

SPEECH-TONE AND OTHER FORCES IN TSONGA MUSIC

Thomas F. Johnston
 Department of Sociology/Anthropology
 Western Washington State College, Bellingham

The Tsonga, a Bantu-speaking people of Mozambique and the Northern Transvaal, represent an anomaly among southeastern African groups in that, while showing certain affinities with the Nguni, they possess no extensive heritage of pastoral folklore and did not participate in that period of Nguni history when clicks were absorbed into the language (Tsonga is clickless).

Tsonga speech-tone patterns have both syntactical and semantic significance--the meaning of similar Tsonga words may vary according to the rise or fall of individual syllables, examples of which are given below.

(' = high, ` = low, ^ = falling)

bává 'to be bitter'

bává 'father'

bófù 'blind person'

bófú 'pus'

bvím[́]bá 'an aromatic shrub'

bvím[̀]bá 'to seal with a lid'

In the following different versions of five songs (tape-recorded by the writer during field work in 1968-70 under grants from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research and the University of Witwatersrand), speech-tone markings were supplied by linguist C. T. D. Marivate of the University of South Africa, Pretoria.

Song 1. Ximánjèmánjè xalé ntsùngèni màrà hayi àhí kú sásèká

Song 1, Version A (sung by a chorus of men at Samarie)

call

response

ngèni

xalé ntsù

Ximanjema-a-nje

màrà hayi

àhí kú sásèká

8ve

bow

Song 1, Version B (sung by Wilson Zulu)

24

xi-ma-nje ma-nje xalé ntsu- nge- ni màrà ha- yi àhí kú sa- se- ka

Song 1, Version C (sung by a chorus of women at Ribola)

call

response

Yo- o

xi- mà- nje- mà- nje- e

call

response

yo- o

mà- ra ha- yi àhí kú sa- sek xi- mà- nje- mà- nje yo- o

mà- ra ha- yi àhí kú sa- sek

Song 1, Version D (sung by Joel Mashava)

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system is for the voice, with lyrics: Xi-ma-nje-ma-nje-e ma-ra ha-yi ha ku sas. The second system is for the piano, with lyrics: xi-ma-nje-ma-nje xa-le ntsungeni mara ha-yi ha ku sasék. The third system is for the piano and clap, with lyrics: xi-ma-nje-ma-nje-e ma-ra ha-yi ha ku sa-sék. The clap part consists of a series of 'X' marks on a bass line.

Song 1, Translation

Ximanjemanje	xale ntsungeni	mara hayi ahi ku
These modern things (times)	over there	they are so
saséka		
beautiful		

(Refers to social change and the white man's possessions...cars, etc.)

Of the above four versions of Song 1, all melodically observe the various speech-tones of the word *ximánjémánjé*, two observe the "high-low" at *ngéní*, and all observe the "falling" at *hayi*. Two of the versions exhibit a melodic "high-low" at *sáséká* that is not indicated by the speech-tone markings, but *sáséká* is the song's concluding word, and a cadential drop in pitch is considered (by the Tsonga) musically desirable.

Song 2. Xihlámbyètwanà xá mánánà wélélé xítê
ngéléngéléngélé wélélé

Song 2, Version A (sung by a chorus of women at Mahonisi)

call

16

Ngé- léngele wé- lé- lé ho xi- hlá-mbyè- twá-ná xá ná-

response

drum (two hands)

16

(In most songs drumming, flat fingers are used near center of drum; heel of palm used for accents near edge.)

ná- ná wé- lé- lé xítê ngéléngé- léngele- ngele

drum

Song 2, Version B (sung by Johannes Mathye)

hlámbyètwanà xá ná-ná-ná hí- yó há xí- lo

ngéléngéléngélé ngéléngéléngélé hí- yó- ú yó- wé

D.S.

Song 2, Translation

Xihlambyetwana	xa manana	welele	xite	ngelengelengele
The little pot	of my mother	tralala!	goes	ideophone representing the sound of a newly baked clay pot rolling along the ground
welele				
tralala!				

(This is a song sung for an infant aged one week, i.e. it is likened to a clay pot that has survived the hazardous firing process, and its cry is likened to the welcome sound of a sturdy clay pot as it is rolled along the ground in an acoustical test of its soundness. Infant mortality is high. Dead infants are buried in broken clay pots.)

