disregard for indigenous art and knowledge systems, among other aspects. In the end, both the student and the lecturer do not have as much access to the knowledge published on their language. In addition, my institution rarely organises or hosts any conferences, debates or symposiums on the significance and relevance of indigenous languages. We currently do not have a scholarly journal which specialises in the production and publication of African indigenous knowledge systems, folklore or languages at our institution.

It is also difficult for one to publish and sell books written in Tshivenda. At this moment, one can only be grateful to the National Library of South Africa which has been providing sponsorship for budding authors to publish their works, with a special preference of indigenous works. Most budding writers prefer writing in English and not in Tshivenda. The fear is that the book will not sell if it is written in an indigenous language. When I write in Tshivenda, I can only

wish that the book will be prescribed at institutions of teaching and learning because that is where my potential readers are. Other than that, a writer in indigenous languages faces a serious challenge in terms of book sales. As a result, there are minimal literary outputs in Tshivenda. This contributes to the slow growth of the language, particularly in a multicultural and multilingual context such as South Africa.

### **Postulations on the Preservation and Promotion of African Languages at South African Universities**

Despite the challenges mentioned above, I am still hopeful that the research committees that review our students' research proposals will one day have members who are not only fluent in African languages, but are also capable of reviewing the research proposals written in the three indigenous languages that are recognised by the institution's language policy. I believe a time will come when it will no longer be mandatory for our students to translate their research proposals from indigenous languages into English. Having to translate my proposal into English was, to me, nothing but an indication that our indigenous languages are still a mere subset of the English language. I still believe that a day will come when there will be a Bachelor of Arts in Tshivenda, Northern Sotho or Xitsonga at my institution. I appreciate that at postgraduate levels, our African languages students, upon the approval of their translated research proposals, are still allowed to write their dissertations and theses in indigenous languages.

I am hopeful that our institution will one day establish an independent

African languages department, and that our government will try by all means possible to enforce the recognition and valuation of African languages, as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. I believe that, with the recognition and subsequent promotion of our indigenous languages, the assumption that African languages are not economically viable will soon be debunked. I am confident that both the seasoned and novice African languages lecturers will keep themselves abreast of the job opportunities and other emerging trends in the field and try by all means to sell the professions that exist in indigenous languages to the students as a recruitment strategy to increase the number of African languages students at universities. Moreover, with the advent of technology and its rapid development, African languages will need to be adapted into whatever technological format that may be available and useful for the preservation and promotion of our indigenous languages.

I believe that the Vhenda writers will keep writing in their mother tongue because they would have eventually realised that this is one of the ways through which the agency and essence of their language is asserted in a variety of contexts. I, on the other hand, will try my best to write in my mother tongue with the hope that some learners and students will be encouraged to do the same. I will have to keep researching and writing about my mother tongue and believe that young people in particular will realise the essence of their language and culture, and in turn, contribute to the promotion and preservation of their language, literature and culture.

To date, I am still drafting and submitting my articles on the Tshivenda language, literature and culture. As I write this, I have published at least six

articles in accredited journals, with a few others either still under review or forthcoming. I keep writing in an effort, not merely to establish myself in scholarly writing but chiefly to make a contribution towards the recognition and promotion of the Tshivenda language within scholarly circles. In the few years that I have been teaching Tshivenda, I have met some people who are as passionate in the promotion of indigenous languages and this has been quite helpful in fuelling my passion for indigenous languages. It is my hope that my institution will join other institutions of higher learning in South Africa who are already ahead of us in the promotion and recognition of indigenous languages in South Africa. I still believe that my institution will kick into gear and that we too will make indelible marks on the elevation of our indigenous languages. There are already signs that this is possible. As already stated, our students, particularly from honours to doctoral

studies are given the latitude to write their research in their mother tongues. This is a step in the right direction. Our institution has a Master of Arts in African languages, which is inclusive of Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Northern Sotho, as prospective languages and cultures of research. I believe that soon we will have an independent Master of Arts in Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Northern Sotho. Persistence and perseverance in writing and publishing in our mother tongue, both in our creative and scholarly outputs, will encourage our students and other custodians of indigenous languages to contribute to the promotion and preservation of our languages. I am hopeful that my doctoral study on Tshivenda culture will in some way contribute towards the appreciation of Tshivenda in the broad spectrum of African languages and literature. I am also hopeful that even the poetry outputs such as the excerpts below will add value to the promotion of Tshivenda:

