

“No Place for Old men”: Ikalanga Oral Narratives and Ageism

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Abstract

“Retired but not tired” is an African aphorism that Professor Moteane John Melamu can wear like a fitting cap. Is there perhaps something in African folklore that can unravel the enigma of rejection on account of age when there is much more a person can still offer despite being an elder academic? Ikalanga oral narratives provide a visual window through which stylistic and paralinguistic features of a performer coalesce in an arena to impart a particular expectation on the audience and wider society. These expectations range from mimicking stereotypical behaviour to unorthodox violent reactions. Have oral narratives been unkind to ageism? In the Bakalanga artistic experience, characters tend to portray the old with suspicion, derision, and no small amount of fear. This paper examines the phenomenon of ageism in Ikalanga oral narrative and some narrative types from other cultural experiences.

Keywords:aphorism; Ikalanga;retired; African folklore; widow

Introduction

Kalanga (TjiKalanga or IKalanga) belongs together with Shona languages of Zimbabwe. It is closer to the Karanga dialect of Shona. These languages fall within the Zone S of Bantu languages of Southern Africa (Chebanne *et al.* 1995; Mathangwane 1999; Guthrie 1967 and 1971; Wentzel 1983). Moyo (2002) provides an account of the break-down of the Kalanga kingdoms and the modern state of the dialectalised Kalanga. Chebanne *et al.* (2018) explain that the Kalanga that is now mainly spoken in Botswana is the Lilima. However, most Kalanga speakers are found in Zimbabwe where the spoken forms take from Lilima and Taulanda (Moyo 2002). The early Christian literatures which were published in Dombodema (Zimbabwe) were in this dialect of Kalanga (Ndebo Mbuya yoBuhe gwe Ndzimu and Gwaba le Njimbo Dzinolumbidza Ndzimu).

Despite the prevalence now of secondary as opposed to primary orality, a lot in orature can provide telling insights into human relationships today (Ong 1982). Orature is much more than an artistic form of cultural expression. It provides a doorway between the pragmatic, tangible world, and the abstract, fantastic world. It is across this doorway that moral anecdotes, expectations, repercussions and much more traverse from the voice of the narrator to the ears of the listener. In genres where storytelling becomes performance, the antics of the performer described as non-verbal clichés by Scheub (1977) become a visual reference point to augment the verbal text. This article discusses ageism as depicted by Ikalanga oral tale and other narratives and shows how subtle changes in labelling lead to an emotional void between the old woman and the audience.

Ageism, a term coined by Butler (1969), is a form of discrimination based on one’s age. ‘Evidence-based research has shown that ageism is characterised as a form of age discrimination and is a severe problem’ (Atumah and Abdulazeez 2019:295). Ikalanga oral narratives provide interesting concepts as to how the aged are presented in society and this paper provides interesting information given that no data is available on ageism in Ikalanga oral narratives. ‘Critical ageing studies are unknown in many university undergraduate programmes, and education about an ageing population is not apparent in the public-school courses. It is even lacking in the socio-economic

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research that informs Botswana policy, even as it is becoming a medical concern for pension fund administrators. In the absence of these studies, current myths of ageing become contemporary, social folklore of the worst order' (Thornton 2002:311). It appears that this is a field that could do with more research. Thornton (2002:301) further asserts that 'efforts to educate or inform people, whether by gerontologists, professionals, and practitioners, using the current myths of ageing contribute to their persistence as ageist stereotypes.' Various literature points out that identifying what causes ageism is anything but straightforward. The 'root cause of ageism remains in dispute, with ambiguity regarding whether age discrimination against older adults has evolutionary or sociocultural roots' (North and Fiske 2012:1007). Ageism has long been a feature of humankind. The next paragraph makes four references to this effect.

The Bible and three literary poems provide material for a preliminary examination of the subject of ageism. The attitude to the elderly has deep biblical roots. Leviticus 19: 32-33 exhorts respect for the elderly; 2 Kings 2:22-24 points out that there can be repercussions for deriding the elderly; and 1 Timothy 5:17-24 describes how the elderly may be rewarded. These three examples cover pivotal areas of reverence, punishment and reward that illustrate how relationships with the elderly in biblical times were addressed. In Ikalanga narratives, there are tales where the old are depicted as loving, sources of comfort or where they are despicable symbols of untold horrors. Socio-cultural theories of ageism put emphasis on the social roles the aged carry out and assert that older adults are labelled as irrelevant, incompetent, or devoid of any useful contribution to society (Cuddy and Fiske 2002; Fiske *et al.* 2012). In countless tales, especially those that have a healthy dose of magic realism, encounters between the youth and the elderly are fractured at best. Tales abound where the old man or woman is banished to the outskirts of society on some pretext or other, never to be welcomed back into the communal fold. What needs to be determined is the role that magic realism plays in fleshing out the undesirable attributes of the old character and if at all their banishment is self-inflicted or a result of society not knowing how to deal with a member who has passed the age of productivity. 'Oral narratives give insight into the dominant ideological formations that manifest in a society and the way communities perceive themselves and their way of interpreting the world' (Sheik 2018:46).

