



ISSN Print: 2664-7699  
ISSN Online: 2664-7702  
Impact Factor: RJIF 8.00  
IJHA 2024; 6(1): 91-98  
[www.humanitiesjournals.net](http://www.humanitiesjournals.net)  
Received: 06-01-2024  
Accepted: 13-02-2024

**Talent Mudenda**  
Department of African  
languages and culture  
University of Warsaw, Poland

**Papa Ousmane Diedhiou**  
Department of African  
languages and culture  
University of Warsaw, Poland

## An analysis of the morphosyntactic behaviour of ideophone and Ideophonic constructions in Shona

**Talent Mudenda and Papa Ousmane Diedhiou**

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.33545/26647699.2024.v6.i1b.71>

### Abstract

The study explores the morphosyntactic behaviour of ideophone and ideophonic constructions in Shona. Data for this study were obtained through desk research and intuition. The study was qualitatively analysed. On the surface peculiarities of the ideophone, it has been demonstrated that monadic ideophones take only the subject at the surface syntax whilst ideophones that portray certain actions are associated with both grammatical relations of functions at the surface syntax. In other words, the ideophone is the one that carries the semantic component as well as predetermines the syntactic component. Thus, it was observed that morphology and syntax are two inseparable components. The conclusion drawn from the discussion was that the syntax of ideophone constructions is influenced by derivational morphological processes. It is recommended that detailed research on the relationship between the ideophone and either the verb or adjective be undertaken. There is a need also to investigate whether there are factors that determine the difference in the final vowel *-e*, *-ei* and *-u* of the ideophone. Therefore, future research can also be pursued in the reference to this particular structure illustrating how it affects syntax or syntactic categories. This will expand the study of ideophones in Shona.

**Keywords:** Morphosyntactic behaviour, Ideophone constructions, Shona language, Derivational

### Introduction

This study is in the area of morphosyntax. Morphosyntax is a compound term, with words, morphology and syntax. Morphology has been defined by Matthews (1991:9) <sup>[18]</sup> as, “the branch of linguistics that studies the internal structure of words “while syntax is the study of how phrases and sentences are structured out of words (Radford, 2004:1) <sup>[28]</sup>. The lexical term of particular interest in this study is ideophone. It is therefore crucial to define what an ideophone is. Doke (1935:118) <sup>[5]</sup> defines ideophone as, a “vivid representation of an idea in sound, a word often onomatopoeic, which describes a predicate, qualificative or adverb in respect to manner, colour, sound, smell, action, state or intensity”. This study investigates the morphosyntactic behaviour of ideophones and ideophonic constructions in the Shona sentence. focus specifically pertains to the derivational morphological behaviour of the ideophone from a theoretical linguistics approach and the types of argument structure will be provided in the appropriate chapter. It is also the aim of this study to investigate whether ideophones in Shona have an intrinsic influence on surface structure or not. Such an exercise is premised on the need to explain the relationship that exists between the ideophonic argument structure and its surface structure.

### The research aims and seeks to:

1. Analyse the derivational morphological behaviour of the ideophone from a theoretical linguistic approach;
2. Investigate the types of argument structures that the ideophone licences;
3. Examine the peculiarities of surface syntax of ideophonic sentences and constructions.

While the verb and other grammatical categories have received prolific and sustained attention, disproportionate attention has been accorded to the ideophone. This study is significant because it explores the morphosyntactic behaviour of the ideophone using a different, formal linguistics approach.

**Corresponding Author:**  
**Talent Mudenda**  
Department of African  
languages and culture  
University of Warsaw, Poland

It departs from the descriptive approach to engage in a theoretical linguistics approach to the study of the ideophone in Shona. In Shona language studies carried out by different grammarians such as Doke (1935) <sup>[5]</sup>, Fortune (2004, 1955, 1980, 1984) <sup>[8, 7, 10]</sup>, Pongweni (1989) <sup>[27]</sup>, Mpfu-Hamadziripi, Ngunga, Mberi and Matambirofa (2013) <sup>[19]</sup>, the tendency has been to give a descriptive analysis of the ideophone. Principal focus has been to examine its phonological, morphological and syntactic characteristics. Very little has been done by way of looking at the arguments that are licensed by ideophones much as such arguments are bound to influence surface syntax and also the derivational morphological behaviour of the ideophone using the theoretical dimension. This study is therefore pertinent in filling the gap left by the earlier studies carried out on ideophones in Shona.

### Literature review

Linguists such as Fortune (2004, 1980, & 1984) <sup>[8, 7, 10]</sup> and Mpfu-Hamadziripi, et.al., (2013) looked at the morphological process of the ideophone. The ideophone's word structure comprises processes such as derivational and reduplication. These processes are vital as they describe the morphological nature of the ideophone. The ideophone can be derived from other word classes such as the verb and the adjective, for instance, the ideophone *tamb-e* 'to dance a bit' is derived from the verb *tamb-a* 'dance', whilst the ideophone *tsvuku-ru* 'reddish' is derived from the adjective *tsvuku* 'red'. More will be said later.