### ***MUTHU A SI MUTHU***

Iwe n̄wana wa muthu

Mbilu ya muthu ndi tshiṭanga

Tshine wa dzhena, u so ngo p̄funa tshisenga

Mbiluni ya muthu a hu dzulwi; hu tou tumbwa

U so ngo kombodzwa nga u tshena ha maṅo u mwemwela

Mbiluni hu seluwa magabelo o furaho mulimo

U so ngo fhurwa nga vhududo ha tshanda u khada

Mapfumo a tuṭulwa na u putwa ṅalani dzenedzo

Lulimi lu u ambaho zwivhuya ṅamusi, matshelo lu do u bvula

Vha u gagamisaho nga dzithendo na zwikhodo ṅamusi

Ndi vhenevho vhathihi vhane vha do u khadela Golgotha matshelo

Vha u ambadzaho khanzu dza khuliso ṅamusi,

Ndi vhenevho vhane vha do anḑadza vhubunyu hau

Mbiluni ya muthu a hu p̄fuṅwi tshisenga n̄wananga

Wa vha na mashudu a u tendela u pfuka luhura lwa mbilu yawe,

Dzula nga lithihi n̄tha ha guvha la mbilu yawe

Mbilu ya muthu ndi kholomo i si yau

U i hama maṅo o sedza ṅdila

Muthu kha funwe; a so ngo fulufhelwa.



**MUSI MBILU I SOGANI**

Ngavhe n̄wana wa muthu o vha a tshi zwi ðivha  
 Uri khuluxoni a i dzulwi nga ndeñwa  
 Vha ðivhaho vhugala, ndi vho fhiraho Golgotha  
 Maanda a vhukuma a ðihwa nga vho kulwaho xungo  
 Dakalo li thetshelwa nga vha ðivhaho u elela ha miðodzi  
 Vhutshilo vhu ðihwa nga vho xanganaho na lufu  
 Nðila i yaho vhugalani, i fhira nga tshifhambanoni  
 A so ngo faho ha nga tshili; a tshilaho ha nga fi  
 Vha tshilaho hungohoni ndi avho vho vhambaho nama  
 Vha furalela mirunzi yavho ine ya ngalangala na u kovhela ha ðuvha  
 Vha sa fhurwi nga u tshena ha n̄wedzi vhusiku  
 Vhane maṭo avho a nzwatimela vuhwini  
 Vhuhwi ho kutelaho zwi sa vhonwi nga a nama  
 Vha pfa a zwiphiri zwo dzumbelwaho vha tshilaho luvhalani  
 Vha tsa fhasifhasi khufhini ya ngoho  
 Vha zwi ðivha uri sogani a hu thomwi muraga  
 Soga ndi n̄dila i isaho vhudzivhani ha zwa ngoho  
 Sogani ndi ngohoni hune ha xanganwa na Musiki  
 Musiki a ðaho na luselo lune ngalwo a fhefhera  
 Ha vha u fhambanya ngoho na mazwifhi; ha fhambanywa nngu na phele  
 Sogani a si vhudzulavhafu; sogani ndi vhudzivhani ha zwa ngoho.

