

The Lexico-semantic Features of Ideophones in E.D.M. Sibiya's Novels: A Stylo-lexicon Analysis

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Abstract

This study focuses on analysing ideophones according to the meaning they denote in Sibiya's novels: Ngidedele Ngife, Ngiyolibala Ngifile, and Inkululeko Engakhululekile. The blended concept of 'lexico-semantic(s)' is used to express that ideophones are words that are studied in relation to their meaning. Most work done on ideophones focuses more on the phonological and morphological features, and very little on semantic and syntactic features. The study aims to fill in this identified gap by analysing the selected ideophones according to their semantic features, as used in Sibiya's novels. These include ideophones related to sound, colour, liquid, and action or movement. The findings of the study will demonstrate how Sibiya employs a variety of semantic categories of ideophones in his novels. The study will also demonstrate the stylistic significance of these ideophones in the analysed novels.

Key words: Lexico-semantics, ideophones, stylo-lexicon, EDM Sibiya, novels

Introduction

The concept of 'stylo-lexicon' is made up of two words: the morpheme 'stylo-' and the noun 'lexicon'. The noun 'lexicon' is used to refer to a sum of words or phrases in a language (MacMillan English Dictionary, 2002: 832). 'Stylo-', on the other hand, is proposed to denote the idea of 'style'. The concept of 'stylo-lexicon' is thus used to convey the idea of style as determined by word choice (style of lexicon/word choice). By stylo-lexicon analysis, this study proposes that this is an approach that intends to analyse word choice in literature to determine the author's style. The integrated concept of 'lexico-semantic(s)', on the other hand, is used to denote that ideophones are words (lexicon) with meaning (semantics).

Word choice is generally referred to as diction. In its basic meaning, diction refers to the choice of words authors or artists employ in their literary works, to communicate their thoughts clearly. It

can be regarded as the language vocabulary authors have at their disposal to present their literary works in an artistic manner. Good writers have a sound understanding of the power of words (Guth in Malinga, 2000: 48). They consciously do a selection of language vocabularies with the intention of conveying or communicating their ideas with accuracy and originality (Raskin & Wesser, 1987: 1).

Words reflect the author's thoughts in writing. Essentially, they are the clothes that thoughts wear (Shipley, 1979: 83). While this stands, it still takes vision, intellect, experience, knowledge, and skill for an author to know the type of clothes these thoughts ought to wear. In other words, the author's thoughts are represented by the type of words he chooses to use. Maintaining a similar view, Shipley (*Op cit.*) states: "It is through words that great thoughts gain currency and are taken in good faith, as gold and silver of a known stamp".

Studying the author's words does not only reveal his/her thoughts. It also reveals his/her style since style is understood by studying language. One cannot comment on style without mentioning language because it is found in language. The way the author writes and his choice of words, determine his/her style. Supporting this, Murfin & Ray (2003: 465) point out that the discipline of stylistics is concerned about analysing aspects such as diction, syntax, phonology, figurative language, and vocabulary to illuminate the author's style. Ideophones are discussed as a category of words that the author uses in his novels, and this is done according to their lexico-semantic features in this article.

Ideophones are one of the types of words authors employ in their literary works, to spark some artistic effects. These words have attracted attention in literary discourse because of their artistic usage and effect in literary forms. Even though this is the case, ideophones, linguistically, have not been given much attention. Arguing this, Childs, in Masubelele (2018: 2), avers: "Although ideophones constitute a robust word category in African languages, they are relatively neglected and rarely integrated into linguistic descriptions of these languages". It is for this reason that the use of ideophones in Sibiya's novels is examined from the linguistic lenses, to integrate these words to the linguistic descriptions of African languages, particularly isiZulu. This will be an attempt to add to the works that have already been done on this. Essentially, this article will cover the linguistic and literary nature of ideophones.

