

## **An Analysis of Common Methods of Number Distinction in Tshivenda**

**Prof Nelson Mbulaheni Musehane**

*Language Research, Development and Consultancy Services, P.O.Box 358, Sibasa, 0970.Limpopo Province, South Africa.*

---

**Abstract:** *Tshivenda is one of the eleven official languages in the Republic of South Africa. This language has structural features that are found in the methods of distinguishing pluralisation. This paper seeks to analyse the typological features of number of distinction and the process of the number distinction used among the Tshivenda culture. This will be accomplished by the processes of:*

- (a) *Using plural affixes*
- (b) *Using words of multitude*
- (c) *Reduplication of nominal words*

*This will be accomplished by analysing oral speeches, published and unpublished literature using qualitative method because it is the appropriate method to get acceptable results.*

**Keywords:** *Analysis, common, methods. Number, distinction, Tshivenda*

---

### **I. Introduction**

All nouns in Tshivenda are classified into different classes or groups according to their meaning. One of the meanings is singularity and plurality. Musehane (1995:66) reaffirms that most nouns were divided into certain classes without showing any typical common characteristics. The common meaning is their singularity and plurality. In most cases the meaning of the nouns is a good indication of why it would have a specific prefix. The meaning of a noun is also more important than the class to which it belongs.

A prefix is defined by Poulos (1990:208) as the term used here in a general sense to refer to subject and object concords and also to the various tense formatives or markers. In fact, the term prefix in the context of the verb will refer to those entities that occur before the verb root, while the term suffix can be used to refer to those entities that occur after the verb root

### **II. Theoretical Framework**

The researcher will analyse oral speeches of common words with the meaning of plurality in Tshivenda orally and in published and unpublished literature. This will be subjected to semantic theory i.e. theory of meaning.

### **III. Plurality Expressed By Using Nominal Affixes**

Radford (1997) defines an affix as a grammatical morpheme which cannot stand on its own as an independent word, but which must be attached to an item of an appropriate kind. An affix which attaches to the beginning of a word (e.g.) un+ in unhappy is called a prefix; an affix which attaches to the end of a word (e.g. +s in chases is called a suffix).

In the following discussion, we will analyse prefixes that refer to pluralisation in Tshivenda.

#### **3.1. Plurality EXPRESSED BY USING NOMINAL PREFIXES**

There are 21 noun classes in Tshivenda numbered from 1 to 21. The class prefixes numbering with odd numbers are in singular whereas the even numbers show that the class prefixes are plurals. The following class prefixes have been dealt with.

- 1. Class 2/2b are Plural noun classes
- Class 2 Prefix: Vha->Vhathu 'Persons'
- Vha>Vhashumi 'workers'
- Class 2b Vho> Vhomme 'mothers'
- Vhomalume 'uncles'

For all nouns falling under these categories, the plurals class prefixes will be Vha- affixed to the noun stems -thu and -shumi respectively Vho- is affixed to noun stem -mme 'mother' and -malume' 'uncle' respectively. Such nouns will show the plurality of the singularity  
For all nouns that fall under these categories will be in plural form

---

2. Class 4 Prefix: *Mi- >Miri 'trees'*

: *Mi- >Mishumo 'works'*

For all nouns falling under this category, the plural class prefix will be *Mi-* affixed to noun stems *-ri* and *-shumo* respectively. Such nouns will show the plurality of the singularity.

3. Class 6 Prefix: *Ma- >Maṭaḍulu 'heavens'*

: *Ma- >Maṭo 'eyes'*

For all nouns falling under this category, the plural class prefix will be *ma-* affixed to noun stems *-ṭaḍulu* and *-ṭo* respectively. Such nouns will show the plurality of the singularity.

4. Class 8 Prefix: *Zwi- >Zwiṇoni 'birds'*

: *Zwi- >Zwilimo 'summers'*

For all nouns falling under this category, the plural class prefix will be *zwi-* affixed to noun stems *-ṇoni* and *-limo* respectively. Such nouns will show the plurality of the singularity.

