

SOME PROBLEMS RELATING TO THE INCORPORATION OF LOANWORDS IN THE LEXICON

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THIS ESSAY IS a summary of observations made by the writer while he was going through Hannan's *Standard Shona Dictionary*¹ as part of an attempt to build up a corpus of 'acceptable' loanwords in Shona. The writer found that in addition to the common problem of establishing criteria for the acceptability of foreign words,² a little-studied, little-standardized and little-modernized language like Shona presents other problems for the lexicographer: dialectal selection, choice of a suitable format for the dictionary, and considerations regarding its relative usefulness to first and second-language speakers respectively.

It must be stressed at the outset that, in the writer's view, the inconsistencies and inadequacies of this Dictionary as outlined below are an indication not of incompetence on the part of the compiling team but rather of the problems that the complex language situation in the Shona-speaking community creates for the lexicographer. The writer must also point out that his comments deal mainly with Hannan's handling of loanwords.

1.0. The Language Situation

Before these comments are made, the language situation in the Shona-speaking community must be sketched. The language varieties are as represented in Figure 1.

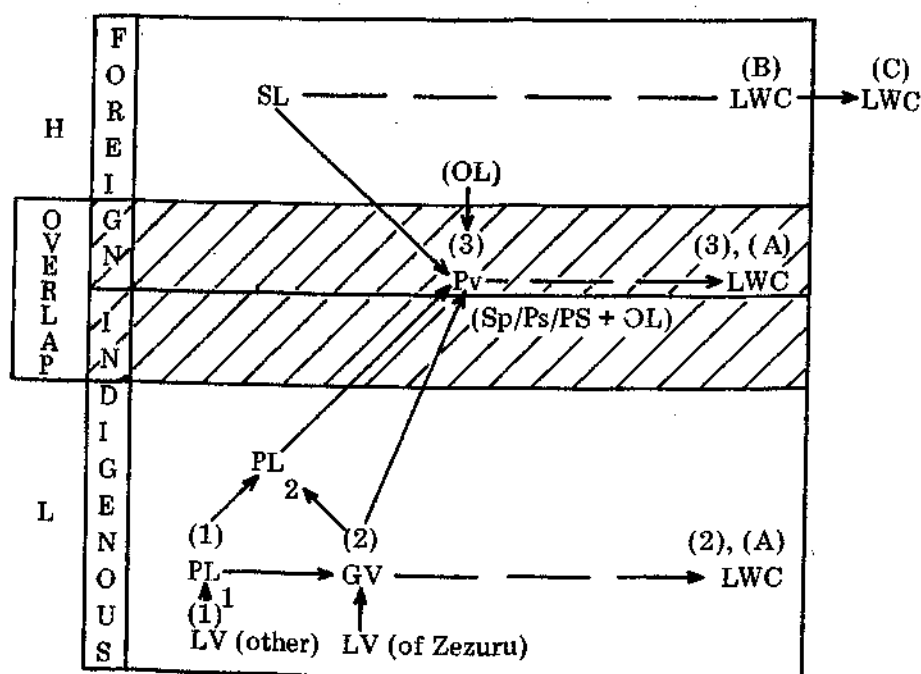
From Figure 1 it may be observed that a gradual process of domination by a Zezuru-based variety of Shona is in evidence. One may well claim that Zezuru is becoming the *de facto* 'prestige-laden standard language' *vis-à-vis*, not the other dialects as such, but their sub-dialects or LV as the numerous 'local patois'.⁴ For reasons of ethnic identity these LV are preserved but their speakers adopt certain linguistic features from Zezuru to

¹ M. Hannan, *Standard Shona Dictionary* (Salisbury, Rhodesia Literature Bureau, 2nd edit., 1974).

² The problem of acceptability will be discussed later in 4.0.

³ U. Weinreich, *Languages in Contact* (The Hague, Mouton, 1953), 1.

⁴ J. H. Greenberg, *Language, Culture and Communication* (Stanford, Stanford Univ. Press, 1971), 185.



KEY

- LV : Local Variety (Sub-dialect e.g. Duma, Shawasha)
 PL₁ : Primary Language (Dialect other than Zezuru)
 GV : General Variety (Zezuru-based)
 PL₂ : Primary Language ('Standard Shona')
 SL : Secondary Language (English)
 OL : Other Language (s) (e.g. Cewa, Afrikaans, Ndebele)
 PV : Popular Variety (Shona + English and/or Other)
 Sp, Ps, SP : Manner of switching or amount of interference (see Note 3)
 Sp(o) : Secondary Language Predominant(o)—Other Languages(s)
 Ps(o) : Primary Language Predominant
 PS(o) : Balanced Switching
 H, L : 'High', 'Low' in diglossic situation
 H : Dominant or Upper Language (English)
 L : Lower Language (Shona)
 LWC : Language for Wider Communication
 (1), (2), (3) : Intra-group Communication Levels (where 'Group' refers to entire Shona-speaking community)
 (A), (B), (C) : Inter-group Communication Levels
 (A) : (sub-) Dialect + (sub-) Dialect
 (B) : Shona + Other (Rhodesian)
 (C) : International

avoid the use of 'marked' varieties which they think may carry some stigma.* For example, the verb stem *-dya* (eat) is pronounced in a variety of ways in different parts of the country, but Salisbury at least, most people say [d₃ ga] as in Zezuru.

