

An exploration of the nature, functions and subcategories of the discourse functional category Interactive in spoken Xhosa

A.P. Hendrikse

Department of Linguistics
University of South Africa
PO Box 392
Pretoria

N. Nomdebevana*

School of Interdisciplinary research & Graduate studies
University of South Africa
PO Box 392
Pretoria

e-mail: nomden@unisa.ac.za

Formatted: Norwegian Bokmal

Jens Allwood

SCCIIL – Interdisciplinary Center & Division of Communication and Cognition
Department of Applied IT
University of Gothenburg
412 96 Gothenburg
Sweden

*Corresponding author

It is a generally accepted view among discourse analysts that the so-called ‘discourse particles’ are extremely variable in meaning and multi-functional and consequently highly context-dependent for their understanding. As a result of this view no generally accepted view of the systematisation of the range of discourse particles, words and other expressions exists within the discourse analytical framework. Not all functionalist linguists agree with this viewpoint. Some of them, in fact, suggest that discourse particles belong to a single word class. Research done at Gothenburg University on a corpus of spoken language interactions in Swedish show that there is a range of communicative interactive functions around which interactive function expressions cluster. In this article we take these views further by attempting to systematise and classify Xhosa interactive functional expressions into functional subcategories of an overarching functional category which we call Interactive. This article is therefore an attempt to develop a taxonomy of functional expressions in Xhosa.

Introduction

Spoken language material has largely been neglected in the compilation of language corpora. There are many reasons for this, the most important of which is that the transcription of spoken material is a very laborious, time-consuming and expensive exercise. No doubt, the development and refinement of speech-to-text software would facilitate and speed up the compilation of spoken language corpora. Unfortunately, it is highly unlikely that low resource languages such as the African languages will benefit from such speech-to-text developments in the near future. And yet, spoken language use is characterised by a unique range of linguistic features which warrant the compilation of spoken language corpora (regardless of the costs) as well as the corpus linguistic study of such corpora for the benefit of both general and applied linguistic concerns. Furthermore, some of the unique features of spoken language use can only be very roughly approximated in written language including transcriptions of spoken material. Standard written language conventions therefore need to be appended with a set of transcription conventions and annotations that caters for the unique features of spoken language (cf. Ahlsén et al. 2003; Allwood & Hendrikse, 2004).

The following amended list excerpted from Nomdebevana (2013: 3–5) isolates some of the most prominent features of spoken language:

Conversational contractions

Short forms, often called conversational contractions, are very common in spoken language. (For a discussion of whether they are best viewed as contractions, see Allwood & Ahlsén, 2013). Biber et al. (1999: 1129) note that negative contractions, for example, *don't* 'do not', verbal contractions, for example, *let's* 'let us' as well as the use of aphetic forms of contractions such as *dunno* 'I don't know', *gonna* 'going to', *gotta* 'got to', *innit* 'is not it' and *yeah* 'yes', are significantly more frequent in conversation than in any other register. Note that the term 'conversation' here does not have the generic use it often has in Conversational Analysis, but rather refers to informal spoken communicative interactions (cf. Atkinson & Drew, 1979). Similarly, Rühlemann (2008: 678) observes that 'the contracted forms are, by far, more frequent than the non-contracted SE-conformant forms' and therefore refers to them as conversational contractions. This is also the case

in Xhosa where short forms or contractions seem to be used pervasively in everyday spontaneous conversations. In fact, utterances without such short forms are disproportionately fewer than those containing contractions. Out of 380 utterances of the first transcribed natural conversations for the study, 268 contain contractions. The following is an example of these utterances. The contracted forms are presented first, followed by the same utterances with full forms in curly brackets:

- Utterance with contractions: *yaz'u'ba int'edal'u'ba ndithi wenz'iSeptember month kukh'iprogram uyibonile. Kukh' isiXhosa poetry phaya.*
- Utterance with full form: *{U}yaz{i} u{ku}ba int{o} edal{a} u{ku}ba ndithi wenz{a} iSeptember month kukh{o} iprogram uyibonile? Kukh{o} isiXhosa poetry phaya.*
- Translation: 'Do you know what makes me say he is doing September month, there is a programme, have you seen it? There is Xhosa poetry there.'

Code switching

In spoken Xhosa language interaction, foreign language expressions are occasionally used together with the expressions of the language of the conversation. For example, *because bendifun{a} ukums' eBhayi* 'because I wanted to take her to Port Elizabeth'.

