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A Syntactic—Stylistic Critique of Interjections & Ideophones with Reference to the IsiZulu Novel

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ABSTRACT

Through the lenses of descriptive linguistics, interjections and ideophones are usually analysed separately from literature in the South African indigenous languages. Nothing much has been done so far to investigate these aspects through descriptive linguistics in context to literature. By investigating the syntactic features of interjections and ideophones, with reference to the IsiZulu novel genre, this paper seeks to harmonise literary criticism and linguistics. This study is theoretically and broadly grounded on linguistic stylistics, and it adopts Ngaru's linguistic proper format as the main theoretical base. With the analysis of four novels namely, *Kungasa Ngifile*, *Ngidedele Ngife*, *Ngiyolibala Ngifile*, and *Inkululeko Engakhululekile*, as primary sources, the study is done qualitatively through textual analysis. The findings of the study demonstrate that literary criticism and linguistics can co-exist even with reference to the isiZulu language as a case study. While interjections are discussed under the syntactic properties of them as complete sentences and auxiliaries in sentences, ideophones are discussed under the following sub – headings: Ideophones used with finite verbs, ideophones used with the verb stem -thi, and ideophones used independently. It is through these syntactic properties that the artistic or stylistic significance of interjections and ideophones in the novels are also demonstrated. Such an approach covers both the form (linguistic description) and function (literary significance) of interjections and ideophones.

Keywords: Novel; Interjections; Ideophones; Syntax; Stylistics; Linguistics; Literary Criticism

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1. Background & Introduction

The relationship between linguistics and literary criticism can be likened to the relationship between the United States of America and Russia during the Cold War, a war of words and a conflict of ideologies. Linguistics and literary criticism have made their differences clear and debates between the two schools of thought have since been going on. The arguments have been mainly from literary critics who question the relevance of linguistics as a distinct discipline to literature. Among many aspects of concern, literary scholars have criticised linguistics for being too scientific for an artistic bound discourse like literature ([1], p. 1) and linguists, on the other hand, have also responded by criticising literary criticism for its subjective approach to the analysis of literature ([2], p. 43). While literary scholars perceive the involvement of linguistics in literature as “imperialistic” ([3], p. 149), linguists have labeled literary criticism as too vague ([4], p. 198).

Despite these debates above, there is a considerable number of research works that have since emerged to show the relationship between the two disciplines and how much they are interdependent. Despite the conflict of ideologies between linguists and literary scholars, there are scholars who have attempted to dissolve this academic tension. Much of their attempts are motivated by the belief that the tension between linguists and literary scholars is unnecessary because the two disciplines can co-exist. In other words, as much as they are two different disciplines, there is a bridge between them, and that bridge is stylistics. Stylistics is the contact point between linguistics and literary criticism since a part of its methodology focuses on language use in literary works. For instance, Hejal [5] provides a holistic discussion on stylistics, its scope, and its value in linking linguistics and literary criticism. This scholar argues that even though stylistics does not replace literary criticism, literary criticism can benefit largely from stylistics. The main claim made is that stylistics is the link between linguistics and literary criticism because its intent is to highlight the relevance of language as a means of literary expression.

Abdulmughni [6], on the other hand, focuses on identifying the connection between linguistic analysis, literary criticism, discourse analysis and stylistic analysis. Similarities and differences among the four disciplines are highlighted in the study with an exemplary text used to enable

the application of the descriptive and comparative approach in their analysis. The results of the study depict that stylistics, linguistics, discourse analysis, and literary criticism are interconnected, and they can all be used to scrutinise both literary and non-literary texts. Highlighting the role of stylistics in linking linguistics and literary criticism, Zhang ([7], p. 155) remarks: “Literary stylistics is a discipline mediating between linguistics and literary criticism”. Hall ([8], p. 317) also goes along these lines by arguing that stylistics, as a linguistic approach to literature, has a beneficiary approach to literary criticism. Having studied the literary works of Sotirova and Gavins, it is argued in this article that stylistics offers the most appealing analysis of a literary text. Sura ([9], p. 25) also singles out the role of stylistics in correlating linguistics and literary criticism. A stylistic analysis of a poem titled “What I Will” by Hammad is explored to support the claim.