With respect to ageism, in orature, three African poems come to mind. These are the Igbo poem, 'Breaking kola nut' as translated by Lawrence Emeka, 'The death of Liyongo' by Muhamad bin Abubakar bin Umar al-Bakari and Senghor's dramatic poem 'Chaka'. 'Breaking kola nut' is a dramatic monologue that pivots around the ritual of the kola nut through the medium of rhetoric such as witticisms, proverbs, and aphorisms. It has a decidedly African texture to it, given its theme and multi-layered symbolism regarding Africans and their ancestral links:

KOLA is small!
 And yet is big!
 Like the sacrificial food,
 It is more important that it goes round
 Than that it fills the stomach.
 Our fathers' fathers
 And their fathers before them –
 All our ancestors –
 Saw all the fruits of the land
 But they chose kola

As the prime substance for hospitality
And for offerings:
What an old man lying down has seen,
Has the young man ever seen better
Though he perches on the highest tree? (Senanu, 1976:26-27).

This extract demonstrates that the kola nut becomes a symbolic ritual of obeisance. Age as a receptacle of wisdom and authority is given prominence here. In the poem, the old man is depicted as having a vision that cannot be matched by the zeal of youth. The poem thus venerates age, and the kola nut becomes a conduit through which the spiritual and the flesh communicate. 'The death of Liyongo' echoes Freud's Oedipus complex as it illustrates how an elderly man, who is successful, well-loved and a hero in ways that border on the fantastic, becomes targeted by his own kin. The classic Greek tale of Oedipus was used by Freud in his theory that children can have a more than platonic attraction to their opposite sex parent while displaying negative emotions towards their same sex parents. 'Human lives are inherently storied. It is the story or narrative of life which allows for arriving at 'meanings', 'feel', 'sense' of our and others' lives' (Bansal 2017:1). The hatred of the same sex parent creates a burning desire for Chaka to murder Liyongo who has done him no wrong, 'Yet in the folds of his attire, he had hidden the dagger, but no man saw it, as he sought a way of killing his father' (Senanu 1976:34).

Lacan argues that the search for meaning in a tale is only one aspect of analysis. Questions as to who has power over the narration are equally important. In other words, through psychoanalysis one examines the thematic content of the work or even the artistic construction of the text. For instance, in an oral performance, understanding the life of the oral narrator would from a psychoanalytic point of view help one to unpack the dramatization of the text. 'Breaking kola nut' and 'The death of Liyongo' show how the youth have an ambivalent relationship with the elderly. Senghor's dramatic poem 'Chaka', often used as a rallying call for negritude, goes at a tangent to 'Breaking kola nut' by looking at shamanism and treachery in a way that tries to strike an uneasy balance between African traditional practices and the modernity of Europe. There is an obdurate air about the poem in which the clash of cultures becomes a verbal battlefield for the justification of one's actions. It is a poem that depicts Chaka at his twilight, yet he is a man undiminished by age or circumstance. Despite the passage of time, Chaka is seen as an individual who remains fiery and uncompromising. He remarks, 'the greatest evil is the weakness of fear.' These three poems aptly demonstrate the ambivalence with which ageism is engaged, regardless of status, culture, or circumstance.

Nkadzikulu ne Bana be Bana Babe (The Old Woman and Her GrandChildren)

Okpewho (1992) categorizes oral narratives into four sections. The first section is based on the protagonists. This breaks them further into protagonists of human tales and those of animal tales. Where an oral narrative seems to have a mixture of such protagonists as is the case with *Nkadzikulu ne bana be bana babe*, then obviously the classification becomes murky. The second section is on the objective of the narration (if it is simply didactic or has a greater spiritual pillar). The third focuses on thematic concerns and the fourth section groups the tales according to content or instance (are they fireside/moonlight tales or told as part of divination?). *Nkadzikulu ne bana be bana babe* is a tale about an old woman who is disrespected by her grandchildren who refuse to go on errands. Feeling unwanted she packs her belongings and leaves the community to go and live in the forest. However, while there she gets no peace at all from the community and decides to take matters into her own

hands.