Mkanganwi (2002:172) <sup>[21]</sup> posits that "derivational affixes change the grammatical class or category of the roots to which they are attached". Affixes such as *-e*, *-ei*, *-u* and *-ru* can change the verb or the adjective into an ideophone. Thus, the derivation is concerned with the formation of a new word. The tables below support this,

**Table 1:** Ideophones derived from verbs

Verb radical	Affixes, -e, -ei, -u	Gloss
-suk	-ei	Cleaning up something
-par	-e	To scratch something
-bvar	-u	To tear something
-dzvut	-u	To sip

**Table 2:** Ideophones derived from adjectives

Adjective stems	Affix-ru	Gloss
-tsvuku	-ru	Reddish colour
-chena	-ru	Faded colour
-pfumbu	-ru	Greyish colour

Both tables above are given to demonstrate the ideophones 'derivation process. It is also pertinent to emphasise that affixes as shown in both tables play a major role in the formation of what Spencer (1991:9) <sup>[30]</sup> calls "the creation of new words from old words". In Table 2, the adjectival stem *-chena* 'being white' deviates from other adjective stems such as *-tsvuku* 'red' and *-pfumbu* 'grey'. Both of these stems end up with the terminal vowel *-u* except *-chena* which ends with the terminal vowel *-a*; thus, we can delete *-a* and replace it with the vowel *-e* so that it becomes *cheneru* 'faded colour'.

The ideophone is associated with certain or peculiar syntactic behaviour in a sentence. This makes it imperative for the syntax of the ideophone or ideophonic constructions

to obligatorily insert particles such as the deficient verb *-ti* 'say' or *-ri* 'be', the passive *-nzi* and the copulative inflected pronoun *-ye* 'then went'. These elements or features precede the ideophone and the following examples demonstrate this,

- 1a. Mukomana akati ga muti nesanhu.  
'The boy then struck the tree with an axe'.
- b. Mbuya vainge vari zii kunyarara  
'Grandmother was very quiet'
- c. Mbavha ndiye kwatu mwana nembama.  
'The thief then slapped the child'.
- d. Mbudzi dzakanzi tsvai dzose.  
'The goats were all stolen'.

The ideophones in sentences 1(a-d), *ga* 'to strike something by an object', *zii* 'to be very quiet'. *Kwatu* 'to slap someone' and *tsvai* 'to take away everything', are introduced by the syntactic strategies that we mentioned earlier on. We can also notice that these elements are an expressive way of narrating or introducing ideophones in ideophonic sentences. They are closely connected with the ideophones that follow them. In other words, syntactic elements or features of an ideophone are used to introduce certain highly expressive or vivid ideas or actions.

Research was also done regarding the occurrence or the specified position of the ideophone in a sentence. Matambirofa (2009) <sup>[17]</sup> provides insightful information concerning the position of the ideophone in syntax. He observes that the ideophone can occupy any position in a sentence. This entails that the ideophone does not have any strict structural pattern that it follows. Two or more ideophones can be used in a sentence for expressive purposes such as creating a vivid picture, elaborating or heightening an action or dramatizing a sound. This can be rendered using more ideophones as highlighted below,

### 2. Musikana akati kwaku ndiye tande nenzira.

'The girl quickly jumped and went along the path'.

Example (2) gives a mental picture to the hearer about the dramatized actions described by the ideophones. Ideophones have a deeper meaning than some of the verbs of adjectives from which they are derived from.

Doke (1935) <sup>[5]</sup>, Fortune (2004, 1980, 1984) <sup>[8, 7, 10]</sup> and Mpfu-Hamadziripi, et. al., (2013) analysed the ideophone in Shona from a descriptive approach. These scholars studied and analysed the phonological, morphological and syntactic characteristics of the ideophone in Shona. They argued that the ideophone is peculiar on its own and it has salient features that set it apart from other grammatical word categories. In their studies, they illustrate the fact that the ideophone in Shona is onomatopoeic in nature and it describes a predicate in respect to manner, colour, action or intensity. They also argued that tone in Shona ideophones marks a significant difference in meaning. They classified the ideophone according to the number of syllables and postulates that they are monosyllabic, disyllabic, trisyllabic and quadrisyllabic ideophones in Shona. In terms of morphology, ideophones can be reduplicated, derived from verb radicals or adjectival stems by suffixing ideophonisers. In this case, they analysed the derivational morphological behaviour of the ideophone from a descriptive standpoint. These scholars discussed also the syntactic properties of the ideophone. They argued that ideophones are introduced by the efficient by the deficient verb *-ti* 'say' and they can also

occur after the deficient verb *-ri* 'be' and the copulative inflected pronoun-ye 'it is/then went' can precede ideophones. Their line of argument is that ideophones in Shona have peculiar characteristics. Their research on ideophones is vital in the understanding of Shona ideophones. However, this study tends to differ from these earlier studies in the sense that it analyses the ideophone in Shona from a theoretical linguistics approach.

Pongweni (1989) <sup>[27]</sup> explored the functions of Shona ideophones. Pongweni argued that ideophones in Shona are rich in terms of expressing, illustrating and explaining a particular concept or action taken. He also argued that in ordinary linguistic intercourse, ideophones serve to express the speaker's attitude to his subject, his emotional involvement with it and to describe moments of excitement in some adventure, an eventful hunt or a rescue attempt. Pongweni's argument is in line with Fortune's observation. Pongweni (1989:38) <sup>[27]</sup> asserts that,

Fortune (2004) <sup>[8]</sup> associates ideophone usage with the accomplishment speaker with an artistic sense for the right word for the concrete situation...To be used efficaciously ideophones must correspond to the speaker's inner feelings since such use indicates a high degree of sensitive impressionality, thus ideophones show a special concern with life.