**VUMBA LIFESHWA**

N̄nala dzo u vhumbaho  
 Ndi dza muvhumbi makone  
 O u vhumbaho nga vumba likhethwa  
 Wa shanduka mbumbotshidele  
 Vhukhavhane ho dzumbwaho  
 N̄nalani dza muvhumbi wau  
 Ha khaḁana na vhutshena  
 Vhutshena ho alamaho maṭoni au  
 Vhutshena vhu fhiraho ha luvhomba  
 U n̄watekana ha meme dza mulomo wau  
 Ha putulula phethwa dza mbilu yanga  
 Dza putuluwa vhunga dzuvha la luṭavula  
 Lo welwa nga n̄wando u si wa misi  
 Maṭo anga a tandavhala na thandavhuwo  
 Ya lunako lwau lu kherulaho vhutete ha nama  
 U xangavhedza ha xayo dzau  
 Ha tala gwala li lilwaho nga vhanzhi; la wanwa nga vha si gathi  
 U sekena ha ipfi lau ha shanduka dzhogo i si na muruli muyani wanga  
 Maṭo a pofula nda kundwa u vhona zwe khana yau ya dzumba  
 Dzhogo yau nda i gagamisa ndi ndoṭhe  
 Ndo livha tshaloni tshe wa bwa ndi tshe ndo pofudzwa nga lunako lwa vumba  
 Vumba lo u vhumbaho ndi vumba lo dzumbaho vhutulu he mbilu yau ya khuba

Sa phulu ya tsilu nda gagamisa dzhogo nga dakalo  
 Ndo livha silahani hune malofha anga a yo gubunyea  
 Ndo funa vumba, nda lamba u vhona mbilu  
 Nda kundwa u vhona uri yashu dzhogo  
 Ndi ya donngi na phulu.

### **DZANGA LAU LI NGEI PHANDA**

Ndi iwe wo fhungaho n̄wando  
 Ndi iwe wo thakhaho mbula nga tshitiko  
 Ndi iwe wo reḁaho khuni wa vha onzela mulilo  
 Ndi iwe wo shishaho biko tsimuni u tshi vha limela  
 Ndi iwe wo kapudzaho tshetshe na dzi si dzau  
 Ndi iwe we lukanda lwa lūwa nga phepho ya vhuriha  
 Ndi iwe we wa shanduka vhomadala  
 Wa dededza mabofu, madzingandevhe na mashuvhuru  
 Ndi iwe wo rafhaho notshi, wa lūwa u wothe  
 Ndi iwe wo vha hwalelaho tshifhambano  
 Namusi vho no u hangwa  
 Namusi vha u vhona vha pfa mare  
 U vho sokou vhuvhula u wothe phephoni  
 Wo no shanduka mmbwa i si na muḁe  
 Vha vho ri u u vhona, vha dzumba zwifhatuwo  
 Ngeno hu iwe we wa tadzia khali wa vha bikela vha la thumbu dza tou rwe!  
 Namusi vha vho tadzia dzavho vha la vho dzumbama  
 Ndi iwe wo thakhaho mbula nga tshitiko  
 Dza dobelwa nga vhotsinda, vha la wo sedza  
 U si lile, u si gungule u tshi vha vhona  
 Phumula miḁodzi u fhumule  
 Tshililo tshau tsho pfiwa u sa athu lila  
 Muḁe wau ho ngo popula, o i vhona miḁodzi yau, o tshi pfa tshililo tshau  
 O u vhetshela dzanga li sa sini, fhumula u ende nga mulalo.

### **TSHILALANDOIMA**

No ntsalelani murahu  
 Arali hu si hone u ḁoda u sea mapeta anga  
 Lwaḁu lulimi lu tshilelani  
 Arali hu si hone u ḁoda u sola makwanda anga  
 Hūwe ndo vhona maḁo aḁu u tshena  
 Nda ri u sema haḁu maḁo ndi nge na ntakalela  
 Ndo ro sa zwi divha uri a ni khou mwemwela nge na mpfuna.  
 Na tsa ni tshi gonya, vhusiku na masiari, ni tshi rea magwekwe  
 Na atha mambule, na vhaḁa na mapfumo  
 Hu u ḁoda hone u nnyededza khofheshidele  
 Ni ro sa zwi divha  
 Uri hanga vhutshilo ndi pfundo  
 Lo pfuḁwaho nga ḁala dzi sa nyethi  
 A ḁodaho hanga vhutshilo

Kha tou zhambukanya, a pfukenyanye  
 Gole na swiswi zwo dzumbaho tshiko tsha tsiko  
 A dzhene pfamoni, a livhanye zwifhatuwo  
 Na o sukaho vumba lo putelaho vhumuthu hanga.

