Language Contact and Expressiveness: Ideophones, gestures and code-switching among young Zulu speakers in South Africa

Mertner, Anna Miri Speyer

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by
Anna Miri Speyer Mertner

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Abstract

The present study explores the relationship between multilingualism and expressiveness, with reference to the case of ideophones in Zulu. Ideophones make up a large and productive word class in Zulu, as they do in most Bantu languages (Nkabinde, 1986; Doke & Vilakazi, 1951). However, a study by Childs (1996) found that ideophone knowledge and use is in decline among young Zulu speakers in South Africa, likely because of influence from Afrikaans and English as prestige languages which do not have ideophones. This study seeks to follow up on this and expand upon it with the inclusion of gestures and an investigation of the attitudes surrounding ideophone use. The central finding is that the results here conform to Childs's (1996) prediction that ideophone use is decreasing among Zulu speakers; however, ideophones are generally positively perceived by urban speakers, which stands in stark contrast to what Childs (1996) found. The implications of these positive attitudes are discussed in light of South Africa's sociolinguistic history and current context. Lastly, I posit the tentative hypothesis that many of the functions of ideophones have persisted into urban Zulu in the form of onomatopoeia and even code-switching.

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Introduction

The present study sets out to re-investigate Childs's (1996) finding that the use of ideophones in Zulu is decreasing, especially among young, educated speakers living in the city. He even predicted that they will disappear from the language entirely. One of the hypotheses put forward to explain this decline is the strong influence of English and Afrikaans, two prestige languages which do not have ideophones. It is well-known that ideophones can be altered or borrowed in contact situations (e.g. Andrason, 2017), but can contact with a non-ideophone prestige language directly cause a decrease in ideophone use? The disappearance of a word class from a language is an as-yet undocumented phenomenon which has significant repercussions for theories of language contact and change. That this change is affecting the word class of ideophones in particular may be no coincidence, however, and is likely rooted in their sociolinguistic history.

Ideophones are 'marked words that depict sensory imagery' (Dingemanse, 2011a: 25). One of the most conspicuous characteristics of ideophones is their onomatopoeic nature which, before Dingemanse's (2011a) definition, tended to be the main criterion according to which they were defined as a word class (e.g. Doke, 1935; Nuckolls, 1999). Because they were assumed to trace a direct link between a sound and the meaning it conveyed, some scholars historically associated them with 'primitivity' (e.g. Lévy-Bruhl, 1910), with several researchers relegating them to the realm of the extra-linguistic.

In short, they were considered to be something outside the scope of 'real language'. Ideophones tended to be excluded from dictionaries or studies on morphosyntax or phonology (e.g. Colense, 1861). They were studied not as a part of the linguistic system but as a 'peculiarity', or a window into the role of onomatopoeia in language (Westermann, 1927). Many studies still exhibit this pattern in which they focus either on the language's grammar, or on its ideophones, rather than adopting an integrated approach which considers the way in which ideophones interact with the grammatical properties of the language (Ameka, 2001).

The assumed primitivity of ideophones went hand in hand with similar associations for African languages in general: that they were more 'primitive' due to their use of ideophony and 'mimicry', and therefore less 'language-like' than European languages (e.g. Pound, 1934). The absence of ideophones in European languages would only have served to strengthen this account. Today, we know that ideophones are not synonymous with onomatopoeia; rather, they are conventionalised words which exhibit varying degrees of sound symbolism (Nuckolls, 1999). These associations with the 'primitive' as opposed to the 'modern' reflects a key dichotomy in South African society, and speakers may be (consciously or otherwise) reluctant to align themselves with the former (Brookes, 2005). This is the sentiment Childs (1996) documents in his study, in which Zulu speakers eschew the use of ideophones because of their strong associations with a rural – rather than modern – identity.

However, when Childs (1996) investigated the use of ideophones by Zulu speakers, it was at the tail-end of the apartheid period. This may explain some of the negative attitudes he found towards ideophones as a symbol of rural Zulu identity; until very recently, none of the Bantu languages held political or economic power, and they were routinely stigmatised against. Thus, it is necessary to look at ideophone knowledge and use again in light of the socio-political

developments since then which should have led, at least in theory, to an empowerment of the African languages in South Africa.

Despite this, the influence of English has not decreased in later years. Even though South Africa has twelve official languages which the constitution places on equal footing, it is English which effectively holds the key to political and economic power in the country (Kamwangamalu, 1998). With that in mind, it is unclear what to expect: whether the results will build upon Childs's (1996) prediction that ideophones will disappear as a word class from the Zulu language, or whether recent political developments have led to a revival of ideophone use and pride in the identity they convey.

This will be investigated through the use of interviews, participant observation, and a game-like task involving the description of motion. The framework of analysis will rely primarily on sociolinguistic theory, and will take into account some of the historical developments in South Africa which have shaped current language attitudes.

Lastly, this thesis touches upon some ideas for further research in the field. If ideophones in Zulu are decreasing due to language contact, what other expressive devices have emerged to take their place, and are these related to the multilingualism of the South African context? This is an open question to which I pose a tentative hypothesis along with a framework for the future analysis of expressive language. Above all, I hope to emphasise the importance of considering social factors in the study of expressive language.

1. Ideophones

Ideophones are notoriously difficult to define. Early research tended to focus on their use of onomatopoeia, and would either dismiss it as 'extra-linguistic' or herald onomatopoeia as the new cornerstone of language. They have been variously defined according to their semantic content; their deviation from the morphosyntactic and phonological behaviour of other word classes in the language; their iconicity, or sound symbolism; and their role in social interaction (e.g. Doke, 1935; Kunene, 2001; Nuckolls, 1999; Childs, 2001). The following sections will cover the various theoretical lenses through which ideophones have been viewed.

A salient element of the discussion around ideophones is the recognition of their structural deviance from the general phonological or morphosyntactic properties of the language in which they are found (e.g. Kunene, 2001). Dingemanse (2011a: 25) incorporated this idea into his definition of ideophones as 'marked words that depict sensory imagery', *marked* referring to the fact that 'they stand out from other words.' The interplay between markedness and the expressive function of the ideophone will be discussed in Section 1.1.

Another common thread which runs throughout the various definitions of ideophones is the idea that they are 'vivid' and 'onomatopoeic' (Doke, 1935: 118). In his famous pivotal definition of ideophones, Doke (1935) pinpointed one of the most elusive characteristics of ideophones, namely their *iconicity*, which he referred to as onomatopoeia. Iconicity refers to the property of a linguistic sign which has a high degree of transparency in its mapping between form and meaning; for instance, if the word for 'walk' in some way sounded like the patter of feet on the ground, it could be said to be iconic. Section 1.2 will examine existing research on iconicity in ideophones, and to what extent they can be considered iconic.

Section 1.3 will consider a social perspective on ideophones in general and then in relation to Zulu specifically, describing how social forces might shape the ways in which ideophones are used and perceived among urban Zulu speakers.

1.1 Why are ideophones considered expressive?

Ideophones make up a part of the conventionalised lexicon of a language; they are *words*, not just 'ad hoc' combinations of iconic sounds (Dingemanse, 2012). Such 'ad hoc' combinations can be referred to, instead, as *onomatopoeia*. The literature widely recognises that ideophones are highly expressive, and are often used for dramatic effect in narratives as well as everyday language (Dingemanse, 2011b). However, the notion of *expressiveness* must first be defined in order to pinpoint what particular characteristics of ideophones lend them their expressiveness.

Samarin (1970: 153) describes expressive language as 'the manipulation of verbal material to convey information about one's emotional state.' He recognises that, in order for language to be expressive, it must be 'manipulated' in some way, presumably so that it falls outside its regular form and function. As an example, Samarin (1970) mentions the use of the English word *pig* not to describe an animal, but a person. In this example, the word *pig* is taken out of its regular context of use and applied to a different one. It is this unexpectedness and creative use, or 'manipulation', of semantic domains which render words in new contexts more

expressive. Eventually, such words can become so commonplace in their emphatic usage, such as calling someone a 'pig' as an insult, that they cannot be considered 'unexpected' anymore in that context. Samarin (1970) does not offer a theory on whether such forms retain their expressiveness despite losing some of their unexpectedness in the 'new' context. My hypothesis is that such forms do become less expressive over time as they are solidified in their contexts of use, such that eventually they must be replaced by new, highly expressive forms, which Deutscher (2005) describes as one of the central driving forces of language change.

Expressive language, then, seems to involve creative use of the linguistic material already available to the speaker. Thus, one of the characteristics of expressive language (although undoubtedly not the only one) seems to be *newness*. Combining words and phonemes in new and unexpected contexts renders an utterance more expressive. Thus, the quality of ideophones as words which 'stand out' from other words must be a factor in their expressive function.

One of the things which makes them stand out is their 'aberrant phonology' (Kruspe, 2004: 102): ideophones do not necessarily conform to the phonological rules of the language in which they are found. Thus, you might encounter a phoneme in an ideophone which is not a regular part of the language's phoneme inventory. Often, they also show unusual prosodic and tonal patterns (Samarin, 1970).

Ideophones are also known for their morphosyntactic non-conformity (Dingemanse & Akita, 2017). However, the idea of ideophones as 'extra-systematic' has also been contested (e.g. Newman, 2001), with the main argument that ideophones vary in whether and how much they deviate from either the phonology or syntax of the language. Dingemanse & Akita (2017) find a way to unify these ideas by proposing that the more expressive an ideophone is in a given context, the less morphosyntactically integrated it will be, and vice versa. This holds for their phonological and prosodic traits as well: 'more expressive' ideophones are more likely to be reduplicated multiple times, show unusual stress patterns, and have lengthened vowels. Thus, part of what lends ideophones their expressiveness is their 'extra-systematicity' or markedness, which can be more or less pronounced.

1.2 Iconicity in ideophones

Another thing which makes ideophones expressive is their *iconicity*. Iconicity of a linguistic symbol is usually defined as a resemblance between the symbol and the thing it represents (Streeck, 2008). This is relatively straightforward when an ideophone is sound symbolic or ontomatopoeic in nature. Take the Zulu ideophone, *pho* ('of dripping') below:

(1) *Ngalesi sikhati zase zehla izinyembezi ku-Alice zithi* ***pho pho pho****, engazi kodwa ukuthi ukhalelani.*
'At the time the tears came down Alice's face – drip drip drip – while she did not know why she was crying.' (de Schryver, :41)

What this example alongside its English translation reveals is that the two languages represent the sound of tears falling in very different ways. Across languages, sound symbolic words are susceptible to cross-linguistic variation, such as the sound a particular animal makes: the English rooster goes *cock-a-doodle-do*, while the Danish one says *kykkeliky*. Thus, even

onomatopoeia is shaped by convention, such as the phonotactics of the language in question (Dingemanse, 2011). However, both representations display some degree of iconicity.

A striking feature of the comparisons above – both *pho* to *drip* and *cock-a-doodle-do* to *kykkeliky* – is that the main similarities between these representations come not from their segmental features, but their syllabic structures. Both English and Zulu recognise the sound of a single tear or drop of liquid hitting a surface as a 'monosyllabic' event, while the rooster's crow is recognised as a multi-syllabic event.

The iconicity of ideophones has historically fascinated scholars in the field (e.g. Ohala, 1994). The existence of such a thing as an 'ideophone' – an onomatopoeic word whose meaning comes from an intrinsic relationship between its sound and its meaning – subverts the famous assumption that arbitrariness is one of the main 'design features' of language (Hockett, 1960; Perniss et al., 2010). However, as Dingemanse et al. (2016: 117) state, 'there appears to be a tendency to either underplay or exaggerate the significance of iconicity in the study of language and the mind.' Some scholars argue that the role of iconicity is negligible, if it exists at all (e.g. Newman, 2001), while others try to make broad claims about the iconic form-meaning mappings of particular phonemes, which fall flat upon closer examination.

The iconicity of ideophones depends not only on the phonemes they contain, such as back vowels for largeness and high front vowels for smallness (Ohala, 1994). Like the examples above in which the main commonality between the sound symbolic representations lies in their syllable structure, Dingemanse et al. (2016) found that prosodic information was equally important to participants' ability to guess the meaning of unknown ideophones as segmental information. Although it may seem obvious, the meanings of ideophones were also recognised at a higher rate when they related to sound rather than other semantic domains such as colour or shape (Dingemanse et al., 2016).

How, then, do ideophones manage to iconically represent something across modalities? In this case, they cannot function by way of resemblance or imitation. Dingemanse (2011) overcomes this by arguing that rather than imitation, they function by *depiction*. Depiction is about the *way* something is represented, rather than the resemblance between a sound and the thing it describes (Clark & Gerris, 1990). Dingemanse (2012) draws a parallel to visual arts: although a painting typically bears some resemblance to the thing it depicts, it does so in different ways and to different degrees. Similarly, he argues, ideophones 'depict' a sensory experience or image using sound. This may account for the perceived similarity between the ideophone and its meaning.

Moreover, this depictive mode of representation may also relate to the markedness of ideophones. While the majority of linguistic symbols are arbitrary and descriptive rather than depictive, ideophones are 'an invitation to map sound onto sense', and therefore they are marked as apart from other words (Dingemanse, 2012: 658). I would add to this the interactions between expressiveness and markedness mentioned above: the depictive nature of ideophones contributes to their markedness which, in turn, lends them their expressiveness. Markedness also lends ideophones their performative and narrative foregrounding (Nuckolls, 1996).

In many ways, ideophones as an expressive device are comparable to gestures. They function in two different modalities, but both of them use depiction as their strategy for conveying meaning (Streeck, 2008). Iconic gestures are also, in a sense, 'partial

representations' of something in the real world. The formation of iconic gestures will be discussed in more detail in Section 2.

1.3 A social perspective on ideophones

According to Childs (2001: 70), ideophones are 'quintessentially social'. If this is true, the study of ideophones should be done with a full understanding of the social contexts in which they occur. In his sociolinguistic study of ideophones among Zulu speakers in South Africa, Childs (1996) found that ideophone knowledge and use had decreased significantly among them. Surprisingly, however, this decrease was not only affecting the speech of young, urban speakers; it was also affecting speakers from rural areas of the country, although to a slightly lesser extent. This is surprising because, across languages, ideophones are considered to be a mark of high proficiency in the language in which they occur (Dingemanse, 2011). They are also a display of linguistic agility: the creative use of ideophones is associated with speakers who are highly skilled at telling stories (Innes, 1964).