The interesting thing about orature is that the oral performance is what brings the narrative to life. The antics of the oral performance is key in swaying the audience's opinion about character. Though, obviously, the oral performer is not captured in this paper, one can still revert to the language in the oral text and come up with aspects of attitude, tone, diction, and other such nuances. As such the paper, will limit itself to an analysis of the text at the level of language, magic realism and song.

Regarding language, what is it with old age and surly behaviour? Is it a milestone of impending implosion or a futile attempt at warding off the cobwebs of amnesia? An argument is that 'the current myths about old people and ageing are certainly not historic. They trivialise and debase the older person and the ageing experience in their attempt to inform and educate.' (Thornton 2002:303). This will be looked at in more detail when I explain how the oral performer uses language to perpetuate stereotypes of the 'grumpy geezer.' What we see in the tale of *Nkadzikulu ne bana be bana babe* comments on how society cares little for one's state of mind when a certain age is passed. In the tale the tone is already set in the first paragraph when the oral performer uses rhetorical questions and diction. The tone when the old woman complains to her daughter is dismissive and incredulous. The rhetoric suggests that the old woman is troublesome by always sending the grandchildren on errands. Therefore, it seems inevitable that the younger members of the family revolt. Though, in African culture it is disrespectful to talk in this manner to an elder, one gets the idea that the old woman is her own worst enemy. The daughter makes it clear that the old woman is better off wandering off into the forest to die. The tone of the oral performer could thus be one in which he/she is frank and assertive about an old person's behaviour which is suffocating and not endearing, overbearing, and not enthralling. The other aspect, besides tone, that shows that the old woman has fallen out of favour is in the manner of address. For instance, in the beginning of the narrative the old woman is referred to as *nkadzikulu* (old woman) but later when she has a fall-out with the daughter and grandchildren the term of address changes to *tjikadzikulu* (old thing):

Kwakati kuli ntolo, nkadzikulu ali mu nzi ana bana be bana babe. Nkadzikulu wakabe egala ebatuma belamba. Wati lin'gwe zhuba kabe ebudza mayibabo eti, "kana imi bana babo banondikona. Ha ndibatuma abatoyenda. Abatondihwilila"[Once upon a time, an old woman, lived in a villagehome with her grandchildren. The Old woman used to send them but they would refuse. One day, she (the old woman) told the children's mother (her daughter) and said, "Your children are impossible for me. When I send them, they do not go. They do not listen to me].

Iye kabe eti kuna mayibabe, "ha! Mokhataza bana bangu kubi. Moshwa muti ndobatuma, ndobatuma, ini mubakahataza saikoku? Ini musingayende nge shango mukanoofilako? Mokhataza bana bangu kubi nkadzikulu ndin'gwi!"[But the (daughter) said to her mother (the grand mother), "Oh, you trouble my children a lot! The whole day you are saying, I am sending them, I am sending them, why do you trouble them like this? Why don't you go into the wild and die there? You are troubling my children you old woman].

This is important in that the veneer of respectability that the old woman received at the beginning has been cast aside. The woman is being cast aside as it is felt that she is of no use to the community. One imagines that the manner she is being chased away is quite painful for the old woman. 'Stereotypes are reflected in the collective and commonly used language of societies. Thus, examining the

language used by a society may provide a basis for understanding attitudes towards older adults in pre-industrial societies' (Marcus 2015:1008). In this tale, given that the old woman is referred to in an unsavoury manner, the oral performer legitimizes feelings of scorn and disdain that follow as the plot develops. Jensen and Oakley (1982) analysed the treatment of the elderly in pre-literate societies and came up with divergent results. Some pre-literate societies treated the aged with reverence due to their wisdom and knowledge of the arts, while some societies often neglected the aged and doomed them to die. In this Ikalanga tale the old woman's subsequent disappearance into the forest causes unease among the community but it is brief.

Though language provides interesting insight into human relationships, it is the use of magic realism in the text that develops as well as demeans character. Magic realism allows for a suspension of belief, it is made to turn the fantastic into the mundane and this is done by the oral performer deliberately not displaying disbelief in tone or facial gestures. In this manner, episodes that defy belief can pass off as expected and ordinary in the larger scheme of things. Though magic realism sounds like an oxymoron, neither of the two elements dominate the other. Ngom (2020) states that they work in tandem in a constant tussle to carry forth the narrative and the dramatic aspects of the oral performer. Selvarani and Hussain (2019) state that magic realism works on the mechanism of paradoxes of placing two opposites together to make a rich and complex meaning. In essence, magic realism immerses the audience and with a skilled performer, this immersion becomes an aural-visual experience. The oral narrative has three episodes worth mentioning. These are the pot scene, the morphing of the old woman and the egg hatching into a daughter.

