

RE-UNITING A PEOPLE SEPARATED BY ‘ARTIFICIAL’ BOUNDARIES USING 100 WORDS: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHY ACCOUNT OF MALOZI, BASOTHO AND BATSWANA OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

by

Francis Simui¹, Tahleho Tseole², Kago D. Monare³ & Gistered Muleya¹

The University of Zambia¹, University of Lesotho² & Open University of Botswana³

Abstract

Scholars in this study interrogated the Malozi of Zambia, Batswana of Botswana and Basotho of Lesotho and established their purported common ethnic heritage in a quest to contribute to the attainment of the Sustainable Development agenda. The researchers applied Autoethnography and interrogated similarities and differences in 100 purposively selected words. 100 words were selected across themes common to humanity as follows: (i) human body, (ii) family, (iii) environment, (iv) food, (v) animals, and (vi) religion. Finding showed a 100 percent level of similarity across the six themes above with minor variations. Therefore, commonalities in the use of words among the three ethnic groupings is a pointer to a common heritage despite being separated by geographical boundaries. Equally, minor differences in language pronunciations exist but not profound enough to warrant poly-acculturation. Thus, blurring the ‘artificial’ boundaries in existence as perceived by members of those groups. This discourse spurs a realization of a common culture and identity.

Keywords: Autoethnography; Culture; Languages; Setswana; Silozi; Sisotho

1. Introduction

This is an Autoethnography account of three cultures separated by political boundaries in three separate countries of Southern Africa whose main thrust was to establish a common heritage using the power of words in a language. The study drew its participants from Botswana, Lesotho and Zambia. A Typical case sampling was applied to select three participants who were purposively

drawn based on their cultural linkages to Setswana, Sesotho and Silozi languages from the three countries highlighted above and happen to be accommodated in one place in Windhoek, Namibia for five days under the banner of the Commonwealth of Learning in November, 2018. The primary purpose that brought the three participants together was centred on ‘Creating and Repurposing Open Education Resources,’ and were hosted by the Centre of Open and Distance eLearning at the University of Namibia from 26th to 30th November, 2018. It was during the CoL workshop that the discourse on re-uniting a people separated by ‘artificial’ boundaries was mooted, with a realization that despite the differences in nationalities, the three participants were happily surprised that they were able to communicate with easy among themselves to the amusement of the other workshop participants. To further interrogate the commonality among the three nationalities, the three participants volunteered to purposively select 100 commonly used words as a litmus test for the assumed oneness claim. Hence this study.

1.1 Context

According to Pakendorf, Gunnink, Sands and Bostoen (2017), Southern Africa is characterized by the presence of two typologically distinct groups of indigenous languages: the Bantu languages and the Khoisan languages. The Bantu languages form a close-knit genealogical unit that is widespread over sub-Saharan Africa. Similarly, Herskovits (1948:44) observed that "Language is a system of vocal signs that are arbitrary" i.e. people have a set of words and these words can be selected to form sentences. In addition, members of a social group use these collectives of words to interact and cooperate with each other, (Herskovits, 1948). Further, Isiksal (2002) and Levine (1999) suggested that even when people go their separate ways, the cultural practices of a people may transcend time and place and remain with a people in their groups, as is the case in the Sotho ethnic group. This somewhat resonates with Muleya (2016: 185-198)’s work on managing and leading through Ubuntu where he asserts that connectivity and inclusivity among all people is the basis of African humanism which does not only form the basis of African world view but also runs through the veins of all Africans. He further contends that ubuntu dictates that if we are to be human, we need to recognize the genuine otherness of our fellow citizens; acknowledge the diversity of languages, histories, values and customs, all of which constitute the African society and not necessarily a particular nation in Africa. This is also in line with the principles of civic education where citizens have to be made aware of what it means to live together and cooperate

with each other in the community (Muleya, 2017a, 2017b, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c, 2019; Bergersen & Muleya, 2019; Machila, Somba, Muleya, & Pitsoe, 2018; Magasu, Muleya & Mweemba, 2020; 2020; Mupeta, Muleya, Kanyamuna & Simui, 2020, Habanyati, Simui, Kanyamuna & Muleya, 2020; Mwase, Simuyaba, Mwewa, Muleya & Simui, 2020; Mwanangombe, Mundende, Muzata, Muleya, Kanyamuna & Simui, 2020)

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Whereas anecdotal evidence does show that the Malozi of Zambia, Batswana of Botswana and Basotho of Lesotho share a number of similarities linguistically, it is not clear to what extent this could be true. Hence the need through this study to establish their purported common ethnic heritage using the power of words and language.

1.3 Specific Objectives

The following objectives guided the study:

- i. Explore commonality in language use among the Malozi, Batswana and Basotho.
- ii. Describe differences in language use among the Malozi, Batswana and Basotho.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study findings lie in its potential to foster the creation of synergies among Botswana, Lesotho and Zambia for the common good of their people. Equally, such a study has potential to create social cohesion and common identity across geographical divide.