This paper is theoretically and broadly grounded on linguistic stylistics because it intends to harmonise linguistics and literary criticism by discussing interjections and ideophones as they are used in the novels *Kungasa Ngifile* [10], *Ngidedele Ngife* [11], *Ngiyolibala Ngifile* [12], and *Inkululeko Engakhululekile* [13]. This study is an attempt to also contribute to the debates highlighted above on the relationship between literary criticism and linguistics by using the Zulu novel as a case study. Interjections and ideophones are analysed through the lenses of descriptive linguistics with syntax as the main linguistic level.

In the isiZulu language, interjections are known as ‘*iz-ibabazo*’. This noun is derived from the verb *ukubabaza* which means to exclaim, praise or acclaim. Interjections are used more often in the spoken as compared to the written language. They are a medium through which people’s emotions or cognitive faculties are conveyed in ordinary day-to-day life, generally. These emotions range from happiness, sadness, praise, shock, etc. Alluding to this, Crystal ([14], p. 249) refers to an interjection as:

A term used in the traditional classification of parts of speech, referring to a class of words which are unproductive, do not enter into syntactic relationships with other classes, and whose function is purely emotive.

Similarly, Hismanoglu ([15], p. 18) maintains:

They are words or constructions with no real linguistic value but we generally employ them to express feelings or states of minds in daily life situations.

The two views above highlight that interjections are expressions of emotions and state of mind. As much as they have a dramatic effect in ordinary spoken language, they can also be credited for this very same effect in fictional writing. Interjections are generally a less popular subject in linguistics and, even though they are evident in literature, their form and function in literary discourse have not been given sufficient attention ([16], p. 417). Even though Crystal above maintains that interjections “do not enter into syntactic relationships with other classes”, a different perspective is maintained in the case of isiZulu as a case study. It is for this reason that their syntactic properties are explored in this paper.

An ideophones, on the other hand, is commonly known as ‘*isenzukuthi*’ in the isiZulu language. This is a compound word made up of the morpheme *isenz-* (from the verb root *-enza*) and the morpheme *-ukuthi*. This morpheme is derived from the idea that most of these words are introduced by the auxiliary verb stem *-thi*, which indicates that something is being perpetually done. For example, in the sentence, “*Lwanguzithi heqe uvalo*” (fear struck me), the ideophone ‘*heqe*’ is introduced by the word ‘*lwanguzithi*’, which has the stem *-thi*. The concept of *isenzukuthi* can thus be directly translated as words that express the idea of something happening. Even though this is the case, ideophone have various connotations. They can do what other words such as verbs and adjectives can do. Supporting this, Poulos and Msimang ([17], p. 414) explain that ideophones are descriptive or colourful expressions and this relates them to adjectives in terms of semantics. Mtumane and Dlamini ([18], p. 3) holistically capture the meaning of an ideophone by saying:

... 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.

There seems to be little that has been done to investigate the literary syntactic significance of both interjections and ideophones in isiZulu or the South African indigenous languages’ literature. This paper thus aims to contribute to existing literature by filling in this gap. Before this analysis, this paper commences by commenting on the theoretical framework and research methodology that guides this study.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study is broadly grounded on linguistic stylistics. Bakuuro ([19], p. 37) contends that stylistics aims to draw the link between the linguistic and literary effects of the text, to determine the reasons behind the quality of a written work of art. Manqoush and Al-Wadhaf ([20], p. 19) also argue that stylistics is a linguistics entity, which was extended to include literature and other disciplines. Linguistic stylistics offers a scientific approach to the study of literature through descriptive linguistics. This approach is a linguistic study to the concept of ‘style’. Ngara’s^[21] stylistic criticism is one example of such an approach. This criticism is divided into two sets namely, ‘para linguistic devices’ and ‘linguistic proper features’. This study focuses on the latter set of this criticism, which is divided into the following linguistic levels:

- The *grammatical level* focuses on the grammatical patterns such as sentence structure and the meaning attached to this.
- The *lexical level* is centered on diction and how this informs style.
- The *level of tenor of discourse* considers the relationship between the author and the audience. It considers aspects such as tone.
- The *phonological level* examines phonological patterns such as rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, etc.
- The *graphological level* involves typographic aspects

such as punctuation, orthography, etc.