### **ZWIPHIRI ZWA MBEU**

Ntendeleni!

Hanga vhuda ndi pute, ndi dobe, ndi tuwe.  
 Yanga ndima ndo wedza, yanga mbambe ndo khunyeledza  
 Ipfi li mmbidzaho ndi mukosi u sa fhumudzei,  
 U pfiwaho nga vhane ndevhe dza dzula dzo pangulwa  
 Vha mbilu dzo rulwaho mihwalo, vha mafo a kungwaho nga dzanga li sa sini  
 Vhane havho vhutshilo ha nga mbeu  
 Mbeu i tavhaho mukosi wayo yo fhumula  
 I tshilaho nga u fa,  
 I tshilaho nge ya liwa nga buse  
 Mbeu i dzumbaho miri ya daka layo tshiphirini  
 Vha sa vhone u ya kule vha sa zwi limuwe  
 Uri mbeu i tshila nga u fa; mbeu i tshila nge ya sina  
 U thathaba hayo ndi u tshila hayo  
 Vhuhulu ha zwiphiri vhu putelwa vhutukuni ha mbeu  
 Vha vhoneleho tsini, vha kungwa nga mitshelo u anda matavhini  
 Vha poidza vha sa vhone mbeu yo tanzaho muri na matavhi  
 Matavhi a gagaqelaho mbeu mbiluni ya mutshelo  
 Mutshelo wo bebwaho nga mbeu  
 Mbeu yeneyi ine musi mutshelo wayo wo shengwa  
 Ya vho kudzwa kule sa tshilangwa  
 Tshilangwa tsho kokotedzwaho khanani dzo kamataho khangwa  
 Heyi mbeu heyi i qisaho muri na tavhi  
 Tavhi line khalo tshinoni tsha vhea muqi  
 Mbeu yo qisaho muri na murunzi  
 Ya vho pfelwa buseni na mare a muli  
 Ndi mbeu yo qisaho muri na khuni  
 Khuni dze ngadzo vhalo vha mutshelo wayo vha onza mulilo  
 Vha tshi vho pfa vhududo vha hangwa uri mbeu yo vha bebela khuni  
 Khuni dzi tshi vho dubisa vhutsi, mafo a kombodzwa nga mainyainya tshivhasoni  
 Tshivhasoni tsha vhududo na zwickadzingwa  
 Vha devha mapwapwalala vho takala  
 Vho hangwa vhutshilo he mbeu ya lozwa uri vha tshile  
 Vha hangwa lufu lwa mbeu lwo qisaho vhutshilo na vhududo  
 Vha i kudza daledaleni heyi mbeu heyi  
 Tshayo ha sokou tou vha u vhumbuluwa buseni  
 Vha i kandekanya heyi mbeu heyi  
 Vho hangwa uri labi le vha fuka mivhilini yavho  
 Lo tutuwa khufhini ya heyi mbeu heyi  
 Mifihoni yavho, vha tshina vho takala  
 Vha tshi zikinya heyi mbeu heyi yo pfelwaho buseni

U zikinya havho ha vha u i zonyedza hafhu mavuni  
 Mutumbuli wayo a i nea shothodzo hafhu buseni layo heyi mbeu heyi  
 Shothodzo la heyi mbeu heyi  
 Ndi miṭodzi i elelaho tshifhatuwoni tsha Musiki wayo  
 Mbeu u ṅukala, ya mbo ḡi dovha ya sina, ya thathaba  
 U thathaba hayo, ha tutuwa muri na matavhi,  
 Matavhi a angaladza zwanda, zwiṅoni zwa sima luimbo  
 Zwa bvela phanda na u vhea miḡi yazwo matavhini a muri wa heyi mbeu heyi  
 Vhatami vha mitshelo yo gagaḡelwaho nga matavhi vha ḡa la, vho no fura vha a vunda  
 U oma ha matavhi zwa a shandula tshivhangalelwa tsha vharedi  
 Ila mbeu yo guludanaho matavhini ya vhuedzedzwa tshivhasoni  
 Thase dzayo dza thathaba dzi tshi hasha tswaro dza vhaori vho pofulaho  
 Vhaori vha sa vhoni tshiphiri tsho kutelwaho nga heyi mbeu heyi  
 Ya duga heyi mbeu heyi u swika i tshi shanduka miḡora, buse la heyi mbeu heyi.  
 Vha hwala buse layo heyi mbeu heyi, vha li hasha ḡaledaleni  
 Ha vha u ṅangana hafhu ha buse na miḡora  
 Mbeu, naho yo no shanduka buse litshena, ya vhuELELA vhubvoni  
 Mbeu buseni ya tshila vhugalani hayo.  
 Mbeu ndi tshidula, a tshi vhulahwi nga u poswa maḡini.