The pot scene comes when the old woman has gathered her belongings and goes to start a new life in the forest. The four pots are not really that large since we are informed that these are cooking pots (*kabe etola dzihali dzidze*). What is interesting is that when an inquisitive boy is wandering in the forest with his hunting dog he discovers the pots in a line and upon uncovering the last one, finds the old woman inside! Either the pots have become life-size to accommodate the old woman or the old woman has shrunk to fit into the pots. The narrative is unhelpful here (although witnessing the antics of the oral performer in action would have helped. Perhaps he stooped low when demonstrating the boy's action of uncovering the pots) but what is clear is that there has been a change in size that cannot be readily explained. In any case the appearance of the old woman from the pot, being addressed in a manner that is shorn of dignity (*tjikadzikulu*) adds drama to the scene. Immediately she is out of the pot she (or 'it') chases the boy (*tjikabe tjintata*)

The boy calls out to his faithful dog, *Bademana*, which sets upon the old woman and tears her to pieces. In Ikalanga, *Bademana* is a word that denotes someone who is dear to you. It shows appreciation. When *Bademana* attacks the old woman, three verbs are used to show the level of violence against the old woman: *dzungudza*, *itjizandabula*, *itjipalulanya*. These words depict the violent nature in which the dog tears into the old woman. *Dzungudza*, for instance, is akin to the action of using both hands to rinse dirty laundry, dunking it repeatedly into water when rinsing it. So, one gets the impression the woman was being tossed about or upended over and over by the dog. Similarly, *itjipalulanya*, literally means to tear to pieces. The image is thus one of carnage, of a dismembered body. Again, the reference of the old woman as a thing neutralises what feelings of empathy the audience would have. So, essentially it seems like one animal attacking another. Language in oral literature can desensitize the listener especially if it is accompanied by other paralinguistic features like tone and facial gestures that the oral performer is at liberty to use. There is an argument that 'our mind is a stereotype generator – efforts to dispel the stereotype likely reinforce and perpetuate it.' (Estes 1979:12) In this context the oral performer's body language in the dramatization of a scene

can influence the perception of the audience. The dynamics of a live performance is something that the written form of literature can never match. When the woman was made to leave the community, it seems a large part of her humanity was lost as she changes from ‘old woman’ (*nkadzikulu*) to ‘old thing’ (*tjikadzikulu*). There is thus the suggestion that the community is where one finds dignity, purpose, and support. In the forest, one is relegated to a thing of consequence. In terms of this oral narrative, the removal of one from a familiar environment has the potential to reduce that individual to an inhuman entity.

When the old woman has been torn to pieces, we see another of magic realism come into play. The old woman can regenerate. In no time at all she becomes whole and is none the worse for wear. In fact, after the second mauling by the dog she is presented as a mud figure or clay potter that moulds herself back to life, *tjikadzikulutjibetjibumbanatjibumbana, tjibumbana*. What takes the sting out of this narrative is the lack of correlation between the violent actions and the effects. On each occasion the old woman is unscathed physically. It is bloodless. The last fascinating scene occurs when the old woman has an egg from which a beautiful maiden is hatched. True to the general style of the narrative, this new development is nothing to grab the attention of the audience. What is of interest is the way in which the community that has ostracised the old woman become entangled in the whole situation. We learn, coincidentally, that the boy who has been in a series of running battles with the old woman is in search of a wife. The boy’s relatives go in search of a suitable wife and come across the old woman’s daughter. This daughter is ultimately taken by the boy’s family back to the village. It takes resilience for the old woman to safely rescue her daughter and return with her to the forest.