The concept of ideophone

In their basic nature, ideophones are words that describe the nature or extent of something according to sound, colour, movement, action, etc. Most scholars refer to the descriptive nature of ideophones in their attempt to explicate this concept. For instance, Brown & Miller (2013: 218) explain that an ideophone is a word that is used adverbially and may constitute of elements such as reduplication, sound symbolism and onomatopoeic characteristics. They are words that reflect an action or state of something in an expressive and colourful manner (Tabu, 2007: 34). Dingemanse (2018: 1) maintains that ideophones are words that describe sensory scenes. Kavanagh (2002: 573) also holds a similar stance by arguing that ideophones are a word group which depicts sensual entities such movement, sound, or duration. Adding to these insights, Trask (1993: 132) perceives ideophones as:

One of a grammatically distinct class of words, occurring in certain languages, which typically express either distinctive sounds or visually distinctive types of action. In languages that have them, ideophones are usually as rigidly conventional in form as other words, though they may sometimes exhibit exceptional phonological characteristics, such as segments not otherwise attested.

The scholarly views above highlight that, semantically, ideophones are words that are used to vivify impressions. These impressions can be sensual in that they can depict sound, smell, colour, etc. When used in literature, ideophones are a powerful narrative technique authors employ to convey their ideas in a concise yet vivid way. They are utilised to emphasise, evoke emotions, and paint images. As a result of these functions, they make literary texts rich and pleasant to read. They even add a participatory element to the reading experience. In terms of their structure, ideophones are made up of syllables that are sometimes reduplicated if they are more than two, that is. This reduplication can sometimes be characterised by similar sounding syllables, and this creates rhythm when they are read in the text. Such is the artistic richness of ideophones.

Even though some scholars like Doke (1926) classify and regard ideophones as onomatopoeia, which is the creation of a word from its sound, it is important to take note that not all ideophones are created from sounds. For instance, while the ideophone *gi-gi-gi* (of footsteps) emulates sound, the ideophone *njo* (of seeing) does not. Since this is the case, a view is presented that not all ideophones are onomatopoeic. What can be argued, however, is that some have onomatopoeic characteristics. Fortune, in de Schryver (2009), alludes to the highlighted view above by saying: “The fact among others, that ideophones can be used to indicate complete silence makes the term onomatopoeic an unreasonable term for ideophone as a whole”.

Nyembezi’s (1981) semantic classification of ideophones is utilised to evaluate the lexico-semantic features of ideophones in Sibiya’s novels in the next section. These ideophones are analysed according to the following subheadings: Ideophones relating to sound, ideophones relating to colour, ideophones relating to liquid, and ideophones relating to action and movement.

Ideophones relating to sound

Sibiya employs a considerable amount of ideophones relating to sound in his novels. It was highlighted earlier that, even though ideophones are not necessarily regarded as onomatopoeia, some have onomatopoeic characteristics. In other words, they are formed from the sounds they depict. The first example of such an ideophone, in Sibiya’s novels, is observed from the following lines, in *Ngidedele Ngife* (2006: 86):

*Khona manjalo ezwe ubufohlofohlo bezihlahla. Aqalaze. Angaboni lutho. **Fohlo, fohlo, fohlo.** Akhokhe isibhamu. Athule angabe esanyakaza manje. **Fohlo fohlo.***

(Right then he heard dry brittle trees. He looked around. He did not see anything. The sound continued. He bridged the gun. He was now quiet and motionless. The sound becomes audible.)

John and his girlfriend, Khona, find themselves hiding from the police in the example above. He is being chased and hunted because of drug dealing activities. Their role in the development of the plot is significant as they are the ones who discover Ndabayakhe who has hung himself in the very same bush. The bush is surrounded by trees and, to portray

the noise they (trees) are making, the ideophone *fohlo* is employed. It is repeated to emphasise the constant sound of dry brittle trees. This ideophone is derived from the noun *ubufohlofohlo*, which refers to the sound of breaking dry brittle tree or grass. Sibiya uses it to depict the sound occurring as John and Khona are hiding in the bush. The use of this ideophone artistically vivifies the scenario.