### **MUKWITA WA LUTENDO**

A ṅangaho lwendo u bva Egipita a tshi ya Kanana,  
 A songo tsha sedza murahu  
 Naho lwanzhe lutswuku phanda magabelo a vhinḡuluwa o sinyuwa  
 A yaho Kanana tshawe kha hu vhe u sedza phanda  
 Lwanzhe lutswuku kha pfuke naho magona a tshi tetemela  
 A sedzaho murahu u ḡo shushwa nga mmbi ya Farao  
 Phanda a si tsha ya nga u phanda a ri yi ro sedza murahu  
 A yaho phanda a songo rembuluwa, a nga ḡo shanduka tshiulu tsha muṅo  
 A yaho Kanana ndi o nangaho u furalala madzanga a Egipita  
 A yaho vhutshiloni ha Kanana ndi uyo o furalalaho mavhida a Egipita  
 Ane a ḡo swika Kanana ndi uyo we maḡo awe a lila liṅḡadulu o lilala  
 Ane a ḡo thetshela ṅdirivhe dza Kanana,  
 Ndi a sedzaho he lubaḡa lwa Mushe lwa sumba  
 Lutendo na fulufhelo zwa shanduka mapango a tingaho mbilu yawe  
 Kanana a hu swikwi nga vho gagaḡelaho mihwalo ya Egipita  
 Zwoṅhe zwi kudzwa lwanzheni, ndovhedzoni ya lukuna vhukuma  
 Ha pfukelwa seli na luḡa hune ha vha na mifhululu na dakalo vhukuma  
 A yaho Kanana u ya o gagaḡela lutendo na fulufhelo  
 Kanana hu swikwa nga vhaḡa vhane ṅḡala naho ya tota mala  
 Vha si ṅanutshela gwala le vha nanga.

### **THABELO YA ZWIFHONDO**

Zwenezwi ri tshitumbani tshashu  
 Kha ri ṅanganyise ṅala ri vhoṅhe lithihi  
 Zwa sa ralo, vha ḡo vhudzula zwa thafha  
 Vhutshilo ndi dzanda line ra tou hwalisana

Ra sa amba lithihi, ra imba luthihi  
 Vha do gobela tshene ngadeni yashu  
 Khaṅo ya vho shanduka mipfa na mavongori  
 Milomo ndi minzhi yo aṅamaho  
 Ra kumedza, vha do balanganya zwoṅthe  
 Tshitumba tshashu tsha vho shanduka shubi  
 Ndimi ndi nnzhi dzi reneḡelaho  
 Ra sa gogoḡela Yehova, ri do shanduka tshiimbo tsha zwidakwa  
 Mapfumo ndi manzhi o tuṅulwaho  
 Ra shaya tshituṅu, malofha a do nzwuruwa  
 Kha ri kande huthihi, ri ambe luthihi  
 Ra enda ro tandavhadza milenzhe, a ri nga yi kule.