1.5 Theoretical Underpinnings

The study is guided by the theory of ethnicity as it helps to clarify whether the Malozi, Batswana and Basotho share a common heritage by interrogating their language. Darvill (2008) observed that ethnicity claims to belong to a certain cultural group with regard to cultural presentations i.e. languages, genetics, and values. In addition, Scott (2014) complements Darvill (2008) by observing that the individuals as well as others see themselves as a community who share the same characteristics in terms of politics, language and various social activities that set them apart from other communities. Further, the fundamental components of the theory of ethnicity is segmented into *identity* (belonging) and *culture*, i.e. one has acquired or practices a particular culture because one belongs to a particular identity (Nagel, 1994).

1.6 Review of Related Literature

The literature review focused on various studies conducted on commonalities and differences in language use among the Batswana, Basotho and Malozi people in Southern Africa. Inevitably, knowledge gaps are exposed in the process to justify the current study. Zerbian and Barnard (2009) in their study focused on the realisation of a single high tone in the verbal constituent in Northern Sotho, a Bantu language spoken in South Africa. Zerbian and Barnard investigated existing descriptive and theoretical literature as it relate to numbers of syllables in the verb stem, morphosyntactic constituency and verb-internal morphological boundaries. Phonetically, findings showed that the F0 peak associated with a high tone was not necessarily reached within the syllable carrying the high tone but only later depending on the segmental make-up of the tone-bearing syllable and its position within the utterance. The segmental make-up of the tone-bearing syllable led to systematic surface variation in tone realization (Zerbian and Barnard, 2009). While the study provided a ground for cross-dialectal comparison of Southern Bantu tone no comparison was done across the major Sotho dialects within Southern Africa. It is this knowledge gap that the current study sought to address.

In addition, Pakendorf, Gunnink, Sands and Bostoen's (2017) study focused on lick consonants as one of the hallmarks of "Khoisan" languages of southern Africa. In their study, they reviewed the Southern African Bantu languages with clicks and discussed ways they may have obtained these unusual consonants. These scholars drew on both linguistic data and genetic results to gain insights into the sociocultural processes that may have played a role in the prehistoric contact. Results showed that the copying of clicks accompanied large-scale in-marriage of Khoisan women into Bantu-speaking communities (Pakendorf, Sands and Bostoen, 2017).

Whereas Pakendorf, Gunnink, Sands and Bostoen (2017) concentrated on click consonants as one of the hallmarks of "Khoisan" languages of southern Africa, Monyakane's (2016) study extended the discourse by focusing on the oneness of Sotho and discussing their cultural, social and political similarities of the Batswana, Basotho (Southern Sotho) and Bapedi. Findings maintained that Basotho (Southern Sotho), Batswana and Bapedi were similar people. Their cultural dimension showed they had similar languages that share the same collection of words (langue) that indicates the same origin, (Pakendorf, Gunnink, Sands and Bostoen, 2017). While

Pakendorf et al. (2017), concentrated on the Batswana, Basotho and Bapedi and left out the Malozi people, the current study did include the latter in its discourse.

2. Methodology

This qualitative study is situated within existential philosophy and highlights the role of Words and Language in uncovering the hidden essence in ‘*Being and Time*’ as advanced by Heidegger and other proponents such as Ricoeur, Gadamer and Merleau-Ponty (Simui, 2017). According to Benjamin (1989:8) “Words and language are not wrappings in which things are packed for the commerce of those who write and speak. It is in words and language that things first come into being and are”. Hence the purposive selection of *Words* to re-ignite the discourse on acculturation across political boundaries.

2.1 Research Design

The study applied Autoethnography, a qualitative research design and used personal experience (“auto”) to describe and interpret (“graphy”) cultural texts, experiences, beliefs, and practices (“ethno”). Autoethnographers argue that personal experience is infused with political/cultural norms and expectations, and they engage in rigorous self-reflection—typically referred to as “reflexivity”—in order to identify and interrogate the intersections between the self and social life. Fundamentally, autoethnographers aim to show “people in the process of figuring out what to do, how to live, and the meaning of their struggles” (Bochner & Ellis, 2006:111). Autoethnography applied in this study is similar to how Simui, Chibale and Namangala (2017) & Simui, Mwewa, Chota, Kakana, Mundende, Thompson, Mwanza, Ndhlovu and Namangala (2018) applied phenomenology. However, the point of departure between phenomenology and Autoethnography is that, while the former is situated in lived experiences in general, the latter focuses on personal cultural experiences in particular.

Three participants volunteered to generate 100 commonly used words in English and later translated in Silozi, Sisotho and Setswana. Thereafter, three independent peer reviewers specialist in linguistic discourse were engaged to provide further insights as a way of attending to the emic/etic challenge associated with Autoethnography studies.

Table 1: Participant Profiles

Pseudonym	Country	Designation	Sex	Role Played
[1] <i>FSZ</i>	Zambia	HoD/Lecturer	M	Principal investigator / Participant
[2] <i>TTL</i>	Lesotho	Librarian	M	Co-researcher / Participant
[3] <i>KMB</i>	Botswana	Lecturer	M	Co-researcher / Participant

2.2 Sample size

A typical purposive sampling approach was applied to select three volunteer participants in this study. The choice of the type of sampling technique was informed by the need to study a phenomenon relates to what are considered “typical” or “average” members of the concerned population. In addition, the sampling approach chosen empowered researchers to address qualitative demands such as the need for reflexivity, fit for purpose, availability and accessibility (Kemper, Stringfield, & Teddlie, 2003).