However Standard Shona (PL₂) is still struggling to be born, and this creates serious problems for a work with such an obviously ambitious title as *Standard Shona Dictionary*. The situation is further complicated by a fluid social situation in which PL₂ is struggling against a faster-growing PV. The PV is itself very unstable, lexically at any rate, being a variety of admixtures of Shona (the L) and English (the H) in a diglossic situation, plus interference from other languages (OL) according to the degree to which individual speakers have been exposed to them. Examples of such languages with which Shona has or has had contact are Ndebele, Cewa, Sena, Afrikaans and Portuguese.

The terms 'interference', 'high' (H) or 'low' (L), 'sub-dialect', 'dialect' or 'language', 'native', 'indigenous' or 'foreign', and 'loanwords' or 'borrowed forms' are used in this paper in a technical sense without any evaluative or emotional character. The view taken here is the neutral one that at any given point in time the state of a language cannot be better or worse than any of its previous forms; nor can a language be better or worse than any other language in the same period of history. Cultures differ, change and interact, and languages must adopt accordingly 'to suit the occupancy of a new personality'.* Rather, it is being suggested here that a case can be made for *multiple diglossia* in the Shona speech community: (a) along a triglossic pattern from LV through PL₂/PV to English (E) (as in Figure 2); and (b) between each variety of Shona and E (as in Figure 3).

NOTES TO FIG. 1

1. PL₂ is not indicated as a LWC because it has no individual existence in natural speech flow.
2. In the shaded overlap the arrows converge on PV. In the same area are also found two varieties, 'English' and Shona', neither of which is anybody's first language; but whether a case can be made for a 'Shona-English dialect' is a moot point.
3. The term 'interference' in this paper is used in the neutral sense, i.e. to refer to instances of deviation from the norms of the bilingual's PL as a result of his familiarity with SL₂.
4. The term 'Shona' here is used to refer to any or all of its varieties from LV to PV.

* K. G. Mkanganwi of the Department of Linguistics, University of Rhodesia, suggests in a personal communication that the result of such attitudes is the emergence of what may be described as Town Shona (which would be the same in status as PV in this paper).

* E. Haugen, *The Ecology of Language* (Stanford, Stanford Univ. Press, 1972), 303. Compare also, M. H. Abdulaziz-Mkilifi, 'Triglossia and Swahili-English bilingualism', *Language in Society* (1972), I, 197-213.

What one gets in the end is not a simple case of diglossia between say, LV and GV or PL⁷ or between Shona and English, if we accept Fishman's modification of the notion.⁸ Nor could a further modification to incorporate the notion of triglossia adequately describe the manner in which the linguistic versatility of Shona speakers has developed, or is developing, some patterns of usage as social norms.

Figure 2

TRIGLOSSIA			
H	=	ENGLISH	
L	=	PL ₂ /PV	= H
LV			= L

Figure 3

MULTIPLE DIGLOSSIA						
H	=	E	—	E	—	E
L	=	LV _(x)	—	PL	—	PV

The situation then is complex and perhaps the inadequacies of Hannan's dictionary reflect the practical difficulties that confront any attempt to describe Shona as a whole. The language is heterogeneous and the social situation fluid. The development of a standard dialect is not easy to predict or control in a multiple-diglossic situation because the speakers' socio-linguistic behaviour tends away from purity towards an inter-language in the overlap area in Figure 1. Hence the real need to give serious attention to borrowed forms and innovations in the language. The whole point in setting out a descriptive model of options available to the speaker is to underline the problems of compiling a dictionary of 'Standard Shona'. Hannan's work, very admirable though it is, cannot be regarded as a *complete* dictionary of Shona and, strictly speaking, it is not really a dictionary of 'Standard Shona'.

All this is not to suggest, however, that no efforts are being made to modernize the language. Indeed Hannan's dictionary is one big contribution in that direction. That the language is being rebuilt and codified is not disputed. The Literature Bureau, educational institutions and the broadcasting media and some of the smaller newspapers are all contributing in their small ways to processes of codification and elaboration, the twin-aspects of

⁷ Cp. C. A. Ferguson, 'Diglossia', in D. Hymes, *Language, Culture and Society* (New York, Harper and Row, 1964), 429-45.

⁸ J. Fishman, 'Societal bilingualism: Stable and transitional', in his *Language in Sociocultural Change* (Stanford, Stanford Univ. Press, 1972), 135-52.

language modernization.* But this process lacks formal planning (e.g. in the sense of a national language policy). The result is that although standardization in grammar, orthography and phonology has made some progress, there is some confusion at the lexical level: language elaboration involving the addition of technical vocabulary, for instance, is lagging far behind language codification. Language elaboration is an on-going process¹⁰ but it is being managed mainly at the ideolectal level. This is probably why the general tendency is to switch from Shona to English every now and then, because English acts both as the language of specialized information and of wider communication.¹¹ On Fergusson's scale, then, Shona could be placed at 'W.I' ('written I') where use is only for 'normal written purpose'.¹²

Hannan's handling of the situation will now be discussed.