Even though Ngara's linguistic proper format covers five levels, it is only the grammatical level that this study makes special reference to. This is mainly because the study focuses on the syntactic investigation of interjections and ideophones in the selected novels. Out of the five levels above, it is only the grammatical level that focuses more on sentence structure and its relationship style. Ngara's stylistic criticism, through the linguistic proper features, is thus seen as a suitable theoretical approach for this study because it advocates for a linguistic approach to style. This approach also covers the syntax at a linguistic - stylistic level.

3. Research Methodology

The study adopts textual analysis as a qualitative research technique. This is motivated by the fact that data is collected, organised, and interpreted from the selected three isiZulu novels namely, *Kungasa Ngifile*^[10], *Ngidedele Ngife*^[11], *Ngivolibala Ngifile*^[12], and *Inkululeko Engakhululekile*^[13]. Essentially, these books serve as primary sources for data collection. Textual analysis is one of the research techniques used in linguistic and literary studies. It is based on the interpretative research paradigm and thus focuses on the beliefs, assumptions, and backgrounds information that underpin the text ([22], p. 173). Textual analysis is used to evaluate the text to determine the meaning and possible external influence.

Since textual analysis is used for the purpose of determining an in-depth understanding of the text, it is seen as a suitable research technique for this study. The aim of this study is to understand the relationship between linguistics and literary criticism through the analysis of interjections and ideophones. This will be done by analysing the four selected novels. In other words, the deeper meaning of the selected novels, as a result of the literary syntactic investigation of interjections and ideophones, will be enabled by the adoption of the qualitative textual analysis technique. The analysed novels are all written by the same author who is known as E.D.M. Sibiyi. His novels were selected because he is an award-winning novelist in South Africa. The use of his novels as a case study thus seemed suitable because of the quality of his literary works.

4. Data Analysis

This section offers the analysis of data. This is done by firstly considering the syntactic properties of interjections and then the ideophones ones.

4.1. The Syntactic – Stylistic Features of Interjections

Interjections are analysed according to their syntactic significance in this section. There is little that has been done on isiZulu to explain interjections from a syntactic point of view. Interjections are discussed as a complete sentence and as auxiliaries here.

4.1.1. Interjection as a Complete Sentence

Interjections are observed according to their ability to stand independently as complete sentences here. In this instance, they start with a capital letter and end with a full stop or exclamation mark, just like other ordinary complete sentences. Also, they convey an idea in a manner of exclamation just like other sentences that convey ideas in the form of statements, questions, or commands. One example of such a syntactic feature of an interjection is analysed from Ndabayakhe's speech below, in *Ngidedele Ngife*^[11]:

“Oh. Ngizwa phela sekukhulunywa ngegcwane engathi isinqunywe indaba yokuthi ngiphethwe yilo.” Wabonakala ukuthi usethukuthela manje uNdabayakhe.

(Oh. I am hearing talks about the virus as if the matter has been concluded that I have it". It was clear that Ndabayakhe was frustrated now.)

(^[11], p. 48)

Here, the nurse is advising Ndabayakhe to test for HIV & AIDS since they are failing to diagnose him. He seems to be annoyed by this and the interjection is used to depict this. In this instance, the interjection is not used with an exclamation mark to indicate that, even though Ndabayakhe is annoyed, he speaks politely. When the nurse proposes the suggestion, Ndabayakhe scolds her, asking if she is suggesting that he has HIV & AIDS. After the nurse responds to say no, he then responds in the above-cited manner. As shown in bold, he starts his speech by using the interjection 'Oh'. This

interjection appears as a complete sentence in this instance, and this demonstrates its ability to work independently. The interjection starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. Essentially, this implies that an interjection is not only a word, but it can be classified as a complete sentence, as in the case of this interjection.