2.3 Data generation procedure

In carrying out this study, we documented 100 words purposively selected from the common themes from real world. The process of word generation was conducted in 5 days. This was followed by cluster creation as indicated in table 2. In addition, once words were clustered, deep reflection followed to establish common and uncommon threads of possible common heritage among the three cultures under review. All in all, the data generation process took five months as further insights were solicited via emails among the three key participants.

Table 2: Thematic Areas

Theme Number	Theme Title	Number of Words Generated
1).	Human External parts	18
2).	Human Internal organs	09

3).	Family Matters	14
4).	Environment /Animals	13
5).	Food /Drink	11
6).	Activities for daily living	19
7).	Spiritual Matters	16
Total		100

2.4 Trustworthiness

In this study, Guba’s (1981) four criteria on trustworthiness were applied. These are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The data generation process was triangulated using Observation, a Focus Group Discussion and individual Interviews. The researchers used a reflexivity approach to decipher meaning from generated data. In addition, the researchers had early familiarity with the culture of participants prior to data generation. The data generation procedure and boundaries were documented for the purposes of ensuring transferability of the study findings to different settings. Further, the elicited information was cross-checked by outsider participants to avoid the usual emic/etic problems. This means that interpretation of physical traces or observations may be from the point of view of the stranger, or outsider (etic), and therefore may fail to grasp important in-group meanings (emic) (Berry, 1989). Given that the findings were presented verbatim, coupled with participant checks on the research, the study met the dependability and confirmability criteria as well.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

In carrying out this study, ethical issues as guided by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000) were followed. For example, pseudonyms were used to represent each participant for confidentiality and anonymity purposes as shown in Table 1. In addition, permission was sought and granted from the University before the study could be conducted. Further, the findings of the research process were disseminated to stakeholders as demanded for in the ethical protocols.

3. Findings of the Study

The findings in tables 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 are segmented in seven thematic areas as follows: (i) Anatomy of a human body (external feature), (ii) Anatomy of a human body (internal organs), (iii) family matters, (iv) Environment / Animals, (v) Food and drinks, (vi) activities for daily living, and (vii) spiritual matters. In addition, the discussion is weaved within the findings for easy of reference and clarity of thought.

Table 3: Theme 1 - Human External Parts

English	FSZ - Silozi (Zambia)		TTL - Sesotho (Lesotho)		KMB -Setswana (Botswana)	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
[1] Head	Toho	Litoho	Hlooho	Lihlooho	Tlhogo	Ditlhogo
[2] Nose	Ngo	Lingo	Nko	Linko	Nko	Dinko
[3] Eyes	Lito	Meto	Leihlo	Mahlo	Leitlho	Matlho
[4] Hair	Mulili	Milili	Moriri	Meriri	Moriri	Miriri
[5] Ears	Zebe	Mazebe	Tsebe	Litsebe	Tsebe	Ditsebe
[6] Tongue	Lulimi	Malimi	Leleme	Maleme	Leleme	Maleme
[7] Teeth	Lino	Meno	Leino	meno	Leino	Meno
[8] Neck	Mulala	Milala	Molala	melala	Molala	Melala
[9] Gullet	Mumizo	Mimizo	mmetso/ qoqotho	Mmetso qoqotho	Momentso	Memetso
[10] Hands	Lizoho	Mazoho	Letsoho	matsoho	Letsogo	Matsogo
[11] Stomach	Mba	Limba	Mpa	Limpa	Mpa	Dimpa
[12] Back	Mukokoto	Mikokoto	Mokokotlo	mekokotlo	Mokwatla	Mekwatla
[13] Butocks	Lilaho	Malaho	Setono	Litono	Lerago	Marago
[14] Thighs	Silupi	Lilupi	Serope	Lirope	Serope	Dirope
[15] Legs	Lihutu	Mahutu	Leoto	Maoto	Leoto	Maoto
[16] Bones	Lisapo	Masapo	Lesapo	Masapo	Lerapo	Marapo

[17] Body	Mubili	Mibili	Mmele	Mebele	Mmele	Mmebele
[18] Neils	Linala	Manala	Lenala	Manala	Lenala	Dinala

Out of the 18 identified human body parts in table 3, there is consensus in understanding the various facets of a human anatomy among the three languages with minor variations in pronunciations of a few segments. For instance, whereas in Silozi a human head is called *Toho*, which the Sotho people refers to as *Hlooho* and Tswanas call *Tlhogo*. Equally, whereas the Lozi call a Neck as *mulala*, the Sotho and the Tswana refer to it as *molala*. The only variation on the neck concept is on the letter ‘u’ [*mulala*] replaced by ‘o’ [*molala*]. The variations in pronunciation are insignificant on most of the concepts used to describe human body parts.