Code mixing

Foreign language grammatical and lexical elements are integrated with constructions of the language of the conversation. For example, the Afrikaans lexical element *stout* 'naughty' is integrated with the Xhosa expression *nobustouthanyana* 'somewhat naughty' in the Xhosa utterance: *ndaqond{a} ukuba sel{e} enabo nobustouthanyana* 'I noticed that she has a tendency to be naughty'.

Own communication management (ocm) markers

Speakers manage the flow of their utterances in various ways, including special linguistic markers such as repetition of syllables or single sounds, hesitations, self-corrections and other changes including special ocm expressions. For example the Xhosa expression *unto* 'what's his name?' or 'what do you call it?' is used as a placeholder for a name, while the speaker is trying to retrieve the relevant name from memory, *athi unto ahambe uZen ayoreporter* 'then says **what's his name** Zen went to report.'

Other communicative and interactive function words

Besides ‘own communication management’, ‘communication management’ also involves ‘interactive communication management’ (ICM). We will use the term ‘communicative and interactive function words’ (CIFWs) for such words. These words and phrases make up the most important subset of what has often been called ‘discourse particles’. These words and phrases are extremely important for the interactive interpretation of the utterances in which they are used. Typical CIFWs of English are *well, so, OK, indeed* amongst others. Typical CIFWs in Xhosa are *hayi* ‘no’, *ke* ‘so’ or ‘then’, *nje* ‘of course’ or ‘indeed’, *wethu* ‘no matter what’ or ‘you’ or ‘shame’ or ‘good colleagues/friends’, and *bethu* ‘shame’ or ‘good colleagues/friends’.

Gestures and facial expressions

Gestures and facial expressions are typical features of multimodal communication and include the use of gestures such as nodding, shaking the head, finger(s) and the hand(s) and arm movements to enhance communicative effects.

Prosodic features

Intentional loudness or silence; tone, for example, *inyama ìngàtyíwa* ‘the meat can be eaten’ (high tones on the vowels of *nga* and *tyi*) or *inyama ìngàtyiwa* ‘the meat cannot be eaten’ (low tones on *nga* and *tyi*) and the use of stress, for example, *asokuze* ‘never!!’ provide very important supra-segmental information for both the semantic and pragmatic interpretation of such utterances. For various reasons, such prosodic features are not commonly represented in written language.

Two other features which are not spoken language features as such, but rather features of spoken language activities, need to be added here as they are characteristic of the interaction between participants in a spoken language activity:

Simultaneous utterances

Although turn-taking is used to control the interaction between participants in a spoken language activity the occurrence of utterances of various participants that are simultaneous with the contribution of the participant whose turn it is, is pervasive in spoken language activities. In fact, not only are such overlaps very common in spoken language activities, but they are actually

essential in that they assist the speaker to continuously assess the effects of his/her contribution on and the intelligibility of his/her contribution for the other participants. A typical example of such overlapping utterances is the English feedback expressions such as *there you are, no ways, you don't say, yes, oh no*, etc. In Xhosa overlapping utterances of this nature are ubiquitous, and in most cases they are used in a form of an exclamation to perform various feedback functions, for example; *nantso ke!* 'there you are!', *kwatsha pha!* 'that's it!' (e.g. to indicate agreement with the speaker or to indicate surprise); *he ke* 'good' (agreement with the speaker); *hayi khona* 'no ways' (disapproval or disagreement) and many more.

Attunement

An important functional feature that can be achieved by several of the behaviour oriented features above is the attunement between interlocutors. Certainly, one of the most interesting and challenging linguistic mysteries to unravel is the ability of participants in a spoken language activity to understand one another without too much difficulty. Mutual knowledge (cf. Clark & Marshall, 1981), relevance (cf. Sperber & Wilson, 1986), and context of the situation (cf. Crystal, 1992) are some of the factors that have been identified in the literature as facilitators of mutual understanding in communicative situations. However, these three factors mainly involve shared factual and episodic information in the long term memories of the communicative participants. Oral communication involves many subtle and elusive meanings such as intentions, emotive nuances, attitudes, perspectives and so on that are difficult to fathom and interpret. For the interpretation of such meanings there must be some form of attunement between the minds of the participants. Certain spoken language expressions are typically used by a speaker to solicit or more generally, elicit and evoke responses from the audience to ensure that everybody is on the same cognitive frequency, so to speak. In English, for example, expressions such as *you understand, you know, you see, you follow* and so on perform this function together with the function of consensus implication to enhance attunement. Examples of such expressions in Xhosa are: *Uyaqonda?* 'Do you understand?', *Uyabona?* 'Do you see?', *Uyandifumana?* 'Do you get me?', *Uyandiva?* 'Do you hear me?' and so on. Feedback expressions such as *owu mntakwethu* or *owu bethu* 'oh dear', *owu madoda*, *owu yhini na* 'oh no', *awuboni ke, he ke* 'wonderful', etc. confirm attunement on the part of the audience.