In the case of Zulu, this association with linguistic proficiency and skilfulness is deeply intertwined with their social function as markers of 'local identity' (Childs, 2001: 70): the ideophone, in marking proficiency in the speaker's language, is also, in a sense, restricted to those speakers who are most proficient in it – or those who are perceived to be most proficient.

In the context of Zulu, this means that the ideophone signifies belonging to the kind of community in which the most proficient Zulu speakers are found. Since the Zulu spoken in urban areas tends to be heavily influenced by contact with English, Afrikaans and other Bantu languages (e.g. Mesthrie, 2002), these communities are most often villages in rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). This is where you will find 'deep Zulu', the common name for the kind of highly proficient Zulu which is less prone to English influence. Based on this, Childs (2001: 66) writes,

> 'Ideophones mark one as being rural, non-urban, something of a country hick. Young Zulu speakers want no part of that identity and strictly eschew the use of such words.'

The main two reasons for this, according to Childs (2001: 67), is urbanisation and the normative influence of at least one language without ideophones. In this case, they are English and Afrikaans, although English is much more positively perceived among young people today and generally exerts a bigger influence on South African society at large. Thus, Child's (1996) hypothesis is that somehow, the influence of a European non-ideophone prestige language has led Zulu speakers to eschew the use of an entire word class in the language, due to its associations with a 'rural identity'. However, one might be tempted to ask what it is about the associations with the rural that modern speakers seek to avoid. I will delve into more detail on this topic in Section 4 on the recent history of South Africa.

Childs (1996: 99) concluded that his results could be indicative of 'an early demise of ideophones as a viable word class in Zulu.' However, since the study and the publication of its results, there have been major changes to the sociolinguistic landscape of South Africa. Nowadays, Zulu-speaking media, including television and newspapers, is widely available (Buell, 2005), and the empowerment of the Bantu languages is typically high on the

government's agenda, at least in theory. Despite this, proficiency in English is still essential in order to gain access to prestige domains such as education and politics (Ndimande-Hlongwa & Ndebele, 2014).

Given that the sociolinguistic situation has changed so drastically since Childs's (1996) study, it is possible that associations with a more rural or 'authentic' Zulu identity would be more positively perceived among young people today. Childs (2001: 68) himself expresses this in a later summary of his research, noting that 'perhaps with the change in power in South Africa ideophones will once again flourish in Zulu'. Alternatively, the decline of ideophone use could continue along Childs's (1996) predicted trajectory, which could be due to the still-pervasive influence and necessity of English. Thus, a part of this study will involve asking Zulu speakers about their attitudes towards ideophones and those who use them, in order to gain an under-standing of whether the changing social landscape of South Africa has had an effect on the language attitudes of urban speakers.

2. Gestures

Broadly speaking, a gesture is a movement of the hand, arm or head which usually accompanies speech. Gestures have historically been classified according to the semantic information they convey, or their use in the context of discourse (Kendon, 2004). There are gestures which serve a purely pragmatic function, which McNeill (1992) classifies as 'beat' gestures; that is, they serve only to punctuate the discourse, much like a comma punctuates a sentence. Other gestures seek to convey specific meanings through the visual representation of certain objects, events or even concepts. The latter kind of gestures will be the focus of the present section.

2.1 Defining iconic gestures

An iconic gesture resembles the thing it describes (Nyst, 2016). However, it is not obvious how human hands can actually 'resemble' highly diverse objects or events (Streeck, 2008). What does it mean for the shape or motion of a hand to 'look like' a bird, a tree, or a person walking in a particular way? How is it possible for our hands to iconically represent such different phenomena? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to break iconic gestures down into their component parts.

> 'Whether someone can recognize a cluster of paint particles (or, one might add, a sequence of motions of a limb) as a likeness of an object or a scene depends upon whether or not the methods by which these are made are part of the beholder's culture-bound repertoire.' (Streeck, 2008: 287)

Here, Streeck (2008) mentions a number of relevant elements for gesture analysis. The first is the idea of recognition. The person who receives the gestural depiction must be able to recognise that depiction as a representation of a real-world referent. The use of the word 'recognition' must be significant here: it implies that the receiver is already familiar with that referent, or with gestural depiction, to the extent that they will interpret the gesture in the intended way. Secondly, he mentions the function of the gesture as a 'likeness' to something else, which relates to the broader question of iconicity.

Third, he refers to the *methods* by which gestures are made, thus recognising that a single thing or event can be visually represented in multiple ways, and that these ways are systematic enough to be considered a part of a 'culture-bound repetoire'. That is, the ways in which we create gestures are not only influenced by the need to create the most striking resemblance to the thing we are trying to depict; they are shaped by our cultural surroundings (e.g. Efron, 1942, 1971; Kita, 2009) and may even be susceptible to cross-linguistic transfer (Pika et al., 2006).

2.2 The link between gestures and ideophones

In many ways, gestures have suffered the same fate at the hands of scholars as ideophones: they have been considered relatively unimportant compared to the more 'sophisticated' system of speech. Moreover, gestures are still commonly considered extra-linguistic, despite evidence

for the unitary nature of the speech-gesture system in the mind (McNeill, 1992; Brookes, 2005). Gestures and ideophones are both, to some extent, iconic, and they function as 'partial representations' of the things they depict. Aside from this, they both lie somewhere within the realm of 'expressive language', and their expressiveness varies according to their level of markedness and discourse foregrounding. Gestures are considered more expressive if they are located close to the face or make a more expansive use of the gesture space (Kita, 2009).

The link between gestures and ideophones has long been recognised intuitively by researchers in the field. Broad claims such as, 'Ideophones are often accompanied by gestures of mimicry' (Kunene, 1965: 21) or '[ideophones] are tightly coupled with iconic gestures' (Kita, 1997: 392) are relatively common in the literature; however, Dingemanse (2011) was one of the first to quantify this relation using video recorded data.

In Dingemanse's (2011: 348) data, most of the ideophones occurred without a gesture, which indicates that the relationship ideophones and gestures may have been overstated. Of those ideophones that did occur with a gesture, the overwhelming majority of these were iconic or 'depictive' gestures. As such, it is possible that ideophones do not occur more frequently with gestures than any other word class, but that they have a tendency to co-occur specifically with iconic gestures. As such, it provides some validation of Kita's (1997) claim. The implications of this relationship for ideophones and gestures in language contact will be discussed in Section 7.

3. A descriptive overview of Zulu

Zulu (or isiZulu[1]) is a Bantu language of the Nguni cluster spoken mainly in South Africa, but speakers are also found in neighbouring countries Zimbabwe, Lesotho, and Swaziland. There are around 11 and a half million native speakers, the vast majority of which are in South Africa, and around 15 million L2 speakers (Ethnologue). In South Africa, the main Zulu-speaking province is the south-eastern KZN, but there is also a large number of speakers in the province of Gauteng, where Johannesburg is located. It has a high level of mutual intelligibility with the other three languages in the Nguni cluster: Swati, Xhosa, and Ndebele.

Zulu has a noun class system, which is typical of the Bantu languages, with 15 noun classes (Buell, 2005). The other elements in a clause, such as verbs and adjectives, show agreement with the relevant noun class. The basic word order of Zulu is SVO, and it is classified as agglutinative due to its complex morphology (Spiegler, van der Spuy & Flach, 2010).

Zulu also has lexical and grammatical tone. Tones interact in complex ways with each other and with segmental phonemes, which makes it notoriously difficult for second-language learners to pick up on the underlying tones of a phrase (Buell, 2005). Moreover, tone is not represented in standard Zulu orthography, adding to this opacity.

For prosody, stress always falls on the penultimate syllable (Buell, 2005). However, ideophones form an exception to this rule (Msimang & Poulos, 2001). This will be discussed in more detail in Section 3.2.

Even though Zulu is comparable in size to some Western languages (and even has more speakers than some languages in Europe), it lacks written resources compared to these. There are two main reasons for this. The first is that the written history of the language is relatively short, as it has historically had a strong oral tradition. The other lies in the history of apartheid, during which the majority of resources were allocated to Afrikaans and English rather than any of the Bantu languages (Spiegler, van der Spuy & Flach, 2010). Since apartheid's end in 1994, it has been one of the country's eleven official languages, with several television programmes, radio publications and some books and literature, although these are limited (Buell, 2005).

3.1 Verbs and glossing

Zulu is an agglutinative language with a highly complex verbal morphology. However, in the present thesis, the examples will be of a limited complexity, and are restricted to the present tense. This section briefly goes through the basics of the Zulu verb and the glossing conventions followed in later sections, which are based on Buell (2005).

The Zulu present verb has two possible forms: a long and a short form. The long form is used when no element directly follows the verb and includes *-ya-*, while the short form is used when an element follows the verb. As in Buell (2005), *-ya-* will simply be glossed as *ya-*. For example:

[1] The form 'isiZulu' is the stem 'Zulu' with a noun class prefix and determiner attached, *isi-*. Although this is the endonymic variant of the name, I will refer to the Bantu languages by their bare stem form alone (e.g. Zulu, Xhosa, as opposed to isiZulu, isiXhosa), as lexical borrowings from these into English routinely drop the noun class prefix, while borrowings into the Nguni languages add the noun class prefix even to non-Nguni languages, such as *isiNgisi* for 'English', reflecting their grammatical function which is highly specific to the Bantu languages.

(2) Ngi- ya- khulum- a
1SG- *ya*- speak FV
'I am speaking'

(3) Ngi-khulum-a isi-Zulu
1SG-speak- FV 7- Zulu
'I speak Zulu'

The final -a of the verb is glossed as FV for 'final vowel', another convention adopted from Buell (2005). Every Zulu verb must obligatorily end in a final vowel; however, since it is never stressed, it sometimes undergoes phonological reduction. Thus, when a verb is pronounced without a final vowel (as is often the case for reduplicated stems), this is indicated in the glossing.

3.2 Notes on the orthography

Perhaps the most striking (and easily the most famous) part of the Zulu phonology is its 'clicks'. Throughout this thesis, it will become necessary to refer to these click consonants. I will represent them as they are typically written in the orthography, but for those who do not know the relevant conventions, the following table translates the orthographical Zulu signs into the international phonetic alphabet (IPA) and describes their place of articulation.

Herbert (1990a) argues that phonemes can be placed on a continuum of markedness, along which click consonants make up a particularly marked category of sounds. Thus, they are inherently more marked than other consonant phonemes in Zulu. It is probably no coincidence that ideophones, as a marked word class, contain a particularly high percentage of click consonants when compared to other word classes (Andrason, 2017, for Xhosa). Moreover, these consonants are notoriously difficult for L2 learners of the language to reproduce.

Letter	**IPA symbol**	**Place of articulation**
q	[ǃ]	alveolar-palatal
x	[ǁ]	lateral
c	[ǀ]	dental

Zulu also has breathy consonants, which are indicated orthographically by *h* as in the aspirated stops *ph, kh* and *th*. *Bh* indicates a breathy *b*, and so on. Tone is not represented in the standard Zulu orthography, and the same convention will be followed here.

3.3 Ideophones in Zulu

Ideophones in general have been classified as morphosyntactically and phonologically aberrant, and Zulu is no exception. Within this word class, there are sounds which do not occur otherwise in Zulu phonology (Childs, 1996). An example of this is given below, in which /r/ is an aberrant phoneme since it is not part of the regular phoneme inventory of Zulu:

(4) *Inyoni indize yathi **trr**.*
'The bird flew away.'
(Msimang & Poulos, 2001: 246)

Of course, it is also possible to argue that /r/ is in fact a Zulu phoneme which just happens to occur only in ideophones. However, given that ideophones have the cross-linguistically attested tendency not to comply entirely with the phonological rules of a given language, this would seem an unlikely analysis. Moreover, ideophones are also known to deviate from the general syllable structure and prosodic patterns of a language; in Zulu, the ideophone is characterised by the placement of stress and vowel length at unusual points in the word (Msimang & Poulos, 2001). It is typically the vowel of the penultimate syllable which is lengthened and stressed. Not so in the case of ideophones, however, as the following examples from Msimang & Poulos (2001: 245) illustrate:

(5) *hu::buluzi:* 'of gulping down'
ge::ngelezi: 'of gaping/wide open'

In these examples, the first syllable is lengthened by two morae [:] and the last by one, a highly unusual syllable structure for a Zulu word. Moreover, it is possible to change vowel length and prosodic patterns for expressive effect. As Msimang & Poulos (2001: 245) write, 'in [*ge::ngelezi:*] the vowel length on the first syllable will be determined by just how wide open the door was.' Similarly, vowels in ideophones can be shortened to indicate that something happened abruptly, quickly or quietly:

(6) *Akathanga **vu** uDora.*
'Dora did not say a word.'
(Msimang & Poulos, 2001: 245)

In other words, vowel length is determined by the speaker's creativity. However, the level of phonological 'playfulness' attached to the ideophones also depends on the context. Some ideophones undergo 'category switching', in which affixes are attached to the ideophone to make it 'more grammatical in function', perhaps reflecting an early stage of grammaticalisation (Msimang & Poulos, 2001: 239). For example, in Venda, a related Bantu language spoken in South Africa, there are cases in which an ideophone occurs without a verb root, and thus functions as the verb root itself.

In Zulu, the ideophone is typically not derived from any other word category, with some small but significant exceptions, in which an ideophone is derived from a verb root (Msimang & Poulos, 2001). The lack of derivation might be partly due to the productive, creative nature of ideophone-formation. However, it is common to see other word categories which are derived from ideophones, such as verbs (Nkabinde, 1986). As such, it is likely that there are still a number of ideophone-derived nouns, verbs and adverbials in the Zulu language, even if ideophones themselves are going out of fashion (Childs, 1996).

In terms of meaning, Nkabinde (1986: 105) writes that the ideophone 'reinforces' the meaning conveyed by the predicate, and 'illuminates the predicate in a forceful and picturesque manner.' As such, some ideophones do not carry a specific meaning themselves, but rather function together with the predicate, which lends them their meaning. This is a significant methodological point to which I will return in section 6.