In the same novel, another ideophone relating to sound is observed from the following excerpt:

*Esalalele lolo hleko kuthi **gakla** isicabha. Kuphume leliya patshazi lentokazi. Iyamoyizela. Ishaye kancane sengathi ifuna ayibuke.*

(While listening to that laughter, the door banged. That beautiful woman appeared. She is smiling. She walked slowly as if she wanted him to see her.)

(Sibiya, 2006: 44)

In the scenario above, Ndabayakhe is hospitalised. He is described to be listening to a nurse who is mocking one of the patients, hence the laughter in the ward. While Ndabayakhe is listening to the patients' laughter, one of the nurses appears. Her appearance is signaled by the sound made by the door. To depict this sound through a word, Sibiya uses the ideophone *gakla*. This ideophone depicts the sound of closing or throwing something with a bang. A verb could have been used to describe this, but Sibiya artistically uses an ideophone, instead.

The use of an ideophone relating to sound is also observed from the following lines, still in the same novel:

*Ishaye inhliziyo kube sengathi kunezigi phandle. **Gidi, gidi, gidigidi**. Alunguze? Lutho! Athule.*

(There was fast heartbeat as if there were stampings outside. *Gidi, gidi, gidigidi*. should he peep? Nothing! He was quiet.)

(Sibiya, 2006: 158)

The ideophone *gidi* is used to imitate the sound of a heartbeat. A heart does not beat once and it is for this reason that this ideophone is repeated four times, to present the idea that the heartbeat occurs repeatedly. MaSibiya wakes up from a nightmare and she is terrified in this scene. It is for this reason that her heart is beating fast. The last repeat of this ideophone '*gidigidi*' is not written separately like the first two, and this is used to indicate how quickly MaSibiya's heartbeat becomes.

Just like the ideophone *gidi*, Sibiya also uses the ideophone *du* to mark the sound of a heartbeat in *Inkululeko Engakhululekile* (2020: 159):

*Wambuka ngokumtshontsha uMthokozisi ngenkathi uChris ephuma emnyango wegilasi eza ngapha engxenyeni lapho abantu bedlela khona, wambuka maqede wezwa isifuba sakhe sithi **du,du,du**.*

(Mthokozisi looked at Chris indirectly when he was going out by the glass door coming to the side where people eat, he looked at him and then his chest was beating *du,du,du*.)

Mthokozisi has butterflies in his stomach after seeing Chris. He is nervous and excited at the same time. Even though it is not made clear at the beginning of the story whether he is gay or not, it becomes clear at this stage of the story. This assurance makes him to even divorce his wife who later dies because of depression. By using the ideophone *du*, Sibiya is describing to the reader how tense Mthokozisi gets as he sees Chris. It is natural for people to have fast heartbeats when they see people they like or have feelings for. Mthokozisi is feeling like this because he is romantically attracted to Chris. The ideophone is thus successfully employed in this instance, to describe the character's emotions.

Another example is also from *Inkululeko Engakhululekile* (2020: 4), as shown below:

Luvele luthi po-po-po ucingo. Cishe sekuphele imali ocingweni. Angazihluphi nokubheka ukuthi imali isekhona yini uMaSibisi ...

(The sound po-po-po came from the cellphone. It was as if there was no longer airtime in the cellphone. MaSibisi did not even bother to check if there was airtime ...)

The ideophone *po-po-po* above is used to depict the sound that comes from a cellphone to signify that there is no longer airtime. The ideophone indicates that MaSibisi's call is cut off because her airtime has gotten depleted as she is talking to Ndlovu. The ideophone *po-po-po* is essentially a direct imitation of the sound generally made by cellphones when a call is cut down because of depleted airtime. The artistic significance of such an ideophone is thus to mark sound. Ideophones are the only medium through which sounds are translated into words in literature and Sibiya demonstrates his understanding of this. The use of this ideophone is also evident in *Ngiyolibala Ngifile*, as demonstrated by the example below:

"NguKhanyisile lona okhulumayo, you know what to do...", kuthi po. Nebala ashiye umlayezo uMaKhoza.