The example below also shows interjections as complete sentences:

“Wu-ah! *Ntombi kaMtimande!* **Wushi mame!**
Sengiyabona nje ngithandana nawe Themba
ungakwazi ngisho ukugqoka nje ...

(Wu-ah! Mtimande’s child! Wushi mame!
Imagine me dating you Themba, as you cannot
even dress ...)

(^[12], p. 26)

The interjections ‘*Wu-ah!*’ and ‘*Wushi mame!*’ above are used as complete sentences since they stand independently. They convey a thought of shock as they are exclamatory in nature. To also signify that they are complete sentences, they both begin with capital letters and end with exclamation marks.

The interjection ‘*Mameshane*’ below also marks the complete sentence nature of interjections:

Mameshane! *Ngubani manje lona? Yindoda*
emnyama esho ngamakhala ayo ayizimpenge
sengathi ngawehhashi lapho seliphefumulela
phezulu kade ligijima.

(Mameshane! Who is this now? It is a black
man with a snub bed nose just like the horse’s
when it breathes heavily after galloping.)

(^[13], p. 112)

‘*Mameshane*’ is used as complete sentence here. Just like the examples discussed above, this interjection is not only a word, but it also qualifies as a sentence, syntactically. An exclamatory idea of shock is conveyed by this sentence and the sentence stands on its own independently.

4.1.2. Interjections as Auxiliaries

By regarding interjection as auxiliaries, this is to suggest that interjection can play the role of being a complement or additional support form in a sentence. In such instances,

these interjections do not stand independently in a sentence. They are used to additionally support the idea that is conveyed by the sentence. The bold part in the excerpt below, from *Ngiyolibala Ngifile*^[12], is one example of such an instance:

Athi uma ejeqeza uMaKhoza abone ukuthi
akusekho nelilodwa iphilisi kulawo aphezulu
*kwetafula. **Hhawu Nkosi yami, usefa ngem-***
***pela madoda?** Azame ukukhala. Lutho uku-*
phuma izwi.

(When MaKhoza looked she saw that there was
not even one pill from those on top of the table.
Hhawu my Lord, is she really dying? She tried
to cry. No voice came out.)

(^[12], p. 37)

As shown above, the interjection ‘*hhawu*’ is used to complement and support the statement: “... *Nkosi yami usefa ngempela madoda*” (... my God, is she really dying?). This interjection is not used as a complete independent sentence in this instance. It is for this reason that a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark are used after it. The use of this interjection with the subsequent statement assists in ensuring that there is an emotional effect when the entire statement is read. It emphasises the idea that there is an emotional element attached to the expression of the statement.

The interjection ‘*hheyi*’, in the following speech, in *Ngidedele Ngife*^[11], also serves as an auxiliary:

“*Hheyi wena khehla ndini!* *Vala umlonyana*
wakho, angikhulumi nawe. Futhi ngikutshelile
wena ngathi yekela inkomo uma ingafuni no-
bisi lwayo”.

(“Hheyi you old man! Keep quiet, I am not
talking to you. And I told you to stay away
from a cow if it does not want with its milk”.)

(^[12], p. 43)

One of the nurses is rebuking a patient who interferes with her conversation with another patient and the statement: “*Hheyi wena khehla ndini*” (“*Hheyi you old man!*”) is used to introduce how frustrated the nurse is. Even in this instance, an interjection, which is ‘*hheyi*’, in this case, is used as an auxiliary to the sentence. It is used within a sentence and not

necessarily as an independent word. Its use in this sentence aids in the emphasis of the main conveyed idea, which is the fact that the nurse is frustrated by the patient.

The excerpt below shows the auxiliary nature and role of an interjection:

Wo hhe, izigemeleme zaselokishini. Cishe kukhona lapho kuqubuke khona umlilo: kuy-oba khona abadinga usizo ngokushesha. Kuphinde kwedlule lokho.

(*Wo hhe*, the severe occurrences of the township. There is probably fire somewhere: there will be people who need urgent help. There is more to that.)

