

A DIALECTOLOGICAL STUDY OF TONGA

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Alick Sibajene, do hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work. I also declare that the dissertation has not been submitted for a degree at this university or any other university, and that it does not include any published work or material from another dissertation.

Signed.....

Date.....

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APPROVAL

This dissertation of Alick Sibajene is approved as fulfilling in part the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Linguistic Science of the University of Zambia.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated some linguistic differences between two dialects of the Tonga language spoken in Zambia. These are Valley Tonga (VT) and Plateau Tonga (PT). Tonga is spoken in the Southern and some parts of the Central provinces of Zambia. Dialects considered in the study include Valley Tonga spoken in Siavonga and Plateau Tonga of Mazabuka, Monze, Choma and Kalomo. The study was conducted in order to identify variations at phonological, morphological, syntactic and lexical levels of linguistic analysis.

Data was collected using a modified Swadesh word list of basic vocabulary and a list of sentences drawn from Tonga grammar books by Hopgood (1992), Thompson (1989) and from a Tonga novel by Mweemba (1980). The researcher purposively selected two native speakers for VT and two native speakers for each of the four PT dialects considered in the study. Each of the informants was given the word list and the sentence list in English and was asked to supply the equivalents in their respective Tonga dialects. The researcher, being a native speaker of the language being investigated, was also able to correct wrong data through native speaker intuition. The data that was collected was then analyzed in accordance with the objectives of the study which were: to identify phonetic variations between Valley Tonga and Plateau Tonga, to point out morphological variations between Valley Tonga and Plateau Tonga, to distinguish syntactic variations between Valley Tonga and Plateau Tonga, to establish lexical differences between Valley Tonga and Plateau Tonga. The findings were analyzed and interpreted in line with the levels of linguistic analysis applied in the study, that is, phonology, morphology, syntax and lexis.

Overall findings of the study were that Valley Tonga and Plateau Tonga exhibited some dialectal variations at the various levels of linguistic analysis applied in the study. The study revealed that there were more variations at lexical and phonological levels than there were variations at morphological and syntactic levels. The linguistic variations between Valley Tonga and Plateau Tonga were attributed to the concept of divergence. Valley Tonga is rather geographically farther from the four dialects that are spoken on the plateau. The study observed that there were very few morphological and syntactic differences between Valley Tonga and Plateau Tonga.

The researcher has recommended that a dialectological study of Tonga which is wider than the current one be conducted to focus on all sub-dialects within Valley Tonga and Plateau Tonga so that conclusions to be made would be based on all dialects of Tonga. In addition, Linguists should be encouraged to conduct dialectological studies of Bantu languages in general and Zambian languages in particular. If this was done, it would widen the teaching and learning material base for Bantu languages.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife and friend, Edith and my children: Mizinga, Nanzila and Kubanza.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

C	Complement
Chm.	Choma
FV	Final Vowel
IV	Initial vowel
Klm.	Kalomo
Lit.	Literal meaning
Maz.	Mazabuka
Monz.	Monze
N	Noun
Neg.	Negation
NS	Nominal Stem
O	Object

OM	Object Marker
PL	Plural
Pref.	Prefix
PT	Plateau Tonga
RAD.	Radical
S	Subject
SG.	Singular
SM	Subject Marker
TM	Tense Marker
V	Verb
VT	Valley Tonga