Here, Pongweni analysed ideophones specifically looking at their expressive role in communication. Pongweni also argued that ideophones describe predicates or adverbs. Pongweni's line of argument is that ideophones have different functions. The present study differs from Pongweni's work in the sense that the researcher investigates the derivational morphological behaviour and the syntax of the ideophone in Shona.

In addition to what has been outlined above, some contributions were made concerning the Bantu ideophone. Miti (2006) <sup>[20]</sup> and Mpofu-Hamadziripi *et al* (2013) analysed the ideophone in Bantu from a descriptive approach. Miti (2006:393) <sup>[20]</sup> argues that "ideophones across the entire Bantu language family are similar in structure, classification and use and they exhibit phonological, morphological and syllabic characteristics which are not permitted in other word classes". This contribution from Miti is similar to what Doke (1935) <sup>[5]</sup>, Fortune (1980) <sup>[7]</sup> and Mpofu-Hamadziripi, *et al*, (2013) comment about the characteristics of the ideophone in Shona. Mpofu-Hamadziripi *et al* (2013) argued that "there is a morphological and semantic-functional correlation between adjectives and ideophones". This study differs from the studies carried out by Miti (2006) <sup>[20]</sup> and Mpofu-Hamadziripi (undated) in the sense that it investigates the types of argument structures that are licensed by the ideophone in Shona and the kind of syntax that arises out of such structures.

Matambirofa (2009) <sup>[17]</sup> made remarks on Bantu ideophones. Matambirofa argued that ideophones in Bantu have argument structures. The study carried out is pertinent to this study because the former explores ideophones from a formal linguistics point of view. Matambirofa's major argument is that there is need to further the study of Bantu ideophones using another approach that is non-descriptive. This study appreciates the idea suggested that ideophones have argument structures and in this regard, it is similar but it then differs in the sense that it specifically or uniquely examines the type of argument structures that the ideophone

in Shona licenses and the extent to which ideophonic argument structures influence surface syntax. This study also analyses the derivational morphological behaviour of the ideophone in Shona from a theoretical linguistics approach.

Zondo (1982) <sup>[31]</sup> observed that ideophones can be considered as an element of discourse. Zondo analysed the semantic and syntactic features of the ideophone in Ndebele from a sociolinguistics approach. Zondo shows the connection between language and society. He argued that speakers can exploit a wide range of ideophones and ideophones are effective in communicating the semantic and dramatic aspects of the language situation which depend on a repertoire shared by the speaker and hearer and on the linguistic and social competence. In this case, Zondo's study or line of argument is similar to that of Pongweni (1989) <sup>[27]</sup> who also wrote along the same lines outlining the functions and use of ideophones. This study acknowledges that although ideophones can be used to express certain ideas in a language, there is a need also to go beyond a sociolinguistics approach to identify and investigate the participation of the ideophone in a sentence using a non-descriptive approach to enhance the study of ideophones.

The major conclusion that can be drawn from this research is that a theoretical linguistics approach can account for and interpret the derivational morphological behaviour of the ideophone in Shona with perhaps more rewarding insight. This research also shows the intricate relationship that exists between the ideophone in Shona and two grammatical categories, namely the verb and the adjective. The ideophone, therefore, cannot be interpreted in isolation from the two categories. The relationship is because some ideophones are derived from verbs of adjectives and vice versa as well. The derivational operation (morphology) functions to illustrate the connectedness between the ideophone and its arguments in the idiophonic constructions. It is the derivational affixes that influence syntax and these affixes predetermine the kind of arguments that a particular ideophone is associated with. Thus, derivational morphological processes enhance the meaning of the ideophone. It has been also emphasised that morphology and syntax are two interwoven elements that shape the outcome of idiophonic syntactic outcomes.

### Research Methodology

The researcher uses his intuitions since he is a native speaker of the Shona language. Intuitive knowledge is a presentation of one's linguistic competence. Intuitive knowledge helps native speakers who are researching to fill a gap left by other research methods used when compiling information. Mberi (2006:52) <sup>[19]</sup> posits that, "linguistics should be a synthesis of introspection and observational techniques, relying on a mix of artificial and natural observation". Sharing the same opinion, Evans and Green (2006:16) <sup>[6]</sup> complement it thus, "native speakers of any given human language will have strong intuitions about what combinations of sounds or words are possible in their language.

Intuition is the data-gathering method that is used widely in generative grammar studies (Haegeman 1991) <sup>[11]</sup>. It is a powerful methodology to explore the limits of grammatical structure allowed in a language and to articulate the rules that determine what is and is not part of a given language's grammar. This introspective approach where a writer, as in



the present case uses oneself as an informant in the accumulation of data is what Newmeyer (1986:23) [24] comments upon as follows “The typical practice of generativists has been to use themselves as informants in collecting data about the acceptability and interpretation of grammatical constructions.” The introspective judgements that derive from my grammatical as well as my linguistic knowledge of Shona fully qualify me to make acceptability judgements concerning the grammaticality of data used in this research. Since I am a native speaker of the language, I have therefore been inadvertently engaged in a naturalistic, participant observation data gathering exercise, perhaps since birth.

