

Ideophones in Shona

An Inaugural Lecture

GIVEN IN THE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF
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Book

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IDEOPHONES IN SHONA

THIS lecture is concerned with the special features of form and behaviour of a class of words in Shona called Ideophones. This somewhat restricted topic, a particular form-class in one South-Central Bantu language, has been chosen for several reasons. The first is that ideophones are a general Bantu phenomenon and it is very likely that a statement about the place of ideophones in one Bantu language will throw some light on their position in other related languages. The second is that they do not seem to have been adequately described for any Bantu language. The third is that the special features of ideophones in Shona lead us to recognize in this language a subsystem of syntactical, morphological, and phonological units and structures, peculiar to ideophones, and characteristic of a style of speech which can loosely be called 'free expression'. The relation of this subsystem to the central system, which is characteristic of 'formal expression', is a problem which arises out of the description of the ideophones, but which can only be partially answered here.

Ideophones are a general Bantu phenomenon. Doke, in his *Southern Bantu Languages*,¹ lists them as one of the main morphological characteristics of these languages. It is known that they are found in the wider Niger-Congo area of which Bantu is a part, e.g. in Ewe. They are even found in the West Indies, e.g. in Jamaican English. While it appears that these forms have not yet received adequate treatment in any grammar of this area, their existence has

¹ Clement M. Doke, *The Southern Bantu Languages* (Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 47.

often been reported. In the older grammars which were based, consciously or unconsciously, on classical models, the peculiarities of the ideophone, and its unlikeness to anything in the grammarians' background, were revealed by the startling variety of terminology and treatment which it received. Doke has given us a selection of the terms used in his *Bantu Linguistic Terminology*.¹ He had himself, in his earlier works, used the terms *onomatopoeia* and *radical*. Others had used the terms *descriptive adverb*, *indeclinable verbal particle*, *intensive interjection*, *onomatopoeic substantive*, *mimic noun*, *indeclinable adjective*. Doke insisted that ideophones should be treated as a separate part of speech and he proposed the special term *ideophone* to underline this fact. In practice, however, he tended to treat ideophones as adverbials or adverbial equivalents. 'Their work is that of describing predicates or qualificatives, and for that reason are best classified along with the adverbs under the heading of descriptives.'² This description, proposed by Doke in his discussion of ideophones in Shona, is very representative of his position in regard to ideophones in Bantu generally. Doke, however, did not make a serious grammatical study of this field in Shona. His great contribution there lay in the phonetic description.

In Shona, the form it is most profitable to compare the ideophone with is not the adverb but the verb. When we compare speech in which a high proportion of ideophones is found with the more normal speech, we find that we are led to distinguish two quite different styles. In ideophonic speech verbs are replaced more or less entirely by ideophones. Most things can be expressed in either way, either

¹ Longmans, 1935, p. 118.

² Doke, *A Comparative Study in Shona Phonetics* (University of the Witwatersrand Press, Johannesburg, 1931), p. 221.

verbally or ideophonically. But whereas the verbal utterance is rather matter-of-fact, in construction highly structured and exact in its use of concordial agreements spread over the utterance, ideophonic speech expresses itself in varying degrees of freedom from normal constructions to achieve vivid and arresting description. In order that the special features of ideophones may be appreciated, I propose to describe them against the background of the more formal verbal structure. Such comparison will serve not only to bring out their special features but also to show their place in the language as such. However, a word is necessary about the sorts of occasions on which they are likely to be used.

They may be used in a narrative or speech at certain points where a special lively style and special vividness is required. Here they have considerable rhetorical effect. They are used to express emotion or excitement where one wishes to give an adequate description of an adventure, e.g. a rescue from a crocodile or from a burning house. They are elicited by speedy action or complicated interaction and co-operation as, for example, in a communal hunt, a football match, or the migration of a tribe to a new country. The need to describe some quite characteristic action creates occasions where normal verbal expression may be considered too involved or not sufficiently vivid or specific. They are frequently found in folk-tales. Many of them are onomatopoeic, but their reference is far wider than to sound.¹ Colour, taste, smell, texture, postures, gaits, activities, and conditions of every kind are included. Stylistically, too, they rank higher than onomatopoeia.

¹ The fact, among others, that ideophones can be used to indicate complete silence makes the term *onomatopoeic* an unrepresentative term for ideophones as a whole.

They are used by accomplished speakers with an artistic sense for the right word for the complete situation, or its important aspects, at the right pitch of vividness. To be used skilfully, I have been told, they must correspond to one's inner feeling. Their use indicates a high degree of sensitive impressionability.

With them one is in a special realm of spoken art. There is a roundness, a complete shape, not so vividly conveyed by more complex constructions, more formal expressions. They attempt to be a vivid re-presentation or re-creation of an event in sound. Thus, Firth's term, phonaesthetic particles, is a remarkably apt one. One notices that in speech, or even in a discussion about their nature and use with informants, they bring a sense of ease and mirth. Mirth, infectious boisterous African laughter, is their natural accompaniment—laughter, not so much at the reference of the forms as at the forms themselves. Always they try to capture the freshness of an event and to express it *of themselves* with nothing to dull or cloud the evocation. Passing over to their use one is freed from most of the conventions and limitations of normal speech, necessary for normal communication and precise statement, but momentarily felt to be inadequate. This freer expression, however, has its own rules and limitations, and it remains to attempt a description of these.

SYNTAX

There are four constructions in which ideophones are used. In the order described here, they move progressively farther and farther away from normal verbal constructions.

Construction I

In the first and commonest construction, ideophones appear in phrases after an introductory verb. This verb is

based on the stem *-ti*, or its passive *-nzi*, forms meaning respectively something like 'do' or 'undergo'.

e.g. Ndatí bhátye rángu páyi (I hung up my jacket).¹

To compare examples of normal verbal constructions with the first ideophonic construction, it will be convenient to choose examples of ideophones which have corresponding verbal derivatives. Such correspondences do not always occur.

Thus: páyi (hanging up)	and	kupáyiká (to hang up)
dó (going down)		kudóká (to go down, to set)
svétu (jumping)		kusvétúká (to jump)

Compare the sentences:

- (1) Ndapáyika bhátye rángu (I hung up my jacket).
- (2) Ndatí bhátye rángu páyi (I hung up my jacket).
- (3) Ndakásvíka, zúvá rikabva rádóka (I arrived and then the sun set).
- (4) Ndakásvíka, zúvá rikabva ráti dó (I arrived and then the sun set).

Of these sentences, nos. (2) and (4) contain ideophones, (1) and (3) only verbs; (2) and (4) are considered to be more direct and vivid in expression than (1) and (3).

The form *ndapáyika* can be analysed as follows:

- (a) the 1st person singular subject concord *nd-*;
- (b) the past tense indicator *-a-*;
- (c) the derived verbal radical *-páyik-*;
- (d) the radical suffix *-a*, found in this and most other verbal forms.

¹ In the examples, ideophones are italicized as well as the word or words which most nearly correspond to them in the English translation. High-toned syllables are marked with an acute accent, low-toned syllables are unmarked. Long syllables are marked by colons. A long syllable in final position is realized as falling, either high falling or low falling, depending on its tone.

This is a fairly simple example of Shona verbal morphology, but it contains five different morphemes. If we compare it with the construction: *ndatí páyi*, we see that the subject concord and tense indicator are used with the relatively colourless introductory verb *-ti* to indicate the subject and time of the action, while the ideophone expresses the particular action in question. It is a form freed from morphological ties to verbal affixes, placed in a position of prominence, and the result is that the sentence is expressed with greater clarity and effect.