Another important point to note is that there is a general lack of standardisation and agreement on ideophone meanings in academic sources. For example, Msimang & Poulos (2001: 246) list the ideophone *bhalakaxa* as 'of being sprawled out', while Nkabinde (1986: 106) lists the same ideophone as 'of falling in mud'. It is possible that these are two distinct ideophones, for example differing in tone, which is not represented in the paper by Msimang & Poulos (2001). It is also possible that this kind of variation reflects the reality that ideophone meanings are generally not very standardised among Zulu speakers, especially of different regions or speech communities.

3.4 The contact history of Bantu ideophones

Understanding the phonological non-compliance of ideophones requires a social as well as linguistic analysis. The sound /r/ may have been selected for the ideophone *trrr* simply because it best represents the sound of birds flapping their wings in flight, or of bees buzzing. This explanation relies mainly on iconicity, assuming that a language will select whichever sounds best represent a certain concept or event, even if the language does not normally 'allow' that sound. However, there are plenty of ideophones which are not particularly iconic or sound symbolic; thus, this explanation does not seem entirely satisfying.

Another possible explanation is that ideophones use aberrant sounds *because* they are aberrant. Using a sound which normally does not occur in the language immediately draws the listener's attention to the ideophone. That is, the more marked the sound is in the language, the more expressive it will be. This correlates negatively with grammaticalisation: when an ideophone undergoes grammaticalisation to become, for instance, a verb, its phonology is adapted to that of the language. Its markedness decreases, and so does its expressivity. Another possible route to decreasing markedness, however, involves keeping the ideophone's aberrant sound and incorporating it into the language itself.

This may have been the route by which the click consonants entered Zulu and Xhosa in the first place (Andrason, 2017). The clicks were first attested in the language grouping known as 'Khoesan languages', which is a vague term, since it groups together at least two distinct language families: the Khoi and the San (Vossen, 2013). The San were traditionally hunter-gatherers in southern Africa, while the Khoe were farmers, sustaining themselves by keeping various livestock. Although these languages are still spoken by small communities in Botswana and Namibia, they are now extinct in South Africa.

It is well-known that it was the close contact between Bantu speakers and speakers of Khoe and San languages which led to the clicks being introduced to Zulu and Xhosa (Louw, 2013). Recent theories propose that this happened via the borrowing of ideophones specifically (Andrason, 2017). Ideophones are a particularly suitable pathway for the borrowing of new sounds, because they usually constitute an open and productive word class in the languages in

which they are found (Childs, 1994). Thus, the inventory of ideophones in a language can be continuously expanded (Dingemanse, 2014).

Although the markedness of specific sounds depends heavily on the phonological system of the 'host language' in which ideophones occur, the click consonants are attested as being particularly marked cross-linguistically (Herbert, 1990b). Thus, is likely that ideophones were used for their expressive effect, which came from their markedness in the Bantu languages or their 'exotic' nature (Andrason, 2017). Even now, clicks are used with overwhelming frequency in Xhosa ideophones as compared to the general vocabulary of the language: 15% of the general vocabulary contains click consonants, while 30% of ideophones do (Herbert, 1990a; Andrason, 2017).

Andrason (2017: 147) pinpoints 'the tolerance of ideophones for exotic sounds' as a main factor which may have allowed the transfer of Khoekhoe ideophones to Xhosa without altering the clicks. This may have been compounded by the effectiveness of clicks as an expressive linguistic feature. Once the clicks had been adopted into the language via ideophones, they could have spread to other parts of the Xhosa vocabulary. In this way, the borrowing of ideophones might constitute a particularly effective way to transfer new phonemes from one language to another.

4. A sociolinguistic overview of South Africa

South Africa has eleven official languages: Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele, SiSwati, Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho, Tsonga, Venda, English and Afrikaans. All of these, apart from English and Afrikaans, belong to the family of Bantu (Niger-Congo) languages. However, they are often divided into the following clusters based on linguistic similarity (Mesthrie, 2002):

- The Nguni cluster (Zulu, Xhosa, SiSwati, and Ndebele);
- The Sotho cluster (Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho, and Tswana);
- Tsonga;
- and Venda.

The unofficial languages spoken in South Africa include South African Sign Language (although there are ongoing campaigns for it to be included as the twelfth official language, led by individuals and organisations such as DeafSA), other Bantu languages spoken by people from close countries such as Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi, and Indo-European languages of the Germanic, Indic and Romance branches (including, for example, German, Hindi, and Portuguese). Historically, Khoesan languages were also spoken in the Cape, but these are now extinct or very close to extinction in South Africa (Vossen, 2013).

Thus, throughout the present thesis, when the Bantu languages of South Africa are mentioned, this includes all the languages listed in the clusters above. Occasionally in the literature, the term 'African languages' is used synonymously; however, for the sake of precision, 'Bantu' is the term used throughout this thesis. It will also be necessary to refer to specific languages, chiefly Zulu and Xhosa.

4.1 The role of English in South Africa

In a South African township, there is rarely a straightforward answer to the question, 'What is your native language?' Many people grow up with home languages which are distinct to the languages learned in school and used among their peers, and often, they are simultaneous or early bilinguals. However, English is a common thread among the list of languages in which most South Africans, especially in the cities, are fluent. Although there tend to be more emotional and familial attachments to their 'home languages', as English L1 speakers make up only a small percentage of the population (Mesthrie, 2002), many South Africans choose to communicate in English as a 'bridge' between languages, even closely related ones with a relatively high level of mutual intelligibility (such as Zulu and Xhosa). As Branford (1996: 37) writes, in a statement that is still highly relevant,

> 'The residual dominance of English depends today less on South African speakers of English as LI than on its widespread currency as L2, notably among the present political elite.'

Branford's (1996) use of the word 'currency' is a succinct nod to the role of English as a language of economic advancement. Although in theory English should hold no more power than any of South Africa's other eleven official languages, the reality looks very different. Yet

English is still largely perceived in a positive way among the majority of South Africans, with the use of English signifying modernity. This stands in stark contrast to the overwhelmingly negative connotations to Afrikaans as a language of historical oppression. Both languages have been used as an oppressive force by colonial powers, but the difference in attitudes can be explained with reference to a brief history of English in South Africa.

Dutch (now Afrikaans) and English were the main colonial languages of South Africa, and generally, these are both associated with wealth. However, for a long time these languages have been divided unequally between urban and rural areas. Historically, English was primarily spoken in the cities, excepting a couple of Afrikaans-majority towns, while Afrikaans was more concentrated in rural areas (Lanham, 1996). This urban/rural divide has persisted into the way people view English and Afrikaans today.

However, the main reason for the positive connotations of English as compared to Afrikaans lies in the education policies of the apartheid government. When the Afrikaner apartheid government came into power, largely thanks to its numerous rural voters, it was determined to uplift Afrikaans while limiting the use of English. This culminated in the 1953 Bantu Education Act, which demanded a decrease in the use of English along with an increase in the use of Afrikaans – a language which many black South Africans did not know, and which thus made the contents of the classroom inaccessible to them. English, as the main alternative, became the language of resistance to this policy. Thus, English went from a language of oppression to a language of 'advancement, education, access, democracy, and of Black unity and liberation' (Kamwangamalu, 1998: 283).

Today, English remains highly influential as the language of politics, higher education and other prestige domains. Moreover, it has had an intense impact on the African languages in South Africa, for example resulting in prolific lexical borrowing into Zulu (Ndimande-Hlongwa & Ndebele, 2014). Although the country has eleven official languages, of which English is just one, the reality of the linguistic situation in South Africa is one of diglossia, with English as the 'High language' and the others as 'Low languages', including Afrikaans (Kamwangamalu, 1998).

However, the term 'diglossia' might be too simplistic for the South African context considering that there are also power dynamics which play out between the various 'Low languages'. There are differences between them in terms of the availability of mother-tongue education, written resources, and media such as television and newspapers. Zulu in particular has a large media presence compared to the other Bantu languages, but there is still a lack of educational resources in it (Buell, 2005). However, Zulu is relatively privileged compared to languages with a smaller number of speakers, such as Tsonga (Herbert, 2002b). Because Tsonga speakers are mainly located in predominantly Zulu-speaking areas, they often need to learn Zulu in order to get by. This illustrates why the dichotomy between English as the 'High language' and all the others as 'Low languages' might be an overly simplistic representation of South Africa's diglossia.

It is unarguable, however, that English holds a special place in prestige domains. Despite the constitution's seemingly progressive mother-tongue education policy, the majority of South African parents want their children educated in an English-medium school (census data) because it is perceived to be the language of social mobility. Kamwangamalu (1998:) describes how English is perceived by many as an 'open sesame' which opens up highly desirable and

necessary possibilities such as prestigious education and economic advancement. Since a huge number of South Africans, the majority of whom are black, are still living in poverty (census), the pull of English as a potential key to wealth is a powerful one, and one which leads many to choose English as the medium of education for their children over their native languages.

Because the sociolinguistic complexity of South Africa goes far beyond two languages, and because of the relatively small number of L1 English speakers, Kamwangamalu (1998) expanded on Grosjean's (1982) dichotomy between languages in diglossic societies as either a 'we-code' or a 'they-code' by adding a much-needed third category for the South African context, which he terms the 'code-in-between'. For a select few native English speakers, English is a 'we-code'. However, for the majority, English functions as a 'code-in-between' in South Africa: although it is not awarded any special treatment in the post-apartheid constitution and should, in theory, function as an equal alongside the other ten official languages, the reality is that English is a valuable 'currency', to use Branford's (1996) term, which shapes almost every aspect of South African daily life today.

In the following sections, the notion of the 'code-in-between' will be extended to other relevant contexts, as I will argue that South Africa has not one but several 'codes-in-between'.

4.2 Multilingualism and code-switching

The developments in education policy during apartheid outlined above led to a more positive outlook on English among black South Africans, which means that English today holds a certain level of covert 'cool' as well as overt prestige. It is a marker of a certain kind of identity which exemplifies modernity and advancement, also signalling that the person lives or has lived extensively in urban areas. Thus, English exerts a great deal of influence on the other languages in South Africa. It is common for presenters in television and other media to code-switch from any of South Africa's other official languages to English. As Kamwangamalu (1998) states, it is not because Zulu, Afrikaans or Sotho do not have viable alternatives to those English words; rather, it is a matter of identity and domain.

As a result of multilingualism in the townships, contact varieties have sprung up which combine elements of African languages with English and sometimes Afrikaans, such as Isicamtho in Soweto (Brookes, 2004). The linguistic situation in the townships is one in which no single dominant language has emerged, which is why code-switching and contact varieties which incorporate aspects of multiple different languages are so prevalent. The term *code-switching* will be used to describe situations in which two or more languages are used within the same conversation, in line with Myers-Scotton's (1993) definition. This definition is left purposely vague in order to encompass a large set of related phenomena. These include instances where one interlocutor says something in one language and the addressee replies in another, as well as the mixing of languages within a single sentence.

> 'In the absence of a majority language people have had to learn each other's languages in the townships. Within these melting pots no particular language has become dominant. This is one of the unique linguistic aspects of the townships: no single lingua franca serving the entire populace has developed, although one does find in certain townships a regionally predominant language, such as Zulu in Soweto.'

(Slabbert & Finlayson, 2002: 237)

Using Kamwangamalu's (1998) notion of the 'code-in-between', I would argue that South Africa has not one but several 'codes-in-between' which depend on the interlocutors involved. Often, it is English which serves this function. Sometimes, it is a contact variety which serves as a 'code-in-between' for speakers of multiple different languages. At other times, it might be whichever African language is most dominant in the given region, in cases where a dominant local language has emerged. This could be Zulu in Soweto or Durban.

One of the Soweto-born participants in the present study described his own use of Zulu as a 'code-in-between' (translated from the Zulu originally used in the interview):

> 'I'm born and bred in Johannesburg, that's where I grew up, that's where I live. My family is from here, but I'm not actually "officially" Zulu, even though I speak Zulu. But what I actually am in terms of culture, I'm Sotho, but I learned how to speak Zulu in order to communicate with others.'

In the original Zulu, the ending of this short statement was, '*communicate* abantu abantu.' *Abantu* means 'people' and is reduplicated here, I think, in order to emphasise that Zulu would enable him to communicate with *many* people. Also note the use of the English word *communicate* rather than a Zulu synonym such as *xoxa*, which again emphasises the prevalence of code-switching to English as a 'code-in-between'. I do not think it is a coincidence that the participant specifically chose to say the word *communicate* in English. Firstly, code-switching can and often is used either to create a sense of distance, or a sense of closeness or solidarity. The use of the word here seems to create a sense of distance between the speaker and the use of Zulu as a code-in-between.

Aside from contact varieties which are new, distinct languages that usually borrow vocabulary and grammatical structures from several languages to form their own, there is also a dichotomy between 'urban' and 'deep' varieties of African languages, where 'deep' refers to the more 'pure' version of the language in the sense that it is less affected by the influence of English and other languages, and which is usually spoken in rural areas (Slabbert & Finlayson, 2002). The present paper focuses on variation in gestures and ideophone knowledge of 'urban Zulu' and 'deep Zulu' speakers, rather than speakers of contact languages, although most of the urban Zulu speakers in this study were also fluent in a contact language (usually Isicamtho), and often several other African languages as well, like the speaker above. The following quote from Mesthrie (2002: 12) emphasises the typically multilingual nature of a Soweto upbringing:

> 'My father's home language was Swati, and my mother's home language was Tswana. But I grew up in a Zulu-speaking area; we used mainly Zulu and Swati at home. But from my mother's side I also learned Tswana well. In my high school I came into contact with lots of Sotho and Tswana students, so I can speak these two languages well. And of course I know English and Afrikaans. With my friends I also use Tsotsitaal.'

Within this short segment, then, we can see that the use of different languages, or 'codes', is highly dependent on the social context. In Section 7, there will be a more detailed discussion

of the sociolinguistic aspects which shape the use of code-switching, with reference to previous theoretical and empirical work as well as the data from this study.

5. Methodology

5.1 Hypotheses

Ideophone use in Zulu cannot be disentangled from the social factors which shape the perception of ideophones among its speakers. The decline of ideophone knowledge among younger speakers has been linked to the prevalence of English in the daily lives of Zulu speakers, and the normative influence it exerts on the language (Childs, 1996). On a purely linguistic level, we can see this most clearly in terms of lexical borrowing from English into Zulu (e.g. Ndimande-Hlongwa, 2014). On a sociolinguistic level, English and thereby its linguistic norms is associated with a modern, urban identity which is considered desirable by a lot of speakers. These norms include the common characteristics of expressive language in English, which will be summarised below.