(^[11], p. 74)

The interjection ‘*Wo hhe*’ complements and provides additional support to the statement: “*izigemeleme zaselokishini*” (severe occurrences of the township). Just like the other two examples discussed above, this interjection is not used independently and as a complete sentence. It is used to emphasise the idea that there are severe and bad things that take place in townships. The interjection is used to ensure that the emphasis is done in a manner that has an emotional effect.

4.2. The Syntactic - Stylistic Features of Ideophones

In this section, a discussion is made on the syntactic features of ideophones, as demonstrated in the selected novels. There seems to be less discussion of ideophones from the syntactic viewpoint in African languages. This part of the work serves as an attempt to close this gap, by discussing the use of selected ideophones from a syntactic perspective. The discussion will be done from the following sub-headings: Ideophones used with finite verbs, ideophones used with the verb stem *-thi*, and ideophones used independently.

4.2.1. Ideophones Used with Finite Verbs

Finite verbs are verbs that can stand independently. They do not depend on auxiliary verbs (^[23], p. 28). There are ideophones that are used with finite verbs in sentences and, in such cases, these ideophones syntactically appear after verbs. When this happens, they are used to emphasise

the verb. Such a syntactic feature of ideophones is evident in Sibiya’s novels. The first example is analysed from the following example in *Ngiyolibala Ngifile*^[12]:

Akumaphoyisa lawaya, wayeqala ngqa ukubona amaphoyisa angaka empilweni yakhe.

(There were so many police officers, it was the first time in his life seeing so many police personnel.)

(^[12], p. 48)

The ideophone *ngqa* is one of the ideophones used with specific verbs. It is generally used with the verb stem *-qala* (begin). In this case, the ideophone is used to emphasise the idea denoted by the verb that something is happening for the first time. *Ngqa* is used to emphasise *-qala*, which means ‘first time’. This ideophone cannot be used independently in a sentence. As shown in the example above, it is used with the verb *wayeqala* (It was his first time) to emphasise it. In this case, the ideophone is used to emphasise that it is indeed Madonsela’s first time seeing so many police officers. It appears after the verb *wayeqala*.

Another example is analysed from the following sentences:

Okumkhanyela bha wukuthi uNdabayakhe cishe akaseyubuye ambone esaphila. Okumhlupha kakhulu wukuthi umngani wakhe ulahleka nje ubegula.

(What is clear to him is that he might never see Ndabayakhe alive again. What is troubling him most is that his friend went missing while sick.)

(^[11], p. 64)

The ideophone *bha* expresses the idea that something is clear. It cannot be used independently. It is generally used with the verb *-khanya* (light up/bright/shine) as in the case of the example above. It follows the verb and this marks emphasis. Majongosi is worried about Ndabayakhe’s disappearance in the example above. To demonstrate how convinced he is that there are less chances to see Ndabayakhe again, *bha* is used alongside the verb *okumkhanyela* (what is clear to him) for emphasis purposes.

In a similar manner, the ideophone *bhe* is also one of the ideophones that are used with verbs. The following words from the same novel, are considered:

Isifuba lesi sishisa bhe. Ahlale phansi. Uyahe-fuzela. Into agabe ngayo nje wukuthi noma yini esondela kuye uzovele ayisusuluze ngenhlamvu kube kunye.

(His chest is very hot. He sits down. He is breathing heavily. He is relying on shooting once whatever comes near him.)

(^[11], p. 85)

It is evident from the example above that the ideophone *bhe* is used with the verb *shisa* (hot). This ideophone expresses the idea of raging and, in this case, it is the heat raging in a person's chest. This usually happens when one stops after running for a while. As the ideophone *bhe* is used with the verb *sishisa* (it is hot), the role of emphasis is also evident even here. This ideophone can also be used with other synonyms of the verb *shisa* like *-vutha* (be hot) as in the case of the example below, in *Kungasa Ngifile*^[10]:

Lwamshaya lwamenga uvalo uSenzo uma ekhumbula ukuthi unina ubevutha bhe izolo. Wayengazi ukuthi namuhla uzothini.