From the narrative, it is evident that the villagers do not seem to recognise the woman, nor do they have any fear of her. However, they seem to have some form of disdain for her since they label her *lombe* which loosely translates into sycophancy. This negative term seems to suggest that the old woman has some unsavoury characteristics that are self-serving. She is not made to feel welcome and it appears that the news of her earlier departure has been roundly condemned. The manner of address further shows how out of favour the old woman has fallen. However, she ends up with the last laugh for she destroys that which the community cherish, the daughter. *Ha tjiyenda, bathubanobonankadzietiwangayaa! Pasi*. The daughter is no more, and the old woman leaves. The ending is somewhat open-ended particularly since the diction and tone in the text gives little away. At one level, one can root for the old woman finally getting ‘revenge’ on the community for the manner she has been treated. On the other hand, the ending can reinforce the notion that this woman is devoid of any feelings of empathy since she does her deed without care for the boy’s feelings. Whatever the deduction, it seems apparent that the lady feels that she is no longer welcome amongst the community:

Ha tjiloba tjibizha tjosimula vudzana pa nkadzi we nlongo tjimilika tjiyenda. Ha tjiyenda bathu banobona nkadzi eti wangayaa, pasi! Tjikadzikulu tjitola ng’wana watjo tjiyenda zwatjo [When she [old woman] clapped with her hands shaped like horns, she would pluck out the hair from the bride woman. The she left and went away. When she left, people saw the bride collapsing, and falling down. The old woman took her child and left].

The community suffers a huge loss at the departure of the old woman. On one level this loss is accentuated by the fact that she denies the villagers a most handsome bride for the young man. The second and more important loss is that her departure is also one that will leave a great intellectual void among the community. Age denotes wisdom among African societies and when the community

sees the old woman go, she leaves with a treasure trove of knowledge that will be extremely difficult to replace. This goes to show that respect of the elderly in African culture is very important and it is often believed that to respect the elderly is to open one to blessings. In this particular case, the young boy is denied the blessing of a beautiful wife. It is a valuable moral lesson that an audience will take to heart.

Conclusion

The treatment of the aged in Ikalanga oral narratives is one that fluctuates between ageism and reverence. The tale puts into perspective that views towards the aged at times tend to be skewed towards expediency rather than logic. In instances such as in this narrative, the lone old individual is stereotyped as bringing discord to the communal set up, though there is little proof to validate her subsequent ostracism. The depiction of the departure in the text in no way allows for an emotional attachment towards the old woman. More importantly, subtle changes in labelling further create an emotional chasm between the old woman and the audience. The old lady makes us realise how important respect for the elderly is. They embody experience and wisdom that can bring blessings and joy to the community. We see this in the way in which the old woman is able to bring about a beautiful bride for the young man. It is a blessing that the young man does not enjoy due to his treatment of the old woman

The term *tjikadzikulu* sheds the old woman of humanity. She is the only character in the text to be referred to in this derogative manner. It is a status that even the dog, *Bademana*, avoids. The oral narrative helps to create an arena where disbelief is substituted for character development that further reinforces the depiction of the old woman as a rogue element, who is intransigent on revenge. Throughout the oral text, aspects of tone and other paralinguistic features embellish the visual impact of the tale. The oral narrative does show how the oral performer is crucial to an understanding of any point of view that the text may not provide. Still, a visual recording of a performance of this tale would have yielded a more fulfilling journey into the dramatic world of the oral narrative.

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Appendix

NKADZIKULU NE BANABANA BABE

Ndi B Thini (Thini Village)

Kwakati kuli ntolo, nkadzikulu ali mu nzi ana bana be bana babe. Nkadzikulu wakabe egala ebatuma belamba. Wati lin'gwe zhuba kabe ebudza mayibabo eti, "kana imi bana babo banondikona. Ha ndibatuma abatoyenda. Abatondihwilila"[Once upon a time, an old woman, lived in a village home with her grand-children. The Old woman used to send them but they would refuse. One day, she (the old woman) told the children's mother (her daughter) and said, "Your children are impossible for me. When I send them, they do not go. They do not listen to me"].

Iye kabe eti kuna mayibabe, "ha! Mokhataza bana bangu kubi. Moshwa muti ndobatuma, ndobatuma, ini mubakahataza saikoku? Ini musingayende nge shango mukano filako? Mokhataza bana bangu kubi nkadzikulu ndin'gwi!"[But the (daughter) said to her mother (the grand mother), "Oh, you trouble my children a lot! The whole day you are saying, I am sending them, I am sending them, why do you trouble them like this? Why don't you go into the wild and die there? You are troubling my children you old woman].

Nkadzikulu kabe esheta kuti ungatini. Kabe etola dzihali dzidze etobela shango. Bakadzosala

beshakashaka, beshaya. Basingazibe kuti nkadzikulu ungabe akayenda ngayi[The old woman could not find anything to say. She took her pots and went away into the wild. They remained looking for her and they did not find her. They did not know where the old woman went].

