XITSONGA NICKNAMES: THEIR ORIGINS AND FUNCTIONS

CHAUKE MT

M.E.R Mathivha Centre for African languages, Arts and Culture, University of Venda
E-mail: mkhacani.chauke@univen.ac.za

Abstract - This paper is a critical examination of origins and functions of some selected Xitsonga nicknames. Nicknames originate from different views and become very powerful symbols. They reflect how people view the nicknamed within the small group(s) of society. Nicknames can affect the person's esteem and confidence positively or negatively. This study will critically investigate whether nicknames are more functional than real names or not. Emphasis is laid on the manner in which Vatsonga use nicknames to overshadow real names. The researcher will employ the Descriptive Theory. The Descriptive Theory argues that the meaning or semantic content of a nickname is identical to the description(s) associated with it. Data will collected through interviews and focus groups.

Keywords - Nickname, real name, Vatsonga, derogatory name, name-giver