1.1. *The Second Edition.* On the whole it can be said that Hannan was bolder in the second than in the first¹³ edition of the Shona dictionary as far as the incorporation of new words is concerned. That some attention was paid to the effective attitudes of the mass of the speakers at the PV level at the expense of 'purity'¹⁴ is indicated by the numerous borrowings and creations contained in the second edition. As linguistic diffusion is an on-going process each new edition should presumably contain new entries from PV. Some of the entries contained in the 1974 edition would probably have been rejected in 1959-61 on puristic grounds. Others had not even been created or borrowed. And now, only four years after the publication of the second edition, one feels that a lot more loanwords and innovations could be included in another revised edition without risking a war with the purists. To that extent, then, it can be said that Shona dictionaries will always be 'out of date' and future compilers must always consider new entries from PV.

A good 8 per cent of all the entries in the second edition are of foreign origin, English is the main donor language, accounting for 64 per cent of

* W. Whiteley, 'Introduction' to *Language Use and Social Change* (London, Oxford Univ. Press for International African Inst., 1971), 1-2.

¹⁰ Cp. A. R. Diebold, 'Incipient bilingualism', in Hymes, *Language, Culture and Society*, 495-508, on lexical borrowing and general acculturation. Here reference is not to the fully integrated loans which are learnt from childhood, but to the more recent ones which are learnt through subsequent contact.

¹¹ Cp. E. A. Nida and W. L. Wonderly, 'Communication roles of languages in multilingual societies', in Whiteley, *Language Use and Social Change*, 57-74.

¹² G. A. Ferguson, 'The language factor in national development', in F. A. Rice (ed.), *Study of the Role of Second Languages in Asia, Africa and Latin America* (Washington, Centre for Applied Linguistics, 1962), 9.

¹³ M. Hannan, *Standard Shona Dictionary* (London, Macmillan, 1959; reprinted with corrections, 1961).

¹⁴ J. R. Rayfield, *The Languages of a Bilingual Community* (The Hague, Mouton, 1970), 105. Cp. also, O. Jespersen, *Growth and Structure of the English Language* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1938), 81.

all these loanwords. Among the constituent classes or form classes the nouns are outstanding as the most hospitable to newcomers, accounting for 79 per cent of all the loanwords. Most of these loan-nouns have been adopted in classes 3, 5 and 9 where reference is non-human, and in class 1/1a¹⁵ where reference is human. The most productive noun classes in this respect are 9 and 5, accounting for 53 per cent and 29 per cent of the total loan-nouns respectively.¹⁶

For reasons of space, the full implications of these figures for Shona in linguistic terms cannot be stated here. These figures are only intended to indicate the general direction in which the total composition of the language is changing, and only in this connection one or two notes may be made here.

Nouns are most hospitable to newcomers because in a contact situation between H and L, the vocabulary of L proves most deficient where material culture is concerned. It is also very probable that the influences exerted by SL and OL and PV are greater than is indicated by these figures because, in addition to outright transfer of elements, the semantic function of native terms may be broadened through the influence of another language. The use of *imba* to refer to any type of (modern) building, of *zuva* to refer to 'date', and of *chidimbu* to refer to 'fraction' or 'percentage' are good examples of this. For the most part Hannan gives these new meanings although in some cases (e.g. in the case of *imba*) he fails to do so.

Another problem for the compilers appears to have been the incidence of archaisms and preferred loans. Loan creations as such (e.g. *hangurwa* for 'biscuit', *dzimudzangara* for 'radio, radiogram' and *chitundumutseremutserere* for 'rocket') do not occur as often as their directly imported equivalents (e.g. *bhisikitsi*, *redhiyo/redhiyogiramu* and *roketi*). That these direct loans are more easily popularized is probably because they are introduced at the same time as the items to which they refer, while the loan creations are new coinages stimulated by a need to match designations in English. These are generally used only by those people with some special interest in the language who, therefore, consciously avoid using 'foreign words' whenever they can help it.

One result of this situation is that there has grown a large number of what may be described as 'borrowed synonyms' for native Shona terms. The dictionary has many examples of these. Another result of this duality is competition between the lexical items involved. This 'struggle' may be balanced and duplication may result; e.g. between *mugwagwa* and *rodhi* <

¹⁵ The writer prefers to treat 1a+1 and 2+2a+2b as composite classes.

¹⁶ These percentages were in the first instance calculated to two decimal places but the loanword counting and the calculations have not been revised. It is therefore possible that one or more of them could be wrong but, however this may be, the degree of possible error is felt to be negligible.