Of the above two versions of Song 2, both observe "high" at xá; version A ignores the "low" at the end of mánánà but version B observes it; and both observe the "high-fall" at xítê. Neither version observes the "high" at wélélé (see the three melody tones following ngéléngéléngélé), but then this is the song's concluding word, and a cadential drop in pitch is musically desirable.

Song 3. Í nhlámpfi bák màbòmú ó gèdlè mánané gèdlè mánané

(sung by a chorus of women at Mutsetweni)

call

Í nhlámpfi bák ma-bo-mu

o gè-dlè má-ná-a-ne gè-dlè má-ná-a-ne

added part

ha-a-a

ma-bo-mu

Song 4, Version B (sung by Johannes Mathye)

a- hí ye- ní Ma- nte- ngu- la té-ka tá wena ú fu-ne- nge- tá hí a-
 hí fá- mbi Ma- nte- nguí Nte- ngu Nte- ngu- ta n'wa- na- nga

Song 4, Version C (sung by John Chauke)

voice: Ma- na- na Ma- nte- ngu- le- e
 rattle: 16 (+2) X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X
 voice: ú té-ka swa we- na ú fu- ne- nge- tá hí mbi- tá ma- na- na Ma- nte-
 rattle: X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X
 voice: ngu- tá wa nte- ngu nte- ngu s'we- na
 bow: X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

Song 4, Translation

Yo navenave Ntengula na wena ahi yeni
 Tempter! Child-of-the-Drongo-Bird! Yes, you

Mantengula u teka ta wena u funengeta
 Child-of-the-Drongo-Bird! You hide all your secrets

hi mbita ahi yeni Mantengula
 under a mortar Yes, you Child-of-the-Drongo-Bird!

(Refers to a legendary bird that hides its secrets but reveals everybody else, i.e. it is customarily blamed for the spread of gossip.)

Of the above three versions of Song 4, all exhibit a melodic fall between the two syllables of mbitá (the two tones following fúnéngétá hí) regardless of the "fall-high" speech-tones of the word. A possible explanation is that mbitá occurs at the conclusion of a verbal and musical phrase, preceding the new phrase áhí yéni Mánténgùlè, which must preferably commence "high" in relation to its predecessor.

Song 5. Hiyà héhà Mógèné ndzà áhí byélétélá n'wáná wálé
ndzèni kù tlulá ká mhàlá sáláni hìyá káyá Mógèné
 (sung by a chorus of women at Njakanjaka)

call 18

response

1 call

H'ya ká- yá- a- a he- há- a- a- a Mò- (2)fa- mba-a- a

ge- ne ndzà

clap 18

next, ndzèní, a speech-tone "high-low" is indicated and this, also, is melodically observed. The five speech-tones of kù tliúá ká mhà-- "low-high-falling-high-low" are all observed by the melody, as is the "low" at the end of sálání.

The musical characteristics of the initial statement of a Tsonga song are considerably influenced by the rise and fall of Tsonga speech-tone, and by the length and rhythmic stress¹ of the syllables. Once melody and rhythm are set, subsequent "statements" may be a product of both linguistic and purely musical forces (the latter will be discussed under the next sub-heading).

The relationship between Tsonga song-words and their musical setting generally involves more than mere imitative processes. Hornbostel's statement that "itches of the speaking voice, indeed, appear to determine the melodic nucleus; but they have no influence upon its inborn creative forces"² assumes particular significance in the light of many compositional practices of Tsonga. There are musical forces limiting the influence of speech-tone on melody, and musical forces limiting the influence of speech-stress on rhythm.

Some Tsonga melodic principles: musical forces limiting the influence of speech-tone on melody

There exists, within Tsonga communal vocal music, a phenomenon which might be termed "pathogenic" descent. An analysis of Tsonga "pathogenic" descent reveals that 24% of songs exhibit a first-to-last-tone descent of a 5th; 20% exhibit a first-to-last-tone descent of an octave; 13% exhibit a first-to-last-tone descent of a 4th; and 100%

¹Of Sambian Tonga song-rhythm it is reported that "the theory that the determinant lies entirely in natural speech length and stress is not consistently born out." (Rycroft, David. "Tribal Style and Free Expression". African Music, 1:1, 1954, p. 26.

²Von Hornbostel, E. M. African Negro Music. London: Oxford University Press, p. 31.

exhibit a first-to-last-tone intervallic descent of one kind or another. These descents are neither sharp nor gradual, but occupy a series of plateaux, and exert limiting counter-influence against speech-tone domination, particularly at sentence-endings where a musical drop is desirable.