(“Khanyisile speaking, you know what to do”. The voicemail sound rang. MaKhoza then left a message.)

(Sibiya, 2010: 60)

The ideophone *po* is also used to mark sound in the example above. While it marks a call that has been cut off in the prior example, it marks a voicemail in this instance. In the first instance, the ideophone *po* is repeated three times but only once here. By looking at this, the reader can easily see that even though the ideophone refers to the sound produced by a phone, the contexts in which it is used are not the same. The repetition of the ideophone *po*, in the previous example, indicates that a call has been cut off, but it only appears once in the above example, to indicate that a call has gone into voicemail. Sibiya should be commended for paying attention to this and using the ideophone to depict sounds in different contexts.

In *Inkululeko Engakhululekile* (2020: 95), the ideophone *gqa* is used to also mark sound as shown below:

Lena enye intokazi ibheke uMthokozisi, noMthokozisi ayibuke ngamehlo athi akushaye yona. Nebala ilungise eyayo indukwana. Ilishaye lithi gqa, gqa, gqa, lingene phakathi.

(The other lady looked at Mthokozisi, and Mthokozisi also looked at her, expressing that she should hit. Indeed, the lady prepared her stick. She hit the ball and it went inside.)

The repetition of the ideophone *gqa* is used to depict the sound made by the pool ball as it rolls into the hole. Unlike other ideophones that are derived from either verbs or nouns, this ideophone is not necessarily derived from any word. It is the direct expression of the sound made by the pool ball as it rolls, and it is repeated three times to emphasise that the sound is reoccurring. A word like *lihambe* (and it moves) could have been used to express that the ball rolled into the hole, but Sibiya demonstrates artistry in using this ideophone to refer to this action.

In the same novel, *ngqongqongqo* is also used as an ideophone to mark sound, as shown in the passage below:

Esabuza ukuthi ngubani lowo owabe engqongqoza ngoba ukungqongqoza kwakhona wayengakujwayele, kwaphinde kwathi ngqongqongqo.

(While still asking who was knocking because he was not used to this kind of a knock, the knock occurred again.)

(Sibiya, 2020: 227-228)

Chris is knocking in the scenario above. He was arrested for fraud the previous day. Mthokozisi is not expecting him. The ideophone *ngqongqongqo* is derived from the verb *ukungqongqoza* (to knock). The sound *ngqongqongqo* generally occurs when there is a knock, and that sound is classified as an ideophone. In the statement “*Kwaphinde kwathi ngqongqongqo*” (The knock occurred again), it should be noted that the knock is denoted by an ideophone and not necessarily the verb. This is stylistically done to present the idea of a sound that occurs as the person is knocking.

Ideophones relating to colour

This section considers ideophones that refer to colour in Sibiya’s novels. These ideophones refer to the following colours: black, red, green, and white. The first example which is analysed from *Ngidedele Ngife* (2006) is shown by the following sentence: “*Uma uya ekujuleni kwalo kuvele kube mnyama bhuqe!*” (When you go to its deep end, it becomes completely dark!) (Sibiya, 2006: 1). Here, the author is describing the bush Ndabayakhe is planning to hang himself in. The ideophone *bhuqe* denotes the idea of darkness or blackness. Ideophones that are related to colour tend to be used in a sentence with the relatives they refer to. This is the case with the example above. The relative *mnyama* (black/dark) is used with the ideophone *bhuqe* for emphasis purposes. Semantically, both words denote the same meaning; darkness/blackness.

While the ideophone *bhuqe* refers to darkness, the ideophone *cwe* can refer to greenness or blueness. Still in the same novel, Ndabayakhe is described to be wearing green overalls as MaSibiya, his mother, visits him in prison. He is discharged from hospital after attempting to commit suicide, but gets arrested right after this incident, as police officers find an illegal firearm in his room. The following lines describe the scene between MaSibiya and Ndabayakhe:

UMaSibiya avele azidedele izinyembezi zehle. Umntanakhe usewaba yizimpahla eziluhlaza cwe njengotshani njalo nje uma efika ezombona lapha.