As a native speaker of the Shona language, the researcher intuitively detects information that is inaccurate in the presentation of distinct data on the morphosyntactic behaviour of the ideophone in Shona. It is therefore difficult to exclude dependence on intuitive knowledge because it helps the researcher to select data that conforms to the objectives of this particular research. The researcher uses her intuitions to come up with acceptable grammatical ideophonic constructions and sentences. However, intuitive knowledge might disadvantage the research if inbuilt judgmental is imposed on the information gathered. There is need therefore, for a native speaker to minimise the use of intuitive knowledge.

The linguistic competence of the researcher is a language ability that he shares with other speakers of Shona language. It cannot be expected that the researcher’s introspective judgements on Shona constructions will always be accurate. This doubt is what was observed by Newmeyer (1986: 50) [24] where he indicated that “studies of introspective data carried out so far show that variation in this field is widespread.” Similarly, Palmer (1976) [25] holds a different view on the importance of intuition in gathering data when he argues that “although it is true that intuition should play a major role in our investigation of language, it should be noted that if introspective data cannot be backed by observational evidence, then it is superfluous” (Palmer 1976:28) [25]. This means that intuitively gathered data need to be verified by investigation in the field to cover for the weaknesses of intuition as a data collection method. With Palmer’s view in mind, the researcher, whom he deemed necessary, therefore checked on the grammaticality and or acceptability of utterances against the collective linguistic and/ or grammatical competence of other native speakers of Shona in Harare.

The data also came from the internet, journal articles and textbooks. Primary sources are germane to this study since they provide data which is essential in understanding ideophones in general. These include works contributing to the study of Shona ideophones such as works by Doke (1935) [5], Fortune (1980, 1984) [7, 10], Pongweni (1989) [27] and Mpofo-Hamadziripi, et. al., (2013). These sources are the basis upon which this study is anchored. This research also draws on information from secondary sources. These are sources that are in the area of morphology, syntax, and theoretical linguistics. This study utilises secondary sources that have been written on morphology as well as syntax to analyse the morphological and syntactic patterns of the ideophone. This sheds more light on the analysis of the morphosyntactic behaviour of the ideophone in the Shona sentence.

## Data analysis

Data were analyzed using content analysis. This was so because content analysis allows researchers who are considering using it with many advantages Samarin, (1967) [29]. Content analysis, in particular, examines communication directly through messages or transcripts, getting to the heart of social interaction. It is a discrete method of communications analysis that involves analyzing the semantic content, or what section of the message is being investigated. This is a qualitative method of identifying, and analyzing data in rich detail similar to the observational approach, as in this case what is being analyzed is a description of actions and actual behavior observation (Muganda, 2010) [23].

## Data presentation and analysis

This section presents and analyses data.

### The ideophone and other grammatical categories

The ideophone has an intricate relationship with other grammatical categories such as the verb and the adjective. This is largely because ideophones can be derived from verbs or adjectives and vice versa. In this regard, we can say that the adjective and the verb form part of the ideophonic category. Spencer (1991:21) [30] posits that “derivational operations typically create a word of a different syntactic class from that of the base, but will also add further elements of meaning”. The morphemes or the affixes of the ideophone function as elements of meaning. However, we cannot dismiss the idea that other ideophones are purely ideophones, which are not derived from any of the two categories, for instance, *vhu* ‘arrive’, *pu* ‘a sound of something falling on the ground’ and *pa* ‘to hit someone’, just to mention a few. It is the goal of this chapter to give an account of derivational affixation and how it affects syntactic outcomes. When used in a sentence, the verb acts as a complement to the ideophone which in turn when interpreted from a theoretical linguistics standpoint is an argument or a thematic role. The following examples support this explanation:

- 1) Musikana akati svetu kusvetuka gomba  
‘The girl jumped the pit’
- 2) Mvura yainaya yakati dzimu kudzimura moto  
‘The rains extinguished the fire’

In descriptive linguistics *kusvetuka* ‘to jump’ and *kudzima* ‘put out a fire’ are both infinitive complements of class (15) as evidenced from the above examples (3) and (4). However, the intention in providing the examples above is to show the relationship between ideophones and verbs as alluded to earlier. Verbs in this case become argument complements. From a Lexical Function Grammar (LFG) theory point of view, *kusvetuka* and *kudzima* are infinitive arguments that denote or complement the actions named by the respective ideophones. The above examples demonstrate the interconnectedness or symbiotic relationship that the ideophone has with the verb. Syntactically, the ideophone is hierarchically higher than the verb because the ideophone gives more information about the verb. The ideophone in this case, functionally acts as an adverb to the verb and for the reason one is inclined to use the analogous term adverb to describe the semantic relationship. The ideophone also has an intricate relationship with the adjective. The ideophoniser affix-*ru* plays a central function in connecting the two. This indicates the notion that the two are

compatible. Below are examples that support the semantic relationship that exists between the ideophone and the adjective,

3a. Jira rakati cheneru.