Ng'wana nng'we we tjisana kabe enovima kushango ana mmbgwa iye inoyi Bademana. Wati ali ikoko kabe ebona hali dzilinna dzaka tshibikiwa. Mbisana kabe eyenda nge dzihali efumula. Wati muna yekutanga efumula kabe ewana kusina tjimukati. Yebubili naiyobo ewana hakuna tjimukati. Wati efumula yebutatu, kabe ewana naiyobo isina tjimukati. Kabe epindila kuna ye bunna. Wati efumula, tjikabe tjabuda mukati tjikadzikulu. Tjibe tjiti[One male child then went hunting in the wild with his dog called Bademana. When he was there (in the wild), he saw four clay pots put upside down. The boy went on to turn up the pots. When he opened the first one he found it empty. The second one also had nothing inside. When he opened the third one he found it also empty. So he went on to the fourth pot. When he opened it, an old lady came out of it, and she said]:

*Nowana zwigele ukafumula,
Nowana zwigele ukafumula,
Nowana zwigele ukafumula,
Nowana zwigele ukafumula.*

[You find things at rest and you open.
You find things at rest and you open.
You find things at rest and you open.
You find things at rest and you open].

Tjikabe tjintata. Ngwenu wali tjontata Bademana isipo. Akabe etizha eswika etatha nti. Tjibe tjizha tjikadzikulu tjiti[Then she chase after him. Now she was chasing after him when the dog Bademana was not there. He ran away and climbed a tree. The old woman came, and said]:

*Kekethu kekethu, nge tjizhing'wana tjangu,
Kekethu kekethu nge tjizhing'wana tjangu,
Kekethu kekethu nge tjizhing'wana tjangu*
[Cut and cut with my big tooth,
Cut and cut with my big tooth,
Cut and cut with my big tooth].

Nti wati uzunguzikila pamile nkadzikulu, mbisana kabe etangisa eti[When the tree started shaking where the old woman was standing, the boy started saying]:

*Shelele mbgwa yangu Bademana mayiweee!
Shelele mbgwa yangu Bademana ndanunga,
Ndanunga Bademana, ndanunga*
[To my rescue, my dog Bademana, oh help
To my rescue, my dog Bademana, oh help
I have picked up Bademana, I have picked].

Mbgwa ibe idwa ikweno yakalabuka, yati izha ikabe ibhata tjikadzikulu itji dzungudza itjizandabula itjipalulasnya. Tjibe tjiwila heno tjiwomelela. Mbgwa ibe yogwilila zwayo inovima. Mbisana wati

adeluka abe thambgwanya isingapani, kabe ehwa tjikadzikulu tjili shule kukwe tjidanidza[Then the dog came from where it was running, and when it arrived, it caught the old woman, and shook her, tearing her all over/ She fell down and dried up. Then the dog returned to hunt. When the boy climbed down the tree, when he had taken some few steps away, he heard the old woman calling behind]:

*Nowana zwigele ukafumula,
Nowana zwigele ukafumula,
Nowana zwigele ukafumula,
Nowana zwigele ukafumula*
[You find things at rest and you open.
You find things at rest and you open.
You find things at rest and you open.
You find things at rest and you open.]

Mbisana kabe etatha nng'we nti kakale. Tjikabe tji sendela pa nti ihwoyo tjiti
[The boy then climbed another tree. Then she came to the tree, and said]:

*Kekethu kekethu, nge tjizhing'wana tjangu,
Kekethu kekethu nge tjizhing'wana tjangu,
Kekethu kekethu nge tjizhing'wana tjangu*
[Cut and cut with my big tooth,
Cut and cut with my big tooth,
Cut and cut with my big tooth.]

Mbisana akabe emba eti[The boy then sang and said]:

*Shelele mnbgwa yangu Bademana mayiweee!
Shelele mnbgwa yangu Bademana ndanunga,
Ndanunga Bademana, ndanunga,
Ndanunga Badenyana, ndanunga*
[To my rescue, my dog Bademana, oh help
To my rescue, my dog Bademana, oh help
I have picked up Bademana, I have picked,
I have picked up Bademana, I have picked].