(MaSibiya just cried. Her son has just become the epitome of green clothes like grass every time she comes to visit him.)

(Sibiya, 2006: 136)

As indicated above, the ideophone *cwe* refers to greenness, blueness, or clearness. In this context, it should be noted that it refers to the green colour. The ideophone is used with the relative *eziluhlaza* (green ones) for emphasis. In the same novel, another ideophone that is used to refer to colour is *tebhu* as shown in the example below:

*Zombili izakhiwo zibheje zibomvu **tebhu**. Zibiyelwe ngothango locingo oluhlabayo lapho uluthinta.*

(Both structures are red. They are enclosed with barbed wire.)

(Sibiya, 2006: 125)

The author describes the environment of the jail Ndabayakhe is imprisoned in. The ideophone *tebhu* emphasise the colour red and it is used to emphasise the relative *zibomvu* (red), to describe the structure of the prison environment. The relative *zibomvu* can also be used with the variant ideophone *klubhu*, and this is demonstrated by the example below, in *Ngiyolibala Ngifile* (2010: 20):

*Lapho ke usebheje wabomvu **klubhu**. Kwakucaca ukuthi uThemba uzowukhomba umuzi onotshwala khona lapha endlini.*

(She has become red. It was evident that Themba would get punished in this very house.)

The ideophone *klubhu* also has the meaning of redness and it has been alternated with *tebhu* to emphasise the relative *wabomvu* (and was red). MaKhoza is described as frustrated in the example above. She is frustrated because Themba is rejecting the idea that he is the father of Khanyisile's child. Khanyisile initially had to lie about her child's father since Madonsela threatened her. The fact that MaKhoza is described to be red when she is frustrated could be signifying that she is light in complexion. People who are light in complexion are generally believed to become red when they are angry.

An ideophone relating to the white colour is evident in *Ngiyolibala Ngifile* (2010: 4). The following words are considered:

*Uphakeme sengathi ubekwe phezu kwamatshe kanti cha, yindlela owakhiwe ngayo nje. Ifenisha yakuleli kamelo ungathi yonke yenziwe ngethambo nje elimhlophe **qwa** ...*

(It is high as if it has been placed on top of rocks yet not, it is just how it is built. It is as if all the furniture of this bedroom has been made with a white bone ...)

The ideophone *qwa* denotes the idea of whiteness. It is syntactically used with the relative *elimhlophe* (that is white) for emphasis purposes. The passage describes how beautiful and luxurious MaKhoza and Madonsela's bedroom is in their big house. To make a particular reference and emphasis to how white the furniture is, the ideophone *qwa* is employed along the relative *elimhlophe* (a white one).

It is evident from the preceding discussions that Sibiya successfully employs ideophones that are relating to colour. What is worthy of note is that these ideophones play a significant role in emphasising the relatives they are used with.

Ideophones relating to liquid

Ideophones that relate to liquid are considered here. These include tears and water. Sibiya's novels consist of such ideophones, and this part of the work seeks to explore this aspect. To begin with, in *Ngiyolibala Ngifile* (2010: 5), Sibiya uses ideophones that are related to tears. The first example is analysed from the sentence: "*Ithi ingalala indodakazi yakhe ayigqolozele uMaKhoza. Zehle zithi mi- izinyembezi kuMakhoza*" (Once her daughter slept MaKhoza stared at her. Her tears fell.)

The ideophone *mi-* is generally associated with the dropping of tears. Khanyisile has just confessed to her mother that Madonsela has raped her. MaKhoza is hurt and cannot help but cry. The use of this ideophone reflects how MaKhoza's tears flow uninterrupted. They fall in an uncontrollable manner like an overflowing river would do. Still referring to MaKhoza's hurt and state of crying with tears, Sibiya uses the ideophone *co co co*, as indicated in the lines below:

Athi angabheka ingane uMaKhoza, zehle izinyembezi zithi co co co. Ikhandla lakhe ungathi lizophambana impela. Okusho ukuthi nalo mfana kaNxumalo owaphika isisu sikaKhanyisile wayeqinisile ngempela?