5. Class 10 Prefix: *Dzi- >Dzinngwa 'steeps or vertical rock faces'*

: *Dzi-- >Dzinyambo 'languages'*

All nouns falling under this category, the singular class prefix will be *Lu-* affixed to noun stems *-wa* and *-ambo* respectively. The plural class prefixes is *dzi-* affixed to the noun stems *-wa* and *-ambo* respectively. Such nouns will show the plurality of the singularity.

These nouns are sometimes used without plural prefix *dzi-* To show that the noun is in the plural form and not in singular form; the noun will be identified by the subject concord in the plural. e.g.

6. *Kholomo dzi a fula hatsi*  
Cattle are grazing

7. Class 14 Prefix: *Hu- >Vhusunzi 'any small ants'*

: *Vhu-- >Vhutanda 'long sticks'*

For all nouns falling under this category, the plural class prefix will be *Vhu-* affixed to noun stems *-sunzi* and *-tanda* respectively. Such nouns will show the plurality of the singularity.

8. Class 20 *Ku-* is a singular class although it falls under even numbering.

Class Prefix *Ku- >Kuṇoni 'small bird'*

: *Ku- >Kutanda 'small stick'*

All nouns that fall under this category will be in singular form. The nouns in the plural form will sometimes fall under classes *Zwi-* and *Vhu-*

9. Class 8/14 Prefixes: *Zwi- >Zwiṇoni 'birds'*

*Vhu ->Vhutanda 'thin sticks'*

10. Class 8/14 Prefixes: *Zwi-- >Zwitanda 'long sticks'*

: *Vhu ->Vhutanda 'narrow sticks'*

All nouns falling under this category, the singular class prefix is *Ku-* affixed to noun stems *-ṇoni* and *-tanda* respectively. Such nouns will show the plurality of the singularity of prefixes *Zwi-* and *Vhu-* affixed to the noun stems *-ṇoni* and *-tanda* respectively to express the plurality of the singularity.

### 3.2. Plurality Expressed By Using Various Nominal Concords

There are two nominal concords to be dealt with here and they are subject and object concords. The singular class prefixes have singular nominal concords whereas the plural nouns have concords which express plurality.

#### 3.2.1. Plurality Expressed By Using Subject And Object Concords

Class	Prefix	Subject Concord	Object Concord
11. (a).	Class 2/2b	<i>Vha-/vho-</i>	<i>vha</i>
(b).	Class 4	<i>Mi-</i>	<i>i</i>
(c).	Class 6	<i>Ma-</i>	<i>a</i>
(d).	Class 8	<i>Zwi-</i>	<i>zwi</i>

(e).	Class 10	Dzi-	dzi	dzi
(f).	Class 14	Vhu-	vhu	vhu

The above-mentioned classes have subject and object concords which are structurally the same as class prefixes, with the exception of classes 4 and 6, whose subject and object concords relinquish *m* and the concord remains as a vowel only. This happens to subject and object concord with the bilabial sound *m*.

12. (a). Class.2: *Vhathu vha1 a vha2vhona (vhatukana)*  
People see them (boys)  
2b: *Vhomalume vha1 a vha2 vhona (vhatukana)*  
Uncles see them (boys)
- (b). Class.4: *Miri (m) i1a (m) i2anwa (mitshele)*  
Trees bear those (fruit)
- (c). Class. 6: *Malwadze (m) a1 a (m) a2 tambudza (matshudeni)*  
Diseases harass them (students)
- (d). Class. 8: *Zwiṅoni zwi1 a zwi2 fhaṭa (zwiṭaha)*  
Birds build them (nests)
- (e). Class. 10: *Kholomo dzi1 a dzi2mamisa (ṅamana)*  
Cattle suckle them (calf)
- (f). Class. 14: *Vhulimbo vhu1 a vhu2 fasha (vhutswiri)*  
Birdlime catches them (a vhutswiri bird)

In the preceding paragraph it was shown that *vha1*, *m (i) 1*, *m (a) 1*, *zwi1*, *dzi1* and *vhu1* are subject concords which express the plurality. The words *vha2*, *m (i) 2*, *m(a)2*, *zwi2*, *dzi2* and *vhu2* are object concords of the words in the same class and they are structurally the same as the subject concord as well as the class prefixes.