English can be characterised as a relatively low-frequency gesture language, in which 'excessive' gesturing can be viewed as impolite (Scheflen, 1973). There are no ideophones, and the set of onomatopoeic words is relatively small and generally restricted to those which map sound onto sound. Moreover, such words are most likely to be used in informal situations. In other words, the use of iconicity as an expressive device is limited in English, and associated with informality.

My hypothesis is that, if English linguistic norms have affected the ideophone use of South African Zulu speakers, the decline in ideophone knowledge and use observed by Childs (1996) will still hold now. It may also have influenced gesture use; however, this is difficult to evaluate due to the lack of data on gestures in South Africa from the past. For a detailed short paper on the size and shape gestures of South African Zulu speakers, in which these are compared to data on same category of gestures by African and European speakers, see Mertner (forthcoming).

A second hypothesis concerning the data on language attitudes specifically is that Zulu speakers' attitudes towards ideophones are not as negative as Childs (1996; 2001) claims. I would attribute this to the changing social forces in South Africa, which have led to a new prestige for the South African Bantu languages. However, whether positive or negative, self-reported attitudes will not necessarily provide an accurate reflection of speakers' actual linguistic behaviour.

5.2 Research questions

In the very beginning of the study, one of the central research questions was whether a decline in ideophone use would correlate with a similar decline in gestures. This involved looking for a specific type of gesture which has not been documented among European speakers, but has been documented for speakers of West African languages (Nyst, 2016). However, this turned out to be difficult to test in relation to ideophones. Thus, this research question has not been included here, but has been done as a separate study, the results of which can be found in Mertner (forthcoming). Instead, the results, analysis and discussion sections will attempt to answer the following questions in the order that they are posited here:

1. To what extent do Zulu speakers recognise and use ideophones in their daily lives? Will explanations of ideophone meanings include iconic gestures?

2. What are Zulu speakers' attitudes towards ideophones and the people who use them?
3. Aside from ideophones-as-conventionalised-words, do speakers make use of creative sound symbolism or onomatopoeia?
4. In case the hypothesis turns out to be correct and ideophone use is in decline, what other expressive linguistic devices (if any) have emerged to take their place?

5.3 Data collection

The data for the present study was collected using an elicitation task (see 5.1 below) and ethnographic interviews in either Zulu or English, according to the interviewer's changing Zulu proficiency. All of the 12 participants considered here were Zulu speakers between 19 and 33 years of age, residing in Johannesburg, Durban or the rural village of isiThumba. Ten of the interviews were conducted in Zulu or Zulu with English code-switching, which is highly prevalent in urban speech, while the other two were in English. Additionally, key observations were gathered through field notes while spending time with both Zulu and Xhosa speakers in Johannesburg.

For this reason, although only Zulu speakers participated in the semi-structured interviews which were recorded, certain chapters may state 'Zulu and Xhosa speakers' rather than simply Zulu, because I have used examples from Xhosa speakers in the field. Most young Nguni speakers in a major city such as Johannesburg are bilingual, and it is often hard to pin down their proficiency, especially considering that English is the dominant, but not necessarily native, language for many. One consultant, for instance, was a native Xhosa speaker who has been learning and speaking Zulu from a young age, and now uses English more frequently than either of them. Because of this, I did not restrict my participants to L1 Zulu speakers, as long as Zulu was a language they were using on a daily basis. All of them had been exposed to the language from a young age and used it extensively in their social groups.

Considering the multimodal nature of the study, all interviews were filmed to include participants' gesture use. Field notes were also accompanied by a brief, coded description of the kind of gesture, if any, which accompanied the utterance. Reference will be made to participants' gesture use insofar as it relates to the broader question of iconicity. All recordings were made with free informed consent prior to the recording, either written or verbal, as outlined by Bowern (2008), with a detailed debriefing afterwards.

5.3.1 Elicitation task: The description of motion

During a pilot study with a speaker of Ewe, another ideophone language, I was informed that motion could be a particularly productive domain for the elicitation of ideophones. Dingemanse (2011a) also found a wealth of ideophones in the domain of motion, and several are listed for Zulu specifically in Msimang & Poulos (2001). I also chose this domain for practical reasons. Testing participants' perception of taste and texture requires bringing carefully crafted materials which do not have an obvious source, in order to avoid source-based descriptions; for instance, Dingemanse (2011a) used solutions of water and salt or sweeteners and then asked participants to describe the relevant taste, in order to see whether they would use ideophones. Due to the fact that I had to travel around independently with a small amount

of luggage, this would have been impractical. Moreover, motion provided a good domain for eliciting non-onomatopoeic ideophones, as they would not map directly from sound to sound, although they may contain onomatopoeic elements, such as sounds inspired by the pattering of feet walking.

I used four videos from the GRACE database (Aussems, Kwok & Kita, 2017). This database contains a series of videos featuring different participants performing unusual movements while walking. The videos are designed to elicit creative, compositional descriptions and gestures, as they contain highly unusual movements for which there is probably no single word in most languages. As such, they could provide a good tool for studying ideophone use, as participants will be prompted to describe the movements creatively and expressively.

Although the study was done using four videos, only the data from the first two have been used due to the limited availability of a Zulu speaker who could assist me in processing the data. For this reason, too, the data have not been transcribed in full; instead, selected parts have been transcribed in detail (these have been included in Appendix 1), while other parts have had to be transcribed only in broad strokes.

Because of my status as a non-native Zulu speaker, I designed this task in such a way that I was not involved in the task at all aside from doing the recording. Instead, two native Zulu speakers would do the task together. One participant, the 'describer', would sit facing the laptop, while another participant, the 'actor', would stand or sit opposite them, unable to see the screen. I asked the describer to explain the movement to the actor in order for them to copy it, either with a full-body motion or using their hands to represent a whole body, depending on how they felt most comfortable. Although I specified that they should describe it in Zulu, I also told them that this was not strict, so if they would normally use an English word in a particular sentence, they could use it here, too. I decided to do this so they would not prevent themselves from code-switching or feel 'blocked' in case they thought more easily of an English word than the Zulu equivalent. Moreover, code-switching and loanwords make up a significant part of people's regular speech, so I wanted to portray this as accurately as possible, even if the setting was not naturalistic.

This exercise was designed to feel like a game of charades, and the videos I chose were purposely selected because they were humorous and unusual without being exceedingly difficult to copy. I also let the describer know that they were free to use their hands and bodies while explaining the motion. Essentially, they were not 'expressively limited' in any way.

5.3.2 Semi-structured interviews

Childs (2001: 70) holds that work on ideophones 'must be put into the hands of native speakers.' Although I unfortunately cannot embody this role, I focused on making my methodology as inclusive as possible. I made it clear that I, as the researcher, was not looking to test or evaluate the knowledge of the speakers, but rather ask them about their own experiences and uses of ideophones. Even though self-report data can be problematic if it is the only data to rely on, I believe it is essential to take speakers' own perception of their language use into account, since, after all, they have had much more experience with it than a researcher could hope to obtain during a twenty-minute interview.

The interviews were quite freely structured, although the beginning was usually the same. I started by asking participants about a type of word that I had heard about called *izenzukuthi* (the Zulu word for 'ideophone'). However, many participants were not familiar with this word, and in this case, I gave them an example of an ideophone and asked them to if they knew any other 'similar words'. If necessary, I gave them another example and prompted them by mentioning some more semantic domains for which, according to Childs (1996) and Msimang & Poulos (2001), there are ideophones in Zulu.

At the end of the discussion in which they were asked to name the ideophones they knew, I asked them how often they felt they used such words in their daily life. For the ideophones they knew, I asked them if they could define them, thus gathering some folk definitions where possible, loosely inspired by Dingemanse's (2011) methodology. Sometimes, I also asked them if they associated this type of word with specific speakers, although it was difficult not to lead them by asking, for example, if they experienced that people used them more in the countryside than in the city. In the spirit of inclusivity I usually laid out the existing research for them at the end during a detailed debriefing, including the idea that ideophones are more common in 'deep Zulu', in order for them to evaluate this statement with their valuable native speaker's intuition and experience.

5.3.3 Participant observation

Aside from doing formally recorded interviews, some of my data, especially on attitudes, comes from participant observation. Some of my early participants, whose data I am not including, became dear friends of mine and valued informants. One informant in particular had a great deal of useful insights into the use (or lack thereof) of ideophones in an urban setting, some of which have been collected in section 6.x. Moreover, section 6.x is entirely based on data collected from participant observation.

Of course, there are ethical implications associated with participant observation, especially if it involves people with whom the researcher has formed a close relationship over time. However, such a relationship also allows for more open communication, for example about the purpose of my research. I was also able to continually ask for permission to use anecdotes, opinions, or phrases that I had noted down. As a result, the data from participant observation is used will the full consent of everyone involved.

5.4 Participants

Participants were intentionally found outside a university setting, using social networks already available to the interviewer. Usually, these were mutual friends of people I met during my first independent trip to South Africa four months earlier. This minimised the formality of the setting, but also resulted in a sample that was fundamentally based on availability. Moreover, participants who did the motion description task together were always friends who already knew each other well. This was convenient for me as the interviewer, but also allowed for the collection of more naturalistic data, as participants would be less likely to feel as though they had to change their linguistic register for the study. With the participants who did both the

motion description task and an interview, the motion task always preceded the interview so that participants were not primed to use (or avoid) ideophones.

The participants had varied educational backgrounds, but all of them had completed high school. Two of the urban informants had attended university at Bachelor level. Thus, there was a spread of educational backgrounds, but they were not classified because of a couple of informants' discomfort with disclosing this.

Table 1. Participants

Participant	**Gender**	**Age**	**Residence**
A	F	26	Soweto, Johannesburg
B	M	26	Soweto, Johannesburg
C	F	24	Soweto, Johannesburg
D	M	23	Soweto, Johannesburg
E	M	20	Durban, KZN
F	F	21	Durban, KZN
G	M	20	Durban, KZN
H	M	29	isiThumba, KZN
I	F	33	isiThumba, KZN
J	M	32	isiThumba, KZN

6. Results and analysis

The main finding of this study is an absence finding. It was considerably rare that participants could name more than one new ideophone off the top of their head, and a few were not able to remember any. I will not take this to mean that the participants did not *know* any ideophones however.

Section 6.1 will go through the data from the motion description task.

Section 6.2 will list the total number of ideophones in the data, including ones given by the interviewer in order to explain the word category and how they may have been modified by participants. Onomatopoeic words are also mentioned where they occurred. This will be followed by a more detailed description of the interviews, and an analysis of some of the gestures which co-occurred with onomatopoeic words and ideophones.

Section 6.3 will describe the participants' attitudes to ideophones, including informal conversations during participant-observation. The reasons for and implications of these attitudes will be touched upon, and a broader discussion of the issues surrounding language attitudes in a South African context will be given in section 7.

Section 6.4 will deal with a curious finding from participant-observation data, in which onomatopoeic words with unusual phonological traits, including click consonants, were observed in the English speech of Zulu and Xhosa speakers.

6.1 Motion task

Neither the urban nor the rural speakers used any conventionalised ideophones in the motion description task. I say 'conventionalised' because none were found which constitute a widely-known lexical item with a specific meaning, according to my informant. On the other hand, onomatopoeia was used, albeit to a small extent.

One example of onomatopoia was *nyenyenye* (video 1, with Johannesburg-based participants A/B), which served to clarify the kind and speed of gait which the 'actor' needed to carry out. This was determined on the basis of the context and the rising pitch contour:

(7) A: yenz- a!
do.IMP- FV ('do it')
B: nyenyenye [starts to do the motion]
A: yeah

According to a native Zulu speaker informant, this is neither a Zulu word nor an ideophone. Most notably, it does not have vowel lengthening and stress on the penultimate syllable, which is typical of Zulu verbs; and it is articulated with a high tone on all syllables, which is also atypical. I also wish to note the similarity of this utterance to the Zulu verb *-nyonyoba* 'to sneak', which was used by another Johannesburg-based participant to describe the movement in the same video. Thus, this onomatopoeic form may have been loosely based on a verb.

Other onomatopoeic features of words were also found, such as significant vowel lengthening on *uya-xo::* for 'jump'.

In summary, the main finding here is an overall absence of ideophones, tentatively supporting Childs's (1996) predictions that ideophone knowledge and use are in decline among Zulu speakers. As found in Childs (1996), too, no difference emerged between urban and rural speakers. Although only two rural informants did the motion description task together, no ideophones emerged here either. The ecological validity of this task and its findings will be discussed in Section 6.6.2.

Below, I will describe in more detail the use of iconic gestures in the motion description task, which proved to be a rather richer source of data.

6.1.1 Some functions of iconic gestures

Table 2. An overview of iconic gestures

Participants	Residence	Number of iconic gestures (total)
A/B	Soweto	6
C/D	Soweto	8
E/F	Durban	4
I/J	isiThumba	7

No significant difference was found between the areas, but these numbers show that the rate of gesturing was generally fairly high, since this includes the results from only two videos, and each video typically took no more than a minute and a half to describe. The table below lists the same number of gestures by the body part used in their formation.

Table 3. Iconic gestures by articulator (hands, legs, or whole body)

Articulator	**Number of gestures**
Hands	16
Legs	6
Whole body	3

As is common, the hands were the most common articulator, followed by the legs and then the whole body.

In several cases, the iconic gesture representing the motion in the video directly contributed to the meaning of the utterance, rather than functioning on the periphery of speech. This is perhaps unsurprising, as these illustrations were helpful for the 'actor' to better understand the motion. The following short exchange is an example of this, where the iconic gesture almost functions as a stand-alone lexical item not accompanied by any co-occurring speech:

Example 1.

C: u- ya- nyonyob-a, u- ya- nyonyob-a
3SG- *ya*- sneak- FV 3SG- *ya*- sneak- FV
'… he's sneaking, sneaking'

D: u- ya- nyonyob-a? [slow iconic gesture representing 'sneaking' movement]

3SG- *ya*- sneak FV
'He's sneaking?'

C: yeah [inaudible] a ka- nyonyob-i like [slow gesture] but [fast gesture]
yeah NEG- 1.SBJ sneak- NEG like but
'Yeah, he's not sneaking like [slowly] but [fast]'
D: u- ya- hamb -a
3- *ya*- go- FV
'He's walking'

C: a- ka- hamb-i like [fast gesture] like u- ya- tiptoe also like
NEG- 1.SBJ go- NEG like like 3SG- *ya*- tiptoe also like
'He's not walking like but also on tiptoes'

D: uma e- nyonyob- a
when cop- sneak- FV
'while he is sneaking?'