Table 4: Theme 2 - Human Internal parts

English	FSZ - Silozi (Zambia)		TTL - Sesotho (Lesotho)		KMB -Setswana Botswana	
	Singler	Plural	Singler	Plural	Singler	Plural
[1] Brain	Boko	Boko	Boko	Maboko	Boboko	Maboko
[2] Heart	Pilu	Lipilu	Pelo	Lipelo	Pelo	Dipelo
[3] Liver	Sibiti	Libiti	Sebete	Libete	Sebete	Dibete
[4] Lungs	Liswafu	Masawafu	Lets'oafo	Mats'oafo	Lekgwafo	Makgwafo
[5] Gall bladder	Nyoko	Nyoko	Nyooko	Nyooko	Santlhoko	Disantlhoko
[6] Splin	Lubete	Mabete	Lebeete	Lebeete	Lebete	Lebete
[7] Kidney	Piyo	Lipiyo	Phieo	Liphieo	Philo	Diphilo
[8] Intestine	Lila	Mala	Lela	Mala	Lela	Mala
[9] Blood	Mali	Mali	Mali	Mali	Madi	Madi

Out of the nine identified human internal organs in table 4, there is consensus in understanding all the listed concepts with minor variations in pronunciations of a few areas. For instance, whereas in Silozi a human heart is called *Pilu*, the Sotho and Tswanas refers to as *pelo*. Similarly, whereas the Lozi call a Kidney as *Piyo*, the Sotho call it as *phieo* while the Tswana refer to it as *philo*. As can be seen the variations are very minor and insignificant on the names assigned to body organs in the three languages.

Table 5: Theme 3 - Family matters

English	FSZ - Silozi (Zambia)		TTL -Sesotho (Lesotho)		KMB -Setswana (Botswana)	
	Singler	Plural	Singler	Plural	Singler	Plural
[1] Father	Ndate	Bondate	Ntate	Bontate	Ntate/Rre	Bontate/ Borre
[2] Mother	Me / Boma	Boma	Mme	Bomme	Mme	Bomme
[3] Elder Brother	Muhulwa na ka	Bahulwan a ka	Abuti	BoabutiMo r'abo rōna	Nnakê wa mosimane	
[4] young brother	Mu nyanaka	Banyani baka	Moena	Baena e monyenyan e	nnakê wa mosimane	
[5] Sister	Kezeli	Likezeli	Khaitse eli	Likhaitseli	Kgaitjadi	Bokgaitjadi
[6] Groundfather	Munamuh ulu		Ntate- moholo	Bontate- moholo	Ntatemogo lo	Bontatemog olo
[7] Groundmothe r	Kuku	Bokuku	Nkhono	Bonkhono	Nkuku	Bonkuku

[8] Uncle	Malume	Bomalome	Malome	Bomalome	Malome	Bomalome
[9] Auntie	Bondate babasali		Mmanga aone	Bommango ane	Mmangwane Rakgadi	Bommangwane Borakgadi
[10] Family	Lilapa or Lubasi	Malapa or Mabasi	Lelapa	Malapa	Lewapa	Malwapa
[11] Friends	Muzwale or Mulikani	Mizwale or Balikani	Motsoa lle	Metsoalle	Tsala	Ditsala
[12] Babies	Mwaana Mbututu	Bana Limbututu	Ngoana	Bana	Ngwana	Bana
[13] Elderly person	Mucembel e	Macembele	Moholo ane	Baholoane	Mogolo	Bagolo
[14] Father-in-law	Makweny ani	Makwenya ni	Ntate- Matsale	Bontate- Matsale	Matsalê	Matsalê

On fourteen family matters related concepts in table 5, nearly all are similar with an exception of a few. For instance, Father and Mother, *Ndate* and *Me* respectively are used across the three languages in question. Further, a prefix of 'Bo' is used on words such as father, mother, grandfather, grandmother and uncle across the three languages as a mark of respect. Equally, to the concepts of family, friend and baby, *lilapa*, *muzwale* and *bana* respectively are used across the three languages. However, variations exist in a few instances such as when referring to an elderly person who in Silozi is called *muchembele* while *Moholoane* and *mogolo* are used in Sotho and Tswana respectively.

Table 6: Theme 4 - Environment

English	FSZ - Silozi Zambia		TTL - Sesotho (Lesotho)		KMB –Setswana Botswana	
	Singler	Plural	Singler	Plural	Singler	Plural
[1] House	Ndu	Mandu	Ntlo	Matlo	Ntlo	Matlo
[2] Play ground	Patelo	Lipatelo	Lebala	Mabala	Patlelo	Dipatlelo
[3] Trees	Kota	Likota	Sefate	Lifate	Setlhare	Ditlhare
[4] Water	Mezi	Mezi	Metsi	Metsi	Metsi	Metsi
[5] Grass	Bucwani	Bucwani	Joang	Joang/Majoang	Tlhaga/boja ng	Tlhaga/boja ng
[6] Birds	Nyunya ni	Linyunya ni	Nonyana	Linonyana	Nonyane	Dinyone
[7] Animals	Folofolo	Lifolofolo	Phoofolo	Liphoofolo	Phologolo	Diphologol o
[8] Cattle	Komu	Likomo	Khomo	Likhomo	Kgomo	Dikgomo
Dog	Nja	Linja	Ntja/Nyalas i	Lintja/Linyalas i	ntša	Dintša
[9] Cat	Kaze	Likaze	Katse	Likatse	Katse	dikatse
[10] Elepah nt	Tou	Litou	Tlou	Litlou	Tlou	Ditlou

[11]Lion	Tau	Litau	Tau	Litau	Tau	Ditau
[12] Hippo	Kubu	Likubu	Kubu	Likubu	kubu	dikubu
[13] Stone	Licwe	Macwe	Lejoe/Letla pa	Majoe/Matlapa	Letlapa	Matlapa

On thirteen environmental related aspects in table 6, nearly all are similar with an exception of a few such as grass referred to in Lozi as *bucwani*, while in Sotho it is called *joang* and in Tswana as *Tlhaga* or *bojang*. The rest are pretty much related such as a house which is called *ndu* or *Ntlo* or *Ntlo* in Lozi, Sotho and Tswana respectively. Equally, water is referred to as *mezi* or *metsi* or *Metsi* in Lozi, Sotho and Tswana respectively. A cat is referred to as *kaze* or *katse* or *Katse* in Lozi, Sotho and Tswana respectively. Thus, there is closeness among the three languages in the way they refer to environmental related aspects.