### 3.2.2. Plurality Expressed Using Adjective Concords

Plurality is expressed by words which are adjective concords found in the adjectives that qualify the nouns belonging to the following classes which are termed plurality classes. These are classes which express nouns in the plural form.

	Class	Prefix	Adjective Concord	Adjectives
13. (a).	Class 2	Vha-	vha-	vhahulu 'big ones'
(b).	Class 4	Mi-	mi-	mihulu 'big ones'
(c).	Class 6	Ma-	ma-	mahulu 'big ones'
(d).	Class 8	Zwi-	zwi-	zwhulu 'big ones'
(e).	Class 10	Dzi-	dzi-	(dzi) khulu 'big ones'
(f).	Class 14	Vhu-	vhu-	vhuhulu 'big ones'

The adjective concords of the above-mentioned classes are *vha-*, *mi-*, *ma-*, *zwi-*, *dzi-* and *vhu-*. When the adjective concords are affixed to the adjective stems they form adjective *vhahulu*, *mihulu*, *mahulu*, *zwhulu*, *khulu* with the relinquishing of the adjective concord *dzi-* attached to the adjective stem *-hulu* respectively

### 3.2.3. Plurality Expressed By Relative Concords

Poulos (1990:141) says that there are three possible ways of forming direct relatives in Venda and they are:

#### 3.2.3.1 Plurality Expressed By Relative Concord + Verb Ending –ho

A relative concord that is followed by a verb stem on to which a suffix *-ho* is added. This suffix is known as a relative suffix

	Class Form		Relative Concord
14.	Class 1 Mu-	First person Plural	ri 'we'
	Class 1 Mu-	Person plural	ni 'you'
	Class 2/2b Vha- / Vho-		vha 'they'
	Class 4 Mi-		I 'they'

Class 6 Ma-	a 'they'
Class 8 Zwi-	zwi 'they'
Class 10 Dzi-	dzi 'they'
Class 14 Vhu-	vhu- /hu- 'they'