Kunene (1965: 37) observed that 'Ideophones referring to actions or states are often replaced entirely by gestures.' Since there are no ideophones here, it could be said that the gestures in this example have 'taken over' the purpose of the ideophone. Each gesture is introduced by the English loanword *like*, a relativiser like the Zulu verb root *thi* which often precedes ideophones. The fact that the gesture is introduced by a linguistic element places it in the position of a constituent in the clause, where it functions essentially like an adjective or another descriptor would in the same place.

In the example below, the gesture involved the participant raising her elbow, letting her hand 'hang down' from it, and swinging the fingers back and forth like a pendulum, thus representing the movement of the 'skipping' video from Aussems et al. (2017).

Example 2.
F: zama ukuthi, yenz- a, like this
try that do.imp- FV [skipping gesture]
'Try, do it [gesture]'

E (meanwhile): is it faster or slower?
F: eh, slow
E: oh, ganjani?
how (like this)?

In several other cases, the gesture co-occurred with another motion descriptor. This was more common than the 'constituent-like' gestures in example x. The square brackets and low parentheses (when needed) show the time alignment of the gesture with the phrase.

Example 3.
C: a- ka- hamb- i like u- ya- ski:p-a like i- skipping
NEG- 1.SBJ go FV like 3- *ya*- skip- FV CL skip
[___skipping gesture___]
'She's not walking, she's *skipping*'

Co-expression (Brookes, 2005) – relevance: iconic gestures were common along with code-switched phrases in particular. Moreover, there appeared to be no reduction in iconic gestures, or associations of gestures with the 'iconicity-equals-primitivity' school of thought.

6.2 Ideophone knowledge and use

This section provides an overview of the relatively few ideophones which were found in the interviews, and serves as a tentative answer to the first research question of the present study. Like Childs (1996), the main finding here was a general absence of ideophones, but not an absence of onomatopoeia. Some of the potential methodological reasons for this are discussed in Section 6.6, but this overview relates the results as they are.

First, I will list some key observations from the semi-structured interviews. The word class of ideophones was better recognised and conceptualised by the participants when given with a predicate, such as *kukhanya bha* (where *kukhanya* is the main meaning-carrying predicate and *bha* is the ideophone), while ideophones in isolation were relatively unsuccessful at stimulating their knowledge and sometimes resulted in misunderstandings. Group interviews were also far more successful at getting participants to recognise the word class than one-on-one interviews.

Table 1 will present an overview of all the ideophones given in the data, including the few from the motion task. Following this, I will give a narrative-style description of how the participants arrived at these particular ideophones. This description will also include some details about the iconic gestures which co-occurred with the relevant ideophone.

Table 4. Overview of ideophones in the data

Ideophone given by the interviewer	Ideophone given by participants
ncamu-ncamu 'of sweetness'	*ncam-nce* 'of sweetness'
kukhanya ***bha*** 'of extreme brightness'	*khumnyama* ***thu*** 'of extreme darkness'; *umhlope* ***qwa*** 'of extreme whiteness' *umuhle gan****jani*** 'of beauty' (for a person); *shisha* ***phe*** 'of hot weather' *klobhobhobhobho* 'of redness' *imbibibibibi* 'of ugliness'
fa fa fa, fua fua fua 'of raining'	*nc-mc-nc-mc-nc-mc…* 'of raining' *ngca ngca ngca* 'of raining [alternative]' *fa* 'of slapping'
pexepexepexe 'of a fat person walking'	*macaphacapha* 'of walking with flip-flops' (but the participant expressed that it has no conventionalised meaning)
trrrr 'of birds flying'	*vuuuu* 'of bees buzzing'
none	*zzzz* 'of aftershocks'

A few of these contain syllabic consonants apart from /m/, a feature of Zulu ideophones listed by von Staden (1977). These include the one for the sound of rain, and the one which describes the aftershocks of an earthquake with a long *z:*.

Table 5. Ideophone knowledge by interview

Participant	Residence	Ideophones given	Ideophones listed
A	Johannesburg	bha	thu, macaphacapha
B		bha	thu, phe
C/D (group interview)		bha, pexepexe	thu, qwa, jani, bho, bibi
E/F/G (group interview)	Durban		mc-nc-mc-nc ngca ngca ngca fa
H	isiThumba	ncam-nce	bzzz
J		trrr	vuuuu

Perhaps significantly, the participant who was able to name most ideophones was also one of the only urban participants with an entirely Zulu upbringing, in that Zulu was the L1 of both her parents, although she, like the others, was also highly proficient in English. She was also the only one who had spent parts of her upbringing in areas of KZN outside the major cities of Johannesburg or Durban.

Group interviews were also found to be more successful in general at stimulating participants' knowledge of ideophones, and this is another reason why the data from the one-on-one interviews will only be applied as an indication of overt language attitudes, but not a representation of the participant's knowledge of ideophones.

Table 3. Overview of ideophone meanings by perceptual domain

Perceptual domain	Non-onomatopoeic	Onomatopoeic
Sound		rain, bees buzzing, electricity
Sight	bright light, pitch darkness, intense whiteness, redness, beauty, ugliness	
Temperature	intense heat	
Motion		walking with flip-flops, a slap
Taste	sweetness	

When studying ideophone knowledge among urban speakers, it is unsurprising that the ideophones that come up tend to relate to domains which are relevant in a city context. *Kukhanya bha* was related to the extreme brightness of a car's headlights, for example. No ideophones were related to nature. Interestingly, the majority of the ideophones found related to the visual rather than the auditory domain.

During each interview, participants were asked to give examples of *izenzukuthi* (the Zulu word for ideophones). The aim of this was to briefly evaluate speakers' ideophone knowledge by seeing how readily they were able to recognise and give new ideophones when prompted. Typically, they were given one or two examples of an ideophone and asked if they could think

of any more. These were predominantly gathered from Childs (1996) and Msmimang & Poulos (2001), such as *Ubhanana umnandi uthi* ***ncamu-ncamu*** ('The bananas are very sweet').

However, regional variation and perhaps the decrease in ideophone use found by Childs (1996) meant that often, these examples were not recognised by the speakers. It is also possible that the interviewer factor played a role; perhaps, for example, my own pronunciation of the ideophone was so strange that it was rendered unrecognisable. The above ideophone, *ncamu-ncamu*, was corrected by a (rural) participant to *ncam-nce*, which might have been in concordance with the variety of Zulu spoken in that particular area or village. Another rural participant listed an ideophone for the sound of bees buzzing, *vu:::*, with a significantly lengthened vowel and breathy articulation. However, the rural participants tended to list only onomatopoetic ideophones which may or may not be conventionalised as a part of the lexicon. This conforms to Childs's (1996) finding that residence alone was not a significant predictor of a speaker's ideophone knowledge and use.

One group interview involved four Durban-based speakers at once, although one did not say anything during the recording. They were all friends and knew each other well, so a significant part of the interview consisted of them speaking to each other and discussing in Zulu among themselves. The first ideophone they recognised was one for the sound of rain, which was also accompanied by an iconic gesture.

(8) *nc-mc-nc-mc-nc-mc…*

The way in which they arrived at this ideophone was interesting in itself. First, I gave them an example I had read in Msimang & Poulos (2001), an ideophone to describe the sound of rain as *fa fa fa* or *fua fua fua*. One of the participants then said that you would say something like *nca nca nca* for the sound of rain. Then another participant then gave the onomatopoeic form above in (8), and all the participants nodded in agreement and recognition, which suggests that this form has some level of conventionalisation, at least within that specific speech community. The same iconic gesture accompanied it during both repetitions of the word, which involved a lateral movement away from the speaker's head while the fingers made small, quick back-and-forth motions to represent the movement of rain (in the participant's words, this would be used for 'small showers'). The gesture was time-aligned with the utterance.

Figure 1. Iconic gesture representing rain

If the participants knew the ideophone I used as an example, I also asked them to define it or, if they held that there was not a single definition, I asked them what it would mean to them if they heard it. An example of this is the onomatopoeic word given by one of the Johannesburg residents, *macaphacapha.* When asked to define it, she responded that she would interpret it as the characteristic 'slapping' sound of flip-flops. However, she also told me that flip-flops are called *macaphacaphas.* I am unsure whether the onomatopoeia is derived from the noun or whether the noun is derived from an ideophone. An interesting observation about this word is that it took the English plural form *-s*, rather than undergoing the Zulu plural formation of a preceding noun class morpheme.

The lack of standardisation of Zulu ideophones and their meanings also showed up in the interview with the Durban speakers, when one of the participants made an iconic gesture for the motion of slapping someone while saying *fa*. This, again, contrasts with the literature on ideophones in that *fa fa fa* is listed for 'the sound of rain' in Msimang & Poulos (2001). This general lack of standardisation made it difficult to evaluate whether these utterances were ideophones or creative, 'ad hoc' onomatopoeia.

There were only two ideophones which all the Johannesburg participants knew and defined the same way. Unfortunately, not all the participants were asked if they knew these ideophones, as I was unaware of their existence before I met a Durban-based informant who told me about them, over halfway through the study. Consistently following that, however, all the participants asked knew *bha* and responded with its counterpart, *thu*.

(9) a. Kukhanya **bha**
'It's very bright!'
b. Khumnyama **thu**
'It's very dark!'

Bha and *thu* were also accompanied by a time-aligned iconic gesture. *Bha* was accompanied by a sudden opening of the hands with the palms facing the addressee, while *thu* was accompanied by a 'closed' kind of gesture in which the palms curved inwards towards the speaker (Figure below). Closedness could be said to iconically represent darkness in that it represents a narrowing of perspective.

Figure 9. 'Closed' gesture accompanying *thu*

It is worth noting that a consultant from Durban, along with the paper by Msimang & Poulos (2001), list *bhuqe* as the ideophone for depicting extreme darkness; however, all of the

Johannesburg-based participants knew *thu* instead, pointing to regional variation. This variant is perhaps the same as the one which is listed in Childs (1996), *tshu*, albeit with a minor phonological alteration.

6.2.1 Informants' definitions of ideophones

Dingemanse (2011a) advocates the use of folk definitions in ideophone research. Although ideally these should be in the native language, my interviews were predominantly in English with highly proficient English speakers, so I asked them to define the ideophones they knew in English rather than Zulu. In the following short segments of participants' speech, bold italic text is used to highlight Zulu ideophones, while bold text indicates intonational emphasis on that word by the speaker.

A common feature of the explanations was emphasis involving intensifiers like 'very' or 'too', or word repetition. This points to their function as intensifiers with a more specific meaning, but perhaps not entirely unlike conventionalised or idiomatic couplings of adjectives and intensifiers in the English language, like 'pitch black'.

(10) '…*shisha* ***phe*** – which means it's very hot… it's hot, hot.'

(11) '*mhlophe* ***qwa*** – it's pure white.'

A similar kind of emphasis can be seen in one explanation of the meaning of *bha* and *thu*:

(12) 'Well… *ukhanya* means it's light up, it's light – if you're gonna add that onomatopoeia, *bha* – that's just to give the name an effect, you know, like – *kukhanya* ***bha***, *khumnyama* ***thu***… like it is **too** dark, it's **too** light – it's just to give the word an effect.'

A feature of these definitions is that they carry very general meanings. The specificity of ideophone meanings has been listed as a central feature of them by Dingemanse (2011), and many of the ideophones listed in resources such as Nkabinde (1986) show this tendency. In the view of these informants, however, ideophones function more as intensifiers rather than carrying a specific meaning of their own, which may also be a result of having fewer commonly-known ideophones. However, the difficulty of translating ideophones into another language has been emphasised time and time again (e.g. Masubelele, 2018), so it is likely that there are nuances of meaning which do not show up in these English statements.

The same Johannesburg participant also knew *qwa* for 'of whiteness', which is also listed in Msimang & Poulos (2001), and was able to list non-onomatopoetic ideophones for redness, beauty and ugliness (included in Table 1). This interview was conducted with her and one other participant, also from Soweto, who recognised all the ideophones she said. Therefore, it appears that urban speakers still have knowledge of specific ideophones, but that perhaps it is easier for some to access that knowledge actively (as opposed to having a passive understanding that will be activated when reminded). The same participant also had metalinguistic awareness of the onomatopoeic nature of the words, as evident from the quote above, as well as the feature of reduplication:

(13) ‘you’d probably say the end of the word twice, like – *klobhobhobhobho, bibibibibi…* for intensity… like it is **too** ugly, it is **too** red.’

Some informants also emphasised the non-conventionality of ideophone meanings. For instance, one expressed that ‘they’re not actual words’ – thus lending support for the idea that ideophones with fixed meanings are in decline, but onomatopoeia is still in use.

6.3 Attitudes to ideophones

This section poses an answer to the second research question of this thesis, which is also presented in a narrative style using quotes from the informants. Language attitudes will be broadly defined here as ‘any affective, cognitive or behavioral index of evaluative reactions towards different language varieties’ (Ryan, Howard & Sebastian, 1982: 7), hereunder also specific words which are associated with a particular language variety (in this case, ‘deep Zulu’). The main points to be investigated here were whether participants considered themselves to use ideophones often in daily speech or not; whether they had mainly positive, negative or neutral attitudes towards ideophone use; and whether they associated them with a particular kind of speaker.

Almost all the speakers interviewed had a highly positive view of ideophones and ideophones use. Ideophone use was associated with ‘deep Zulu’, which can be seen in the quotes below. However, unlike what Childs (2001) observed, urban speakers did not, at least consciously, eschew the use of ideophones because of this association. Ideophone use was described by one Xhosa-Zulu bilingual, who was also highly proficient in English, as a kind of linguistic ‘finesse’ used by rural speakers.

The most common reason given for why the informants could not remember many ideophones was lack of context. Three pointed to the fact that they are more common in stories, and one said, ‘it’s just that it’s easier to use them when you’re having a conversation, and you say them.’ Thus, a central component of ideophone use seems to be spontaneity and the narrative style. However, several informants – the ones whose interviews were recorded as well as others with whom I had conversations about it – noted that ideophones are somehow associated with the countryside, in different ways. One used the city context as a reason why he did not generally use a lot of ideophones, as illustrated by the quotes below:

> ‘…it’s very rare that I do use them [ideophones] on the daily… I mean, if I was in rural KZN or speaking to someone that speaks more “deeper Zulu”, it would then change.’