Table 7: Theme 5 - Food

English	IFSZ - Silozi (Zambia)		TTL - Sesotho (Lesotho)		KMB - Setswana (Botswana)	
	Singler	Plural	Singler	Plural	Singler	Plural
[1] Food	Sico	Lico	Lijo	Lijo	Sejo	Dijo
[2] Nshima	Buhobe	Mahobe	Bohobe	bohobe/mahobe- different types	Bogobe	Bogobe
[3]Bread	Sinkwa	Linkwa	Bohobe	Bohobe	Borôthô Senkgwê	Borôthô Senkgwê
[4]Goat	Puli	Tupuli	Pōli	Lipōli	Podi	Podi
[5] Fish	Tapi	Litapi	Tlhapi	Litlhapi	Tlhapi	Ditlhapi

[6] Meat	Nama	Nama	Nama	Nama/linama-different types	Nama	Nama
[7] Beer	Bucwala	Bucwala	Joala	Joala-majoala-different types	Bojalwa	Bojalwa
[8] Vegetable	Muloho	Miloho	Moroho	Moroho-meroho-different types	Morôgô	Merôgô
[9] Sorghum millet	Mabele	Mabele	Mabele	Mabele	Lebele	Mabele
[10] Milk	Mabisi	Mabisi	Lebese	Lebese	Maši	Maši
[11] Beans	Linawa	Manawa	Naoa	Linaoa	Dinawa	Dinawa

In table 7, nearly all the eleven food related items are similar such as bread which is called Sinkwa in Silozi, *Bohobe* in Sesotho and *Borôthô* or *Senkgwê* in Setswana. Equally Sorghum millet is called *mabele* in Silozi, Sesotho and Setswana while Milk is called mabisi in silozi, Mafi in Sesotho and Maši in Setswana. It is clear that the terms used to depict different food stuffs are very similar across the three languages under review.

Table 8: Theme 6 - Activities for daily living (*Temporality*)

English	FSZ - Silozi (Zambia)		TTL - Sesotho (Lesotho)		KMB -Tswana (Botswana)	
	Singler		Singler	Plural	Singler	Plural
[1] Sit	Ina		Lula	Lulang	Nna	Nnang
[2] Run	Mata		Matha	Mathang	Taboga	Tabogang
[3] Sleep	Lobala		Robala	Robalang	Robala	Robalang
[4] Stand-up	Yema		Ema	Emang	Ema	Emang

[5] Eat	Ca		Eja	Ejang	Ja	Jang
[6] Cry	Lila		Lla	Llang	Lela	
[7] Pound	Sita				Setla	
[8] Call	Biza		Bitsa	Bitsa	Bitsa	Bitsa
[9] Search	Bata		Batla	Batla	Batla	
[10] Read	Bala		Bala	Bala	Bala	
[11] You	Wena		Oena	Lona	Wena	
[12] Come	Taha		Tloe		Tlaya	
[13] Cut tree	Lema / Puma		poma/khaola sefaate		Kgaola setlhare	
[14] Dance	Bina		Bina		Bina	
[15] Lost	Latehile		Lahlehile		Timetse	
[16] Love	Lilato		Lerato		Lorato	
[17] Marriage	Manyalo		lenyalo	Manyalo	Lenyalo	Manyalo
[18] Marry	Nyala		Nyala		Nyala	
[19] Worker	Mubeleki		mosebetsi		Mmerekki	Baberekki

Nearly all the nineteen activities for daily living displayed in table 8 carry similar words across the three languages under review. For instance, sit, run, sleep and stand-up all appear to carry similar words with very minor variations in pronunciations. The same can be said of other activities such as love, dance, marry, cry and read as they all appear to be related in the way they are referred to among the three languages.

Table 9: Theme 7 - Spiritual matters

English	FSZ - Silozi (Zambia)	TTL -Sesotho (Lesotho)	KMB - Setswana (Botswana)
[1] God	Mulimu	Molimo	Modimo
[2] Jesus	Jesu	Jeso	Jeso
[3] Holy spirit	Moya o kenile	Moea-o-halalelang	Moya o boitshepo
[4] Bible	Bibele	Bebele	Baebele
[5] Sabbath	Sabata	Sabata	Sabata
[6] Sunday	Sunda	Sontaha	Tshipi/Sontaga
[7] Prayer	Tapelo	Thapelo	Thapelo
[8] Heaven	Lihalimu	Leholimo	Legodimo
[9] Salvation	Puluso	Pholoho	Pholoso
[10] Hope	Sepo	Ts'epo	Tshepo
[11] Gift	Mpo	Mpho	Mpho
[12] Pray	Lapela	Rapela	Rapela
[13] Hymnal Book	Sifela	Sefela	Sefela
[14] Teacher	Muluti / Tichele	Tichere	Morutabana/Morotuntsi
[15] Preach	Kutaza	Tuta/rera	Ruta
[16] Preacher	Mukutazi	Ruta	Moruti