English, 'road'. Unless the new term is consciously rejected (e.g. teachers generally penalize their pupils for using the Fanagalo words *chikafu* (food) and *manje* (now)), the old word may be discarded as its content is fully covered by the new: e.g. *kobiri*—»*peni*—»*sendi* for 'penny, cent', and *chi-doonyera*—»*dhisikodhi* for 'discord' (in singing). Yet another result of this duality may be specialization of content. For example, whereas *chiremba* is the Shona word for 'doctor', many people usually use *chiremba* to refer to the *n'anga* (herbalist), while the loanword *dhokota* is used to refer to the European-type medical practitioner. In Karanga *badza* means both 'plough' and 'hoe', but now the first meaning occurs only rarely, while the loanword *geja* < Nguni is the more common word for 'plough'.

While a dictionary cannot be expected to describe all these possible relationships between so-called equivalents, it is being suggested here that simply indicating that given terms are equivalents is not enough. At least the more obvious archaisms or rare forms (such as *bhahari* < Arabic, 'sea' and *bhangeni* < ?, 'very strong, well brewed beer') could be indicated as such. This is a point which is overlooked in Hannan's dictionary. The whole point is that, however desirable it may be, it is not possible to preserve all the words of language in speech. Even without interference from other languages, some words in a language will simply become obsolete as new coinages are popularized. Low frequency of words, or homonymy, or the loss of expressive force by affective words are all internal factors that contribute to the innovating process and the shedding of older forms. This is not altogether undesirable and the lexicographer must not ignore these natural processes.

2.0 Dialectal Selection. The language situation described in 1.0 means that dialectal bias is unavoidable even at the lexical level. This bias tends away from LV and PL, towards a Zezuru-based PV. It is the latter of which Hannan's dictionary is a representation, and from that point of view the title *Standard Shona Dictionary* is misleading. It refers more to an ideal to be built on PL₂ (which would doubtless be influenced by PV) but whose realization is neither close nor guaranteed. At best Hannan's work represents a long step at the beginning of a journey towards that goal. In the 'Introduction' the compilers indicate that their entries were drawn from Karanga, Manyika, Korekore (Budya) and Zezuru (p. vii). Perhaps the title *A Dictionary of Central Shona* would have been more suitable. A dictionary of Standard Shona would have to draw items from at least one more dialect, Ndau.

The status accorded to Ndau, Rozvi and Kalanga is both unclear and unsatisfactory. Presumably Kalanga was not represented because of low intelligibility and some structural dissimilarities from Central Shona. Perhaps 'Rozvi proper' was excluded for similar reasons. By 'Rozvi proper' here is

not meant the 'marked' variety of the Karanga-speaking Rozvi people (e.g. those of Chief Gumunyu, formerly of Bikita but now living in Gokwe). This 'Rozvi proper' is difficult to place as a sub-dialect¹⁷ and very few of those who claim to be Rozvi can claim proficiency in it. For that reason its claim for representation in Standard Shona is weak. But the position is different with Nda. Nda is commonly regarded as a major dialect of Shona but it was not even represented in the compiling team.¹⁸

There are some words that are typically Nda but occur often enough in Central Shona: e.g. *Ndauwe*, interjective (Sir), which is indicated as 'K Ko' (Karanga and Korekore). Another example, *twara*, v.t. (carry) could perhaps have been indicated 'M Nd' (Manyika and Nda), and not just 'M'. *Bonore*, 5, 'maize cob' is also 'M Nd' and not just 'M'. The compilers gave so much attention to loans from the Nguni cluster of languages. Since Nda has more influence from Nguni than any other dialect and at the lexical level many items are found both in Nda and Nguni¹⁹ this connection could be quite revealing for Central Shona if more attention were paid to Nda vocabulary in the future.

The compilers not only found it convenient to ignore Nda, Kalanga and Rozvi, but also treated them as foreign languages as the few entries from these dialects show. For example: *chipunha*, 7, 'Shave spirit' is indicated as '< Nda'; *murisana*, 1, 'Boy' is indicated as '< Rozvi'; and *ndebwa*, 9, 'Matter of concern. Case' is indicated as '< siKalanga'. This treatment places the three dialects on a par with Venda, Sotho, Lozi, Swahili, and so on, the entries from which are correctly indicated 'from' (<).

The general argument being put forward here is that, whereas in respect of structure Nda, Kalanga and Rozvi may be expected to adjust in the direction of Central Shona, at the lexical level Standard Shona must admit more items from these dialects.

2.1 Identification of Source. Even where the origin of a word is clearly foreign, identification of the source or donor language is not always possible. In many cases Hannan fails to determine the source and he simply indicates 'For' for 'Foreign'. Most of the loanwords for which he gives the source are from English (E), Afrikaans (A), Fanagalo (F) and Nguni (Ng). Presumably these are the languages with which Hannan and/or members of his team were familiar; therefore they could readily identify the interlingual connection where words from these languages were concerned. Relatively few are

¹⁷ It is probably a sub-dialect of Kalanga.

¹⁸ See Hannan, 'Introduction' (2nd edit.), viii.