There exists within Tsonga communal vocal music a special vocabulary of melismatic syllables such as huwele, welele, hayi-hayi, yowe-yowe, etc., during the singling of which a melody is released from any possible obligation to obey speech-tone rise and fall. Nketia states of Akan singing that "unlike other syllables, interjectory syllables e, ee, o, oo, etc., may be sung to one, two, or more notes."³ Examples of Tsonga melismatic non-lexical syllables are given below.⁴

Melismatic Example 1 (he-ri-le-e-e-e, Chauke-e-e-e, mavele-e-le)

The musical score is written on five staves. The first staff is marked 'call' and begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The lyrics under the first staff are: 'Ha ti-nyandha- ye- ye va-va- nu- na va ti- ndlop' ti-le ka'. The second staff is marked 'response' and begins with a treble clef. The lyrics under the second staff are: 'Cha-u-ke M-gu-nga ndlo- pfu hi he- ri- le- e-'. The third staff continues the response with lyrics: 'e- e- ti-le ka Chau- ke- e- e- e- hi va ku-'. The fourth staff continues with lyrics: 'ma va lo be-la na mi-hlo-ti va ri- la ma- ve- e-'. The fifth staff concludes with the syllable 'le'.

³Nketia, J. H. 1963. Folk Songs of Ghana. Legon: University of Ghana, p. 9.

⁴This refers to the carrying of a single syllable over many notes, as in the "ah" in Allelujah; i.e. a non 1-to-1 relationship.

Melismatic Example 2 (ha-a-yi-i, ka-ya-a-a)

call
Mee ndzi kho- ngo- te- la n'wa- na- a a ye
response
a ye
ha-a- yi-i n'wa-na wa le ka- ya- a-a

Melismatic Example 3 (va-hla-le-e, myame-me-e-e-e-e-e-yo)

resp
N-ko- ca- ni va-hla-le-e N-ko- ca- ni nya me- me- e
pitched drum (exact pitch not shown)
leg-rattles
e- e- e- e- yo
call
Ja-vu- la Nko- can'

There exists within communal vocal music a system of "harmonic equivalence" whereby tones a 5th (inverted 4th) distant are regarded by the Tsonga as interchangeable. This system of tone-substitution results in otherwise-inexplicable melodic "highs" and "lows" during unchanging speech-tones. Examples are given below.

First example of "harmonic equivalence" (the word hlámbyètwanà which contains exclusively "low" speech-tones, is melodically represented by D's during the first cycle, and by A's during the second cycle, D and A being "harmonically equivalent"):

1st time
hlámbyetwàna xa ma-na-na hi- yo ha xi- lo

2nd time
hlámbye-twa- na xa ma- na- na hi- yo ha xi- lo

Second example of "harmonic equivalence" (note the substitution of D for A at mina and at maxangu--D and A are "harmonically equivalent"):

voice
He mina ndzi vo-na maxangu swa rilisa mina ndzi vona maxangu swa

voice
mi- na tekiwa kambirhi mina ndzi maxangu swa ri-li

voice
'na ndzi vo-na maxangu swa rilisa vana mina ndzi maxangu swa ri- li

voice
ndzi vo-na maxangu swa rilisa mina ndzi ma-xa-ngu swa ri- li

There exists within Tsonga communal vocal music, word-changes which occur during the successive cycles of a song. Choice of these new words is generally made so that their speech-tone approximates that of the old words, and could, should the singers so desire, be sung to the same melody. Where the melody changes (as in the following example), it does so according to an implicit "harmonic" framework which could be considered as the real control.

Example: implicit "harmonic" framework as the real control

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a call, starting with a treble clef and a forte dynamic marking. The lyrics are "Ma-yi-va- vo- o". The middle staff is a response, starting with a treble clef and a forte dynamic marking. The lyrics are "se la- ndze ma- so- cha nwa we- na- a- a a yi hlo- mi- i- i". The bottom staff is another call, starting with a treble clef and a forte dynamic marking. The lyrics are "e se- la- ndze ma- so- cha nwa we- na- ma-yi-va- vo- o". Vertical double-headed arrows connect the notes of the call and response staves, indicating pitch relationships. There are also "call" markings above the response and call staves.