In Table 9, nearly all the sixteen identified spiritual related concepts carry similar words across the three languages under review. For instance, God is called *Mulimu* in Silozi, *Molimo* in Sesotho and *Modimo* in Setswana. In addition, a Bible is called *Bibele* in Silozi, *Bebele* in Sesotho and *Baebele* in Setswana. Further, hope as an attribute is referred to as *Sepo* in Silozi, *Ts'epo* in Sesotho and *Tshepo* in Setswana. Equally, a gift is referred to as *Mpo* in Silozi, *Mpho* in both Sesotho and

Setswana. Certainly, there is very close similitudes in the way spiritual matters are conveyed across the three languages in question.

4. Discussion

The critical question that begs for an answer is *‘what is it like when Malozi, Batswana and Basotho are brought together in a foreign country and later discover the oneness in language usage?’* This is an ontological question delving into the lived experience of Malozi of Zambia, Batswana of Botswana and Basotho of Lesotho. According to van Manen (2007), the question borders on *‘Being and Time’* derived from the German dialect equivalence of *‘Sein und Zeit.’* It would therefore seem that whereas Malozi, Batswana and Basotho are separated by political boundaries, they in actual fact have a common heritage as attested by some strong similarities in their language.

Literature show that similarities exist among the Basotho (Southern Sotho), Bapedi and Batswana with regard to their cultural, social and political dimensions. According to Prinsloo (1979) the Bapedi migrated from central Africa to Southern Africa through Botswana. This is where they came into close contact with the Batswana people, as is evidenced in their linguistic borrowing from Batswana. While in Botswana, the Bapedi separated into two groups. One group joined the Batswana and another group went further south to occupy an area called Lesotho. A conflict arose while in Lesotho between Sekhukhune I and his brothers. The problem was however resolved by letting Sekhukhune and his cliques to claim their own territory across the Vaal River, which served as a boundary between the two conflicting groups, (Mokwana, 2009).

On the other hand, the Malozi people prior to the year 1830 were called Aluyi lived in Barotseland now western province of Zambia. In 1830, with the death of King Mulambwa, a civil war broke out following a succession dispute between his two sons, Mubukwanu and Silumelume. At this critical moment, the kingdom was invaded by a branch of Basotho peoples that the Luyi originally referred to as the Akubu, later known as the Makololo. The Makololo reached Barotseland on their conquest journey from the south and subdued the divided Aluyi and their subject tribes. They became rulers of the land for 25 years. Consequently, the Kololo victorious tribe married the Aluyi women and imposed their indigenous language on them, the Sikololo which became the medium of communication between the Makololo and their subjects. After 25 years,

the Aluyi and other subdued tribes rebelled and slaughtered the Makolo men and restored the Barotse sovereignty. However, the Sikololo “Lozi” language remained the common language in western province of Zambia (Flint, 1970).

In other words, the question above calls to mind the ‘*Forgottenness of Being*,’ as advanced by Heidegger in van Manen (2007), (Simui, 2018). The Malozi, Batswana and Basotho’s cultural heritage could have been forgotten as a result of living in separate geographical locations (spatiality), yet have more in common than differences. This calls to mind the ‘dialogical education’ as conceived by Martin Buber in Cohn (2001). According to Morgan & Guilherme (2012) and Cohn (2001), Martin Buber (1878–1965) philosophised the ‘*I and Thou*’ type of relationship as being a powerful tool to achieving meaningful inclusion in society. The ‘*I and Thou*’ relationships was characterized by spontaneity, subjectivity, reciprocity, and recognition and acceptance of the unique other as essential for human-hood (Cohn, 2001 & (Yuval-Davis, 2010). This could be attested in the spontaneity with which *FSM*, *TTL* and *KMB* effectively interacted and generously collaborated on the current study.

In addition, given the burgeoning Sustainable Development agenda as encapsulated in Goals 11 (make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable), 16 (promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development...) and 17 (strengthen...the global partnership for sustainable development), the need to cultivate regional integration across countries becomes paramount. Language and culture are such vehicles through which regional integration could become a reality. Thus, this discourse makes a contribution by rediscovering the forgotten common heritage among people separated by geographical boundaries in Botswana, Lesotho and Zambia. Further to the three named countries, South Africa equally have another group of people called Bapedi who share a similar heritage as the Malozi, Batswana and Basotho, (Mokwana, 2009 and Monyakane, 2016). Thus, in view of the Sotho language and culture’s wide spread across the Southern Africa, it makes sense to heed UNESCO’s (2019) guidance that countries should position culture at the heart of their developmental agenda as a catalyst to attain a human-centred, inclusive and equitable development.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Whereas the Malozi, Batswana and Basotho are spread across Southern Africa separated by political boundaries, they are one people as typified by their closeness in language usage. This points to the enduring nature of language over time despite having separated ties more than two centuries ago. The minor language differences lie in their pronunciations of words which could be attributed to the influence of intermarriages with other ethnic groupings over time. To this effect, Botswana, Lesotho, South Africa and Zambia should consider harnessing the ‘*Sotho*’ common language as a vehicle to spur socio-economic integration to the benefit of their citizenry. The rediscovery of a common heritage should be used to bridge the artificial gap and cultivate unit and cohesion. Therefore, it is recommended that Ministries responsible for Tourism, Culture and Foreign Affairs in Botswana, Lesotho and Zambia should seize this untapped opportunity to unify cultures across the three countries and create a synergy for value addition.