¹⁹ Cf. K. G. Mkanganwi, 'An Outline of the Morphology of Substantives in Nda', with a Preliminary Note on Nda Phonology' (Univ. of Rhodesia, unpubl. M.Phil. thesis, 1973), 48.

the loanwords indicated as having been borrowed from Arabic, Swahili, Cewa, Portuguese and Sena which must also have had quite an impact on Shona. It is quite possible that most of those loanwords simply marked 'For' were borrowed from these languages. Some etymological work along this direction could prove rewarding. One would probably find that the 64 per cent figure for loanwords from English is too high if all the older loanwords from the other languages could be identified. While borrowings from English are easily identifiable because most Shona speakers know some English, borrowings with more obscure origins tend, if and when accepted in speech, to become fully integrated and lose their interlingual identity. Most speakers are unaware, for example, that the following are borrowings from different languages: *kwereta*, *chituta*, *shumaira*, *chikerema*, *chingwa*, *tsvigiri*, *chinoto* and *bweza*.

Another line of inquiry that could also prove rewarding would be to determine the role played by the Nguni (in particular the Zulu and Sotho) in transmitting English and Afrikaans words into Shona during the early years of White settlement (especially since Fanagalo seems to be Nguni-based). Hannan's assumption that many words from English (e.g. *foshoro* (shovel)) were borrowed via Nguni needs to be tested before the Nguni can be described as agents of borrowing for Shona. It is possible that Hannan's team's familiarity with some Nguni language(s) may well have given them some preconceptions respecting source languages. It seems that where there is similarity of form between Shona and Nguni words, Hannan tends to indicate ' <Ng', e.g. for *-kupuka*, v.i. (become rich) and *-ora*, v.t. (gather) and *-vonga*, v.t. and i. (thank (religious)). Could these verbs simply be cases of coincidence — especially if we consider that the description 'Nguni' is conveniently vague, and that Nguni and Shona are related in Common Bantu anyway?

One inconsistency noted relates to Hannan's indication to source languages for different verb forms built on the same radicals. The verb stem *-nata*, v.t. (drink (greedily)) is indicated ' <Ng', but the extended form *-natira*, v.t. and i. (drink by sucking) is indicated 'KZ'. But surely the same radical *-nat-* in the former has only had the perfective extension *-ira* added to it in the latter form. These two forms are either both foreign or both native.

3.0. The Format

As far as the lay-out of entries is concerned two areas require comment: the handling of homonyms and allocation to constituent classes.

3.1. Homonyms. Homonyms are linguistic forms that have the same phonemic shape but differ in meaning, e.g. *mota*, cl. 5 (boil) and *mota*, 9 (motor-car). The problem is in deciding whether a given difference in meaning amounts to homonymy or simply represents narrowed or extended meanings of the same linguistic form where the guide to exact meaning is context.

One meaning may be taken as normal or central (just as one allomorph or allophone may be chosen as basic) and the others as marginal (metaphoric or transferred). Here the practical situation gives the clue to which of the variant meanings is intended.²⁰

But what may be viewed as variants of the same form by some speakers may be viewed as homonyms by others. That such situations occur is a problem that is acknowledged in linguistics, the general assumption being that: 'In certain communities (speech-communities) some utterances are alike as to form and meaning.'²¹ This could be construed to mean that each linguistic form has a constant and specific meaning — which, of course, is erroneous but is useful because it is convenient.

Hannan, then, could be excused for listing series of unrelated meanings under single entries where others (e.g. the present writer) would rather have all homonyms entered separately. However, the main contention here is that this convenient practice is resorted to unnecessarily in some obvious cases. The following pairs of homonyms are all entered as single lexical items by Hannan:

a)	<i>koroni</i> ,	9,	< A: <i>Koring</i> , 'wheat'
	<i>koroni</i> ,	9,	< E: 'Crown' (money)
b)	<i>koti</i> ,	9,	< E: 'Court of law'
	<i>koti</i> ,	9,	< E: 'Quart' (measure)
c)	<i>minzi</i> ,	9,	< E: 'Minced meat'
	<i>minzi</i> ,	9/10,	< E: 'Means'
d)	<i>pomba</i> ,	v.t.,	(native) 'Wind round. Bandage'
	<i>pomba</i> ,	v.t.,	< E: 'Pump'
e)	<i>vhesi</i> ,	5 & 9,	< E: 'Verse'
	<i>vhesi</i> ,	5 & 9,	< E: 'Vest'.

The meanings of these pairs are obviously unrelated and in some cases it will be observed that the source languages are different (a) or the models in the source language are different (b, c, e). A distinction must be made between such homonyms and single forms with several but related meanings, e.g. *kotoni*, 9, < E: 'Raw cotton' or 'Cotton thread' or 'Crochet thread'.

3.2. *Constituent Classes*. Several criticisms can be made respecting Hannan's allocation of loanwords to constituent classes (e.g. verbs, nouns) and to their sub-classes (e.g. noun classes).

²⁰ L. Bloomfield, *Language* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1933), 149-51.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 144.

Some cases of allocation to the wrong constituent class were noted. The following examples are all used in adverbial or adjectival function but have been entered as nouns: *manje* (now); *futi* (again); *hadhi* (hard); *seti* (nicely); *mbaimbai* (later); *mbichana* (little, small amount) and *nyowani* (new).