There exists, within Tsonga communal vocal music, occasions on which musical considerations completely overrule speech-tone considerations. The following melody exhibits purely musical characteristics (a descending 4th GD filled-in with 2nds and complemented by a 3rd CA, the whole spanning a 7th) that disregard the speech-tones, which are thus: téká tá wéná ú fúngéngétá hí mbítá.

The musical score shows a single staff with a treble clef. The melody is a descending 4th GD filled-in with 2nds, complemented by a 3rd CA, spanning a 7th. The lyrics are "te-ka ta wena u fune-nge-ta hi ■- bi-ta".

Musical forces limiting the impact of speech-stress on song-rhythm

Of particular use to the Tsonga in the relaxation of speech-stress controls is vowel elision, terminal-syllable contraction, and terminal-syllable prolongation. Examples are given below.

Example 1 (the word h'ta is a contraction of hi ta):

unison chorus

Mpfu-la
ya na tho-tho-tho h'ta dya ma-timba tho-tho-tho

Example 2 (the word dlayan' is a contraction of dlayani, and the word fambile-e exhibits terminal-syllable prolongation):

solo

Dla-yan' ma-vu-lu-vu-lu ngho-ndzo yi fa- mbi-le-e ha

clap

wo ngho-ndzo yi fa- mbi-le-e

Example 3 (the word *lesw'* is a contraction of *leswi*, and the word *njhani* exhibits terminal-syllable contraction to *njhan'*):

The musical score consists of four staves. The top staff is labeled 'call' and contains the lyrics 'A wu fa-ngi', 'lesw' gangisa va-sati va va n'wa-na', and 'a wu fa-ngi'. A bracket above the 'lesw' gangisa va-sati va va' section is labeled 'response'. The second staff is also labeled 'call' and contains the lyrics 'lesw' a wu fa-ngi'. The third staff is labeled 'response' and contains the lyrics 'wena vu- la kwe- nze njhan''. The bottom staff is labeled 'drum' and shows a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents.

Vowel elision permits the singer (a) to execute one long tone instead of two short tones, and (b) to fit a long word into a relatively short musical space. Terminal-syllable contraction permits the singer to utilize, on the concluding single tone of his song, an otherwise-trochaic bisyllabic word. Terminal-syllable prolongation permits the singer to utilize, on the concluding two tones of his song, an otherwise-monosyllabic word.

Another method of freeing song-rhythm from speech-stress controls is the use of letters *n* and *m* as independent syllables--Kubik reports of Yoruba singing that "these *m* and *n* sounds are considered musically as syllables and can bear one note."⁵ Tsonga examples are given below.

⁵Kubik, Gerhard. 1968. "A16--Yoruba Story Songs". African Music 4.2: 13.

Use of n or m as syllables: example 1

call 8 Mbi-ta ya vu-lo- mbe ya re-ka-re-ka response

call ho ne-la hi m-pfu-la ya re-ka-re-ka response

call hi ri xi-be-dle-la ya re-ka-re-ka response etc

Use of n or m as syllables: example 2

call Nghunghu-nya- ne m- hio-vo ya va-ntu

resp. 3/4 sa mba-va-za hi hayi yo- o se su- ma-ni

drum

clap

call 3/4 sa mba-va-za Nghu-nghu-nya- ne m- hio-vo ya va-ntu

drum

clap

In example 1 above, the *m* of *mpfula* occupies an entire crotchet and enables this bisyllabic word to straddle three musical tones. In example 2, the *m* of *mhlovo* is used as a musical anacrusis for the two quavers on which *hlo-vo* are sung.

Within Tsonga vocal composition, many musical factors combine to limit speech-tone domination not the least of which is perhaps a desire for musical contrast between call and response. Concerning the resultant "distortion" of word-meaning, the present writer sought the opinion of native Tsonga linguists in ascertaining to what extent speech-tone may be ignored within Tsonga vocal composition. The consensus was that context is as important as speech-tone, and where, for musical reasons, the latter is dispensed with, recourse to context adequately clarifies meaning.

Programmatic musical settings

Onomatopoeicisms such as *dluva-dluva* 'jump', *vula-vula* 'gossip', *cele-cele* 'carousing', and *ngomu-ngomu* 'ogre' receive programmatic treatment at the hands of Tsonga composers, being set to reiterative, motional, or accelerative tone-patterns. Similar treatment occurs elsewhere in Africa, for Kubik states of Yoruba singing that "gbinrin (the sound of dropping iron)...is worked into the pattern gbinrin ajalubale gbinrin" and that "erin (elephant) suggests the dull movements of a walking elephant."⁶ Tsonga examples are given below.