5.1 Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

References

- Adams, T. E., & Manning, J. (2015). Autoethnography and family research. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 7, 350–366. doi:10.1111/jftr.12116
- Benjamin A. (1989). *Translation and the Nature of Philosophy A New Theory of Words*. New York: Routledge. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1468-0149.1991.tb02288.x>
- Bergersen, A. and Muleya, G. (2019). *Zambian Civic Education Teacher Students in Norway for a Year- How Do They Describe Their Transformative Learning?** *Sustainability* 2019, 11 (24), 7143; doi: 10.3390/su11247143, pp 1-17 www.mdpi.com/journal/sustainability
- Berry, J. (1989). Imposed etics-emics-derived etics: The operationalization of a compelling idea. *International Journal of Psychology*, 24(1), 721–735. doi:10.1080/00207598908247841
- Buber, M. (2004) *I and Thou*. London: Continuum.
- Bochner, A. P., & Ellis, C. (2016). *Evocative autoethnography: Writing lives and telling stories*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

- Bochner, A. P., & Ellis, C. S. (2006). Communication as autoethnography. In G. J. Shepherd, J. St. John, & T. Striphas (Eds.), *Communication as ... Perspectives on theory* (pp. 110–122). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Boylorn, R. M. (2013). *Sweetwater: Black women and narratives of resilience*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research methods in education* (5th ed.). London: Routledge.
- Cohn, F. (2001). Existential medicine: Martin buber and physician-patient relationships. *J. Contin. Educ. Health*, 21: 170–181. doi:10.1002/chp.1340210308.
- Darvill, T. (2008). *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Archeology* UK: Oxford University Press.
- Flint, E (1970) ‘Trade and Politics in Barotseland during the Kololo Period’ *J ournal of African History*, 11, (1), 8384.
- Guba, E. G. (1981). Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries. *Educational Communication and Technology Journal*, 29, 75–91.
<https://www.jstor.org/journal/educcommtech>
- Habanyati, H., Simui, F., Kanyamuna, V., & Muleya, G. (2020). Lived Experiences of Multi-Banked Bank Account Holders with a focus on Banks at Manda Hill Mall Lusaka, Zambia. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 7(6) 208-223.
- Hågensen, L. (2014). *Understanding the Causes and the Nature of Xenophobia in South Africa: A Case Study of De Doorns*. Unpublished PhD Thesis: Stellenbosch University.
- Herskovits, M.J. (1948). *Man and his Works: The Science of Cultural Anthropology* . New York: Knopf.
- Isiksal, H. (2002). Two Perspectives on the Relationship of Ethnicity to Nationalism: Comparing Gellner and Smith. *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*. 1: 1 pp.
- Kemper, E. A., Stringfield, S., & Teddlie, C. (2003) Mixed methods sampling strategies in social science research. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social & Behavioral Research* (pp. 273–296). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Levine, H.B.(1999) Reconstructing Ethnicity. *J. Roy. Anthropol. Inst.* (N.S.) 5PP. 165-180.
- Machila,N, Sompa, M, Muleya, G and Pitsoe, V.J (2018). Teachers’ Understanding and Attitudes

- Towards Inductive and Deductive Approaches to Teaching Social Sciences,” *Multidisciplinary Journal of Language and Social Sciences Education*, (2), 120-137. 2018
- Magasu, O., Muleya, G. & Mweemba, L. (2020). Pedagogical Challenges in Teaching Civic Education in Secondary Schools in Zambia. *International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR)*. 9 (3), 1483-1488. DOI: 10:21274/SR 20327121153.
- Manning, J., & Adams, T. E. (Eds.). (2015). Connecting the personal and the popular: Autoethnography and popular culture. *The Popular Culture Studies Journal*, 3, Special issue
- Mokwana, M. L. (2009). *The Melting Pot in Ga-Matlala Maserumule with Special Reference to the Bapedi Culture, Language and Dialects*. Masters Dissertation. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Monyakane, T.M.M (2016). *The Cultural, Social and Political Similarity of the Bafokeng, Bakuena and The Bataung Lineages Amongst the Sotho*. Unpublished PhD Thesis: UNISA.
- Morgan, W. J. & Guilherme, A. (2012). I and Thou: The educational lessons of Martin Buber's dialogue with the conflicts of his times. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 44: 979–996.
- Muleya, G., Simui, F. Mundende, K., Kakana, F, Mwewa, G. & Namangala, B. (2019). Exploring Learning Cultures of Digital Immigrants in Technologically mediated Postgraduate distance learning mode at the University of Zambia. *Zambia Informational Communication Technology (ICT) Journal*. Vol 3, Issue 3, 2019, pp 1-10
- Muleya, G. (2019). Curriculum Policy and Practice of Civic Education in Zambia: A Reflective Perspective, In A. Petersen et al. (eds.). *The Palgrave Handbook of Citizenship and Education*. <https://doi/10.007/978-3-319-67905-153-1>
- Muleya, G. (2017a). The Conceptual Challenges in the Conceptualization of Civic Education. *Journal of Lexicography and Terminology*. Vol 1, Issue 1, pp 59-81
- Muleya, G. (2017b). Civic education and Civics: Where do we draw the line? *Journal of Lexicography and Terminology*. Vol 1, Issue 2, pp 125-148.
- Muleya, G. (2018b). Civic Education Versus Citizenship Education? Where is the point of Convergence? *Journal of Lexicography and Terminology*, Vol 2, Issue No. 1, pp 109-130.
- Muleya, G., (2018c). Re-examining the Concept of Civic Education. *Journal of Lexicography and Terminology*, Vol 2, Issue No. 2, pp 25- 42