### **TIVHANI**

Nwananga  
 Tivha ḡe wa kudzwa khaḡo  
 Hu tala ngweṅa na mvuvhu  
 A tambalaho ndi uyo o fukaho makwanda a ngweṅa  
 Tivha heḡi ḡine wa tala khaḡo nwananga  
 ḡi ṅoḡa vhutete ha mukumba wa mvuvhu  
 Zwa sa ralo, mbilu yau i vho do fuka makwanda  
 Wa shaya makwanda, tsanga dzi do u kherukanya  
 Nwananga, tivhani heḡi ḡine wa tala khaḡo hu lozwa vhahali  
 Muṅali ndi uyo a bvudaho sa ḡiivha, a tsha sa ṅowa  
 ṅalifha nwananga tivhani heḡi  
 Vhahali na magoswi vhoṅthe vha tala tivhani heḡi  
 Fuka makwanda a ngweṅa na vhutete ha mvuvhu  
 ṅalifha nwananga.

### **DZIVHULUWANI**

No lwa  
 Ni tshi ri ni lwela mavu e na dzhielwa  
 No pembela nge na ri no wana gundo  
 Gundo ḡe na ḡi wana a si gundo  
 Luimbo lwe na imba lwo shanduka dakalotshililo  
 Mavu e vho makhulukuku vha dzula, a vho rengiswa  
 Khezwi ṅamusi ni vho renga mavu a re aṅu  
 Ni tshi ṅoḡa mavu a u fhaṅa muraga, ni a badela  
 Ni tshi ṅoḡa mavu a vhudzulavhafu, vha ni fha mahala  
 Gundo ḡe na ḡi wana a si gundo.

### **NALA DZA MME**

Nṅe ḡi tshi kovhela ndi a tuwa  
 Nayo dza dubisa buse kha wonoyu mukwita  
 Mukwita u livhaho ḡamuni ḡa mme anga  
 Meme dza wanga mulomo dza thuthubisa miludzi

Ndo humbula ndilo ye mme a avha a nndindela  
 Mme we nga vhuṭali ngozwi a luka, a nkuvhatedza  
 Swina ḽa ḽa, mme a ḽi sedza maṭoni, muṭanani o dzumba nṅe  
 A nkuvhatedza vhunga tshikukwana phaphani dza phambo.  
 Nṅe ḽi tshi kovhela ndi a takuwa nda ya ha mme  
 Ndi ṅala dza mme fhedzi dzi konaho u fhodza ntho dza mbilu yanga  
 Ndi nḽevhe ya mme fhedzi i pfaho ya fhumudza tshililo tshanga  
 Ndi tshiseo tsha mme fhedzi tshi ṅukadzaho soga mbiluni yanga  
 Ndi tshililo tsha mme tshi vundaho muya wanga.

### ***NṅE***

Nṅe ndi na afhio?  
 Tshanga ndi u sokou vhovhola.  
 Izwi zwa phalaphathwa i sa ofhi tsindi ḽa mukalaha?  
 Nṅe ndi a vhuya nda dina lini, nṅe a thi dini.  
 Ndi tou vhona zwenezwi zwa kholomo ndala  
 Kholomo ndala i no ḽa hatsi vhutete  
 Hatsi vhutete vhune ya ri u shenga ya somelwa.  
 Hu si halwo a si halwo, lu so ngo kombetshedzwa  
 Miṅwe miṭodzi kha i lilwe maṭo a shango a sa zwi vhoni  
 Vha nga ḽo zwi vhona vha aṅḽadza  
 Muḽi wa vho sala u si na luhura, wa shanduka luvhande lwa mapfene  
 Pfamo yau ya vho shanduka mutanyatanya wa haya mapfene haya  
 Anga ndi afhio arali hu si enea  
 Enea a u dembetetisa ḽologo, ndi tshi ya fhano na ngei  
 Ndi tshi imba lwonolwu luthihi lwa mahandana a ṅwana wa muthu ḽasi ha ḽuvha.

## **CONCLUSION**

I believe that the marginal voices as African languages custodians, lecturers, researchers and scholars, to name but a few, we will secure a place and agency within the intellectual and scholarly horizons. I still believe that the day will dawn when indigenous languages will no longer be appendages or subsets of English, all languages will gain an equal

footing in South African universities. It may take a while but I believe that with each poem, each essay, each article, each book and each debate, peripheral voices in the African languages domain will authoritatively assert their agency and be heard. A time will come when such voices will be recentralised to tell their stories and sing their songs in their own languages.