(Senzo got terrified when he remembered that his mother was fuming (with anger) yesterday. He did not know what she would say today.)

(^[10], p. 40)

The use of ideophones with verbs is also evident in *Inkululeko Engakhululekile*^[13]. The following example is considered:

Yathi iphela inyanga zase zimile mpo izindlu, abantu sebehlala phakathi. Ngenkathi besalindele ukuthi indlu yedlulele emagameni abathengi abasha, wahamba wayofunela abafana bakhe isikole khona kwaNongoma ...

(By the end of the month, the houses were erected, with people staying inside. While they were still waiting for the title deeds to be passed to new owners, he went and looked for a school

for his boys in Nongoma ...)

(^[13], p. 40)

As indicated in bold, the ideophone *mpo* is syntactically used with the verb *zimile* (they are erected). This ideophone expresses the idea of something being erected and, in this regard, it is the houses that are being referred to. Ndlovu and MaSibisi have lost the house they used to stay in due to financial strains. They decided to move back to Nongoma in the rural areas, where they built a house. The verb *zimile* and the ideophone *mpo* share the same meaning and are used to emphasise the idea that the house Ndlovu and MaSibisi built in Nongoma has been built and completed.

The last example is examined from the following passage in the same novel:

Wawa maqede wathula du akaze anyakaze. Cishe wayequlekile. Wahlala phezu kocingo uMthokozisi, ebiza abezimo eziphuthumayo.

(She fell and kept quiet without moving. She had probably fainted. Mthokozisi used the phone, calling the emergency services.)

(^[13], p. 182)

Mthokozisi has just confessed to his wife that he is gay. As he does this, his wife is described to be silent and motionless, as if she has fainted. To emphasise how silent she is, the verb *wathula* (and became quiet) and the ideophone *du* (of quietness) are used. This is another instance of an ideophone that is used with a verb to stress an idea as the ideophone appears after a verb. Mthokozisi and his wife, Sonto, loved each other from childhood and attended the same secondary school. After completing their university education, they got married and were blessed with one child. Everything changes when he confesses. Sonto becomes ill and she eventually passes on because of depression.

4.2.2. Ideophones Used with the Verb Stem *-thi*

This part of the work considers ideophones that are used with the auxiliary verb *-thi* in sentences. There are several examples used in the previous discussions where the verb form *-thi* appears, but it should be noted that the focus was not on this verb form – it was solely on the ideophone. It is in this section where attention is specifically paid to this verb stem in relation to ideophone.

The verb stem *-thi*, among other functions, is generally

used to introduce an ideophone. Commenting on this form, Zondo ([24], p. 112) remarks:

The radical /-*thi*/ has an element of perpetual ‘doing’ in it, be it in the past, present or future tense; in fact, it appears in many instances where ideophones are used, and it seems to carry the function of introducing, stating the dramatic element within the ideophone.

Von Studen ([25], p. 214) supports this view by stating that, in most instances, ideophones are used with the verb stem *-thi*. He further states that this verb stem can also appear as an auxiliary verb to complement a specific verb. For instance, in the sentence “*uyambheka uthi njo*” (He looks at him intensely), *uthi* serves as an auxiliary verb. The verb stem *-thi* can also denote different tenses in introducing the ideophone. For instance, in the sentence “*uyambheka umuthi njo*”, the present tense is denoted. In the past tense, it would be “*wambheka wamuthi njo*” (He looked at him intensely) and “*uzombheka amuthi njo*” (He will look at him intensely) in the future tense.

The first example of an ideophone used with the verb stem *-thi* is examined from the following instance in *Ngidedede Ngife*^[11]:

*Zifikile lezi zinsizwa ezimbili zimbhunyeye ngamanzi abandayo qede zimlalise ngaphansi kwe-sihlahla. **Kuthi nya!** Kulethwe elinye ithunga eligcwele amanzi. Bamthele.*

(These two men arrived and poured him with cold water and laid him under a tree. He did not wake up. Another milk-pail full of water was brought in. They poured water on him.)