A little later on, the informant added:

> ‘You need to be able to communicate with an array of people from different backgrounds… and it’s just – it’s communication. It’s, I need you to understand what I’m saying, and I can’t throw in the deepest of words at you.’

Another informant had a very similar point concerning the multilingualism of Johannesburg, as well as describing the 'cool factor' associated with Johannesburg. The association between fewer ideophones and linguistic 'coolness' suggests that ideophones are not considered 'cool':

> 'I think because like – Joburg has adopted that "cool" way of doing it… like if you go to another place, they chill, you know? [speaks Zulu slowly] … And then there is the mere factor of – when you're in Joburg, you never know who you're talking to, so you always try to find a way – Zulu, Xhosa – until you find a place they're comfortable with. People here are always trying to sync.'

According to this speaker, Johannesburgh has a way of speaking that is 'different' (and more 'cool') compared to other places in South Africa, and points to this as a reason for the lack of ideophones (which also reflects their absence in common township languages like Isicamtho). Another reason which is noted by both speakers is multilingualism. These speakers' primary concern is not wanting to use ideophones in conversation with another speaker who may not know them, as they are considered, as one said, the 'deepest of words'. Most people speak some Zulu, but their proficiency varies – and perhaps more significantly, the way people *perceive* their proficiency varies.

In this way, the association of ideophones with rural, 'highly proficient' Zulu could be something of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Rural Zulu speakers are perceived to be more proficient than urban speakers, who are said to speak a 'less pure' variety of Zulu; therefore, Zulu speakers in the city avoid using ideophones even in conversation with other native or proficient Zulu speakers.

Another telling factor was the reactions I received when giving examples of (or attempting to correctly pronounce) ideophones. Overwhelmingly, my use of ideophones was met with laughter. One likely cause of this could be my foreign accent. The humorous effect of this was probably compounded by the association of ideophones with highly proficient Zulu speakers, as suddenly the participants were hearing these words spoken by a beginner, and by someone who was in no way associated with the 'deep Zulu' identity which ideophones seem to convey (Childs, 1996). However, a native speaker's use of an ideophone was also met with laughter in some cases.

Furthermore, as a learner of Zulu, I was often corrected from the use of an ideophone to a more neutral word. For instance, my use of *ncam-nce* to describe something sweet in the rural area was often met with laughter and the suggestion that I use the 'regular' word *-nandi*, meaning 'sweet' or 'nice'. This adds to the general impression that ideophones are considered less 'proper' than other word classes.

Lastly, there was a contrast between speakers who had positive attitude towards ideophones, and those who had, quite simply, no attitude towards them. It seems that those without explicit attitudes considered ideophones so much a part of everyday speech that there would be no reason to hold a specific attitude to them. As one (rural) informant said: 'It's just how we speak.'

In summary, if a participant stated that they did not use ideophones often, the main reasons given for this were practical ones relating to the facilitation of communication in the multilingual melting pot of the urban environment. The few rural speakers interviewed said

that they did use ideophones often in daily life, and held no particular attitudes towards them. However, it is important to note that they may have been talking about onomatopoeia as well as ideophones, as it was difficult to draw a clear distinction between the two, especially given the lack of standardisation.

It is also important to note that some urban speakers claimed to use ideophones often, emphasising that ideophones are common, but predominantly so when telling a story. Thus, the main findings of this section are that informants who did not use ideophones often gave exactly the same reason as one of those listed by Childs (2001), namely urbanisation; and that informants overwhelmingly regarded ideophone use as a positive thing. The latter part could be a reflection of changing social forces in South Africa, in which the reclamation of a quintessentially African identity is gaining traction. However, the revival of ideophones is fighting against the strong force of urban multilingualism. Along with this comes the perception that proficiency in other languages, such as English and contact varieties, leads to a decreased proficiency in Zulu. This, in turn, discourages some from using ideophones, for fear that it will not facilitate communication – and perhaps create social distance if the addressee is unable to understand them.

6.4 Loaned onomatopoeia in English

This section will present examples of onomatopoeia in English, which were noticed during participant observation in informal settings. These onomatopoeic utterances had an unusual feature – namely, characteristics of Zulu and Xhosa phonology. Thus, this section presents some evidence that the influence between South Africa's Bantu languages and English is not unidirectional, but that elements of Zulu and Xhosa can also be 'borrowed' into English. The implications of this will be discussed with reference to the third research question of this thesis, which concerns the use of onomatopoia as a linguistic device.

One informant described English as a 'communication language' – a language used to bridge boundaries between the several languages in a South African city. In Kamwangamalu's (1998) words, it is a 'code-in-between'. Because of this, it is not uncommon to find groups of speakers of multiple languages communicating in English as a 'matrix language', albeit peppered with several loanwords and 'loan-sounds'. The former is code-mixing or code-switching, often serving an expressive function, which will be described in more detail in the next section. It is the latter 'loan-sounds' which I wish to draw attention to here.

In the title of the present section, I use the term 'loaned onomatopoeia' to describe these loan-sounds. They are not ideophones as such, since they are not conventionalised words (Dingemanse, 2012); they are onomatopoeic, iconic utterances which often make use of the clicks. For example, a young man would describe his night out with the ending, 'and *qa* I was on the floor!' (Example x). This is an iconic utterances which makes use of *q*-click's loud sound (like a popping champagne cork) for expressive effect. Clicks are generally one of the most marked linguistic sounds (Herbert, 1990a; 1990b), even more so given the lack of such a sound in English. The utterance is phonologically aberrant – and therefore more expressive.

It was also accompanied by a fast downward motion of the arm, with a lax hand to indicate the motion of falling in an uncontrolled way. All the ideophonic utterances observed were

accompanied by a gesture, which is described in brackets beside the utterance. A few examples are given below, with the ideophonic utterance in bold italics:

(15) a. ...and ***qa*** I was on the floor! (fast falling lax hand motion)
b. I heard shooting outside, ***twa twa twa*** (gunshots, accompanied by pointed index and middle fingers moving in time with the sounds)
c. I'll go ***x-x-x-x*** (tooth-brushing handling gesture: closed fist of the right hand moving back and forward slightly to the side of the mouth)

Although example (xb) does not involve clicks, using this sound to represent gunshots in a story told otherwise in English is unusual. *Bang* would be a much more common English ideophone to describe a gunshot. In this way, the utterance defies English norms, although it does not directly violate any phonological constraints.

The last example makes use exclusively of the *x*-click, without any discernible vowels, to make a sound akin to brushing one's teeth. This was accompanied by the closed fist of the speaker's dominant hand moving in a back and forth motion close to the mouth, a highly iconic representation of brushing one's teeth with an 'invisible toothbrush'. An important element of all the ideophonic utterances mentioned is that the gestural accompaniment is clearly aligned with the sound of the utterance; that is, in this case, the hand moves backwards and forwards in tandem with each *x*.

Dingemanse & Akita (2017) considered gestures, and iconic gestures in particular, to be an indication of an ideophone's expressiveness. The use of iconic gestures here highlights the expressiveness of these 'loan-sounds', as they emphasise the speaker's desire to draw attention to that specific utterance.

Moreover, these utterances draw a part of their expressive power from the social context in which they occur. It is well-known how difficult it is for non-native speakers, particularly ones whose native language is English or Afrikaans, to produce the clicks. As such, it could be a marker of quintessentially Zulu or Xhosa identity to use the clicks onomatopoeically while speaking English, because the typical white South African English or Afrikaans speaker would not be able to do so. Thus, the marked phonology of the clicks could also serve a social function, marking the speaker's identity as a speaker of Zulu or Xhosa (and, perhaps more broadly, a Nguni language, although Ndebele does not contain clicks).

Additionally, the use of iconic 'loan-sounds' with ideophonic properties suggests that, perhaps, the variety of BSAfE could eventually adopt the clicks as a limited, socially-bound part of its linguistic repetoire. After all, this is similar to the way in which clicks may have been borrowed into southern Bantu languages initially, relying on their 'exotic' nature and markedness (Andrason, 2017). Their expressive power would be compounded by their associations to an urban variety of Zulu with holds covert prestige, and which many speakers wish to imitate (e.g. Nassenstein & Hollington, 2018, on the desirability of urban languages).

6.5 Some functions of code-switching

The fourth research question asked earlier was whether other expressive linguistic features have emerged in order to 'replace' the function of ideophones. In this section, I will present

some instances of code-switching from the data, along with the hypothesis that code-switching in some ways matches the socially expressive function of ideophones. This will be discussed from an in-depth theoretical perspective in Sections 7.4. through 7.7.

It is often difficult to distinguish code-switching from lexical borrowing, especially considering that Zulu is full of English loanwords (Kamwangamalu, 1998). This demarcation is particularly difficult when the code-switch involves only a single word, rather than a multi-word phrase.

Below, I will compare two instances of single-word code-switching from the present data set. The first is an answer to the question 'Have you ever seen a spider?' (which was asked in Zulu):

(16) *eziningi,* actually 'a lot, actually'

Compare this with another instance in which a participant used an English loanword:

(17) *i*-language

The main difference here is that the word *language* has taken the Zulu determiner *i-*. This morphosyntactic integration into Zulu suggests that it is a loanword. However, morphological integration is not a sure sign of borrowing in a Bantu language, as code-switched elements often also take a noun class, and thus show signs of morphosyntactic integration.

For cases which are not clear-cut (and most are not), I would argue that there is no 'hard line' between code-switching and loanwords, but that the two exist on a continuum of lexical borrowing (Gottlieb, 2004). Code-switching marks the initial stages of borrowing, and some of the words may eventually become a part of the lexicon of the host language via a process of gradual integration. As Gottlieb (2004) describes for English loanwords in Danish, the longer they have been in use, the more they conform to Danish phonology; however, it is not a process that happens from one day to the next.

Therefore, I would argue that demarcating the 'grey areas' of code-switching from lexical borrowing is not the crucial point for the present data set. For the examples given here, I will not try to demarcate whether the English elements are loanwords or code-switching, but rather to look at their function within the sentence.

The morphosyntactic integration of the word *language* is perhaps a sign of a 'less expressive' instance of code-switching, if we are to apply Dingemanse & Akita's (2017) study on the grammatical integration of ideophones to code-switching. Expressiveness can also be qualified by word choice, or the kinds of words being code-switched to. Compare () below with (), and it becomes clear that both of the code-switched words serve as intensifiers to the main point, which is in Zulu:

(18) *nami angithanda* at all
'I also don't like them *at all*'

Expressiveness could perhaps be qualified in terms of semantic necessity. In these cases, the addition of 'actually' and 'at all' as intensifiers is essentially superfluous; however, they add

emphasis. Thus, they take on a similar function to that served by an ideophone like *thu* in *khumnyama thu*.

There were also several examples of code-switching which did not seem to have a particular expressive function. The parallel use of a Zulu word and an English equivalent was often observed, such as the pair with 'jump' and *-xoma*, both of which undergo reduplication according to Zulu morphology:

(19) *u- ya- jumpajump*
3SG- *ya-* jump.REDUP

(20) *u- ya- xomaxom*
3SG- *ya-* jump.REDUP

During the motion description task, one participant devised a 'scoring system' (and a rather harsh one, too) which she used to rate the actor's ability to imitate the movement she was describing. These scores were also given in English, seamlessly switched from Zulu, e.g. 'four out of ten'. It was interesting to note this linguistic distribution, in which English was the language of numeric evaluation.

Several more instances of 'casual' code-switching were noted, ranging from simply replying to a Zulu phrase in English (as in example 2, in the section on iconic gestures) to peripheral words which were said in English, as in (16) and (18). However, the example in (21) can be distinguished from these previous examples by its lack of intonational foregrounding, as in this case, *actually* blended in seamlessly with the Zulu phrase surrounding it.

(21) *u- ya- jump-a* actually *u- ya- hamb- a*
3- *ya-* jump-FV actually 3- *ya-* go- FV
'She's jumping, actually, while walking'

Thus, code-switching can be foregrounded by loudness, intonation changes, or use of stress. It is likely that pitch is a modifiable factor as well, although not one observed here. However, as the last example show, there are also many instances of code-switching which simply 'happen', seemingly not to add any specific effect.

6.6 Methodological considerations

The sections below will cover methodological considerations relating to the interviews (6.6.1) and the motion task (6.6.2). First, I will also mention that the resources for the present study were limited, and so full transcriptions of all the motion data could not be obtained. Instead, it was necessary to do partial transcriptions with a native Zulu speaker over a long distance, whose availability was also limited. These partial transcriptions included only the descriptions of the first two videos from Aussems et al. (2017). They purposely focused on segments of interest which included iconic gestures, onomatopoeia, and code-switching. Onomatopoeia, ideophones and other words were classified with the help of the native speaker. However, the limitations of the data set are an unfortunate result of constraints on time and funding.

6.6.1 Interview structure

In a study like this, the interviewer factor is highly signficant: a white foreigner asking participants to name ideophones out of the blue probably produces very different results to the same questions as asked by a native Zulu speaker, who can properly explain the concept and perhaps give more examples *in situ* without a potentially distracting accent. I conducted the interviews over a period of three months during which I was learning and improving both my Zulu and my understanding of the ideophone as a word class within the language. Therefore, my knowledge was more limited in the early interviews.

Nonetheless, this study should be viewed as relevant to what we can learn from native speakers' reactions to a foreigner interested in Zulu ideophones, such as the aforementioned laughter. This study in no way hopes to approximate the understanding that a native speaker would have of ideophones, but rather to see what can be gleaned about the state of ideophone use in Zulu from an outsider's perspective. In hindsight, the most challenging thing was to enable the speakers to conceptualise the word category that I was talking about, and this only became possible rather late in the process, which is why all of my early interviews have been excluded since it was clear that I had explained the concept inadequately.

Nkabinde (1986) writes that a large part of the ideophone's meaning comes from the predicate with which is co-occurs. Due to my changing proficiency in Zulu and evolving knowledge of ideophones, in early interviews I was not able to give examples of ideophones with a predicate. Later examples involving a predicate + ideophone, such as *kukhanya bha*, were much more successful at jogging participants' memory of other ideophones, as well as giving them a clearer ability to conceptualise the word class I was referring to. Because of this, again, the interview data cannot be representative of ideophone knowledge and will only be used to give an impression of participants' attitudes to ideophones, and their definitions of the ones they mentioned.