Ikabe yabuya Badenyana izha itji palulapalula. Mbisana kabo odeluka ipapo emilika eyenda-zwe. Ngayi! Tjikadzikulu tjibe tjimuka tjibumbana, tjibumbana, tjibumbana, tjibe tji n'tobela tjimba tjiti[And then the dog was there quickly, and tore about the old woman. The boy came down the tree, and left and wen his way. Suddenly, the old woman woke up and reconstituted herself and came alive, and followed the boy, saying]:

*Nowana zwigele ukafumula,
Nowana zwigele ukafumula,
Nowana zwigele ukafumula,
Nowana zwigele ukafumula.*

[You find things at rest and you open.
You find things at rest and you open.
You find things at rest and you open.
You find things at rest and you open].

Ebe etatha nng 'we nti kakale. Ewana tjikadzikulu tjonginilila nti nge meno tjokethula tjiti [And he climbed another tree again. And then he sees the old woman cutting down the tree with her teeth, saying]:

*Kekethu kekethu, nge tjizhing 'wana tjangu,
Kekethu kekethu nge tjizhing 'waba tjangu,
Kekethu kekethu nge tjizhing 'wana tjangu*
[Cut and cut with my big tooth,
Cut and cut with my big tooth,
Cut and cut with my big tooth].

Mbisana kabe edana mnbgwa iye kakale [The boy then called his dog again]:

*Shelele mnbgwa yangu Bademana mayiweee!
Shelele mnbgwa yangu Bademana ndanunga,
Ndanunga Bademana, ndanunga,
Ndanunga Badenyana, ndanunga*
[To my rescue, my dog Bademana, oh help
To my rescue, my dog Bademana, oh help
I have picked up Bademana, I have picked,
I have picked up Bademana, I have picked].

Mbgwa ibe ibuya izandabula tjikadzikulu itjibulaya. Tjati tjafa, mbisa kabo eziba kuyenda kanyi. Ndiko kwa anokoti ayenda, tjikadzikulu tjisala tjimuka, tjiyenda patjakabe tjigala. Tjati tjiwika pa tjakabe tjigala, tjibe tjiluka shaka. Tjikabe tjiwana bumbulu. Nkadzikulu kabe etola bumbulu ilelo enogala nalo. Kabe eluka n'gwana uwe. Tjikabe tjitola bumbulu ilelo tjiymbika. Bumbulu libe liphophonya [The dog came and tore down the old woman and killed her. When she was dead, the boy found how to get home. And it is when he had left, the old woman came back from death, she sent to where she was staying. When she arrived, where she used to stay, she wove a nest. She then found an egg. The old woman took that egg and stayed with it. Then she wove her child. And then she took the egg and hid it. The egg then opened and a little bird came out].

Kanyi kwe mbisana kwakabe kushakiwa nkadzi wa angalobola. Bathu bakabe babuda itethela tje kunoshaka nkadzi bakabe beswika bewana ng 'wanana ali mu nti tjikadzikulu tjanoshaka zojiwa wali. Mbisana kadzoshaka kuti ungatulula ng 'wanana tjini; kabe ezhigwa nge njele. Baati bemilidza shathu kuti bateme nti, ng 'wana kabe eti [At the home of the boy there was need to find a wife for him to marry. People then went out in a hunting party to get him a wife, and then they found a girl in the tree, while the old woman had gone looking for food. The boy tried to find out how to get the girl out from the tree. Then he got an idea. When they lifted the axe to cut down the tree, the girl said]:

Gubungala! Gubungala walibo maaaa!

Gubungala! Walibo maaa!
Gubungala! Gubungala walibo maaaa!
[Grandmother! Grand mother, where are you!
Grandmother! where are you!
Grandmother! Grand mother, where are you!]

Tjikadzikulu tjikabe tjihwa tjili kwatji yako, tjisinga zibe tjinga tini. Tjikabe tjidabila tjiti[The old woman heard from where she was, but not knowing what she could do. Then she answered by saying]:

Kulakula, kulakula kwe ng'wanangu!
Kulakula kwe bankudza,
Kulakula kwe ng'wanangu,
Kulakula kwe bankudza
[Growing up, growing up of my child, oh!
Growing up of those who raised her,
Growing up of my child
Growing up of those who raised her].

Nthu ihwoyo kabe etizha. Wati emuka tjimuka kabe egwilila ku nti we n'gwana kakale. Kabe ewana tjikadzikulu tjanoshaka zojiwa. Kabe ati mu nti ihwoyo, khaa! Khaa! khaa! Nti uzunguzika tjosele unga unowolala wawa. N'gwana wati ebona kuti kwasima kabe emba lumbo gugwe eti[That person then ran away. The following day he returned again to the tree with the girl. And he found the old woman having gone to look for food. Then he sent a blow of an axe to the tree, cut, cut! The tree shook as if it would fall. When the girl saw that it would be tough, she then sang her song saying]:

Gubungala! Gubungala walibo maaaa!
Gubungala! Walibo maaa!
Gubungala! Gubungala walibo maaaa!
[Grandmother! Grand mother, where are you!
Grandmother! Where are you!
Grandmother! Grand mother, where are you!]