(^[11], p. 38)

The ideophone *nya* generally expresses the idea of quietness or silence. In this sense, it expresses that there is no response from Ndabayakhe, as attempts are made to make him regain consciousness after he fainted. This ideophone is syntactically used with the verb *kuthi* (there was), which is used to introduce the ideophone in the above example. This verb is made of the subjectival morpheme of class 17 *ku-* and the verb stem *-thi*. Its use suggests that the occurrence is taking place presently. The use of the verb *kuthi* plays an important role in indicating the tense of the ideophone *nya*. It is from this verb that the idea presented by the ideophone is understood to be happening presently and

perpetually.

The example below also demonstrates the use of an ideophone with the verb stem *-thi*, which is *-the* in this regard:

*Lapho-ke intshebe yakhe lena isiqonde okothi lomkhonto **ithe njo** eNcwadini sengathi ikhomba ukuthi la mazwi aphuma embotsheni engenhla kwayo aphuma eNcwadini leyo, hhayi ekhanda likaMotaung.*

(Then his beard was straightened like the shaft of the spear as if to indicate that the words coming out of the hole above were from the Book, not Motaung’s head.)

(^[11], p. 52)

The ideophone *njo* expresses the idea of staring or fixed gazing. It is introduced by the verb *ithe*, which is made up of the subjectival concord *i-* of class 9 and the verb stem *-the*. The *e-* of *-the* indicates that the verb is in the near past tense, and this plays a significant role in providing the tense of the ideophone *njo*. The use of the word group *ithe njo* (it gazed) suggests that Motaung’s beard is straightened, and this is perpetual. In essence, it is the perpetual occurrence of something that is in the past tense. It was indicated earlier that the verb stem *-thi/the* tends to serve as an auxiliary, sometimes. This is the case in this example; the verb *ithe* appears with the verb *isiqonde* (it is straightened).

The following example, in *Ngiyolibala Ngifile*^[12], also demonstrates the auxiliary role of the verb stem *-thi*:

*Umoya ushubile lapho endlini, sengathi ungavele uwubambe **uwuthi ngqi** ngesandla noma uhambe phezu kwawo kodwa ungaweli phansi.*

(Emotions are high in this house, as if you would just grasp them with your hand or walk over them without falling down.)

(^[12], p. 1)

The scenario above describes how tense the situation is in MaKhoza’s house, as Khanyisile reveals the truth; emotions are high. The verb *uwuthi* is made of the subjectival concord *u-* of the second person, the object morpheme *-wu-* and the verb stem *-thi*. It serves as an auxiliary verb of the

finite verb *uwubambe* (and hold it) to introduce the ideophone *ngqi*, which expresses the idea of holding something firmly. This ideophone essentially adds emphasis to the finite verb *uwubambe*. One cannot realistically hold high emotions by hand or walk over them. Sibiyi uses this hyperbole to indicate the severity of tension in the house.

The ideophone *nke* is also one of the ideophones used with the verb stem *-thi*. The instance is considered from the following passage:

Lumuthi nke uvalo. Konke kusaphupho ngempela nje kuye. Kube wumzukuzuku ngenkathi eyibuza indodakazi yakhe ukuthi njengoba ihlala ihlale ikhale nje yingoba kwenzenjani.

(Fear struck her. Everything appeared to be a dream to her. It was a tussle when she asked her daughter the reason behind her constant crying.)

(^[12], p. 5)

The ideophone *nke* expresses the idea of ‘striking’. In the example above, it indicates that MaKhoza is struck by fear as she reflects on what Khanyisile tells her about Madonsela. This ideophone is introduced by the verb *lumuthi*, which is made up of the subjectival concord *lu-* of class 11, object morpheme *-mu-*, and the verb stem *-thi*.

4.2.3. Ideophones Used Independently

There are cases in Sibiyi’s novels where ideophones are used independently in sentences. In this way, they make complete sentences and are part of the narration process. Such instances are evident in *Ngidedele ngifile*^[11]. The first instance is illustrated by the example below:

Nombe, nombe, nombe. Nembala alithole. Abuye ahlale phansi.