Ideophones are also free from the general intonational pattern of the sentence. This requires that the overall pitch register, in which the contrasts of high and low tone are realized, drop, as the sentence proceeds, by a series of downsteps, phonologically determined. Thus, high tone, at the beginning of a sentence, is absolutely higher than high tone in the middle of the sentence, and much higher than high tone at the end, given the presence of the conditioning factors. The pitches of ideophones, however, are not conditioned by their position in the sentence and, in this respect, are like phrases interpolated into its run. In this connexion it is interesting to note that *-ti* (meaning 'say') is the verb used to introduce citations of direct speech,

e.g. *Ndatí, Míráyí!* (I said—Wait!).

Ideophones are also marked off from preceding words by pauses longer than is normal between words. They are not subject to the effect of tonal assimilation or dissimilation across word boundaries, nor to the incidence of length on penultimate syllables which functions in Shona sentences as a word or sentence marker.

The use of the introductory verb stem *-ti* enables Shona

to combine verbal morphology with ideophones, for *-ti* can be fully conjugated. The normal affixes of negation, subject or object, tense, implication, and aspect, together with accompanying tone patterns, are affixed to *-ti* or its passive form *-nzi*. The ideophone, while morphologically disengaged from all that, is yet a constituent in constructions in which *-ti* or *-nzi* appear. They may be in the imperative, in subjunctives expressing desire, in statements and descriptions involving various tenses and aspects in the principal mood, in dependent clauses requiring participial constructions, in relative clauses, and in narrative which requires other types of dependent form.

Some examples:

- (5) Ití dí dí dí, úkúrúmidze kusvika kúnó (*Run and come here quickly*).
 Cf. Dídídzá, úkúrúmidze kusvika kúnó (*Run and come here quickly*).
- (6) Munhu wákánzi nébanga *dyú* kumusáná, pásí *bvurugwada* (*The man was stabbed with a knife in the back and slumped down on to the ground*).
- (7) Gondó ráti *dhabhu dhabhu dhabhu*, richíbvá pázumbu (*The eagle flew slowly away from the fowl-house*).
- (8) Ndaóna maháchi ákátí *twírírí*; ákátárisa kumabva-zúvá (*I saw the horses standing quite still, looking towards the east*).

In this type of ideophonic construction, the combination of *-ti* and ideophone is related to objects and adverbials in much the same way as verbs in a purely verbal construction.

- Cf. (9) Ndapáyika bhátýe rángu (*I hung up my jacket*).
 (10) Ndatí bhátýe rángu páyi (*I hung up my jacket*).
 (11) Nguruve yándúrirwa pazísó nényuchi (*The pig was stung on the eye by a bee*).

- (12) Nguruve yáanzi pazísó ndúre nényuchi (The pig was *stung* on the eye by a bee).

There are, however, differences in word order. Objects and adverbials normally come immediately after the introductory verb and before the ideophone,

e.g. *bhátýe rángu* in (10); and *pazísó* in (12).

The verb incorporating the stem *-ti* and the ideophone are usually discontinuous constituents in constructions of this kind, and the word order serves to put the ideophone in a prominent position.

The verb *-ti* may introduce a series of ideophones,

- e.g. (13) Mashurámúrové ákábva áti ndímu, dzvamu, mwá:nda kubhururuka (The storks *suddenly rose up together in alarm* and then *flew off in different directions*).

An accompanying infinitive may be added to define the reference if this is not precise enough. In the example quoted, the forms could refer to any sudden rising and scattering, confined, for example, to the ground. So *kubhururuka* is added to make it clear that it was a scattering in flight.

Construction II

Another construction in which ideophones appear is one introduced by the form *ndíye*. This is an inflected form of the absolute pronoun substitute *íye*, which functions as a substitute in certain environments for nouns of class 1 and 1a. One could use it in contexts such as the following:

- (14) Ko, Takáwira ndíbabá wáko? (Tell me, is Takawira your father?)
 (15) Hóngu, ndíye (Yes, he is; lit. Yes, it is he).
 (16) Ko, uyo múrume wényú heré? (Tell me, is that man your husband?)
 (17) Hóngu, ndíye (Yes, he is; lit. Yes, it is he).

In these sentences we see that the reference of *íye*, the base used in *ndíye*, is to nouns of class I and 1a. One finds the same form used to introduce ideophones,

- e.g. (18) Munhu wákánzi nébanga *dyú* kumusáná, ndíye pasi *bvurugwada* (The man was *stabbed* in the back and *slumped down* on to the ground).
 (19) Bveni ndíye *hwashu* (And the baboon *cleared off quickly*).
 (20) Imbwá ndíye *ng'á*, kurúmá (Then the dog *suddenly bit* me).
 (21) Umhutu hwákáramba huchíbhúruruka, ndíye *ndúre pachizísó chetsóka* (The mosquito kept flying round, and then *bit* me on the ankle).

Irrespective of the topic being discussed (and examples (18) to (21) give us examples of topics of noun classes I, 5, 9, and 14), the invariable form *ndíye* is used, never *ndíro*, *ndíyo*, &c., as one might have expected, with substitutes agreeing with the topics. For this reason the description of this construction is something of a puzzle. Two descriptions are possible, the first less acceptable than the second.

(a) In the first description, the base *íye* agrees with the topics *munhu*, *bveni*, *imbwá*, *umhutu*, irrespective of their class, because, in this construction, they are always personified and forthwith control agreements of class 1a. This process of personification is quite common in Shona stories, as indeed in stories of other languages. *Íye* would then be a substitute for whatever topic is being used in this construction, just as the substitute 'I', in English stories, can stand for Jack, the grandfather clock, a mouse, or what you will.

Shona has other types of vivid narrative style in which personification takes place, the actions of a baboon or hare,

for example, being described in the first person, as if through the medium of its own thoughts,

- e.g. (22) Kuzoti bere rōti *ndichiiyá* kúzodyá nyáma yáro, rákaóná mómbe íye ichíngé yakásvinura, ndó kubva rátíza (Just as the hyena was about to approach to eat its meat, the ox seemed to it to be alive and so it ran away; lit. When the hyena said, *Now I come* to eat its meat . . .).

Another device is to prefix *vá-* of class 2*a*, or other honorific forms, to the noun indicating the topic. Thus *bere*, a noun of class 5, becomes *VáBére* (Mr. Hyena), a noun of class 2*a*. *Tsuro* (a hare), a noun of class 9, becomes *vanáTsuro*, an honorific form indicating Mr. Hare.

There are several difficulties which can be urged against this first interpretation. One is the invariable nature of *ndíye*. Even in a sentence full of concordial forms referring to other classes, *ndíye* still appears, never the rest of the series, *ndíro*, *ndíyo*, &c.,

- e.g. (23) Bere rákátí mumbá *pindirikiti*, ndíye (*not ndíro*) *téndéuké*, ndíye *wa:re* (The hyena *entered* the house and then *turned* and *cleared off*).

Even if the topic is of the 1st or 2nd person, *ndíye* is used,

- e.g. (24) Iní ndakápínda mumbá, ndíye (*not ndíní*) *súnzúma* (I *entered* the house and *squatted down*).
Cf. (25) Iní *pindéyi* mumbá, ndíye *súnzúma* (do.).

Even where there is no expressed topic, and the reference is just to an action going on with topic unknown or irrelevant, *ndíye* is used,

- e.g. (26) Ndatí *mukéyi*, ndíye *pata* (I *woke up* and there was a *sound of something dropping*).