15. (a). Rine **ra** vhona  
Who are seeing?
- (b). Inwi **ni** ḁaho  
You who are coming
- (c). Vhathu **vha** ḁaho  
People who are coming
- (d). Miri **I** waho  
Trees that are falling
- (e). Maḁi **a** rotholaho  
Water that is cold
- (f). Zwiḁoni **zwi** fhufhaho  
~~~~~Birds that are flying
- (g). (Dzi) kholomo **dzi** fulaho  
Cattle that are grazing
- (h). Vhutanda **vhu /hu** vundeaho  
Thin sticks those are broken

The words in bold are the relative concords in the preceding sentences. The preceding relative concords express the plurality of things referred to the antecedents which are the subjects of the sentences.

### 3.2.3.2. Plurality Expressed By Verbal Relative Concord with –No- Followed A Verb

| Class    | Form                   |                      | Relative Concord +no+V-a       |
|----------|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 16. (a). | Class 1 Mu-            | First person Plural  | ri no ḁa 'we who are coming'   |
| (b).     | Class 1 Mu-            | Second Person plural | ni no ḁa 'you who are coming'  |
| (c).     | Class 2/2b Vha- / Vho- |                      | vha no ḁa 'who are coming'     |
| (d).     | Class 4 Mi-            |                      | I no ḁa 'that are coming'      |
| (e).     | Class 6 Ma-            |                      | a no ḁa 'that are coming'      |
| (f).     | Class 8 Zwi-           |                      | zwi no ḁa 'that are coming'    |
| (g).     | Class 10 Dzi-          |                      | dzi noḁa 'that are coming'     |
| (h).     | Class 14 Vhu-          |                      | vhu/hu no ḁa 'that are coming' |

The plurality is expressed by the relative concords of the plural class prefixes. When these relative concords are employed, they express the plurality of nouns in class Mu- First person Plural and Second Person Plural. In addition to that, plurality is expressed by the relative concords of nouns in class Vha- /Vho-, Mi-, Ma-, Zwi-, Dzi-, and Vhu- respectively.

### 3.2.3.2 Plurality Expressed By Relative Pronoun Plus Relative Concord Followed By A Verb

Here it is shown that a relative pronoun is followed by the relative concord and the verbs

| Class    | Form                   |                      | RP    | +RC    | +V-a                    |
|----------|------------------------|----------------------|-------|--------|-------------------------|
| 17. (a). | Class 1 Mu-            | First person Plural  | rine  | ra     | ḁa 'who are coming'     |
| (b).     | Class 1 Mu-            | Second Person plural | nine  | na     | ḁa 'you who are coming' |
| (c).     | Class 2/2b Vha - /Vho- |                      | vhane | vha    | ḁa 'that are coming'    |
| (d).     | Class 4 Mi-            |                      | ine   | ya     | ḁa 'that are coming'    |
| (e).     | Class 6 Ma-            |                      | ane   | a      | ḁa 'that are coming'    |
| (f).     | Class 8 Zwi-           |                      | zwine | zwa ḁa | 'that are coming'       |
| (g).     | Class 10 Dzi-          |                      | dzine | dza    | ḁa 'that are coming'    |
| (h).     | Class 14 Vhu-          | vhune /hune          | ha    | ḁa     | 'that are coming'       |

The plurality is expressed by the relative pronouns and the relative concords of the plural class prefixes, i.e. Mu- First person Plural *rine ra* and Second Person Plural *nine na*. In addition to that, plurality of all other classes is expressed by relative concords of nouns in class Vha -/Vho- which is *vhane vha*, Mi- which is *ine ya*, Ma-

which is *ane a*, *Zwi-* which is *zwine zwa*, *Dzi-* which is *dzine dza*, and *Vhu-* which is *vhune ha/hune ha* respectively. In that case the relative pronouns follow the relative concords whose plurality has been expressed.

### 3.2.4. Plurality Expressed By Using Quantitative Concord

The quantitative concords of plural class prefixes has a tendency of expressing plurality

| Class    | Form                                             | Relative Concord    |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 18. (a)  | Class 1 <i>Mu-</i>                               | First person Plural |
| (b)      | Class 1 <i>Mu-</i>                               | Person plural       |
| (c)      | Class 2/2b <i>Vha -/Vho-</i>                     | <i>ro-</i> 'we'     |
| (d)      | Class 4 <i>Mi-</i>                               | <i>no-</i> 'you'    |