Onomatopoeic example 1: the reiterative setting of *dluva-dluva* 'jump'

voice

nho- nga- ni ni- ni- ni- ni ma- ko- ti dlu-va- dlu- va

ni- ni- ni- ni- ni ma- ko- ti dlu-va- dlu- va

nho- nga- ni ni- ni- ni- ni ma- ko- ti dlu-va- dlu- va

⁶ Kubik, Gerhard, op. cit., p. 11.

Onomatopoeic example 2: the motional setting of vula-vula 'gossip'

Swi-vu-la-vu-la nka- ta mi- na swi na nwa- Gway' - ma-ne-

Onomatopoeic example 3: the accelerative setting of cele-cele 'carousing'

He nyna xi nga vu- yi- i ha he nuna xi nga vu- yi- i ce-le-ce-le

Onomatopoeic example 4: the reiterative setting of ngomu-ngomu 'ogre'

he n'wana we- le- le ngomu- ngomu ho xo fa-mba x'he ta-van

Formal structure

Tsonga communal vocal music, when compared to Venda and other Southern African musics, appears to reveal a predilection for longer metrical periods. These periods contain interesting proportions of call to response, and contain multiple reappearances of the call and response within any one cycle.

Representative formal structures evinced by Tsonga songs

Song A (call=9 ♩ + response=3 ♩ + call=9 ♩ + response=9 ♩ + call=3 ♩ + response=3 ♩).....	Total 36 ♩
Song B (call=4 ♩ + response=4 ♩ + call=4 ♩ + response=14 ♩)	26 ♩
Song C (unison chorus=2 ♩ + call=4 ♩ + unison chorus=2 ♩ + call=4 ♩ + divided chorus=4 ♩)	16 ♩
Song D (call=6 ♩ + response=3 ♩ + call=6 ♩ + response=9 ♩)	24 ♩
Song E (call=4 ♩ + response=4 ♩ + call=4 ♩ + response=8 ♩)	20 ♩

Song F	(call=10 ♩ + response=4 ♩ + call=4 ♩ + response=4 ♩ + call=4 ♩ + response=4 ♩) 30 ♩
Song G	(call=4 ♩ + response=7 ♩ + call=1 ♩ + response=12 ♩) 24 ♩
Song H	(call=6 ♩ + response=10 ♩ + call=6 ♩ + response=10 ♩ + call=5 ♩ + response=27 ♩) 64 ♩
Song I	(call=2 ♩ + response=3 ♩ + call=2 ♩ + response=11 ♩) 18 ♩
Song J	(call=18 ♩ + response=18 ♩ + call=2 ♩ + response=4 ♩ + call=3 ♩ + response=3 ♩ + call=3 ♩ + response=3 ♩ + call=3 ♩ + response=3 ♩) 60 ♩
Song K	(call=6 ♩ + response=4 ♩ + call=6 ♩ + response=4 ♩ + call=2 ♩ + response=4 ♩ + call=2 ♩ + response=4 ♩) 32 ♩

The transmission, from one generation to another, and from one geographical area to another, of Tsonga musical principles

The Tsonga have a reputation among their neighbors for possessing an extensive body of folklore (ntumbuluku wava khale). They are themselves particularly proud of this folklore and ensure that their children become acquainted with it. Generally, in the daytime, small children learn from older children the legend-telling words of the game-songs (tinsimu tavana to huha) used in games such as Xifu fununu--The Beetle, and Mbita Ya Vulombe--The Pot of Money, both of which were reported over fifty years ago by Junod. In the evening they watch the adult "exorcism" dances, or listen to the story-songs (tinsimu ta mintsheketo) sung by their maternal grandmother at certain times of the year.

Young boys who gather round a visiting bow-player receive an intriguing music "lesson" (ntsakela-vuyimbeleri) as he carefully tunes his string-lengths to a Tsonga 4th, just as older boys learn by observation how to construct their own hand-piano (timbila) and to correctly arrange and tune its seventeen keys.

In the girls' puberty school (khomba) and the boys' circumcision school (murhundzu) songs are learned under rather rigorous conditions, and the present writer encountered urban Tsonga old men and women, miles and "years" removed from their rural initiation schools, who could recite or sing rapid and apparently meaningless initiation formulae for up to thirty minutes, with brief rests.