'The blanket is faded'

b. Komichi yakati tsvukuru mukati nengura.

'The cup is reddish with rust'.

The above information corresponds to the idea suggested by Matambirofa (2009:179) <sup>[17]</sup> that both the two approaches, the descriptive and the theoretical "are far from being antagonistic and if anything, they must be viewed as being somewhat complementary of each other". This is largely because the theoretical approach also uses a descriptive method to explain certain concepts. The affix-*ru* is limited to certain adjectives such as *tsvukuru* 'reddish', *cheneru* 'whitish'. This implies the ideophone selects such adjectives as argument complements just like in the case of the verb and the ideophone. This subsection emphasises that the ideophone does not exist in isolation. For this reason, we can say that the interconnectedness between the verb and other grammatical elements is a result of shared elements, that is, the ideophone borrows from the verb and the verb from the ideophone in turn. Thus, when looking at the derivational operation we take into consideration the verb and the adjective.

### The derivational behaviour of the ideophone in a sentence

The ideophone's derivational morphological behaviour results in the addition of arguments in ideophonic constructions and sentences. Derivational morphology takes place in the lexicon. This explains the reason why the lexicon is vital in argument selection and Katamba and Stonham (2006:13) <sup>[13]</sup> have this to say, "the relationship between a word and its meaning is arbitrary". The ideophone as a lexical category selectively chooses arguments that are appropriate for its semantic structure requirements. In this regard, we argue that affixes play a major role in determining the outcome of syntax be it in ideophonic constructions or sentences. Derivational affixation adds meaning to a given ideophonic construction. The following examples support this,

6a. Mwana adya bota.

'The child has eaten porridge'.

b. Mwana a-ka-ti i-dy-ei bota

'The child ate just a little porridge'.

The change from a verbal to an ideophonic sentence as demonstrated by the above examples 6(a-b) is a result of the derivational affix (DA) *-ei* which has been attached to the verb radical (VR) *dy* 'to eat', the ideophone selects an auxiliary *-ti* or an inflected copulative pronoun *ndiye* 'then', as additional arguments. Matambirofa, (2009:2) <sup>[17]</sup> posits that "derivational morphology can produce complex word forms which have radically different syntactic properties than of the stem to which the morphology attaches". Where the verb takes fewer arguments, the ideophone takes more arguments because of the derivational process that will have resulted in the change of a grammatical category. Within the syntactic domain, both the auxiliary and the copulative inflected pronoun are hierarchically higher than the ideophones that host them. Derivational affixation results in the licensing of extra arguments. For instance, affixes such

as *-e*, *-ei* and *-u* are mostly possible with dyadic or triadic ideophones. Dyadic and triadic ideophones are elaboratively discussed in chapter four. However, for this purpose of clarification, this means that these affixes accommodate two or three arguments. Below are the examples that support this view:

7a. Sekuru ndiye dzvarei mbeu mumunda.

'Grandfather then sow the seeds in the field'

b. Taona akati kande bhora.

'Taona threw a ball a little bit'.

C. Gudo rakati namu bepa kumadziro.

'The baboon removed a paper on the wall'.

The affix *-ei* attached to the verb '*dzvaya*' to sow something' in example 7a) accommodates three arguments which are, *sekuru* 'grandfather', *mbeu* 'seeds' and *munda* 'field'. In the next example in (b), affix *-e* can also accommodate three arguments but in this case, it assigns two arguments which are, *Taona* and *bhora* 'ball'. The affix *-u* in example (c) assigns three arguments that are as follows, *gudo* 'baboon', *bepa* 'paper' and *madziro* 'a wall'. The affix *-ru* is possible with monadic ideophones and this is indicated in example (5). The derivational affix *-ru* implies that the ideophone takes only one argument. All these affixes are suffixal and basically, they convey the meaning of the ideophone which is generated at the semantic structure (constitutes the arguments selected by the ideophone). The major point to take note of is that the derivational affixes can introduce arguments specifically suitable for the semantic structure of the ideophone.

### Morphology and ideophonic syntactic structures

Syntax is influenced by derivational morphology. In other words, derivational affixation determines the outcome of syntactic structures. According to Lyons (1969:194) <sup>[15]</sup>, "the very terms 'morphology' and 'syntax' and how they are applied imply the primacy of the word". This implies that morphology and syntax are interwoven. This is largely because it is through derivational processes that arguments are licensed. Everything that ends up in the syntax in ideophonic constructions start in the lexicon. In other words, syntax is shaped by lexicon. Matambirofa (2009:1) <sup>[17]</sup> posits that, "morphological structure and syntactic structure are clearly mutually dependent". The lexicon plays a major role in assigning syntactic complements as demonstrated below,

Table 3: Affixes and syntactic complements

Verb radical	Derivational affixes	Syntactic complement	Gloss
gar-	ei	pachituro	To sit for a while
Pis	ei	jira	To burn a blanket
tsvet-	e	bhatye	To put a jacket somewhere
ch-	e	muti	To cut a tree

In this case, *chituro* 'chair', *bhora* 'ball', *jira* 'blanket' and *bhatye* 'jacket' are syntactic complements in which the actions denoted by the ideophones are performed, hence these complements can be referred to as patients or themes. Similar to the verb, ideophones also require semantic roles. Morphology functions to indicate certain arguments that belong to different ideophones. About the relationship between morphology and syntactic outcomes, Spencer (1991:32) <sup>[30]</sup> comments that "there are some morphologists who regard all morphology as essentially the concatenation

of things and others who prefer to view it as essentially the operation of processes". This chapter argues that morphology shows the interconnectedness of things for instance, the ideophone and its arguments, the ideophone and other word categories such as the verb and the adjective and also the influence of derivational operations or processes on the external structure. This corresponds to the intuition that the internal structure (derivational morphology) influences the outcome of the external structure (syntax).