A number of borrowings were entered as members of one constituent class (e.g. as verbs) but their equivalent forms in another constituent class (e.g. as nouns) were not entered. It must be emphasized that the present writer is not suggesting that every borrowed nominal has a verbal equivalent or vice versa.²² Even where such equivalents do occur, frequency of use may be different. Some forms like *weti*, 9 (urine) and *-hwina*, v.t. (win) are very common while their equivalent forms *-weta*, v.i. (pass urine) and *hwini*, 9 (win, prize) have not gained general currency. It would be understandable if the latter two were to be excluded from the list of entries (although they have in fact been entered). But in the case of such commonly used words as *-ticha*, v.t. (teach), *wari*, 9 (worry) and *-noka*, v.t. (knock), the decision to exclude them seems either arbitrary or an oversight, since their equally common equivalent forms *ticha*, 1a (teacher), *-wara*, v.i. (worry), and *noki*, 9 (knock) were entered. In fact the verb *-wara* is probably less common than the noun *wari*.

Within the constituent class of nouns Hannan must have had some problems in deciding on allocation to noun classes especially since many loan-nouns are ambivalent in classification. These five nouns, all borrowed from English, all occur as class 5 or 9: *karenda* (calendar); *kenduru* (candle); *goridhe* (gold); *girama* (grammar) and *vheserina* (vaseline). Because ambivalence in classification is made complex by the complex language situation described in 1.0., the treatment of these nouns needs extra care.

Hannan is not consistent in his classification of such nouns. Where the ambivalence is due to dialectal differences (e.g. *vhiki* and *bhuku* are 9 in Karanga and 5 in Zezuru, PL_a and PV) it is understandable if one option should be abandoned in the name of standardization. But in other cases where such ambivalence occurs at all levels from LV to PV, Hannan's choice of class can only be described as arbitrary. Examples are:

- rivhi* (leave) given as 5 but also occurs as 9
- rejimendi* (regiment) given as 5 but also occurs as 9
- jerigadhi* (prison warder) given as 5 but also occurs as 1a
- gadhi* (guard) given as 5 but also occurs as 1a
- fuzi* (stooge) given as 5 but also occurs as 1a
- robhoti* (robot) given as 5 but also occurs as 9
- raisi* (rice) given as 9 but also occurs as 5
- patapata* (sandal) given as 9 but also occurs as 5.

²² Such a suggestion would be ridiculous in view of the observations that have already been made about relative receptivity to newcomers in 1.1.

Ambivalence between 5 and 9 (with no secondary meaning involved) is particularly common. The explanation for this is simple. The bases for classification of loan-nouns are semantic (e.g. 1a if 'human' and 3 if 'tree') and phonological where the initial sound corresponds with an independent prefix (e.g. *chinwa* is 7 and *uroja* is 14).²³ But since borrowing tends towards simplification of forms and relaxation of grammatical rules²⁴ not only do the majority of loan-nouns enter the zero-prefix classes 5 and 9 (which renders addition of an independent prefix unnecessary), but also, where neither semantic nor phonological considerations are overriding, speakers feel free to use 5 or 9 concords: e.g. when referring to *kitibhegi*, *napukeni*, *tangi*, *dhuku*. Hence the ambivalence. This is a common practice which must represent effective attitudes of the speakers which the lexicographer must take into consideration. Loan-nouns, then, need more careful treatment in this respect.²⁵

The tendency towards relaxation of grammatical rules during the borrowing process creates yet another problem: the occurrence of irregular singular-plural pairings such as the following:

(i) Singular 1/1a	→	Plural 6
<i>nesi</i>	→	<i>manesi</i>
<i>mupurisa</i>	→	<i>mapurisa</i>
<i>hweta</i>	→	<i>mahweta</i>
(ii) Singular 9	→	Plural 6
<i>bhebbhi</i>	→	<i>mabhebbhi</i>
<i>chukasi</i>	→	<i>machukasi</i>

Here the problem for the lexicographer is how to indicate these irregularities. Hannan resolves this problem by indicating the independent prefix of the plural form or giving the complete plural form although he does not do this consistently (e.g. he only indicates 1a after *neni* <E: 'nanny'). This seems satisfactory enough but perhaps it would be more economical simply to indicate the irregular plurals by the numbers of their appropriate classes, especially since these borrowed forms seem to be quite versatile.²⁶

²³ Cp. M. Guthrie, 'Gender, number and person in Bantu linguistics', in his *Collected Papers in Bantu Linguistics* (Farnborough, Gregg, 1970), 45-56.

²⁴ E. C. Bokamba, 'The impact of multilingualism on language structures: The case of Central Africa', *Anthropological Linguistics* (1977), XIX, 181-202.

²⁵ It is difficult to see why, for instance, Hannan classifies *katakware* (cultivator) as 9 and 1a; *matiridha* (blue soap) as 9 and 1a; and *minitsi* (minute) as 5 and 9.