| (e)      | Class 6 <i>Ma-</i>                               | <i>vh-</i> 'they'   |
| (f)      | Class 8 <i>Zwi-</i>                              | <i>yo-</i> 'they'   |
| (g)      | Class 10 <i>Dzi-</i>                             | <i>o-</i> 'they'    |
| (h)      | Class 14 <i>Vhu-</i>                             | <i>zwo-</i> 'they'  |
|          |                                                  | <i>dzo-</i> 'they'  |
|          |                                                  | <i>ho-</i> 'they'   |
| 19. (a). | <i>Riṅe roṅhe</i> 'we all'                       |                     |
| (b).     | <i>Inwi noṅhe</i> 'you all'                      |                     |
| (c).     | <i>Vhathu vhoṅhe</i> 'all people'                |                     |
| (d).     | <i>Miri yoṅhe</i> 'all trees'                    |                     |
| (e).     | <i>Madi oṅhe</i> 'all water'                     |                     |
| (f).     | <i>Zwiṅonizwoṅhe</i> 'all birds'                 |                     |
| (g).     | ( <i>Dzi</i> ) <i>kholomodzoṅhe</i> 'all cattle' |                     |
| (h).     | <i>Vhutanda hoṅhe</i> 'all thin sticks'          |                     |

The above words in bold are the quantitative concords in the above mentioned sentences. The above quantitative are formed by the quantitative concords affixed to the quantitative stems *-ṅhe*. These quantitatives express the plurality of things referred by the antecedent which are the subjects of the sentences.

### 3.2.5. Plurality Expressed By Using Absolute Pronoun Concords

It is found that the absolute pronoun concords for plural class prefixes have the potential of expressing the plurality.

| Class   | Prefix                   | Absolute Pronoun Concord | Absolute                                           |
|---------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 20. (a) | Class 2 <i>Vha-/Vho-</i> | <b><i>vha-</i></b>       | <i>vhone</i> < <b><i>vha</i></b> <i>one</i> 'they' |
| (b)     | Class 4 <i>Mi-</i>       | <b><i>mi-</i></b>        | <i>yone</i> < <b><i>ione</i></b> 'they'            |
| (c)     | Class 6 <i>Ma-</i>       | <b><i>ma-</i></b>        | <i>one</i> < <b><i>aone</i></b> 'they'             |
| (d)     | Class 8 <i>Zwi-</i>      | <b><i>zwi-</i></b>       | <i>zwone</i> < <b><i>zwione</i></b> 'they'         |
| (e)     | Class 10 <i>Dzi-</i>     | <b><i>dzi</i></b>        | <i>dzone</i> < <b><i>dzione</i></b> 'they'         |
| (f)     | Class 14 <i>Vhu-</i>     | <b><i>vhu-</i></b>       | <i>hone</i> < <b><i>huone</i></b> 'they'           |

The preceding section consists of the absolute pronoun concords in bold letters. To the absolute pronoun concords we affix the root **-o-** and suffix **-ne** to form an absolute pronouns *vhone* < ***vha*** *one*, *yone* < ***ione***, *one* < ***aone***, *zwone* < ***zwione***, *dzone* < ***dzione*** and *hone* < ***huone*** respectively. The absolute pronoun concords are structurally the same as the class prefixes and the absolute pronoun concords express the plurality of the nouns referred to by the absolute pronoun concords.

### 3.2.6. Plurality Expressed By Using Demonstrative Pronoun Concords

| Class   | Prefix                    | D.P. Concord       | D1                  | D2                  | D3                  | D4                       |
|---------|---------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 21. (a) | Class 2 <i>Vha -/Vho-</i> | <b><i>vha-</i></b> | <i>vhano</i>        | <i>avha</i>         | <i>avho</i>         | <i>vhala</i>             |
| (b)     | Class 4 <i>Mi-</i>        | <b>(m) i-</b>      | <i>ino</i>          | <i>iyi</i>          | <i>iyo</i>          | <i>ila</i>               |
| (c)     | Class 6 <i>Ma-</i>        | <b>(m) a-</b>      | <i>ano</i>          | <i>aya</i>          | <i>ayo</i>          | <i>ala</i>               |
| (d)     | Class 8 <i>Zwi-</i>       | <b><i>zwi-</i></b> | <i>zwino</i>        | <i>izwi</i>         | <i>izwo</i>         | <i>zwila</i>             |
| (e)     | Class 10 <i>Dzi-</i>      | <b><i>dzi-</i></b> | <i>dzino</i>        | <i>idzi</i>         | <i>idzo</i>         | <i>dzila</i>             |
| (f)     | Class 14 <i>Vhu-</i>      | <b><i>vhu-</i></b> | <i>huno</i>         | <i>uhu</i>          | <i>uho</i>          | <i>hula</i>              |
|         |                           |                    | <i>vhuno</i>        | <i>uvhu</i>         | <i>uvho</i>         | <i>vhula</i>             |