An example of a misunderstanding occurred during a pilot study with a Zimbabwean Zulu speaker. I gave him the ideophone *ncamu-ncamu* (listed in Msimang & Poulos, 2001) and asked if he knew this word. He agreed that it was common. However, he used it as a noun, attaching the noun class prefix *ama-* to create *ama-ncamu-ncamu* meaning 'something sweet'. The following quote from the interview describes his memories associated with the word:

(22) When I used to grow up… my mother used to say, can I go and buy you some *am-ncamu-ncamu*?

At this stage, I did not know enough Zulu to realise that the prefix *ama-* designated the *ncamu-ncamu* as a noun, and thus that it was not an ideophone. This could be an instance of 'category switching' as described by Msimang & Poulos (2001), which is interesting in its own right, but was not the aim of the interview.

Because of these kinds of potential misunderstandings, and the lack of conversational spontaneity involved in the interview structure, I chose not to evaluate speakers' knowledge according to a scale as Childs (1996) did. Moreover, I considered how strongly the interviewer

factor can influence results on ideophones in particular, and therefore chose to analyse the responses of participants from a purely qualitative perspective instead.

As noted previously, there was a high level of variation in ideophone interpretation among different speakers.

According to self-report data by the participants, however, ideophones do constitute a major part of conversational interactions. All but two participants claimed that they would use them regularly and often. Although self-report data can be problematic, I do believe it is valuable to consider speakers' own assessment of their language use. Especially prevalent in the self-report data is the idea that sound symbolism, or onomatopoeia, is a common device for description in everyday language, as is evident from the short quotes in section x. This is another good reason to believe that, while onomatopoeia is still in use, knowledge of conventionalised ideophones has decreased.

6.6.2 The ecological validity of the motion task

The previous section briefly outlined some of the necessary methodological considerations relating to the semi-structured interviews. This one examines the motion task in light of its ecological validity. In order to do so, it is necessary to look at some Zulu ideophones of motion.

The domain of human locomotion is generally a prolific, productive one for ideophones in the languages that have them. Below, I will present some examples which are listed in Nkabinde (1986) and Msimang & Poulos (2001):

Table. Motion ideophones in Zulu

Ideophone	**Meaning**
qim	'of falling'
khalakatha	'of falling into a hole'
fofololo	'of falling "flop"'
ndiya-ndiya	'of tottering'
nwabu-nwabu	'of moving with slow gait'
qho… qho	'of heavy steps'
gxaa… gxaa	'of walking with long strides'

As is evident here, the meanings of ideophones in the domain of human locomotion tend to relate to specific kinds of gait and movements. Some of them also describe the situation or state of the person whose movement is being described. This could include the clothes they are wearing, whether they are drunk or sober, and their size (for instance, an ideophone could specifically depict the way a 'fat woman' walks or the way a 'drunk man' staggers). In this way, it is not only the movement itself that matters but the characteristics of the person performing it, as well as the external circumstances around it (e.g. *khalakatha* for 'falling into a hole').

This point is highly relevant to the ecological validity of the motion description task, as none of the videos shown involved a person who was recognisably drunk, for example, or particularly fat or skinny. The first video showed a man, the second a woman, and this may

also have had a bearing on which ideophones were applicable. Although the videos were chosen for their potential to elicit creative motion descriptions, it is possible that these movements were too 'unnatural' to have existing ideophones which would describe them. In this way, the movements perhaps lent themselves better to the creative use of onomatopoeia or the creation of new ideophones.

On the other hand, there are also examples of ideophones with fairly generic meanings, such as *qim* for a falling motion. As the first three examples illustrate, it is common to have several ideophones to describe a single type of motion event, in this case falling. Thus, it could be expected that, if an ideophone exists with a highly specific meaning, then an ideophone should exist for a broader version of the same type of meaning. This is based on general knowledge about the semantic evolution of other word classes (cite).

Thus, without a larger database of Zulu motion ideophones (which unfortunately I have not found), it is impossible to say conclusively whether it is the choice of ideophones which is at fault, or the design of the task. However, given the productivity of this domain for ideophones in general and the diversity of meanings which exist within it, I would tentatively conclude that the absence of ideophones in the motion data must be explained, at least in part, by a general reduction of ideophone knowledge and use among Zulu speakers, especially if this finding is considered alongside the interview data and the results from Childs (1996).

7. Discussion

Although the present data set is too small to make sweeping generalisations about the state of ideophone use in South African Zulu, it can be considered alongside the study and observations by Childs (1996). The data has interesting implications for the study of ideophones as a socially rooted word class, and even revealed relevant information concerning the ideophone's domain of use. The first section will concern itself with this topic. The sections following that will examine the implications of the findings on language attitudes, first in relation to ideophone use in Zulu specifically, and then in relation to the framework of overt and covert prestige. The later sections will expand upon these findings to formulate a broader theory of expressive language, which considers expressiveness to be fundamentally rooted in social phenomena.

7.1 Ideophones and their domains of use

Dingemanse (2011b) and Ameka (2001) both emphasise that ideophones are not restricted to a particular linguistic domain, but that they are used as part of everyday language, even including highly conventionalised exchanges such as greetings. It is perhaps no coincidence that these papers both refer to West African languages in the Kwa family. However, there are equally a great deal of sources which emphasise that they are particularly prolific in narratives (e.g. Schaefer, 2001). Thus, the distribution of ideophones across domains of use varies from language to language.

For Zulu, the results here indicate that ideophones are predominantly expected in narratives. This implies that they are more unsual in other kinds of conversation. Ameka (2001) points out that the distribution of ideophones across domains of use could have an effect on their integration into the grammar of the language. In other words, do ideophones deviate less from the general properties of the language if they are used across several or all domains and styles of speech, as opposed to a select few? Additionally, does this also hold for ideophones' distribution across conceptual domains: that if they are more restricted to selected conceptual domains, like sound, they may show less overall integration into the language?

It is possible that the domain-distribution also affects the susceptibility of ideophones to normative influence from non-ideophone languages. If ideophones are mainly restricted to specific domains, it may be easier for them to dwindle as a word class, while if they are highly integrated into everyday speech, one could imagine that it would be more difficult to purposely eschew them. However, it is also possible that, if ideophones are becoming increasingly restricted to the narrative domain, this may be a sign of their decline rather than a reason for it.

7.2 What attitudes can tell us about language use

Language attitudes can provide a window of insight into linguistic trends. Negative attitudes, like the ones stated by Childs (2001) concerning ideophone use by urban Zulu speakers, can cause an increase or decrease in the use of specific words, phonological characteristics, or linguistic devices. However, these attitudes are the only point of disagreement that this study

finds with Childs (1996; 2001) which, in this study, were overwhelmingly positive. This suggests that a 'traditional Zulu identity' has gained some overt prestige.

However, the mismatch between these positive views on ideophones and the informants' linguistic behaviour suggests that it is still associations with a 'modern, urban' identity which hold the key to covert prestige, which can be even more powerful as a driver of linguistic behaviour, according to e.g. Magro (2016). The relationship between attitudes and actual language use is not always straightforward.

To use an example from Europe, Gottlieb (2004) studied the use of English loanwords and code-switching in Danish. While he found that Danes generally held negative attitudes towards code-switching and viewed it as a sign of the deterioration of the Danish language, this did not in any way reflect the actual use of code-switching by Danes, who code-switched often nonetheless. Gottlieb (2004) explained this as a result of the covert prestige of English. Code-switching indicates that the speaker is highly proficient in English – so proficient, in fact, that the speaker simply cannot help switching to English while speaking their native language, even though they (allegedly) do not want to. In this way, the covert prestige of English overrules the overt prestige of Danish language purity in the actual behaviour of speakers.

Positive attitudes towards ideophone use in Zulu could thus be either an indication of the language shift predicted by Childs (1996), or a sign of the ideophone's revival in Zulu. It would not be possible to predict this from attitudes alone. However, attitudes do tell us what kinds of linguistic behaviour speakers find overtly prestigious. In this case, we find that overt attitudes towards ideophones and high proficiency in Zulu are generally positive, a change that is likely to have been brought about by political changes in South Africa and an emphasis on black unity and solidarity (Kamwangamalu, 1998).

Attitudes to English, meanwhile, were not studied as part of the formally recorded interviews. However, Gough (1993) summarises the dominant attitudes to English among black South Africans in the 1980's and 90's, and although much has ostensibly changed, many of his points have been reiterated during my time in South Africa. These points include the fact that Standard British English is highly valued in an educational context; overwhelmingly, teachers prefer to teach the British standard rather than Black South African English (BSAfE). There is still a great deal of prestige associated with the perceived 'standard British' acrolectal English.

Interestingly, a high level of proficiency and a prestigious variety of English is accompanied by a perceived reduction in mother tongue proficiency (Gough, 1993: 55). Thus, proficiency in English and the Bantu mother tongue seem to be viewed as mutually exclusive, with the general perception that a high degree of competence in one automatically entails a decreased level of competence in the other. This association was also found among several speakers in informal conversations; one said that the Zulu spoken in Johannesburg 'is not really Zulu, it's something else', and Section 6.3 also included telling quotes about the perceived language proficiency of others. It appears that this is not so much associated with the 'objective' proficiency of the speakers as it is an automatic assumption.

My hypothesis is that the positive attitudes towards 'deep Zulu' here are caused by precisely this assumption, and by the perceived distance which now lies between 'Johannesburg Zulu' and 'real Zulu'. From a distance, urban speakers can view these 'real Zulu' varieties through

the more romantic lens of something lost through urbanisation, a necessary trade-off in order to gain proficiency in English and other languages required of the Johannesburg context.

7.3 Iconicity in contact

Childs (2001) emphasised the importance of considering the social function of ideophones. For contact languages, he found that ideophones are rarely transferred from the source to the contact variety, as evidenced by a lack of ideophone cognates. However, he emphasised that the *function* of ideophones will persist into the contact variety. This is the general finding of the present study, too.

In the data gathered here, it seems that iconic sound-imitative utterances, and perhaps gestures, have supplanted some functions of conventionalised ideophones. Iconicity as a linguistic resource appears to be fairly common among Zulu speakers. In the motion data, iconic gestures added a creative, depictive element of description, which could have been done using ideophones. Although used to a lesser extent, onomatopoeia was also found in the motion data, as well as during participant observation, where it was observed quite extensively.

Aside from this, several participants were eager to find sound symbolic properties of 'regular' Zulu words. One informant did so with reference to the words *xoxa* and *qomile*. He also mentioned other common ways of adding some sound-symbolic flair to a word, with reference to some township slang words. The 'feeling' of the word was emphasised. The addition of onomatopoeic elements to 'regular' Zulu words was also observed in the data, so this appears to be a common expressive device.

Another participant also seemed to find a close link between ideophones and slang as, directly followed by our discussion of ideophones, he added: 'And we also use slang.' This suggests that, to him, ideophones and slang belong to a similar category of speech, that category perhaps being 'expressive language'. If ideophones are used to 'vivify' speech, then perhaps so are certain slang words. Slang, like ideophones, can serve to mark in-group identity (Mfusi, 1992, for Sowetan Zulu).

A common slang word heard (and learned) during participant observation was *cav*, meaning 'see', 'know', or 'understand'. Thus, you can say *I cav you* with the literal and metaphorical meaning of 'seeing'. Speakers often emphasised that both 'seeing' and 'understanding' were inadequate translations for the word's complexity of meaning. Judging by its frequency of use, this represented an important concept. In essence, its metaphorical meaning is related to knowing, as opposed to not-knowing – an important dichotomy which I will describe below, with reference to Brookes (2004).

Another way to add a socially-bound 'effect' to speech is by using gestures. In a study of emblematic gestures in a South African township, Brookes (2004) found that these are also used extensively as in-group identity markers. Aside from this, they are used because they 'provide vivid visual representation of spoken content' (Brookes, 2004: 188). Thus, they are used to complement speech for 'humorous' or 'dramatic' effect, either replacing a word or being used in conjunction with it. This, again, bears some resemblance to the ways in which ideophones were perceived by the participants in this study, as they mentioned that the word itself did not carry meaning, but simply added emphasis.

However, in-group emblematic gestures appear to carry the opposite connotations to the 'backwardness' often associated with ideophones. In Brookes's (2004) succinct description of the evolution of the township gesture for *clever*, she captures a key social division which undoubtedly shapes Zulu speakers' use of ideophones and expressive language, including the prolific use of words like *cav*:

> 'Seeing, together with related notions of being forward-looking, progressive or up-to-date in outlook, or "with it," embodied in the township term *clever* and its gestural form, is a key cultural value in black urban township society and is the central characteristic of modern African identity. This is in contrast to what is considered to be the non-seeing, backward, and primitive African, who maintains a traditional, rural, tribal way of life… The 'clever' gesture is a focused expression of this key social division within township society between the "modern progressive" and "backward primitive" African social categories and reflects a key ideological concern or division within black South African society more broadly.' (Brookes, 2004: 208)

Perhaps this negative image of the 'backward' also relates to the historical associations of ideophones and onomatopoeic speech with 'primitivity' mentioned in the introduction, and the subsequent avoidance thereof. As mentioned in the introduction, Lévy-Bruhl (1910) posited that ideophones were indicative of a 'primitive mentality'. Intellectuals of the time were fascinated by, yet looked down upon, the perceived iconicity of African languages, which includes both gestures and ideophones: the famous poet Ezra Pound referred to them as 'languages that are still bound up in mimicry and gesture' (Pound, 1934: 21 in Dingemanse, 2011: 66).

However, I would argue that this provides a better window into understanding English culture than it does any African culture. For in this quote, we can see the attitude of an English intellectual towards the use of iconic devices in language. And Pound was not alone: these kinds of attitudes in which iconicity was associated with a lack of development have been echoed by scholars from various European traditions (e.g. Westermann, 1927). Even in linguistics, it has taken a long time to move away from the idea that arbitrariness is the sole cornerstone of language (e.g. Hockett, 1960), towards an understanding that all languages contain elements of both iconicity and arbitrariness (Perniss et al., 2010). In this way, we can better understand the culture which Bantu- and Khoe-speaking South Africans came into contact with, and why it might have discouraged the use of iconicity in language – especially if one wanted to be taken seriously in prestige domains.