### The ideophone in Shona and its argument structures

Lyons (1977:516) <sup>[15]</sup> avers that, "the information that is found in a typical lexical entry is of three kinds; morphological, syntactic and semantic". The focus in this chapter is on the semantic and syntactic information of the lexical category which in this case is the ideophone. It also needs to be emphasised that semantic structures and syntactic structure are symbiotically related since these two contribute to the outcome of the ideophonic constructions. Every ideophone has its argument structure. In this case, the classification of ideophones is based on the number of arguments which they take. Thus, we can borrow the terminology of the verb to classify ideophones as monadic, dyadic and triadic. The semantic structure shows the roles assigned by the ideophone in a sentence. Spencer (1991:32) <sup>[30]</sup> argue that the "semantic structure is the abode of thematic roles comprising the agent, patient, beneficiary...". These roles play a significant role in shaping the argument structure of a particular ideophone. About the importance of roles in ideophonic constructions, Bresnan (1994:74) posits that "roles correspond to the grammaticality expressible participants of eventualities". This implies that roles intensify the action or sound denoted by the ideophone. In other words, roles are inextricably connected with the meaning of the ideophone. The following constructions support this,

8. Musikana ndiye chekei nyama yemombe.  
'The girl then cut the beef'.

The ideophone *chekei* 'to cut something' requires two roles for the action to be executed, that is, the entity that performs the cutting process and that which is cut. The girl is volitionally involved in the action whilst the beef is the theme that is affected. We can thus say that each ideophone selects its roles that are appropriate for performing the action named by the ideophone. This points to the issue of classifying ideophones as belonging to different types.

### Monadic ideophones

Monadic ideophones can also be referred to as one-place ideophones. Monadic refers to a situation whereby an ideophone only assigns one argument. An argument can be an agent, theme, or patient, just to mention a few that we are focusing on in this chapter. To give a comprehensive picture of what we mean by agent, theme or patient, we have to define them, Bresnan and Kanerva (1988:30) <sup>[2]</sup> define an agent as, "the argument that causes or has control over the situation described by the verb". Polinsky (1994:131) <sup>[26]</sup> asserts that a patient "is created or dramatically destroyed in the course of the given event and is usually affected "whilst the theme has been defined as "the person or thing moved by the action expressed by the predicate". In this case, we can substitute the word predicate or verb with the word ideophone. The structure of the sentence is determined by

the ideophone itself. By monadic we mean that the state, colour or sound expressed by the ideophone cannot be carried over to another entity. Here are the examples;

9. Upfu hwakati ngwerewere kuchena  
'The mealie-meal is highly white'  
10. Mvura yakati weke kuchena.  
'The water is crystal clear'.

Ideophonic constructions in (9) and (10) belong to the semantic category of colour. The phenomenon that can be observed from the examples is that all ideophones that describe certain colours are monadic in nature, they only assign one participant who is passively involved in the action denoted by the ideophone. The nouns in examples (9) and (10), *upfu* 'mealie-meal' and *mvura* 'water' are agents who are passively involved in the colour descriptions named by their ideophones respectively. The agents do not do anything to become white.

Here are some monadic examples listed below;

12. Rwizi rwakati fasha fasha kuzara.  
'The river is full to the brim with water'.  
13. Mbatya dzasekuru dzakati dhabha dhabha kunyorova.  
'Grandfather's clothes are all wet'.

Both ideophones in sentences 12 and 13 fit into the semantic category of state. When we are looking at the semantic domain in the above ideophonic constructions, the states described by the ideophones *fasha fasha* 'full to the brim' and *dhabha dhabha* 'soaked in water' are monadic, they have one argument respectively. These arguments are object-like, meaning to say that they do not cause any state to happen. In other words, we can argue that these arguments are grammatical roles that are used to complement the states described by the ideophones. Haegeman (1991:33) <sup>[11]</sup> asserts that "the grammar of a language is a coherent system of principles which determines the formation of the sentence of a language". Linguistic competence enables a native speaker to intuitively detect the suitable roles or arguments required by a particular ideophone. The argument structure pre-shadows the sentence that may be constructed. For instance, taking into consideration the ideophonic sentence in example (13), we can posit that the outcome of the ideophonic sentence is a result of the semantic component that influences the structure of a sentence. Thus, according to Chomsky, (1965:16) <sup>[4]</sup>, "the semantic component determines the semantic interpretation of a sentence". This gives rise to the issue of syntax which is going to be dealt with in the last sub-section of this presentation.