|         |                           |                    | <b><i>these</i></b> | <b><i>here,</i></b> | <b><i>there</i></b> | <b><i>over there</i></b> |

Translation of *positon*:

The above class prefixes have the same demonstrative PronounConcords which are structurally similar to the class prefixes with the exception of class 4 and 6 prefixes with bilabial sounds. These Demonstrative Pronoun concords have a tendency of relinquishing *m* and remain *i* in class 4 and remains without an *m* in class 6 respectively. These demonstrative Pronoun Concords have a potential of expressing the plurality of singularity of nouns in the other classes.

### 3.2.7. Plurality Expressed By Using the Possessive Concords

|     | <b>Class</b> | <b>Form</b>                                   | <b>Possessive Concord</b>       |
|-----|--------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 22. | (a).         | Class 1Mu-                                    | First person Plural             |
|     | (b).         | Class 1 Mu-                                   | Person plural                   |
|     | (c).         | Class 2/2b Vha- /Vho-                         |                                 |
|     | (d).         | Class 4 Mi-                                   |                                 |
|     | (e).         | Class 8 Zwi-                                  |                                 |
|     | (f).         | Class 10 Dzi-                                 |                                 |
|     | (g).         | Class 14 Vhu-                                 |                                 |
| 23. | (a).         | <b>Muroho washu /wa hashu</b> 'our vegetable' | <i>rine</i> >-shu >hashu 'ours' |
|     | (b).         | <b>Zwithu zwaṅu</b> 'your things'             | <i>inwi</i> >-haṅu 'yours'      |
|     | (c).         | <b>Vhathu vhavho</b> 'their people'           | <i>vha-</i> 'of'                |
|     | (d).         | <b>Miri yavho</b> 'their trees'               | <i>ya-</i> 'of'                 |
|     | (e).         | <b>Maḍi avho</b> 'their water'                | <i>zwa-</i> 'of'                |
|     | (f).         | <b>Zwiṅoni zwavho</b> 'their birds'           | <i>dza-</i> 'of'                |
|     | (g).         | <b>(Dzi) kholomodzavho</b> 'their cattle'     | <i>ha-</i> 'of'                 |
|     | (h).         | <b>Vhutanda havho</b> 'their thin sticks'     |                                 |

The preceding mentioned words in bold type are possessive concords in the preceding mentioned sentences. The possessives have been formed by the possessive concords (formed from the subject concord plus stem *a>ua>wa*) affixed to the possessive stems. The possessive stems could be an absolute pronouns, nouns and other substantives, In the above case the possessive stems are *-shu, -ṅu, -vho* which is the short form of the absolute pronoun *vhone>-vho*. This possessive concord has the potential of expressing the plurality of things referred by the antecedent which are the subjects of the sentences.

### 3.2.8. Plurality Expressed By Using Auxiliary Verbs

Some of the auxiliary verbs have the potential of expressing the plurality. In other words when such auxiliary verbs are in a sentence they have the tendency of expressing plurality referring to many times.

24. (a). *Ṭolou: Ndi ṭolou mu vhona* 'I always see him/her'  
 (b). *Ṭwa: Ndi ṭwa ndi tshi mu vhona* 'I occasionally see him'  
 (c). *Dzulela: Ndi dzulela u mu vhona* 'I occasionally see him/her'

When the above statements are uttered one has the sense that it refers to plurality of seeing him on several occasions but not once.

### 3.2.9. Plurality Expressed By Using Suffixes In Imperative Mood sentence

The imperative sentences are the sentences in the imperative mood. These are sentences in which commands or instructions are given. Sometimes instructions are given to many persons instead of one person.

24. (a). *Vhala! Read!* > *An instruction is given to one person*  
 (b). *Vhalai! Do read!* > *An instruction or command is given to one persons reflected by -i from iwe 'you' which is an absolute pronoun for the first person, singular*

Poulos (1990:233) is in agreement that the verb root is *-vhal-*, and the suffix is *-a*. The *-ni* form is merely a plural marker. Note also that there is no subject concord in those sentences. The *-ni* is derived from absolute pronoun of second person plural.

25. *Vhalani! 'you read'*