A final instance which makes this first interpretation somewhat improbable is the form which this construction takes in Karanga, perhaps in other forms in Shona as well,

e.g. (27) Bere rákátí mumbá *pindikiti*, ndíye kwáro *téndéuke*
(The hyena *entered* the house and then *turned*).

(28) Iní *pindéyi* mumbá, ndíye kwángu *súnzúma* (I
entered the house and *squatted down*).

Kwáro and *kwángu* are concordially linked to the topics, *bere* and *iní*. This would seem to show that we should not look for agreement between *íye* and the topic in a sentence like this. (The agreement of *kwá-* is another problem.)

(b) The second interpretation is that the substitute *íye* agrees, not with the topic or subject, but with the ideophone which it serves to introduce,

e.g. (29) Imbwá ndíye *ng'á*, kurúmá.

This would mean something like this: 'As for the dog, it is *ng'á*, a sudden biting.' If this is so, it follows that ideophones are to be classed together with all the other members of the domain of the substitute *íye*. These are: (i) all nouns of classes 1 and 1a; (ii) all other types of substitute of class 1, e.g. the adjectival *mukúru* (elder); the demonstrative *uyu* (this one); the enumerative *mumwe* (another one); the possessive *wángu* (my one); the relative *ari kuúyá* (the one who is coming). To these must be added all ideophones, a large domain for substitute *íye*. Ideophones are clearly not nouns or pronouns themselves; in form and in syntactical behaviour they are completely different. The only reason for putting them into a common category with nouns and pronouns would be their relation to substitute *íye*. They cannot be said to be nouns of class 1a. Class 1a is a very

hospitable class including nouns of very different origin with zero prefix in common,

e.g. *babá* (father); *nezúro* (yesterday); *pirí* (the number 2);
Bere (Hyena),

but all these nouns have similar paradigms, whereas, morphologically, ideophones are pure particles and have no inflectional paradigms at all.

There is a parallel construction in Shona which gives some support to this interpretation. It is usually classed among the narrative forms, viz. forms which are used to conduct or carry on a narrative, not usually to commence it. It consists of the form *ndíko* followed by an infinitive, e.g. (30) *Bere ndíko kutízá* (And the hyena ran away).

Ndíko is similar in form to *ndíye*, being a similarly inflected form of the absolute pronoun substitute of class 15. It is followed by a noun of class 15, or infinitive, which it introduces. The agreement of *íko*, the base of *ndíko*, is with *kutízá*. (The form *ndíko* is usually abbreviated in the Zezuru dialects to *ndóo* or *ndó*.)

- e.g. (31) *Bere ndíko kutízá* | *Bere ndó kutízá* (And the hyena ran away).
(32) *Imbwá ndíko kurúmá* | *Imbwá ndó kurúmá* (And the dog bit me).
(33) *Umhutu hwákáramba huchíbhúruruka, ndíko kundíndúrírá páchizísó chetsóka* (The mosquito kept flying round and then bit me on the ankle).

The parallelism between the two forms does not seem forced,

- e.g. (34) *Imbwa ndíye ng'á* (And the dog bit me).
Cf. *Imbwá ndíko kurúmá* (do.).

- (35) *Imbwá ndíye gumbo rángu ng'á* (And the dog bit my leg).

Cf. *Imbwá ndíko kurúmá gúmbo rángu* (do.).

The bases *-ye* and *-ko* refer respectively to what follows in the construction, e.g. to *ng'á* and *kurúmá*. *Kurúmá* and all other infinitives belong to the domain of the class 15 substitute *íko*; similarly, if this description is correct, all ideophones capable of being used in this construction would belong to the domain of the class 1*a* substitute *íye*, sharing this characteristic with nouns of classes 1 and 1*a*.

Construction III

A further construction in which ideophones appear is of the type: Stable demonstrative followed by ideophone,

- e.g. (36) *Chínóbáte-regé hóyo vu* (Mr. Shilly-Shally arrived).

- (37) *Ángóti barabada kusímúka, hóyo potyo*. (He got up and disappeared inside).

The stable demonstrative is an inflected form of the demonstrative pronoun base, e.g. *uyo*, indicating something of class 1 at some distance. Prefix *há-* is linked to it and the resulting form is *hóyo* (there he/she is). In examples (36), (37), and (38), the agreement is between the demonstrative and the topic of the sentence,

- e.g. (38) *Varúmé vaye hávo mbá kumunda úye* (Then off they went, those men, to that field).

These stable forms are used to indicate objects both near and far. Used with nouns in apposition they indicate all the various distances from the speaker by degrees of pitch and length,

- e.g. (39) *Hóyo mwaná* (There is the child).

Cf. *Hóyo: mwaná* (There is the child yonder).

Hávo: varúmé (There are the men yonder).

When used in narrative with ideophones, they draw attention to the topic as subject, doing this or that action indicated by the ideophone. But it is the ideophone alone which indicates the action, with no dependence upon any verbal or predicative form. There is nothing to suggest tense, mood, aspect, or any other verbal modality in the form itself.

Construction IV

In the last construction involving ideophones, even this accompanying form is dispensed with, and ideophones are used alone, singly or in a series. Here one reaches the extreme of difference between verbal and ideophonic style and constructions,

e.g. (40) Zirúmé riye zibángá *piku*, *chéke* zinhindi, mukanwá *póri* (The huge fellow *snatched up* a knife, *cut off* a huge piece, and *tossed* it into his mouth).

The syntax of phrases in which ideophones appear is clearly quite special and differs from that of the normal or favourite sentence type, though there is a gradation in the extent to which these constructions do depart therefrom. Of the four constructions mentioned, the first is the least fragmentary, the last the most so. While the style is an exceedingly vivid one, the graphic pictures succeeding one another with none of the linking and other verbal affixes found in the verbal type of speech, it is clear that it has limitations. Subtle and exact distinctions of mood and emphasis are clearly impossible here, the verbal forms, and the various contrasting arrangements of word order by which these are conveyed, being out of the question. Here are two more examples of this very vivid style in which we

have a mixture of verbs and ideophones used without any introductory forms:

- (41) from a story. Hyena, having successfully imitated the voice of Hare, is admitted by Hare's wife into the house, she thinking it is her husband.

<i>Bhewú.</i>	(The door <i>opened</i> .)
A, kúdozótí <i>bha</i> , kukawáníkwá.	What a <i>sight</i> confronted her.
A, zvinhu zváipa.	Ah, things are bad indeed!
Bere ráródza mazínó.	Hyena has sharpened his teeth.
Zvikanzi nyama iyi.	His meat lies before him.
<i>Báte mukádzí úya,</i>	He <i>seized</i> the woman
kungopúpútá, kungopúpútá,	and crunch, crunch went
kudyá <i>bha</i> .	the meat and bones together, all <i>gobbled</i> up.
A, <i>barabada</i> , <i>nyóndo</i> , ráénda zváro	Then <i>up he got</i> and <i>off he slunk</i> .)

This example shows us that infinitives can also be used exclamatorily in this very graphic style, e.g. *kungopúpú:tá*.

- e.g. (42) from a story. Hare has tricked the lion into being tied up in return for a taste of honey and is now free to use the well, which Lion was guarding, for drinking and washing.

Shumba ikagódzínzi mbira-	(So the lion was <i>trussed up tight</i> ,
dzákondo <i>ngá ngá ngá, ndí</i>	<i>securely held</i> with a stick tied
<i>ndí ndí, nadzó tsvínzviri.</i>	between his legs and arms.
Íko tsuro huchi hwúye <i>ráseyí,</i>	The little hare <i>threw away</i> the
íko mvúrá yáko <i>tékeyí</i>	honey, <i>drew</i> his water;
íko makumbo nomúviri	<i>washed</i> his legs and body;
wáko <i>shambéyi;</i>	
íko <i>simu, shápu, tóro.</i>	then he <i>got up</i> , <i>went off saucily</i>
	and <i>disappeared</i> .)