### Dyadic ideophones

Apart from being monadic in nature, ideophones can also be dyadic. These are two place ideophones that accommodate two participants in a sentence. By dyadic, we mean that the action expressed by the ideophone can be carried over to another entity. The following examples support this;

14. Mbuya vakati che muti.  
'Grandmother cut the tree'.  
15. Mbavha ndiye nhonge chikwama.  
'The thief then picked up a wallet'.

The above ideophonic sentences, (14) and (15) are grammatically acceptable. The syntax of dyadic ideophones is different from that of monadic ideophones because of the



number of *mbavha* ‘thief’ arguments taken by ideophones. In (14), *mbuya* ‘grandmother’ is the agent, the argument performing the action expressed by the ideophone *che* ‘cutting something with a sharp object’ whilst *muti* ‘tree’ is the theme which is undergoing the action performed by the agent. *Mbuya* and *muti* are the two roles assigned by the ideophone *che*. In (15), *mbavha* ‘thief’ is the agent involved in the action named by the ideophone whilst *chikwama* ‘wallet’ is the patient undergoing the action expressed by the ideophone. Hence, the ideophone *nhonge* ‘to pick up something’ selects two arguments.

### Triadic ideophones

Triadic ideophones are ideophones that take three arguments and can be referred to as three-place ideophones. In Shona, we have ideophones that are both dyadic and triadic. The argument structure of the ideophone determines which elements of the sentence are obligatory. For instance,

16. Chipo akati ipei mwana sadza.

‘Chipo gave sadza to the child’.

17. Mukomana ndiye zorei chingwa uchi.

‘the boy then spread honey on the bread’.

In (16) the ideophone *ipei* ‘to give’ licenses three arguments. Chipo is the agent volitionally involved in the action named by the ideophone, *mwana* ‘the child’ is beneficiary advantaged by the action carried out by the agent, and *sadza* is the theme affected by the action named by the ideophone. In (17), the ideophone *zorei* ‘to spread something’ has three arguments, namely the agent, theme and the theme. *Mukomana* ‘boy’ is the agent performing the action named by the ideophone, *chingwa* ‘bread’ is the theme undergoing the action performed by the agent and *uchi* ‘honey’ is also a theme affected by the action named by the ideophone. Such arguments are rendered as subjects and objects at surface syntax. Thus, according to Alsina (1992:5200, “the argument structure contains semantic information about lexical items that is relevant for syntax.

### The surface peculiarities of the ideophone

Kaplan and Bresnan (1982:175) <sup>[12]</sup> posit that, “the functional structure provides a precise characterisation of such traditional syntactic notions as subject, object, complement and adjunct, it is the sole input to the semantic component”. The Shona ideophone has a logical syntactic form. The ideophone licenses participants that are realised as grammatical relations on the surface syntax. Arguments are mapped onto grammatical relations through mapping principles. Khumalo (2007:141) <sup>[14]</sup> contends that “a-structures are lexical syntactic constructs”. It needs to be stressed out that each ideophone has its argument structure which influences the surface syntax of the ideophonic sentence.

Generally, the subject is the syntactic argument that performs the action denoted by the ideophone whilst the object is the syntactic argument that receives the action expressed by the ideophone. These two grammatical relations are crucial since they perform the action named by the ideophone. However, not all ideophones have both the subject and the object. This is largely because other ideophones are monadic in nature and this influences the outcome of their surface syntax. When used in a sentence, the ideophone has an intrinsic influence on its surface structure and this is illustrated below;

(18) Sadza rakati tonho kutonhora.

“The sadza is cold.”

(19) Nwiwa rakati piriviri kutsvuka.

“The watermelon is extremely red.”

(20) Jongwe rakati kukurigo-o kurira.

“The rooster crows.”

From the above ideophonic constructions, (18) to (20), it is evident that ideophones which express state, colour or even sound is associated with subjects only at the surface syntax. Since these subjects do not perform anything described by the ideophones, we can label them as passive subjects which are not actively involved. In this case, *sadza*, *nwiwa* ‘watermelon’ and *jongwe* ‘rooster’ are subjects in their respective ideophonic sentences. The syntax that arises from the above ideophonic sentences will be schematised as follows: Subject + Auxiliary + Ideophone + Compliment. This is the kind of syntax that is associated with ideophones that describe states, colours and sounds. Ideophones can select both the subject and the object at the surface syntax. In this case, we can extract examples from dyadic and triadic ideophones which have both surface structures just like the verb. For instance,

21(a) Musikana ndiye potserei zai kwakadaro.

‘The girl picked a jacket.’

(b) Imbwa ndiye piku nyama mupoto.

‘The dog then took a piece of meat in the pot.’

(c) Mbuya vakati sungei gonhi.

‘Grandmother tied the door.’

*Musikana* ‘girl’, *imbwa* ‘dog’ and *mbuya* ‘grandmother’ are the subjects in the ideophonic constructions listed above in 21 (a - c). These subjects perform the actions expressed by the ideophones *potserei* ‘to throw something away’, *piku* ‘to yake something’, and *sungei* ‘to tie something’, respectively. The subject acts on the object. An object is an entity which receives the action named by the ideophone. In this case, *zai* ‘egg’, *nyama* ‘meat’ and *gonhi* ‘door’ are the objects in the above ideophonic constructions. This shows that the subject and the object are two inseparable relations. To use Maranz (1984:6) <sup>[16]</sup> words, these grammatical relations are “syntactic counterparts”. The syntax that arises out of the ideophonic constructions highlighted in example 21 (a - c) will be as follows: Subject + Auxiliary + Ideophone + Object. Hence, syntax is a product of the argument structure.