The young people's competitive team-dancing (xifase) of the drumming school and the adult competitive team-dancing (rhabela phikezano) of the beer-drinks are performed during village-to-village visits and contribute toward the geographical dissemination of Tsonga music old and new, as do the musical activities of itinerant doctors and minstrels.

By carefully observing the correct method of producing the rhythmic and melodic patterns used during these various visits, and by themselves reproducing the heard rhythms upon upturned canisters or pebble-filled stick-rattles (mafowa) while singing, children develop familiarity with, and mastery of, many Tsonga musical principles. This does not imply a latent desire to become musical specialists; engagement in normal social life (which is general) involves the Tsonga in music whether they like it or not, because music is an essential part of Tsonga social life. The acquisition of musical skills are incidental to acquisition of other skills necessary to social and biological maturation.

REFERENCES I: BOOKS CONCERNED MAINLY
WITH THE SHANGANA-TSONGA

- Cabral, A. A. P. 1925. Usos e Costumes dos Indigenas da Provincia de Moçambique. Lourenço Marques: Imprensa Nacional.
- Cuénod, R. 1967. Tsonga-English Dictionary. Johannesburg: Swiss Mission in South Africa.
- da Cruz, Daniel. 1910. Em terras de Gaza. Porto: Bibliotheca Geographica e Colonial.
- Earthy, E. Dora. 1933. Valenge Women. London: Oxford University Press.
- Jaques, Alexandre A. and Henri-Philippe Junod. 1957. The Wisdom of the Tsonga-Shangana People. The Central Mission Press.

- Junod, Henri. 1897. Les Chants et les Contes des Ba-Ronga. Lausanne: Georges Bridel & Cie.
- Junod, Henri. 1927. The Life of a South African Tribe. Volumes I and II. London: Macmillan and Co.
- Junod, Henri-Philippe. 1935. The Bantu Tribes of South Africa (An Introductory Article on the Vathonga, with a Bibliography, and Descriptive Notes on the Plates). Kimberley, in Duggan-Cronin's The Bantu Tribes of South Africa. Volume IV. Deighton: Bell and Co., Ltd.
- Junod, Henri-Philippe. 1938. Bantu Heritage. Johannesburg: Hortors, Ltd.
- Junod, Henri-Philippe. 1940. Fifty Shangana-Tsonga Fables in Tsonga Verse. Pretoria: Wallachs'.
- Marolen, D. P. P. 1954. Mitlangu ya vafana va Vatsonga. The Swiss Mission in South Africa: Central Mission Press.
- Marolen, D. P. P. 1966. Garingani-wa-garingani. Pretoria: Beter Boeke.
- Mkhombo, J. F. C. 1968. Leswi na Leswiya. Pretoria: J. L. van Schaik, Ltd.
- Ntsanwisi, H. W. E. 1968. Tsonga Idioms: A Descriptive Study. Johannesburg: The Swiss Mission in South Africa.
- Paiva et Pona, A. 1892. Dos Primeiros Trabalhos dos Portuguezes no Monomotapa, O padre Dom Goncalo da Silveira. Lisboa Nacional.
- Shilubana, R. P. M. and H. E. Ntsanwisi. 1958. Muhlaba, N. Transvaal. Published by the Nkuna Tribe, New Shilubana Muhlaba Location, P. O. Letaba.

REFERENCES II: ESSAYS, ARTICLES, AND PAPERS

CONCERNED MAINLY WITH THE SHANGANA-TSONGA

- Cole-Beuchat, P. D. 1958. "Notes on Some Folklore Forms in Tsonga and Ronga". African Studies 17.4.
- Guye, The Rev. H. 1920. "Des Noms Propres chez les Ba-Ronga". In Bulletin de la Société Neuchâteloise de Géographie.
- Johnston, Thomas F. 1970a. "Xizambi Friction-bow Music of the Shangani-Tsonga". African Music 4.4.
- Johnston, Thomas F. 1970b. "Letter, and photograph of Shangana-Tsonga nanga whistle." Society for Ethnomusicology Newsletter 4.5.
- Johnston, Thomas F. The Music of the Shangana-Tsonga. University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, unpublished doctoral dissertation.
- Marivate, C. T. D. 1959. "Some Traditional Tsonga Songs". Bantu Educational Journal, August.
- Ramsay, T. D. 1941. "Tsonga Law in the Transvaal". University of Witwatersrand Library, Johannesburg, unpublished ms.