Morphology

The morphology of the ideophone is very simple and, in a language which is otherwise so morphologically complex,

this very simplicity is arresting. Ideophones belong to the form class of particles, of which they form the overwhelming number.¹ The others, a tiny remnant, e.g. *asi* (but), *kana* (if, when), are easily distinguishable from ideophones by their quite different syntactical behaviour. Ideophones consist, then, in the main, of forms which are unit morphemes. There are some derived forms which are a little more complex. Though morphologically simple, they show a great deal of complexity and variety on the phonological level and range from 1-syllable to 6-syllable forms with tone and length patterns of every kind. But one looks in vain, at this stage, for any signs of internal morphological structure in this bewildering variety.

A brief comparison with nouns and verbs will reveal their amoebic-like lack of structure. Nouns consist of at least two morphs, a class prefix (one out of 22 possible forms), and a noun stem,

e.g. *mu-nhu* (person) 1; *va-nhu* (persons, people) 2.

The class of nouns closest in structure to ideophones is class 1*a* which has been described as consisting of zero prefix and stem,

e.g. *teté* (father's sister).

Nouns are often more complex than the examples quoted, frequently having a series of prefixes and suffixes ordered in a definite structure. The paradigm of any noun is a long one,

e.g. *mu-ma-mi-shá* (in the clumps of villages) 18/6/3.

. . . *ndodzi-dzó-mwo-zvé-ba*² (. . . not in those peas again) 10.

¹ In the lexicon, of the three types of stem listed, nominal, verbal, and ideophonic, about 45-50 per cent. consist either of ideophones or their derivatives, a very large proportion of the total stock.

² The example is Earl W. Stevick's.

Verbs are always fairly complex in structure. The example met before, viz. *ndapáyika*, consists of five elements. Other more complex forms are just as frequent, e.g. *ha-ndí-cha-zó-ku-p-á-yí* (I shall not give to you).
u-chí-ti-nyéng-édz-ér-a (you tricking us).

Here we have morphemes indicating negation (*ha-*), the subject (*ndi-*, *u-*), mood (*-chi-*), tense (*-cha-*), other modalities (*-zo-*), the object (*-ku- . . . -yi, -ti-*), the radical (*-p-*, *-nyeng-*), verbal extensions (*-edz-*, *-er-*), radical suffix (*-a*). All find their places in a defined structure.

The simplicity of the ideophone stands out sharply against such a system and evidently serves the special semantic purposes for which it is used. Whereas all other types of stem are morphologically bound forms, these are free. They are used as such as whole, if fragmentary, utterances, given the necessary context.

Given the structural simplicity of the ideophone and its lack of inflexion, it follows that we do not meet any changes in shape due to mutual influence of affixes at morpheme boundaries. The cases of derivation of one ideophone from another, or of ideophones from verbs which we are to examine, show the ideophonic stem as remaining constant.

We find many cases where a series of ideophones is obviously connected by a process of derivation. There are three kinds of relationship here, derivation by extension, derivation by voicing, and parallel formation. There is some rudimentary structure observable in these cases.

Derivation of ideophones: (i) By extension

The first process consists of the addition, to a primitive form, of suitable syllables extending it. The result of this process is the formation of intensive forms. There are

accompanying features of tone and length whereby the pitch of the whole form may be raised or lowered and the final syllable lengthened,

- e.g. (43) Ndíye mbú (It was white).
 Ndíye mbúre (It was very white).
 Ndíye mbúretete (It was extremely white).
 Ndíye mbúretetete (It was whiteness itself).
 (44) Ndíye nho (It was extinguished).
 Ndíye nhototo (It was quite extinguished).
 (45) Ndíye tónho (It was quiet).
 Ndíye tónhono (It was very quiet).
 Ndíye tónhonono (It was as still as the grave).

(ii) *Voicing*

A second process of derivation consists of voicing initial or medial unvoiced consonants in an ideophone. These derived forms indicate larger, weightier, more forceful actions,

- e.g. (46) Ndíye tsamú (Taking a handful).
 Ndíye dzamú (Taking a large handful, using both hands).
 (47) Ndíye tépu (Swaying—of a thin person or thing).
 Ndíye dépu (Swaying—of a large person or thing, e.g. a large tree).
 (48) Ndíye ké ké ké: (Girlish laughter).
 Ndíye gé gé gé: (Deep-voiced laughter).

(iii) *Parallel formation*

Some pairs of ideophones are linked in meaning and form and seem to indicate at least a process of parallel formation, contrast between them being indicated by the contrasting vowels *i* and *u*,

- e.g. (49) Ndangóti tsambakónzi *psfidigi* (I covered the pot).
 Cf. Zvikagónzi, Ití *psfidúgu* (I was told to uncover).

(50) Iní *siye* ndáti póto íya *kwidibi* (I left having covered the pot).

Cf. Zvikanzi *nómwaná kúdúbu* (The child uncovered it).

(51) Ndasíya ndáti gónhi *zari* (I left after closing the door).

Cf. *Garé garé* ndikanzwá *zarú* (After a while I heard something opening).

(52) Ndatí bhátye rángu *túri* (I hung up my jacket).

Cf. Ndikagóti pakárepó *túru* (And I took it down again).

Cf. (53) The riddle: Kuenda u, kudzoka i (To go u (viz. empty), to return i (viz. full)).

The answer: Chirongó (The waterpot).

There are signs that there are other types of correspondence between ideophones, and that we shall find morphological patterns which are still hidden. They are unlikely to be so clearly structured as patterns of derivation in nouns and verbs. The patterns we know show an element of freedom. Uncertainty how far this freedom and improvisation go contributes here to making generalizations difficult.

Derivation from ideophones: (i) Verbs

There are many correspondences in form between ideophones on the one hand and verbs and nouns on the other where ideophones form part of a verb or noun in various ways. These seem to be clear cases of derivation and there are a series of governing suffixes for deriving verbs. One very common short series is the trio, intransitive *-ka*, transitive *-ra*, and causative *-dza* or *-tsa*,

e.g. (54) undú (plucking, moulting).

Ndíye húkwaná íya *undú* (And she plucked the chicken).

Cf. ku-unduka (to moult).

ku-undura (to pluck).

ku-undudza (to make moult, to cause to pluck).

(55) bwógo (snap, break).

Ndíye mutí úya *bwógo* (And the tree *broke* in two).

Cf. ku-bwógóká (to snap).

ku-bwógórá (to break).

ku-bwógódzá (to break, cause to snap).

The suffixes are joined to the ideophones as to a radical, and there is a regular correspondence between the tone patterns of ideophones and the infinitive forms. Infinitives with stem tone-pattern HHH are derived from ideophones which are HL, infinitives of stem tone-pattern LLL are derived from ideophones which are LH. It is interesting to learn that a contrast of two sets of stem tone-patterns, found in infinitives and throughout the whole conjugation, is also found in these ideophones.

There are a number of other governing suffixes of this kind, e.g. *-ma*, which forms many statives, indicating posture or position,

e.g. (56) Iní ndíye *zéndá* (I was *leaning against* it).

Cf. kuzéndámá (to lean against).

(57) Ndíko kuti *kóta*, ndírí pabhásikoro (I *bent over* on the bicycle).

Cf. kukótámá (to bend over, to bow).