²⁶ A different type of versatility exhibited by loan-words is in phonological assimilation. Single models, e.g. 'umbrella', 'bomb', 'Bible', may each yield a replica pronounced and spelt variously, e.g. *bhambo/bhambu/bhombu*; *amburera/sumburera/sambureni*; *Bhaibheri/Bhaibhere/Bhaibhiri*.

Chukasi and *bhebbhi*, for example, may also be class 10. The plural forms of these could then be indicated 'pl:10 and 6'. But perhaps this is not a very important point.

4.0. Acceptability

In any language there will always be the older, fully integrated loans and the more recent, controversial ones. These groups represent the two extremes of a continuum, as it were. For that reason it is not possible at any given point in the development of a natural language to draw up a list of acceptable 'new' words.²⁷ The general tendency seems to be to reject the latest importations and innovations on puristic grounds. But given time, many of these 'rejects' will gain general currency and become fully integrated in the language—even so much so that their foreign source will be forgotten or just cease to be relevant (except to the academic as a matter of historical inference). This creates serious problems for the lexicographer and especially one who has to work in a complex language as that described in 1.0.

In the opening paragraph of his 'Introduction' (p. vii) Hannan states that one of his team's aims was 'to provide as complete a list as could be made . . . of the words used in speech and in the writing' of the four dialects they handled.

One can only try to update language in the lexicon but a variety of pressures require that one be selective when handling words used in speech, especially at the Popular Variety level. It may be necessary to become arbitrary. Here the writer must emphasize that his comments respecting selection or omission of specific words by Hannan are based on his impressions as a first-language speaker (who could be wrong) rather than on any scientific study to test people's attitudes about their use.

Criteria for acceptability can be determined, but faithfully to adhere to them would be impracticable. Greenberg suggests three 'indices of assimilation': (1) phonological and grammatical adaptation; (2) frequency of use in various socio-economic strata and occupational groups; and (3) the judgments of speakers regarding the degree of 'nativeness' of forms of foreign origin.²⁸ The first can be worked out by the linguist easily enough, but (2) and (3) would require a mammoth survey. Such a survey would have to become a permanent institution, continually reviewing and updating the vocabulary. Further, it must be maintained at the same pace as sociolinguistic change. Although perhaps desirable, such a project is practically impossible, if only because of the possible costs involved.

²⁷ Haugen, *The Ecology of Language*, 335.

²⁸ Greenberg, *Language, Culture and Communication*, 187-8.

Since attitudes are so much involved with the whole issue almost anybody will always point out words that 'shouldn't be there', words that 'must be there', or words that 'must be acceptable if this one is acceptable'. Lists A, B and C below should illustrate this point. In 'A' are words entered by Hannan but which the writer feels are controversial. In list 'B' are words which the writer feels should have been entered but were not. List 'C' contains more words which were not entered but which the writer feels have the same claim for entry as those in list 'A'

LIST A:

<i>chukasi</i>	9	(<?)	'girl (-friend)'
<i>bhureka</i>	v.i.	(<E)	'take a break'
<i>ena</i>	v.i.&t.	(<E)	'earn'
<i>ema</i>	v.i.	(<E)	'aim'
<i>checha!</i>	inter.	(<F)	'Hurry up!'
<i>dhaiza</i>	v.t.	(<E:dice)	'trick, deceive'
<i>vhaya</i>	v.i.	(<?)	'go'
<i>bhepa</i>	inter.	(<Ng)	'Sorry'
<i>wena</i>	pron.	(<F)	'you'
<i>zemena</i>	v.t.	(<E)	'examine (medical)'

LIST B:

<i>kimbari</i>	5 & 9	(<E)	'type of brick'
<i>sori</i>	inter.	(<E)	'sorry'
<i>ticha</i>	v.t.	(<E)	'teach'
<i>timba</i>	9	(<E)	'timber'
<i>dhigiri</i>	5	(<E)	'degree'
<i>dhenja</i>	9	(<E)	'colour red, e.g. on robot'

LIST C

<i>mushe</i>	inter.	(<F/Ng)	'well'
<i>kanjani</i>	inter.	(<F/Ng)	'How is it?'
<i>chuni</i>	9	(<E:tune)	'girl-friend'
<i>muranda</i>	1	(<?)	'chap, boy-friend'
<i>dhuweta</i>	v.i.	(<?)	'die'
<i>n'anza</i>	v.t.	(<?)	'eat, scrounge'

The point being made here is not that the *Standard Shona Dictionary* has too many or too few loanwords, but rather that the treatment of loanwords of equal status within the overlap or PV area, whether these be need-filling or prestigious or facetious, is inconsistent. While the problem of selection is fully appreciated, it is felt that all loanwords can be categorized in relation to a given set of statuses. Each category could then be given

the same treatment and designations such as 'slang' or 'Chimanjemanje' or 'ChiHarare' could then be used in the dictionary. At least this would be better than arbitrary selection and would provide better guides for usage, as many users of the dictionary (e.g. in schools) may take the view that what is in the dictionary is acceptable and what is not is unacceptable.

5.0. Usefulness

In conclusion, a few remarks may be made regarding the dictionary's usefulness to first and second-language speakers. Again the views expressed in this section are impressionistic.