## IV. Plurality Expressed By Using Words Of Multitudes

26. (a). *Murivha>Ndi vhona murivha wa zwiṅoni*  
 I am seeing a swarm of birds  
 (b). *Guma>Ndi khou vhona guma ḷa ṅotshi*  
 I am seeing a swarm of bees  
 (c). *Murutshe>Murutshe wa nzie*

- A stalk of grasshoppers*  
(e). *Lutsinga>Lutsinga lwa ɲotshi*  
*A flight of bees*

In the preceding section, the words in bold letters mean many things in a group. The word *murivha* refers to a group of birds flying together. The second one *guma* refers to a swarm of bees. The third one refers *murutshe* which is a stalk of grass or thin wand used to skewer crickets, grasshoppers and figs. The word *shovu* is a plantation of many banana trees whereas *lutsinga* refers to a bowstring; line as of flight of bees or grasshoppers or villages strung out. When these words are uttered one should know that it does not refer to one thing. It refers words showing a multitude in which plurality is expressed in a way.

## V. Plurality Expressed By Using Reduplication Of Nominal Words

Tshivenda like any other language of the world has the properties of expressing plurality when using reduplicated nominal words. Crystal (1991:293) defines reduplication (reduplicate-e,-vie) as A term in Morphology for a process of repetition whereby the forms of a prefix/suffix reflects certain phonological characteristics of the root. This process may be found in Greek, where the initial consonant of the root is reduplicated in certain grammatical contexts (perfective). In Tshivenda the following are good examples of reduplication of the nominal words.

27. (a). *Ndi mu vhona ɖuvha na ɖuvha*  
*I always see him/her*  
(b). *Ndo tshimbila muɖi nga muɖi ndi si mu wane*  
*I went to all homesteads but could not find him*  
(c). *Ro yam muvhundu nga muvhundu*  
*I went to every village*  
(d). *Ro dzhena nnɖu nga nnɖu ra si wane tshithu*  
*We entered every house but have found anything*

In the above sentences words have been reduplicated such as *ɖuvha na ɖuvha*, *muɖi na muɖi*, *muvhundu na muvhundu* and *nnɖu nga nnɖu* has the potential of expressing plurality. In the above sentences what is expressed by the verb occurs several times.

Tshivenda like other languages has the capacity of expressing the plurality when using reduplication of nominal words. Basumatary (2013:194) affirms that in these sense plurality is expressed by reduplication of words of noun class. Sometimes a word is uttered repetitively and used in representation of plurality.

## VI. Conclusion

The above-mentioned discussion has analysed the way in which plurality is expressed in Tshivenda. The following ways have been established. The use of class prefixes, uses of subject and object concords have been employed. The adjective, relative, quantitative, absolute, demonstrative pronoun concords have been employed to express the plurality. Besides that, the uses of imperative suffixes, auxiliary verbs and multitude words have been employed to express the plurality of nouns in Tshivenda. The discussion has succeeded in showing /illustrating words used to express the plurality of various nouns in Tshivenda.

## Acknowledgment

The researcher wishes to acknowledge all members of the M.E.R Mathivha Centre for African Languages, Arts and Culture who consciously or unconsciously assisted me to be engaged in all research activities that took place while I was still attached to the University of Venda before retirement.

## References

- [1] Basumatary, P.C 2012:Common Methods of Number Distinction in Boro and Other Cognate Languages of North-East India. In US-China Foreign Language Vol 11, No.3 of 2013 P 191-195
- [2] Milubi, N.A: Ngoma ya Vhatei Gireidi 10-12, Polokwane, NAM Publishers
- [3] Milubi, N.A and Madadzhe, R.N1990: Mutoli wa Tshivenda Murole wa 8, Sovenga, NAM Publishers
- [4] Musehane, N.M 1995: The Nominal Compound in Tshivenda, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Stellenbosch, University of Stellenbosch
- [5] Napoli, D.J 1996: Linguistics-An Introduction, New York, Oxford University Press
- [6] Poulos, G 1990 A Linguistic Analysis of Venda, Pretoria, Via Afrika Ltd
- [7] Radford, A 1997: Syntax-A minimalist introduction, Cambridge University Press. Great Britain
- [8] Spencer, A 1991: Morphological Theory –An Introduction to Word Structure in Generative Grammar, Blackwell Publishers, Cambridge
- [9] Van Warmelo, N.J 1989 :Venda Dictionary, Pretoria J.L.Van Schaik Publishers