Suffix *-ka* forms many extensives, indicating actions directed in some way or another,

e.g. (58) Ndíye *páyi* (*Hanging up*). Cf. kupáyiká (to hang up).

(59) Ndíye *yambú* (*Crossing, fording*). Cf. kuyambuka (to cross, ford).

Suffix *-dza* is used to form verb stems from animal cries,

- e.g. (60) Ndíye *barara* (*Bleating*). Cf. *kubárárádza* (to
bleat).
(61) Ndíye *púrúru* (*Ululating* of women). *kupúrúrúdza* (to
ululate).

Some of the commonest verbs in the language are derivatives from ideophones. From these derived verbs other derived verbs and nouns are formed by normal processes, verb from verb and noun from verb,

- e.g. (62) Ndíye *tsváí* (*Sweeping*).
Cf. *ku-tsvái-r-á*
(to sweep). Cf. *ku-tsvái-r-w-á* (be swept).
ku-tsvái-r-ír-a (sweep for).
ku-tsvái-r-ís-a (make sweep).
tsváí-r-o (grass for sweep-
ing) 9.
mu-tsvái-r-o (broom) 3.
mu-tsvái-r-i (sweeper) 1.
(63) Ndíye *taú* (*Speaking*).
Cf. *ku-tau-r-a* (to speak). Cf. *ku-tau-r-ir-a* (speak to, for).
ku-tau-r-is-a (speak up).
ku-tau-r-ir-an-a (speak to one
another).
nhaú (news, topic) 10.
mu-tau-r-o (language) 3.
mu-tau-r-i (speaker) 1.
nha-r-o (speech) 9.

(ii) *Nouns*

Derivation of nouns from ideophones follows several recognizable patterns,

- e.g. (64) Ndíye *túri* (*hanging*
up). Cf. *nhúri-túri* (continual
hanging up) 9.

- | | |
|---|---|
| (65) Ndíye tángé (Com-
mencing). | nháŋge-táŋge (race, com-
petition) 9. |
| (66) Ndíye pwítítí (Rising
of dust, smoke in
the air). | chamupwítítí (dust in the
air) 7. |
| (67) púpúrí (whirling
wind). | chámupúpúrí (whirl-
wind, dust-devil) 7. |
| (68) cha cha cha (straining
out of beer). | chámuchácha-muchácha
(straining, &c.). |
| Ndakásvíka ndikanzwá
vachítí cha cha cha (I came and heard the women
straining out the beer). | vakádzí vachísvíná hwahwá, |
| (69) Ndíye svétu (Jump-
ing). | chámusvétu-musvétu
(continual jumping up
and down). |

But in many cases there does not seem to be any regularity observable in the method of derivation,

- | | |
|---|---|
| e.g. (70) tápi (sweetness). | Cf. A, rángové dápi-tápi (Ah,
it is a delicious sweet!). |
| (71) mbínyu (suddenly
changing opinion). | Ndíye chángové chi-
mbínyu (He has become
a person who easily
changes his mind). |
| (72) víri-viri (roaring of
flames). | A, mbiriviri, imbá yátsva
nómotó (Oh, a fire, the
house is burnt). |

Ideophonic verbs and nouns are, of course, inflected normally, and are part of formal speech. Whereas the ideophone may have exaggerated features of pitch and length as compared to those of normal speech, these are not found in the corresponding derived verb or noun forms,

- | | |
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| e.g. (73) púrúru (ululating). | Cf. kupúrúrúdzá. |
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Derivation of ideophones from verbs

Another indication of the close connexion between ideophones and verbs is the fact that every underived verb stem, apart from three or four defective stems, has one or more corresponding derived ideophonic forms for use in the ideophonic style of speech. Verb stems, in their basic form, normally consist of two morphemes, a radical and a radical suffix *-a*,

e.g. *-táng-á* (begin).

It is at the division between radical and radical suffix that the verbal extensions are infixes. From a verb of simplex stem like *-tángá*, a great number of complex forms like

-táng-ír-á (begin for, at); *-táng-ís-á* (cause to begin)

are formed, but the radical suffix is not disturbed. It is replaced, however, when ideophones are formed from verbs, the governing suffixes *-e* and *-eyi* being substituted,

e.g. *táŋge* (starting).

biké (cooking).

Cf. *-táng-á* (start).

-bik-a (cook).

This is a productive process and there is the same correspondence between the tone patterns of verb stems and ideophones which we noted earlier. Examples (41) and (42) instance the use of these derived ideophones which behave syntactically exactly like the underived forms,

e.g. *tékeyí* (drawing water

leisurely).

muké (rising).

shambéyi (washing

slowly, carefully).

mukéyi (rising gingerly,

slowly).

Cf. *kutéká* (to draw water).

Cf. *kumuka* (to rise).

Cf. *kushamba* (to wash).

Cf. *kumuka* (to rise).

- e.g. (74) Ndakánzwa kuti (I felt *something cold lying*
tónhono, iní chí- *next to me* and got up
nyáráiré mukéyi. *gingerly.*)

Ideophones with final vowel u

Many derived verbs with vowel *u* in the extension form ideophones by simply dropping the last syllable,

- e.g. (75) tánháu tánháu Cf. kutánháúra (to pluck here
(plucking all over). and there).
Ndangósvika mumunda ndó kuti *tánháu*, *tánháu*
kutánháúra (I just went into the field and *plucked*
from here and there).
(76) súnúngu (untying). Cf. kusúnúngúra (to untie).
(77) tsvukururu (being Cf. kutsvukuruka (to be red-
reddish). dish).
(78) Ndangóóná máchingoti *tsvukururu* mumundamó,
zviyó kútsvukuruka chaíko (I found the finger
millet in that field *turning quite red*).
(79) bayuru (stabbing Cf. kubayurura (to stab again
continually). and again).

One strange case of derivation sometimes met in ideophonic constructions is a form constructed apparently of prefix *na-* (with) and an absolute pronoun substitute which may be of any class,

e.g. nayó (lit. with it).

- (80) Kumutsa tsuru, ndíye *nayó*, *nayó*, *nayó* (to raise a hare
and *chase it*; lit. with it, with it, with it).

Reduplication

Reduplication is a device used in most categories of words to indicate a higher degree than that conveyed by a single form; or to indicate a repetition, as in verbs. Ideophones which are reduplicated usually indicate actions

which are of their nature repetitive though this is not always the case. Monosyllabic forms are usually triplicated, or, when reduplicated, have the second syllable lengthened,

e.g. (81) Ití *dí dí dí*, úkúrúmídze kusvika kúnó (*Run and come here quickly*).

(82) Ití *gó gó gó* (*Knock!*)

(83) Ibvá wángoti *mbá mbá mbá* (*Be sure to tie it tight*).

(84) Ndíye *gwí gwí gwí*. A, ráfa (*It is twitching this way and that. Ah, it is dead!*)

(85) Ndakángonzwá *imbá yóngóti mbo mbo mbo* (*I heard the house falling down*).

(86) Ndakánzwa kúngóti *kábvú kábvú kachídyá* (*I heard the noise of meat being torn from the bone as it ate*).

(87) A, ndóona íye zvíno rwaívi ruchíngóti *ma:va ma:va ruchísvíká* (*Now I see the chameleon walking as it comes*).

(88) Ayí, ndéngé ndángoti *tíya tíya kukángánwá* (*I seem to have completely forgotten*).

(89) Ayí, rázodyá ndikanzwá kúmedza róngoti *gurwí gurwí* (*Then it fell to eating and I heard the swallowing*).

(90) Ndó kusvika mumbá ndó kuti *báté baté* (*And got into the house and felt here and there*).