(As she would look at the child, MaKhoza's tears dropped. It seems like she is getting insane. Does it mean that the Nxumalo boy who denied Khanyisile's pregnancy was telling the truth?)

(Sibiya, 2010: 7)

The ideophone *qathaqatha* is employed in the same novel to also denote the dropping of tears as indicated below:

Ngiyabonga kakhulu baba ngokungisindisa emlonyeni wengwenya," kusho uKhanyisile qede kuthi qathaqatha izinyembezi ziwele phansi.

(Thank you very much Uncle for rescuing me, says Khanyisile and then her tears drop down.)

(Sibiya, 2010: 7)

Khanyisile leaves home after her mother, MaKhoza, fails to sympathise with her. She becomes a street kid and that is where she is nearly raped by a group of boys. She is expressing her gratitude to the old man, whom she later discovers that he is her paternal grandfather. The ideophones *mi-*, *co co co* and *qathaqatha* are semantically similar as they all express the dropping of tears. The ideophones *co co co* and *qathaqatha* are also associated with the dropping of liquid. These drops could be falling fast or slow. The repetition indicates the reoccurring of the action of the falling of tears. The use of the ideophones then refers to MaKhoza's and Khanyisile's tears falling in drops instead of flowing. Sibiya uses three synonymous ideophones to express the same idea. This helps to avoid the repetition of the same ideophone. This also demonstrates that he has a sound knowledge of the language.

There are other instances in the novel, where Sibiya uses synonymous ideophones to denote the same idea. The ideophones *thuxu* and *te* are used to denote the idea of dripping and this is seen from the following examples:

*Avele akhale uma esebona indodakazi yakhe isiphelele emoyeni. Kube ukuphaphama kwakhe lokho esemanzi **thuxu** wumjuluko.*

(She just cried as she saw her child having diminished. That is where she woke up very wet with sweat.)

(Sibiya, 2010: 36)

*Aphaphame esemanzi **te** umjuluko. Athi uma eqwebula amehlo akhangwe yizindonga zendlu nje.*

(She woke up from sleep very wet because of sweating. When she opened her eyes, she just saw the house walls.)

(Sibiya, 2010: 37)

In both examples above, MaKhoza wakes up sweating. In the first example, she wakes up because of a bad dream she has about Khanyisile. She then unconsciously falls asleep again. In both instances, she wakes up wet because of sweating. The ideophones *thuxu* and *te* are synonymous and are both used to express the idea of one being wet because of sweating. In the same manner, Sibiya uses the ideophone *phici*, in *Ngidedele Ngife* (2010: 156), to express the same idea. This is demonstrated in the following lines:

*Kubonakale ngokuhlina ukuthi iyababa le mbiza. Athi angawuphuza ajuluke abe manzi **phici**. Kuphele izinsukwana esengconywa.*

(It was made evident by his grin that the traditional medicine was bitter. As he drank, he sweated. He was better in a few days.)

The ideophone *phici* means or expresses the idea of perspiring. Mtshingothi is diagnosed with HIV and Aids in the story, and he is at the stages of severe sickness. The ideophone is used to express the idea of sweating. Mtshingothi is sweating after drinking traditional medication. This is to indicate that he is not feeling well. Even here, Sibiya demonstrates his sound knowledge and artistry of the isiZulu language, by using synonymous ideophones to present a single idea.

In *Inkululeko Engakhululekile* (2020: 97), Sibiya uses *nka-nka-nka* as another example of an ideophone that is related to water. The following lines are considered:

*Khona manjalo waqonda ekhishini, wavula isiqandisi maqede wakhapha amanzi asesigujini esasijuluka siconsa ngenxa yokubanda. Wawathi **nka-nka-nka** amathamo ambalwa kwangathi kuba ngcono ukoma.*

(Right then he went to the kitchen, he opened the fridge and took out water that was in a cold-water bottle. He had a few gulps, and his thirst became better.)