- Muleya, G. (2018a). Civic education in Zambia before and beyond the Golden Jubilee. In G. Masaiti (Ed.), *Education at fifty years of Independence and beyond*. Lusaka: Unza Press.
- Muleya, G. (2015). *The Teaching of Civic Education in Zambia: An examination of trends in the teaching of Civic Education in Schools*, (Doctoral dissertation). Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Muleya, G. (2016). 'Managing and Leading Through Ubuntu' In Letseka, M. (ed.). (2016). *Education in a Competitive and Globalising World: Open Distance Learning (ODL) through the Philosophy of Ubuntu*. New York: Nova Science Publishers.
- Mupeta, S., Muleya, G., Kanyamuna, V., & Simui, F. (2020). Imperial Districts Civic Entrepreneurship: The Implementation of Civic Innovations in the Governance of the University of Zambia. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*. 7(7) 674-685.
- Mwanangombe, C. Mundende, K. Muzata, K.K. Muleya, G. Kanyamuna, V & Simui, F. (2020). Peeping into the Pot of Contraceptives Utilization among Adolescents within a Conservative Culture Zambia. *American Journal of Educational Research*, 2020, 8, (8), 513-523 Available online at <http://pubs.sciepub.com/education/8/8/1> Published by Science and Education Publishing DOI:10.12691/education-8-8-1
- Mwase, D. Simuyaba, E. Mwewa, G. Muleya, G & Simui, F (2020). Leveraging Parental Involvement in the Education of their Children as a Conflict Resolution Strategy in Selected Secondary schools, Zambia , *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)* |Volume IV, Issue VII, July 2020|ISSN 2454- 6186
- Nagel, J. (1994) Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture. *Social Problems*. 41 (1):152-176.
- Ndhlovu, F. (2013) "Cross-border Languages in Southern Africa Economic and Political Intergration" in *Africa Studies*. 72:1, 19-40.
- Pakendorf, B., Gunnink, H., Sands, B., & Bostoen, K. (2017) Prehistoric Bantu-Khoisan language contact: A cross-disciplinary approach. *Language Dynamics and Change* 7, 1–46
- Prinsloo, M.W (1976) *Grondslae Van die Adminisratief –reg by die Matlala Van Maserumule*. UNISA, Pretoria
- Scott, J. (2014). *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*. United Kingdom: OU P.
- Simui, F. (2018). Lived Experiences of Students with Visual Impairments at Sim University in Zambia: A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Approach. Unpublished PhD Thesis: UNZA.

- Simui, F., Kasonde-Ngandu, S., Cheyeka, A. M. and Kakana, F. (2018). Unearthing dilemmas in thesis titles: Lived experience of a novice researcher in Sub-Saharan Africa. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*. 5, (4), 99-105. <http://www.allsubjectjournal.com/archives/2018/vol5/issue4/5-3-46>
- Simui, F., Mwewa, G., Chota, A., Kakana, F., Mundende, K., Thompson, L., Mwanza, P., Ndhlovu, D., and Namangala, B., (2018).“WhatsApp” as a Learner Support tool for distance education: Implications for Policy and Practice at University of Zambia. *Zambia ICT Journal*, 2, (2), 36-44, <https://doi.org/10.33260/zictjournal.v2i2.55>.
- Simui, F., Chibale, H., and Namangala, B. (2017). Distance education examination management in a lowly resourced north-eastern region of Zambia: A phenomenological approach. *Open Praxis*, 9(3), 299– 312. doi:10.5944/openpraxis.9.3.442
- Simui, F., Kasonde-Ngandu, S., & Nyaruwata, L.T. (2017). ICT as an Enabler to Academic Success of Students with Visually Impaired at Sim University: Hermeneutics Approach. *Zambia ICT Journal*. 1 (1), 5-9. <http://ictjournal.icict.org.zm/index.php/zictjournal/article/view/9>
- UNESCO (2019). Culture: at the heart of SDGs. <https://en.unesco.org/courier/2017-april-june/culture-heart-sdgs>
- United Nations (2019). Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2010). Theorizing Identity: Beyond the ‘us’ and ‘them’ dichotomy. *Patterns of Prejudice* 44: 261-280. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0031322X.2010.489736>
- Zerbian, S. and Barnard, E. (2009). Realisations of a single high tone in Northern Sotho. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*, 27(4): 357–379. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/824a/832929e39b99398e15f423e95a0d924adcf6.pdf>