(Climbing, climbing, climbing. Indeed, he found one. He came back and sat down.)

(^[11], p. 7)

As indicated earlier, the scenario above depicts Mthokozisi’s attempt to fetch his pair of trousers from the toilet roof. The ideophone *nombe* (climbing) describes his action of climbing up. It should be noted that the ideophone is repeated three times and used without any verb or other word.

Essentially, it is used independently. The ideophone *gabavu* (galloping) also demonstrates the syntactic independent role of an ideophone in a sentence, as shown in the following example: “*Gabavu, gabavu, gabavu. Alihoqhobale*” (Galloping, galloping, galloping. He choked the horse.) (^[11], p. 62). In this instance, the ideophone depicts the running of a horse and, as indicated, it is repeated and appears independently in the sentence.

In the same novel, this is the case with the ideophone *gidi* as illustrated by the following example: “*Gidi, gidi, gidigidi. Alunguze*” (A heartbeat sound. He looked around) (^[11], p. 158). This refers to the sound of a heartbeat. Just like the two examples above, this example illustrates the independent use of an ideophone in a sentence.

In *Inkululeko Engakhululekile*^[13], the independent use of ideophones in sentences also appears. The first example is considered below:

Waphumela phandle uMaSibisi wamemeza ngesankahlu wathi: “Mthokozisi! Mthokozisi! Nya nya nya.

(MaSibisi got outside and shouted and said: Mthokozisi! Mthokozisi! Silence silence silence.)

(^[13], p. 24)

The ideophone *nya* is used independently to present the idea that there is silence and no response as MaSibisi calls Mthokozisi. *Nya* is repeated to express the continuity of silence, and this marks the independent use of an ideophone in a sentence.

The last example is examined from the following quotation in *Ngiyolibala Ngifile*^[12]:

Aphinde. Du. Alunguze. Isihluthulelo singaphakathi. Azame ukuwuvula umnyango.

(He did it again. No response. He peeped. The key is inside. He tried to open the door.)

(^[12], p. 43)

As demonstrated above, the ideophone *du* is used independently. This ideophone is typically and generally used with the verb *-thula* (keep quiet). The use of this ideophone without this verb demonstrates the syntactic versatility of ideophones and Sibiyi’s understanding of this.

It is evident from these examples that ideophones can be used independently as complete. They are not introduced by specific words like verbs, nor are they followed by them. Sibiya's narrative skill is illuminated by this. The use of these ideophones plays a significant role in assisting him to present ideas in a concise way. What could have been presented in many words, is presented in a few words through ideophones.

5. Conclusions

Literary criticism and linguistics can co-exist even when it comes to South African indigenous languages as a case study. It was demonstrated in this paper that interjections and ideophones can be investigated in literature through syntax as a descriptive linguistics level. Interjections were discussed as complete words and as auxiliary words in sentences. Ideophones, on the other hand, were discussed according to their grammatical use with finite verbs, with the verb stem *-thi*, and their use as independent words. The analysis demonstrates the different syntactic representations of interjections and ideophones in literature with reference to three isiZulu novels.

It was discovered in the analysis that the use of interjections and ideophones from different syntactic patterns helps to avoid the repetition of the way in which he presents them. In terms of literary or artistic significance, it was highlighted that interjections assist in taking readers on 'an emotional ride'. They are used to capture readers and make them sympathise or relate with the idea the author is trying to convey on a deeper level. Ideophones, on the other hand, were determined to be useful in assisting the author to paint complete images in readers' minds; they evoked readers' different senses.

Since the study considered both the syntactic and literary significance of interjections and ideophones, it covered both the form and functions of these two linguistic aspects. The discussion demonstrated that literary criticism and linguistics can complement each other and play a significant role in ensuring that a literary text is analysed thoroughly. Such an approach is interdisciplinary in nature, and it leads to a broader understanding of linguistic concepts in literary contexts.

Since there are fewer studies of this nature in the

African indigenous languages of South Africa, it is hoped that this study will inspire more research.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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