The ideophone *nka-nka-nka* denotes the act of drinking. A verb could have been used to express this, but Sibiya utilises an ideophone. The act of doing this brings richness to the text. In the scenario above, Mthokozisi's friend, Sphiwe, is described drinking cold water from the fridge. The

ideophone *nka-nka-nka* is used to describe this act. This ideophone may also denote sound because there is usually a sound of this nature when someone is drinking water with a widely opened mouth.

The following lines, in *Ngidedele Ngife* (2006: 32), demonstrate Sibiya's use of another ideophone that relates to water:

Agcine ehlala phezu kombhede. Khona manjalo ezwe ukoma. Athathe inkomishi ngenhla kombhede, ehlele ngezansi kwabo. Atshekise isigubhu, kuthi mbo-mbo-mbo amanzi.

(He ended up sitting on top of the bed. Right then he felt thirst. He took a cup down by the bed, he was sitting down across to. He slanted the water bottle and poured water.)

Ndabayakhe is depicted feeling sick in the scenario above. He is pouring water into a cup, and this is described by the ideophone *mbo-mbo-mbo*. This ideophone signifies that water is poured from a bottle into a cup in big drips. One can argue that this ideophone is also relating to sound, as it imitates the sound made when water is being poured from a bottle. Even though this is sound and accepted, in this article, however, this ideophone is classified under the category of ideophones relating to water.

Ideophones relating to action or movement

In this segment of the work, ideophones that are related to action or movement are considered. These ideophones usually replace verbs as they paint a picture of certain movements or actions. The first example is observed from the following passage in *Ngidedele Ngife* (2006):

"... Izwi lakhe elinamandla, lifana nenkemba esika nhlangothi zombili!" Isho ize igxume imakwabo lena enguMotaung nesisu sakhe simvumele sithi bhaku bhaku.

("... His powerful word, is like a sword that cuts both sides!" Motaung would even jump as he says that, and his pot belly echoes him by flapping.)

(Sibiya, 2006: 52)

Sibiya uses the ideophone *bhaku bhaku* to describe the movement made by Moutang's pot belly as he preaches to MaSibiya. This ideophone correlates with the verb *ukubhakuza*, which means to flap or flutter. This is one of the several instances where the author could have used a verb to describe but, instead opts for an ideophone to make his writing to be rich. Ndabayakhe has been missing for days and congregants have come to encourage MaSibiya.

The use of this ideophone suggests that Motaung has a pot belly. A belly would not flap on a person with a flat one. The ideophone thus also plays an important role in helping the author to indirectly describe the physical appearance of this character. Ideophones relating to movement tend to be more effective in painting images in the reader's mind. Once readers read the ideophone *bhaku*, they cannot help but imagine the movement of Motaung's pot belly. Repetition makes the imagination to be more effective.

Another ideophone of this nature is evident in the example below:

Kukhale amasondo phansi ngesikhathi injomane igabavula, idabula izinkalo. Gabavu, gabavu, gabavu. Aliqhoqhobale. Abuye ehlise ijubane. Ayikho eqinisweni into ayijahile uMajongosi.

(There was a hoofing sound on the ground as the horse galloped, running with a high pace crossing hill. Gallop, gallop, gallop. He choked the horse. He reduced the pace. There is really nothing Majongosi is rushing for.)

(Sibiya, 2006: 62)

As Ndabayakhe has gone missing, Majongosi, his friend, is searching for him in this scenario. The ideophone *gabavu* expresses the idea of galloping, which refers to the fact that a horse is running at a fast pace. It is repeated three times to signify the continuity of the movement of galloping made by the horse. This ideophone thus denotes movement and it is artistically employed to make the text pleasant to read.

The use of an ideophone that is related to movement is also evident in the following example:

Bathule abasaphefumuli-ke lapho. Ithi qalaqala le nsizwa bese ikhipha intambo ekhukhwini lebhantshi.

(They were completely quiet. The man looked around and took out a rope from the pocket of the jacket.)