(91) A, rukova rwánga rwáchingoti *fasha fasha* (*The river was quite full*).

(92) This example is taken from a story. The animals are trying to dig a well and one after the other fails to find the water. First Elephant, then Hyena. Finally, Tortoise takes over and succeeds. The reduplicated ideophones express the different animals digging.

A, vóchéra, vóchéra vanáNzóu, ndóngonzwá róngoti,

Tírindí, tírindí, mamvúrá machéna

Tírindí, tírindí, mamvúrá machéna

(The elephant dug and dug, and I hear the big fellow going,

Tirindi, tirindi, the clear water

Tirindi, tirindi, the clear water).

Rátadza iro, ndó kupindawó bére róti,

Tíkwabvu, tíkwabvu, mamvúrá machéna

Tíkwabvu, tíkwabvu, mamvúrá machéna

(He failed and so hyena went in, going,

Tíkwabvu, tíkwabvu, the clear water

Tíkwabvu, tíkwabvu, the clear water).

Ayi rátadzazvé bére. Kámba kópinda,

Kokoró, kokoró, mamvúrá machéna

Kokoró, kokoró, mamvúrá machéna

(And hyena failed as well. The tortoise then went in,

Kokoro, kokoro, the clear water

Kokoro, kokoro, the clear water).

Morphologically, then, ideophones give some evidence of structure, and again we find a gradation away from normal forms, as in the syntax. Ideophones derived from verbs and those from which verbs are derived show a certain regularity. Their tone patterns are standard and there are segmental features that recur as well, e.g. the vowel *o* or *u* is often the terminal vowel in deriving ideophones. Other ideophones are not used to derive nouns or verbs. Intensive forms are derived from simpler basic forms. Expressive features of pitch and length readily accompany ideophones but are not likely to be present when the radical has become part of a verb or noun.

PHONOLOGY

There are special phonological features found only, or mainly, in ideophones, in addition to the special syntactical

and morphological features. They are of a much more varied kind and make generalization difficult. In the great majority of cases, the phonemes found in ideophones, and their syllabic structure, conform to the ordinary phonological patterns of normal speech. But there are sufficient features found in connexion with them, and not in normal speech, to make it necessary to describe their phonological structure apart.

Monosyllabic forms

Many ideophones are monosyllabic and consist of any of the consonant phonemes of normal speech followed by any of the vowels,

e.g. (93) *kuti pá*, *kufunga* (to *think*).

kuti pa *kwebhódyera* (the *exploding* of a bottle).

kuti rukúkwe pe: (to *spread out* a sleeping mat).

kuti pi pasí (to *fall down*).

kuti dzamú úpfu, *ku pí muhári* (to *take a large handful* of flour and *use it all* in the pot).

kuti po: *mvúrá múchirongó* (to *pour* water into the water-pot).

kuti pu pasí (to *fall down*).

kuti pu:, *kunhuwa mumbá mósé* (to *smell* all over the house).

kuti pú kwamápurísá (the *arrival* of the police).

In normal speech, monosyllabic forms do not appear as words, exceptions being a short list of nouns in Karanga which, in other dialects, have prefix *i-*, and some particles like *zve* (furthermore),

e.g. (94) *shé wángu* (my chief). Cf. (Zezuru) *ishé wángu* (my chief).

Zve múnýépi (Furthermore he is a deceiver).

In ideophonic speech this restriction does not apply. Most

ideophones, however, are disyllabic or trisyllabic. Quadrisyllabic forms are few, while those of five or six syllables are usually extended or reduplicated forms.

Exotic sounds

Ideophones contain not a few sounds not part of the normal phonological structure as abstracted from normal speech,

e.g. (a) The sound indicated by \forall , an infraflapped labiodental in which the lower lip is briskly flapped out from behind the upper teeth.

(95) Ndiye *kóvó:*, kutsvuka kwámazísó (How *red* were his eyes!)

(b) Extended trills, level, rising, and falling respectively.

(96) Ndiye *íííí*, *ndi*, *rápunzika* (It *toppled over* and *fell flat*).

(97) Ndiye *rrrr*, *kundísíyá ndóga* (And then he *deserted* me).

(98) Ndiye *írrr*, *vaná vésé pámutsetse* (All the children were *in a line*).

(c) Sounds accompanied by manual gestures.

(99) *Uf*, *kupéra vósé* (All *perished*)—the hand is passed over the lips.

(100) *Kungoti ng'ó* (To *refuse a request derisively*)—the thumbnail is flicked off the top teeth at the same time.

The sounds used in a variety of onomatopoeic ideophones and based on natural sounds come in here. A remarkable variety is imported in this way and the Shona are apt imitators of the sounds they hear, not being satisfied with a merely conventional rendering like English *ding-dong* or German *bim-bam*. There are conventional forms like:

(101) *bhu bhu bhu*, *kokorigó:* (*flapping of wings and crowing of a cock*),

but many others are more closely imitative,

e.g. (102) *gó, gó, gó, ngondo ngondo ngondo, pxaka pxaka pxaka pxaka pxaka* (the *chopping down* of a tree, its *fall*, and the *splintering of the branches*).

Patterns of tone

Realizations of tone patterns in ideophones often enlarge the contrast between high and low, the relative heights being, to a foreign ear, more perceptible than the contrast in normal speech. We have seen that ideophones are uttered, as regards pitch, independently of the rules of normal sentence intonation. It often appears as if extremes of pitch, without any regard to contrast, are part of the realization of some ideophones. Thus, for example, the form:

ma:va ma:va (the gait of a chameleon)

is pronounced absolutely very low; the form:

púrúru (ululating of women)

always absolutely very high. One is led to ask whether tone in ideophones is phonemic at all. Is it merely expressive? We find ideophones exemplifying all the tone patterns found elsewhere in free forms,

e.g. (103) in disyllabic ideophones:

LH *dhumá* (covering a vessel).

gurwí (swallowing).

HL *bháru* (tearing).

póri (popping into the mouth).

LL *shutu* (being full, e.g. the mouth of saliva).

tuzu (staring vacantly into space).

HH *méngé* (being full, e.g. a vessel).

In monosyllabic ideophones we have both high- and low-toned forms, both very common,

- e.g. (104) L bu (falling, e.g. of a trap).
 mha (perching, e.g. of a bird).
 H tsvé (throwing down).
 bhá (striking).

In trisyllabic forms the variety of tone patterns is, of course, greater,

- e.g. (105) LLL tsvarara (catching sight of something).
 LLH tangarwí (swallowing).
 LHL svikéyi (arriving).
 HHH púrúru (ululating).
 HHL súnzúma (squatting).
 HLH kwíreyí (climbing).

There are cases, particularly in monosyllabic forms, of minimal pairs distinguished by tone,

- e.g. pu, pí (falling). Cf. pú (arriving); pí (using all up).

There are tonal phenomena, not found in normal speech, which yet appear to be phonemic, e.g. the rising and falling glides,

- e.g. L-H rrrf (being alone). Cf. H-L frrr (being in a line).

Falling tones in ideophones are a concomitant of final length, low syllables in this position being realized as low-falling glides, high syllables as high-falling,

- e.g. (106) Low-falling:

Ndaóna mákátí *ndo*: (I saw it was *dark* inside).

A, napó *ve*: (They *arrived*):

Ndaóna rákátí *twi*: (I saw it *standing still*).

High-falling:

Ndaóna vákátí *mwí*: (I saw that they were *quiet*).

Ánga áchíngoti *zhwé*: (He was *quite pale*).