### Conclusion

In the foregoing, the major concern has been analysing the types of argument structures that the ideophone licenses. Such argument structures emerge from the classification basis, that is, classifying ideophones by the number of arguments they take. This chapter also unravels the relationship between the argument structure and the surface syntactic structure. This was done in an endeavour to show how syntax arises out of argument structures. On the issue of surface peculiarities of the ideophone, it has been demonstrated that monadic ideophones take only the subject at the surface syntax whilst ideophones that portray certain actions are associated with both grammatical relations of functions at the surface syntax. In other words, the ideophone is the one that carries the semantic component as well as predetermines the syntactic component as demonstrated in this research.

Although the study has unravelled the morphosyntactic behaviour of ideophone and ideophonic constructions, not all aspects have been exhausted. Certain areas require further research so that gap in terms of knowledge is covered. It is therefore recommended that detailed research on the relationship between the ideophone and either the verb or adjective be undertaken. There is a need also to investigate whether there are factors that determine the difference in the final vowel *-e*, *-ei* and *-u* of the ideophone. Therefore, future research can also be pursued about this particular structure illustrating how it affects syntax or syntactic categories. This will expand the study of ideophones in Shona.

## References

1. Alsina A, Mchombo S. Lexical mapping in the *Chichewa* applicative constructions. Technical report. Stanford University and San Jose State University, Stanford; c1988.
2. Bresnan J, Kanerva J. Locative inversion in *Chichewa*: A case study of factorization in grammar. Technical report. Stanford University and Xerox PARC, Stanford; c1988.
3. Bresnan J, editor. The Mental Representation of Grammatical Relations. The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts; c1982.
4. Chomsky N. Aspects of the Theory of Syntax. The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts; c1965.
5. Doke CM. *Bantu* Linguistic Terminology. London: Longmans, Green & Co.; c1935.
6. Evans V, Green M. Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers; c2006.
7. Fortune G. *Shona* Grammatical Constructions. Harare: Mercury Press; c1980.
8. Fortune G, editor. Essays on *Shona* Dialects. Oslo: ALLEX Project; c2004.
9. Fortune G. An Analytical Grammar of *Shona*. Longman: London; c1955.
10. Fortune G. *Shona* Grammatical Constructions. Harare: Mercury Press; c1984.
11. Haegeman L. Introduction to Government and Binding Theory. Oxford: Blackwell; c1991.
12. Kaplan R, Bresnan J. Lexical-Functional Grammar: A formal system for grammatical representation. In: Bresnan J, editor. The Mental Representation of Grammatical Relations. The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts; c1982.
13. Katamba F, Stonham J. Morphology. UK: Publisher Macmillan Education; c2006.
14. Khumalo L. An Analysis of the *Ndebele* Passive Construction. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation. Oslo: University of Oslo; c2007.
15. Lyons J. Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics. Cambridge: The University Press; c1969.
16. Marantz A. On the Nature of Grammatical Relations. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press; c1984.
17. Matambirofa F. The Syntax of Applicative and Causative Constructions in *Shona*. AN LFG/LMT Theoretical Account. Germany: Lambert Academic Publishing; c2009.
18. Mathews P. Morphology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; c1991.
19. Mberi NE. The Categorical Status and Functions of Auxiliaries in *Shona*. Unpublished DPhil Dissertation. Harare: University of Zimbabwe; c2002.
20. Miti LM. Comparative *Bantu* Phonology and Morphology. Cape Town: Casas; c2006.
21. Mkanganwi KG. *Shona* (derivational) morphology: An observation in search of a theory. *Zambezia*. 2002;29(2):174-190.
22. Mpfu-Hamadziripi N, Ngunga A, Mberi EM, Matambirofa F. A Descriptive Grammar of *Shona*. Harare: Sable Press; c2010.
23. Muganda M, Sahli M, Smith KA. Tourism's contribution to poverty alleviation: A community perspective from Tanzania. *Development Southern Africa*. 2010;27:629-646.
24. Newmeyer F. Linguistic Theory in America. New York: Academic Books; c1986.
25. Palmer FR. Semantics. UK: Cambridge University Press; c1976.
26. Polinsky M. A longitudinal study of principles of control and pronominal reference in child English; c1994.
27. Pongweni AJC. Studies in *Shona* Phonetics: An Analytical Review. Harare: University Press; c1989.
28. Radford A. English Syntax: An Introduction. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; c1991.
29. Samarin WJ. Field Linguistics: A Guide to Fieldwork. New York: Rhinehart and Winston; c1967.
30. Spenser A. Morphological Theory: An Introduction to Word Structure in Generative Grammar. Oxford & Cambridge, Massachusetts: Basil Blackwell; c1991.
31. Zondo J. Some aspects of the ideophone in *Ndebele* Ideophone. *Zambezia*. 1982;6(3):17-40.