The first point to note is that meanings are given in English. A common criticism is that the dictionary is only useful to English-speakers, or that at any rate a good command of English is a prerequisite for profitable use of the dictionary. It is claimed that the average first-language speaker often finds himself looking up 'the meaning of the meaning' in an English dictionary. A further suggestion is that a Shona dictionary must also give the meanings in Shona.

In respect of these comments the writer has come to two conclusions:

- (a) that a closer examination of the dictionary and of the Shona speech community as a whole shows that the criticisms are not very valid; and
- (b) that a dictionary of Shona 'in Shona' is not a practical proposition at the moment, unless only a small, simple volume is envisaged.

The following entries, taken at random and reproduced as in the dictionary, should suffice to illustrate both points:

- (i) **munzungu** [LLH] KoZ n 3
sp small tree: *Cassia singeana*. cp *kaudziudzi* Ko (B); *mudyamhungu* K; *mutandanyoka* M.
- (ii) **-shanangura** [L]K vt Choose. Select. cp *-sarudza* K Ko MZ
- (iii) **tsapata** [LLL] KZ n 9 Worn-out sleeping-mat. cp *rutsekete* M. *Tsapata rukukwe hazvienzani nokuvata pasi*: An old sleeping mat is not as bad as sleeping on the ground (i.e. better an inferior article than nothing at all) prov.

The descriptions that follow the entries are clearly intended to be useful to everybody: the tone patterns, form classes and English meanings are given mainly for the benefit of the second-language speaker; cross-references to equivalents and near equivalents in different dialects (excepting Ndau, Kalanga and Rozvi; see 2.0) are given mainly for the benefit of the first-language speaker; and in many cases, examples of use in sentences are given for the benefit of both. The main body of this volume (pp. 1-757) is of great value to all categories of speakers. This 'Shona-English' section, then, is intended for the general user.

It is the supplementary sections which are intended for specific groups. The 'English-Shona index' and the 'English-Shona index to ideophones' are of use only to the second-language student of Shona. One cannot think of situations in which a native Shona speaker may look up items in these sections unless he is translating from English.²⁹ Then there is the 'Index to Botanical Names' which the specialist will find particularly useful. There is also a lot of grammatical information for the student of Shona in the descriptions given after the Shona entries in the main section and in the tables of 'Class Prefixes, Predicatives and Qualificatives' and of 'Verb Forms' both of which are given in the preface. Of particular use for teachers and students alike at the secondary school level (and at an even higher level for those learning Shona as a second language) are the 'Guiding Principles for Word Division in Standard Shona' also given in the preface.³⁰

As for the suggestion that a unilingual Shona dictionary is a must, the following observations should be noted. Firstly, the native Shona speaker who finds himself having to consult a dictionary is presumably literate in both Shona and English. English is a compulsory subject at school and in their everyday lives Shona people generally find themselves compelled by a variety of pressures to learn and use some English. Therefore, to the extent that all its users are likely to be literate in English, the dictionary's usefulness to the first language speaker (even without considering the cross-references in Shona) is greater than might appear to be the case.

Secondly, it must be pointed out that the statement of meanings is the weakest point in the study of any language. Meanings are very unstable. Theoretically, one hundred per cent precision in the statement of meanings would require advancement of the natural languages to a stage where a scientific classification of the entire 'speaker's world' — including emotions and concepts — would be possible. This is an ideal which is impossible to realize. Therefore, in practice, meanings of linguistic forms are given by demonstration (e.g. 'this is . . .'), by translation (e.g. from English to Shona) and by circumlocution (i.e. in the manner of a unilingual dictionary), except where definition is possible in terms of some science.³¹

On a unilingual Shona dictionary, the options would be circumlocution, where indigenous forms are concerned, and translation, mainly from English. But owing to the lack of equivalents, such a dictionary must allow a considerable amount of partially assimilated English forms to explain new concepts

²⁹ Or, unless he belongs to a family which has gravitated towards what W. E. Lambert describes as 'the other linguistic-cultural group', 'A social psychology of bilingualism' in Whiteley, *Language Use and Social Change*, 104.

³⁰ Given as originally set out by G. Fortune in *A Guide to Shona Spelling* (Salisbury, Longman, 1972).

³¹ Cp. Bloomfield, *Language*, 140.

and technical terms.³² Even then it is doubtful if such a form of Shona could cope with all the codes of natural sciences. Such an attempt would produce a huge volume which would still fail to satisfy the purists among the protagonists of a unilingual Shona dictionary.

This being the position, the writer feels that a bilingual dictionary like Hannan's (with improvements, of course) is the most practical solution for the moment. That a unilingual dictionary is desirable is not contested here — in fact it is being taken for granted. There is no reason why first attempts cannot be made now. But any such attempts should be realistic. Perhaps a start could be made with a small, simple dictionary without technical terms. Improvements could be made in the future. As the language develops it should become capable of describing more and more concepts and subjects. However, this is a process that must be awaited rather than prescribed, and present indications are that this process will be slow.

³² Cp. Nida and Wonderly, 'Communication roles of languages', 57-74, on languages of specialized information.