Ideophones are particularly susceptible to the overlay of expressive features of pitch and length that accompany heightened emotional description. Intensive forms differ from non-intensive in having abnormally high or low pitch linked to exaggerated vowel length. These features are found, for example, in the intensive forms derived by addition of appropriate syllables. But intensive forms may also be derived merely by the addition of expressive pitch and length. In the following examples intensive forms differ from non-intensive in being higher in pitch and much longer in final syllabic length so that the tones on the final syllable are high- and low-falling respectively,

e.g. (107) Vánga vákátí *mwí*: (They were *quiet*).

Ndíye *MWÍ*:: kunyárará (They were *very quiet*).

(108) Ángoti *do* (He was *downcast*).

Ndíye *DO*::, wákásúrúvárá (He was *very downcast*).

(109) Ndíye *ngwérewere* (It was *bright*).

Ndíye *NGWÉREWERE*: (It was *very bright*).

(110) Ndaóna ákátí *bondokoto* (I saw him sitting *quietly and sadly*).

Ákángoti *BONDOKOTO*: (He was sitting *very dejectedly*).

In such cases distinctions between high and low appear to be maintained though it is not quite obvious whether this is always the case. An expressive form of an ideophone which appears to be low when pronounced non-expressively may be as high as the expressive form of an ideophone which is high in its non-expressive form. For example, *twiriri*:, the intensive form of *twi* (standing still), may be absolutely as high as *ngwérewere*, the intensive form of *ngwé* (being bright). Since we have stated that ideophones are independent of the rules of sentence intonation, it may be asked what meaning is attached to the terms high and

low tone in ideophones since, by the nature of the case, they are outside the frame within which high and low contrasts are realized. The answer appears to be that ideophonic high tone is in contrast with ideophonic low tone. This is the case where there is a series of ideophones in the sentence. In the case of a single ideophone of more than one syllable, contrast between high and low tone may also be plain. But in the case of polysyllabic intensive forms of three or more syllables, there may be a down-step on each syllable,

e.g. *tónhonono* [- - -] (being quiet as the grave).

Cf. *tónho* [- -] (being quiet).

It may be the case that, in the zone of expressive speech, in examples of extreme exaggeration, phonemic pitch no longer applies.

One group of ideophones, in which tonemic contrasts appear to be carefully maintained, is the group from which verbs are derived or which are derived from verbs,

e.g. (III) *tsvái* (sweeping).

Cf. *kutsváirá* (to sweep).

taú (speaking).

kutaura (to speak).

téke (drawing water).

Cf. *kutéká* (to draw water).

sviké (arriving).

kusvika (to arrive).

Expressive pitch and length are found, on occasion, with forms other than ideophones. Thus in demonstratives, relative distance from the speaker is indicated by different degrees of pitch on the whole form and of length on the final syllable,

e.g. (II2) *mutí uyo no-úyó; no-UYÓ::* (that tree and that tree yonder and that one further still).

In this case, the demonstrative *uyo*, which is LL in tone pattern in normal speech, is taken out of the intonational

frame and pronounced with absolute high pitch and a high-falling final syllable.

An interesting feature shared by demonstratives and ideophones is that neither is susceptible to tonal assimilation by an immediately preceding high tone,

e.g. (113) Wákátí imbwá *tsvarara* (He caught sight of the dog).

Batá imbwá iyi (Hold this dog).

Kúné imbwá shóma (There are few dogs). Cf. shoma (few).

The first syllable of the LL form *shoma* (few) is raised by assimilation but not the first syllable of either the LL form *iyi* (this) or the LLL form *tsvarara* (catching sight of something).

When other types of qualifying word are pronounced with abnormal high pitch, tonemic distinctions are maintained within the word and expressive length is found on the penultimate syllable which is normally slightly longer than other syllables, penultimate syllabic length being the normal word-marker,

e.g. (114) Vázhinji kwá·zvo (They are very many).

Cf. Vázhinji KWÁ:ZVO (They are very very many).

e.g. (115) Vanhu vó·sé (All the people).

Cf. Vanhu VO:SÉ (Absolutely all the people).

There is a style of speech which employs final length and hence falling tones. This is an exaggeratedly formal and polite form of address,

e.g. (116) Taúya, babá: (We have come, father).

(117) Pindáyí zvényú: (Come in please).

Vowel length

Vowel length as phonemically distinctive is also found in non-expressive forms of ideophones. Forms may differ

from one another according to the pattern of long and short syllables,

- e.g. (118) Ndíye *bha*, kupédzá (He finished).
 Ndíye *bha:*, zúvá rábuda (It is *bright*, the sun has risen).
- (119) Ndíye *wa:re* (It ran off).
 Ndíye *va:ta* (It was *smooth*).
- (120) Ndíye *ziva: ziva:* (The flying of a large eagle).
 Ndíye *ndúre:* (Stinging).
- (121) Ndíye *toto:to* (Delaying).
 Ndíye *roto:to* (Burning).
 Ndíye *sererere:* (Creeping like a snake).

Stress

Stress appears in ideophones as an expressive feature, especially in onomatopoeic and imitative forms. The following cases, for example, differ in the very much greater degree of stress on the items of the second example,

- e.g. (122) gó gó gó (knocking, e.g. on a door).
 gó! gó! gó! (chopping down a tree).

It may coincide with an increased degree of length,

- e.g. (123) *dha:bhu dha:bhu* (flying slowly)—first syllable stressed and long.
ziva: ziva: (flying of a large eagle)—second syllable stressed and long.

It is found on the first syllable of some forms, coinciding with high tone,

- e.g. (124) *ndúre:* (stinging).
 Ndiye *pwítítí* (Dust rising).
 Mhiripiri *dzáchiti píriviri* (The chillies are very red).

It is particularly noticeable in reduplicated forms when it comes before a voiceless vowel,

e.g. (125) mbétu mbétu mbétu mbétu (alternate shining and disappearance of a white object).

wotsi wotsi (sneezing).

The question recurs at this point what relation the phonology of the ideophone bears to that of normal speech. Ideophones, in addition to using the phonemes which occur in other forms, exhibit contrasts unique to themselves, in segmental as well as in pitch and length phonemes. They also frequently make use of expressive features which, however, are not confined to them. To attempt to combine the features peculiar to ideophones with the normal phonological structure would be to give a false picture of the latter. The phonemes of ideophones as a class show a different pattern of contrasts and arrangements. One is left with the impression that, in many ideophones, contrasts are not maintained as strictly as it is found necessary to do in normal speech. Thus, for example, there is a great deal of latitude in the form in which some ideophones are realized,

e.g. (126) hwipu | dzipu (uprooting).

nzvi | dzvi (capturing, grasping).

nzva | dzva (shouldering).

nzvete | nzwete (following without deviating).

Informants say that these forms are completely interchangeable. There is also the common occurrence of metathesis in ideophones,

e.g. (127) sunungu | sungunu (untying).

tingini | ningiti (being thin-waisted).

Ideophones are clearly part of language proper but they

exhibit so many special peculiarities on all levels that they have to be regarded as constituting a sub-system of their own.¹ Ideophonic forms, ideophonic constructions as well as ideophonic phonemes must be described apart from the normal structure. They are peculiar to 'free expression' as contrasted with 'formal speech'.