(Sibiya, 2006: 100)

John and Khona find themselves in the same bush Ndabayakhe is attempting to hang himself in, as they run away from the police. While Ndabayakhe is not aware of their presence, they are staring at him as he attempts to commit suicide. As he is about to do this, he looks around to see if no one is seeing him, and this is expressed by the ideophone *qala*. Essentially, this ideophone means to glance around. The syllables are repeated to express the continuity of this movement or action. In the opening pages of the novel, Sibiya directly describes Ndabayakhe as someone with a big head. When the ideophone *qalaqala* is used, humour is sparked as one cannot help but imagine the character's huge head looking from left to right.

In *Inkululeko Engakhululekile* (2020: 55), *nombe* is used as an example of an ideophone that is related to movement as well. The sentences below illustrate this:

*Wanombela ngezimbobo ezazishiywe lapha odongeni lwendlu yangasese ngenhloso yokuthi kungene umoya owanele ezindlini zangasese. Wathi **nombe, nombe**, waze wafinyelela ophahleni.*

(He climbed on the holes that were left on the toilet wall with the aim of allowing enough air to come into the toilets. He climbed, climbed, and eventually reached the roof.)

This ideophone *nombe* correlates with the verb *ukunombela* (to climb/grasp tightly/cling on). Essentially, it has the same meaning as the verb it refers to. Mthokozisi climbs through toilet ventilation holes to collect his pair of trousers from the roof. His bullies have molested him and threw his pair of trousers to the top. The ideophone *nombe* is therefore

employed and used two times, to signify Mthokozisi's process of climbing up. With the use of this ideophone, one can imagine Mthokozisi's movement as he climbs through the toilet ventilation holes.

The ideophone *gqwa* is also used to express movement as shown below:

Abantu babedamane bangene bethi gqwa gqwa gqwa. Balinde elinye ihora eligcwele ngaphambi kokuthi itekisi ligcwale.

(People would enter and be in scattered positions. They waited for another full hour for the taxi to be full.)

(Sibiya, 2020: 78)

Gqwa denotes the idea of being sparse. As people are described to be entering the taxi, this ideophone is used to express the idea that they are moving and sitting in scattered positions in the taxi. Just like the other examples above, the ideophone is repeated three times to emphasise this constant movement as people enter the taxi.

In *Kungasa Ngifile* (2002: 52), the ideophone *nyathu* is employed to express the walking movement. This is demonstrated by the following excerpt:

UMaMemela wakuzwa ukungqongqoza kukaNokuthula ngenkathi efika elawini likaSenzo. Wathi ephuma nje endlini yakhe wayengena uNokuthula elawini likaSenzo. Wathi nyathu nyathu uMaMemela wabamba ngodonga, wazama ukulalelisisa abakushoyo.

(MaMemela heard Nokuthula's knocking when she arrived at Senzo's room. When she just got out of her house, Nokuthula was entering Senzo's room. MaMemela walked slowly, balancing with the walls, and tried to listen to what they were saying.)

(Sibiya, 2002: 52)

Nyathu is derived from the verb *nyathuza*, which means to walk slowly. The meaning of this ideophone is thus relative to this verb. MaMemela is sneaking to listen to Senzo and Nokuthula's conversation. As expressed by the repeated ideophone *nyathu nyathu*, she is walking slowly and balancing with walls to ensure that her footsteps are not heard. To sneak, one needs to walk slowly and Sibiya demonstrates an understanding of this by using this ideophone to describe MaMemela's walking movement.

Conclusion

The discussion above demonstrates the variety of ideophones Sibiya uses in his novels. The ideophones are categorised according to their meaning and proved to be effectively used by the author to present his ideas. These ideophones range from sound, colour, liquid, and actions/movement. The overall discussion indicates that Sibiya uses ideophones for different artistic effects. Looking at the effects of these ideophones, their descriptive and emphasis nature in texts was revealed. It was also shown how they are used by the author to narrate events in a rich and captivating way.

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