Thus, it is possible, as a hypothesis for further investigation, that code-switching (and perhaps slang) has 'taken over' some of the expressive functions which could otherwise be served by ideophones, in order to avoid associations with the 'backward', and to pursue connotations of modernity. The next sections will expand upon this idea with reference to Myers-Scotton's (1993) markedness model and Meeuwis & Blommaert's (1994) criticism thereof, followed by some examples of code-switching in South African music.

7.4 The social and political dimensions of code-switching

The ‘markedness model’ of code-switching was formulated by Myers-Scotton (1993) with the aim of accounting for code-switching behaviour in different social situations. This idea will be reformulated here as ‘social markedness’, which concerns what is expected and unexpected in a linguistic exchange. If code-switching is an expected choice, it is socially unmarked for that exchange; this could include many routine greetings in South Africa, which may start with *sawubona* or *molweni* and finish with *I’m good*. If code-switching is an unexpected choice, it is socially marked, and therefore creates social distance between the speaker and the addressee (Myers-Scotton, 1993). In contrast, the unmarked choice signifies solidarity.

However, as Meeuwis & Blommaert (1994) point out, Myers-Scotton considers the ability to distinguish the marked from the unmarked an innate ability that all humans have. Instead, I will argue, this distinction depends on the sociopolitical context of the languages involved, which also means they depend on the languages involved. Code-switching to Afrikaans in the middle of an exchange with a young Zulu speaker, for instance, would serve to mark social distance, due to the historical connotations of Afrikaans as a language of oppression. In Kamwangamalu’s (1998) framework of the ‘we-code’, ‘they-code’ and ‘code-in-between’, Afrikaans, for the majority of black South Africans in KZN, would be considered a ‘they-code’.

The role of English as a symbol of black unity and solidarity is what lends it its status as a ‘code-in-between’. It is a unifying factor in a highly multilingual country. Thus, English code-switching among Bantu speakers marks social closeness as opposed to distance, although the English words tend to be highly integrated into the phonology of e.g. Zulu or Xhosa. Code-switching to ‘the Queen’s English’ in the middle of a Zulu sentence would also serve as a marker of social distance rather than closeness, precisely due to its uniquely prestigious status.

7.5.1 Code-switching in popular culture

In recent years, urban youth languages in Africa have grown in overt prestige, as well as keeping the covert prestige they were historically associated with (Nassenstein & Hollington, 2018). On South African television now, it is not uncommon to see people using urban slang and effortlessly code-switching to another language in the middle of an English sentence, or vice versa. Code-switching involving Zulu or another one of the Bantu languages is often done for expressive effect, or to mark in-group solidarity by using a language to which that group has more emotional and familial ties.

Sometimes code-switching occurs when a speaker wants to use a specific phrase or idiom which is difficult to translate into English, and will be widely recognisable to speakers of that language. It also serves the function of engendering sympathy with that group of speakers, and politicians and public figures in South Africa have been known to adjust their language use according to this goal (Kamwangamalu, 1998).

Code-switching, both inter- and intra-sentential, is also common in music. Wandile Mbambeni, a Xhosa musician based in Johannesburg, writes his lyrics in a mixture of English, Xhosa, and Johannesburg contact languages.

(23) *Kwakumnandi* [it was nice] back then, I wish I could go back then

In (23), the phrase *kwakumnandi* ('it was good') conveys a feeling of nostalgia, both in the meaning of the phrase itself and in the use of a Xhosa phrase (which, incidentally, is the same as the Zulu equivalent), which could have a variety of meanings. On a personal level, it could be a reference to the musician's childhood, and to a time in which he lived in his native language. On a more political level, it could even refer to a time before colonialism. In this way, the use of code-switching in art can be imbued with manifold meanings.

Another example I wish to draw on comes from the popular song *Amalobolo*, in which the singer is left by the woman he loves because he cannot pay the bride price (*lobola*). In this song, too, English phrases seem to relate predominantely to urban culture. Meanwhile, the Zulu segments tend to be more emotional and to relate to traditional aspects of Zulu culture, of which *lobola* is one. This split is most obvious when looking at the verses as compared to the chorus:

(24) *Manj' ung'ghaba kwa ngempela* ['Now you're dumping me for real']
How I wish I had an app
Ing'buyisele what we had ['I wish I could bring back what we had']

Chorus:
Ng'shoda nge m'alyama lobola ['I don't have enough money for *lobola*']

It should also be noted that code-switching is essentially stylish, not only domain dependent. For instance, it is likely that he code-switches back to English at the end of the third line in order to make 'had' rhyme with 'app'. This reflects the importance of skilfulness and style in the use of code-switching.

This is not supposed to be a full analysis of code-switching in South African music or media more generally (as that would require an entire thesis on its own), but a small insight into the domain distribution of languages in songs involving code-switching between English and a southern Bantu language, reflecting the central dichotomy between the modern and the traditional. This dichotomy, in its presentation in music, locates the speaker in an urban world, which is where the speaker coexists with these multiple identities and languages. Essentially, the sum of the 'multiple identities' marked by code-switching is an urban identity.

7.6 Code-switching as an expressive device

In Section 7.5.1, code-switching was placed into the broader political and sociolinguistic landscape of South Africa using examples from popular music. Even in those few examples, the social function of code-switching becomes apparent. Different languages are used, to some extent, in different domains which reflect how those languages are perceived.

In this section, I wish to summarise the parallels between code-switching and ideophones, some of which have already been mentioned in passing throughout the thesis, in order to present the tentative theory that, at least in urban areas, some of the expressive and identity-marking functions of ideophones have been 'taken over' by code-switching.

Both ideophones and code-switching can be linguistically marked to varying degrees. I would argue that, like the inverse relation between the morphosyntactic integration of ideophones and their expressiveness (Dingemanse & Akita, 2017), there could be a similar

relation between the expressiveness of code-switching and its linguistic markedness. For instance, code-switched words can be more or less intonationally foregrounded, such as in *'nami angithanda* at all', in which the phrase 'at all' was louder and each word was more clearly punctuated. Code-switched elements can also be more or less morphologically integrated into the language, with a high level of integration suggesting that it could be on its way to becoming a fixed lexical borrowing like *uyaskipa*.

The next similarity is their identity-marking function. However, the identities they mark stand in stark opposition to one another: while ideophones are markers of 'local identity' (Childs, 2001), code-switching is usually a way to mark 'multiple identities', thus purposely avoiding the localisation of the speaker in one particular identity. The idea of 'multiple identities', moreover, is fundamentally urban and modern, indicating a globalised perspective.

Additionally, as mentioned earlier, code-switching and ideophones both mark linguistic agility and skilfulness when they are used well. Although the notion of being 'used well' is a subjective term, this is something that can be evaluated by the speech community at large, and will depend on the particular style of that community.

Lastly, they both serve an expressive function which depends not only on linguistic markedness, but also on the social situation in which they are used (Myers-Scotton, 1993). As seen in Section 6.5, some of the functions of ideophones and code-switching are similar; for example, code-switching can be used to intensify the meaning of the predicate. This is not to say that all instances of code-switching (or ideophones for that matter) should be categorised as 'expressive language'; examples of non-expressive code-switching were also given in 6.5. Rather, it is one of its possible functions. Code-switching arguably serves a more diverse range of functions than ideophones do, and the similarities between the two are only applicable when they are used expressively.

In a way, the case of gestures provides a contrast to the expressive functions of ideophones and code-switching, even though they can be related, because gestures are less bound to the marking of a specific identity. Thus, although gestures are expressive, they are perhaps not 'socially expressive'. The same appears to be the case for onomatopoeia. Moreover, neither of these linguistic devices appeared to be affected by the decline in ideophones noted by Childs (1996), with the use of iconic gestures especially being quite prolific.

But how do we identify when language is expressive, and when it is not? The next section will provide a possible answer to this by noting some of the general features of expressive language, and laying out a set of parameters for identifying it.

7.7 Towards a social theory of expressive language

Although Samarin (1970) provides a definition of expressive language, it focuses primarily on the function of expressive language rather than its outward characteristics. This section attempts to unify some of the literature on expressive language with the findings here in order to compile a list of the main characteristics by which it could be identified and classified. Aside from its function of conveying information about the emotional state of the speaker, I will argue that expressiveness has additional functions relating to social context. It will be argued that the marking of alignment with or distance from a social group is a key feature of expressive language.

This will also be posited as a potential reason why spontaneously created iconic gestures and onomatopoeia did not seem to be affected by the same decline as ideophones. Although gestures are culturally bound, as stated in Kita (2009), they are also less conventionalised than the vocabulary of a language, and their creation involves more 'ad hoc' spontaneity – like onomatopoia.

Thus, there seems to be a major difference between the type of expressive function served by linguistic elements which are less conventionalised, and those which are more conventionalised but also more open to creative modification than the lexicon or grammar of a language, in the way that ideophones, emblematic gestures, code-switching, and slang are. This difference lies in the overt identity-marking function served by the type of expressive language that has a higher level of conventionalisation, due to its recognisability in the relevant speech communities.

Another feature of expressiveness has to do with linguistic agility. Creativity in the use of ideophones during storytelling is the mark of a great narrator in some cultures (e.g. Innes, 1964). Meanwhile, fast and skilful code-switching can carry similar connotations of agility, since the ability to code-switch in a fast and seamless manner requires a high level of proficiency in two or more languages.

As mentioned earlier, a central characteristic of expressive language is markedness, which functions on a linguistic and social level. Linguistic markedness refers to use of unusual phonemes, prosodic contours, and morphological modification (such as extreme reduplication, or even the absence of morphology which usually occurs on the relevant word class). The foregrounding of gestures involves placing the gesture close to the face, making them very expansive, or making use of multiple body parts (Kita, 2009).

Often, the level of markedness has to do with the speaker's reasons for using an ideophone or gesture. In some cases, especially in languages which are very rich in ideophones, a person might use an ideophone simply because there is no other word for the relevant concept. In contrast, if the speaker is using an ideophone in favour of a more neutral alternative, it is more likely that is is being used for expressive effect and thus, it is more likely to be foregrounded using changes in intonation, pitch, or loudness.

Something similar could be expected to happen in relation to code-switching; there could be intonational differences between the kind of code-switching that happens 'for lack of another word', and the kind that serves an expressive function. Moreover, for code-switching specifically, the degree to which the code-switched words retain the phonology of the source language is socially significant. Often, the retention of this 'original pronunciation' carries with it a higher level of prestige in cases where the source is a prestige language (e.g. Labov, 1966; Gottlieb, 2004). This somewhat mirrors the case of ideophones and grammatical integration, where a higher level of integration into the host language results in an overall less expressive utterance. In essence, there seems to be an inverse relation between expressiveness and grammatical and phonological integration.

Lastly, meaning (or a lack thereof) plays a role in identifying expressive language. When a word or gesture is used 'superfluously' – that is, without adding any necessary meaning or grammatical element to the predicate, but simply intensifying it – this is a good indication that it is being used for expressive effect. This holds for the use of some ideophones, for example, when they are used along with a predicate that could otherwise stand alone. The addition of the

ideophone is for style and effect. This also holds for the vast majority of interjections, words which do not carry a specific meaning of their own except for denoting something about the mental state of the speaker, like surprise, happiness, or anger (Ameka, 1992).

This overview aims to sketch out a few of the characteristics of expressive language, with the aim of incorporating the notion of expressiveness into sociolinguistic theory. In the conclusion below, I will suggest some possible uses for such a theory, in the form of ideas for further research.

8. Conclusion

Although the finding that ideophone use is still declining in Zulu is based on rather tentative data, I hope to have provided a basis for future studies in the field. A more naturalistic investigation of Zulu speakers' daily language use would be needed in order to properly re-evaluate the use of ideophones and onomatopoeia in Zulu, which is likely to be evolving continually. Any such study would need to draw on a larger corpus of language use from a single area or region because ideophones and their meanings are highly susceptible to regional variation. This is another similarity which can be drawn between ideophones and slang, and may simply be a feature of any class of linguistic items which marks alignment with a specific place and speech community.

Thus, I wish to emphasise the need for a more holistic approach to the study of expressive language, in which its social functions are considered alongside parameters like linguistic markedness. This need is clearly illustrated by the single parallel given above, in which the form of specific classes of linguistic items could be more variable because of their social function. When it comes to expressive language, the form of the language itself cannot be disentangled from its social context. Key elements of social context are also evident in the meanings of highly expressive and socially localised words, such as *cav*, or emblematic gestures like the ones listed by Brookes (2004).

However, the specificity and localisation of these linguistic features need not dissuade us from making more general statements and investigations into the characteristics of expressive language. Each culture and speech community is likely to vary in terms of how expressive language is marked and used, but it may share overarching features across cultures. Some of these could be that expressive language is often marked; that it signifies alignment with a specific social group; and that it sometimes contains iconic elements, either in its essence or in its articulation.

Having parameters according to which expressiveness can be defined brings with it several advantages, among them the ability to study how different cultures perceive expressive language. For example, if speakers must constrain their gestural behaviour or use of slang for specific social situations, such as a job interview or another formal situation, this must be considered as part of the expressive norms of that language, as it would tell us that gestures, and perhaps iconicity more broadly, are associated with an informal register.

If English is indeed the dominant cause of the ideophone decline in Zulu, this cannot be categorised as a purely linguistic influence. It must also be the influence of cultural norms

surrounding expressive language, which include the association of iconicity with an informal register. This is perhaps compounded by the historical associations of iconic language with backwardness. And though this is something that is easy to take for granted when living in a European society, the ability to classify such norms across cultures would likely result in the finding that this is far from universal.

There may well be cultures for which this kind of social stratification in the acceptability of expressive language does not exist, or shows a different pattern of variation. For instance, if ideophones are deeply entrenched in all domains of speech in a particular language, e.g. Ewe (Ameka, 2001), it is perhaps less likely that they are associated with informality by virtue of their iconicity and expressiveness. This could give valuable insight into cross-linguistic variation in the acceptability of expressive forms. Moreover, it could help to explain some of the major driving forces of linguistic change – such as the ongoing changes affecting the Zulu language.

Abbreviations

1	first person
3	third person
SG	singular
PL	plural
IMP	imperative
NEG	negation
COP	copulative
FV	final vowel
7	noun class marker 7
1.SBJ	subject marker

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