Tjikadzikulu tjidabilabo tjiti[The old woman replied saying]:

Kulakula, kulakula kwe n'gwanangu!
Kulakula kwe bankudza,
Kulakula kwe n'gwanangu,
Kulakula kwe bankudza.
[Growing up, growing up of my child, oh!
Growing up of those who raised her,
Growing up of my child
Growing up of those who raised her].

Tjiti tjiswika ipapo, mbisana etshembula. Kwati tjimuka tjikadzikulu tjano shaka zojiwa, kabe

ezha kakale etema nti ihwyo. Wati wabe pejo ne kuwa, ng'wana kabe eti[When she arrived there, the boy escaped in flight. Then the following day, when the old woman had gone to look for food, the boy came again and chopped the tree. When the tree was near falling, the girl said]:

Gubungala! Gubungala walibo maaaa!
Gubungala! Walibo maaa!
Gubungala! Gubungala walibo maaaa!
[Grandmother! Grand mother, where are you!
Grandmother! Where are you!
Grandmother! Grand mother, where are you!]

Tjikadzikulu tjoti kwatiyako tjidabila tjiti[The old woman where she was answered saying]:

Kulakula, kulakula kwe n'gwanangu!
Kulakula kwe bankudza,
Kulakula kwe n'gwanangu,
Kulakula kwe bankudza
[Growing up, growing up of my child, oh!
Growing up of those who raised her,
Growing up of my child
Growing up of those who raised her].

Tjiwana dumbu gunga lawa. Tjizwibuzwa kuti ngono n'gwana ungabe ayenda ngayi. Tjito-bela makumbo kanti bathu ba tola ng'wana. Tjibabona tjili munkwala wabo. Bati beswika be longa n'gwezi mungumba. Tjati tjizha tjibe tjimba[The found that the nest had fallen. She was asking herself where the girl could have gone. She followed the footprints, and indeed the people had taken the girl. She was seeing them in their foot tracks. When they arrived, they put the visitor in the house. When she [the old lady] came, she sang]:

Kulakula, kulakula kwe ng'wanangu!
Kulakula kwe bankudza,
Kulakula kwe ng'wanangu,
Kulakula kwe bankudza
[Growing up, growing up of my child, oh!
Growing up of those who raised her,
Growing up of my child
Growing up of those who raised her].

Bathu banoti[People replied, saying] :

Lombe lombe lazha!
Lombe lazha!
Buyani mubone lombe!
Buyani mubone lombe!
[the singer, singer has come!

The singer has come!
Come and see the singer!
Come and see the singer!

Bathu bekubungana ipapo bawobona lombe. Banowana tjikadziku tjakabata[The people gathered there to see the singer. They found the old woman continuing singing]:

Kulakula, kulakula kwe n'gwanangu!
Kulakula kwe bankudza,
Kulakula kwe n'gwanangu,
Kulakula kwe bankudza.
[Growing up, growing up of my child, oh!
Growing up of those who raised her,
Growing up of my child
Growing up of those who raised her].

Bathu bati bezha beti banotola nlongo kuti azhe ahwebo nkadzikulu. Wati ezha ehwa
[When people came they wanted to take out the bride to come and also listen to the old woman]:

Kulakula, kulakula kwe n'gwanangu!
Kulakula kwe bankudza,
Kulakula kwe n'gwanangu,
Kulakula kwe bankudza
[Growing up, growing up of my child, oh!
Growing up of those who raised her,
Growing up of my child
Growing up of those who raised her.]

Nlongo kabe edabila eti[The bride answered and said]:

Gunga lawa libo maaa!
Gunga lawa libo maa!
[The nest fell with a burst
The nest fell with a burst!]

Ha tjiloba tjibizha tjosimula vudzana pa nkadzi we nlongo tjimilika tjiyenda. Ha tjiyenda bathu banobona nkadzi eti wangayaa, pasi! Tjikadzikulu tjitola ng'wana watjo tjiyenda zwat-jo[When she [old woman] clapped with her hands shaped like horns, she would pluck out the hair from the bride woman. The she left and went away. When she left, people saw the bride collapsing, and falling down. The old woman took her child and left]:

Shingalingano ifila [The tale finished].