COMPARATIVE LINGUISTICS

Examined from the angle of comparative linguistics, the ideophones of any one language, e.g. Shona or Ndebele, are remarkable in that they are peculiar to that language and do not have any corresponding cognate forms in related languages. This is in marked contrast with the many correspondences which can be found between noun and verb stems of related languages. Many noun and verb stems in Shona are directly comparable with cognate forms in, for example, Ndebele or Nyanja, or any of the Bantu languages of Central Africa. Take the words indicating 'person' and 'to see',

e.g. (128)	<i>Shona</i>	Cf. <i>Ndebele</i>	<i>Nyanja</i>
	mu-nhu (person)	umu-ntu (person)	mu-nthu (person)
	ku-ona (to see)	uku-bona (to see)	ku-ona (to see)

These are, respectively, cognate forms. There are many such common word roots in all Bantu languages and the possession of a stock of these, derivable by regular laws of sound-change from a stock of forms in the proto-language, is one of the criteria of a Bantu language. This correspondence is lacking between ideophones of related languages.

¹ L. W. Lanham has proposed this method in his discussion of the relation of the phonology of ideophones to normal phonology in Nguni. Cf. his doctoral thesis, *The Comparative Phonology of Nguni*.

Further, the agreement between dialects of a language in this sector of the vocabulary is considerably less than in any other. A comparison between Zezuru and Manyika reveals that Manyika speakers recognize fully only 56 per cent. of Zezuru ideophones. In the remaining 44 per cent. of cases, they recognize either only a modified form or do not recognize them at all,

e.g. the form *dhumá* (covering) is accepted by Manyika speakers, but not *bháru* (tearing). The form *bváru* is used.

For *susuva* (sadness) the form *zuzuzu* is used.

For *serere* (creeping) the form *zverere* is used.

Differences between idiolects in this sector are also very striking as well as is the range of freedom of variation of any one form,

e.g. *hwipu|dzipu* (uprooting).

All this points to the fact that ideophones form a sector of the vocabulary where considerable freedom of expression has been allowed. The ideophones of any language do not go back to a common form. They are peculiar to that language. The existence of ideophones in Bantu generally, as well as the wide distribution of the special verb-forming suffixes (postulated by Meinhof as having been *-ka* and *-la* in Ur-Bantu), shows that they have always been a part of Bantu. Ideophones as a category come from Proto-Bantu, together with their special features, though none of the original members seem to have survived. The stock of ideophones in any one language is the result of independent and probably relatively recent coining. We must think of these words as continually emerging, continually being replaced and disappearing, at a speed quite different from that attending the change of forms in nouns and verbs not derived from ideophones.

The speakers of the language are not reflectively aware of any special freedom to coin words in this way. No one I have questioned is aware of being able to coin a new ideophone for a new experience, or remembers having heard one coined. Yet these speakers find such a satisfaction in the peculiar expressiveness and rightness of these words that it is quite easy to see how new forms could arise. The most people will say is that these words came up often at the chief's court and that they were tested there. They either passed into currency or disappeared. Yet there must have been other cases as well. Junod recalls an incident in which one such term was coined.¹ There was in Rikatla, he tells us, an old Mbekwa, whom everybody called *Nxoko*. Junod inquired into the origin of this curious name and was told the following story. One day Mbekwa, who was a blind man of 70-80 years old, was very happy at finding himself in good company and expressed his satisfaction by this term, *nxoko*. The word seemed so much to the point that it became famous. The inventor was surnamed *Nxoko*, and he coined the verbs *kunxoka* (to be happy) and *kunxokela* (to be happy at a certain place), using it in such expressions as 'I go to *nxokela* in such and such a place', viz. to enjoy myself there. Junod added that he would not be surprised if it were incorporated in the current language which, he said, without, however, adding any further evidence, is enriched every day by new descriptive adverbs like *nxoko*.

To return to the present day, if such new forms could be observed in the circumstances of their coining, their persistence in and acceptance by the society, they might be able to tell us something about the relation of language to

¹ Henri A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe* (Neuchâtel, 1913), vol. i, appendix II. See also vol. ii, p. 142.

society. People I have asked who use these forms in speech and writing, do not appear to have needed new forms. The words they needed were already to hand. We do know of some forms which have been invented recently without being able to say where or by whom,

e.g. (129) kl'ebhu (sound of striking a match) Ndebele
 k'we (do.) Shona
 kwengwele (sound of dropping enamel plates) Nd.
 gwengwendere (do.) Sh.
 ngido (a cycle bell) Sh.
 bai bai (flickering of a light on cinema screen) Nd.
 nyiri nyiri nyiri nyiri (do.) Sh.
 Kuthiwe *tjhayile*, madoda (It's knock-off time, men)
 Nd.

The ideophone is not much in evidence in urban Shona. One thinks of the plethora of new terms borrowed from English to match the invasion of new objects, techniques, interests, and occupations. Perhaps the natural resilience of the language is temporarily in abeyance; perhaps these things are still too foreign to be expressed in so African a style; perhaps there is lack of leisure or inclination in the life of the townships for play and art of this kind, perhaps they are being discarded altogether from speech together with the old roundabout, allusive style which is being replaced by something more direct and straightforward.

In the case of ideophones, the psychological attitude of speakers seems to be different from their attitude to other words. There is a different feeling for the tie between meaning and form. Ideophones seem to be subtly different from the common stock of nouns and verbs whose meaning is purely conventional, arbitrary, and traditional. E. W. Smith makes this point writing of Ila.¹ 'We may say that

¹ *The Ila-speaking Tribes of Northern Rhodesia* (Macmillan, 1920), vol. ii, p. 295.

they are echoisms, but they echo not only natural sounds, as *Nka!* echoes the sound of a hammer, but also, and more often, the sensation caused in the mind by outside things. *Pyu!* is evidently not an ordinary echoism. It does not repeat anything heard as the onomatopes, of which there are many in Ila, do. It presents the immediate percept of redness. There is a word for "red", *subila*. We can trace its history, know exactly what it means, put it into its place in a sentence. It is just an ordinary, traditional sign. *Pyu!* is also conventional in the sense that it has been handed down, but there is something natural and immediate about it that *subila* has not.'

As one old man told me, these words must reinforce your feeling. As another said of a sentence describing a burning house,

e.g. *Imbá yákáti ngandu zvayákábatídzwá motó* (The house went up in flames when fire was set to it),

'We seem to be following the flames.' The heart must utter a good word. The rightness and appropriateness of the word is judged by a sense which the speakers of a language possess more or less in common and which is the result of the secondary associations which cluster round existing forms and can be observed in the realm of puns, playing on words, verse, slang, and the like. A word like *nxoko* will be felt to be a good one if all the secondary associations stirred in the mind by this combination of two syllables seem to agree aptly with the new situation. Just as the word *prang* in English was just right to describe the crash of an aeroplane.

These words must give aesthetic satisfaction, too, in the aptness, rightness, adequacy of the form to reflect the colour, the texture, the taste, the sound, the smell, the

quality or action, the moment perceived and experienced. We have in the ideophone an attempt to give artistic form through the medium of sound to experiences which, in other cultures, would stimulate half a dozen different arts. The Shona have put a great deal of that feeling and creativeness into words. The outsider cannot relish their meaning and associations, their artistic fitness, cannot use them skilfully and artistically as a rhetorical device, until he shares a great deal of their inner consciousness and feeling.

I think we must end this study by noting in these words and this kind of speech a special concern with life. There is behind them a concern to give concrete and adequate expression to what they see of the forces and energies of the world. After all, ideophones never express things, their reference is always to some manifestation of the life and energy of things. There is much here, and in the amazing development of verbal constructions in Bantu, to suggest that Tempels is on the right track when he says that, in African thought, the fundamental reality is energy, its myriad manifestations, its inter-relationships, and its beauty. This is evidently what the African contemplates and takes delight in. Part of it, acting on it, being acted on by it, responsible for it in a way others do not feel themselves to be, ideophones give us a glimpse into the way in which the African viewed the world, into his own inner world.

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