In this article we would like to focus on one of these spoken language features in Xhosa, namely what we are referring to as ‘communicative and interactive function words’ (CIFWs), an important subset of what has sometimes been called ‘discourse particles’ and traditionally mostly called ‘interjections’. As we will explain further on, own communication management markers can also have interactive functions.

The nature and functions of discourse particles noted in the discourse functional framework

Traditionally, spoken language features have often not been assumed to have relevance for the linguistic understanding, analysis and description of the structures and forms of language. They therefore, received very little, if any attention in formal linguistic theories. Lately, however, spoken interaction has emerged as a significant empirical domain in linguistics. Langacker (1998: 1) makes the following important observation:

Language has two basic and closely related functions: a *semiological function* allowing thoughts to be symbolized by means of sounds, gestures, or writing, as well as an *interactive function*, embracing communication, expressiveness, manipulation, and social communion. A pivotal issue in linguistic theory is whether the functions of language should be taken as foundational or merely subsidiary to the problem of describing its form. The recognition of their foundational status is the primary feature distinguishing *functionalist* approaches to language from the *formalist* tradition (notably generative grammar).

The interactive nature of non-monological use of spoken language sets it apart from written language and fully encapsulates the interactive function of language as Allwood and Hendrikse (2004: 33) note in their characterisation of the differences between spoken and written language:

Face-to-face spoken language is interactive (in its most basic form), multimodal (at the very least containing gestures and utterances) and it is also highly context-dependent. Further, spoken discourse very often consists of one-word utterances. Written language, on the other hand, in its most typical form is non-interactive,

monological and monomodal with a lesser degree of contextualization. Typically, written language involves sentences, which are governed by normative rules that dictate the structure of properly formed sentences. The norms of spoken language are usually of a different sort, rather guiding communicative efficiency enabling high rate processing required by speech.

In spoken language we therefore find linguistic expressions that enable ‘online’ thought processing or expressions that allow for change of mind. From a normative written language perspective, these linguistic phenomena might be called ‘dysfluencies’, ‘false starts’, ‘self-corrections’, etc. In spoken language one also finds short and unobtrusive ways of giving discourse feedback, e.g. *ee*, *mh*, *yuh* that indicate comprehension, affirmation, surprise, and so on.

None of these linguistic phenomena that are so characteristic of interactive spoken language have any place in written language.

In addition to the own communication management and feedback phenomena noted above, there are other uniquely spoken language expressions that directly influence the nature and manner of interaction in spoken language. Some functionalist linguists call such expressions ‘discourse particles’. Brinton (1996: 6) describes ‘discourse particles’ or ‘pragmatic markers’, as he calls them, as follows:

These are short words or phrases such as *u’dl*, *so*, *oh*, *you know*, or *I mean* which are of high frequency in oral discourse. They are traditionally known as ‘fillers’ [...] and are often stigmatized or deplored. They are thought to be empty of lexical meaning, and hence difficult to translate, marginal in respect to word class, syntactically quite free, and optional: they appear to be without propositional meaning or grammatical function. However, rather than seeing them as meaningless or merely stylistic, discourse analysts recognize a number of global functions in them, on the textual level.

Like feedback words, these discourse particles are essentially a spoken language phenomenon as Stede and Schmitz (2000: 125) note, ‘[w]hen comparing spoken to written language one soon

notices the abundance (types and tokens alike) of “particles” in speech. The many occurrences of *well, oh, let's see* and others are a typical dialogue phenomenon’.

Not only are they more common in spoken language, but they are typically the most frequently occurring expressions in spoken language according to Lam (2010) and very often the only element in an utterance.

Apart from interjections, interactive expressions in general, are typically derived from instances of virtually all syntactic categories as well as from a range of fixed phrasal expressions depending on the language concerned. In English, for example, we find interjections such as *oh, o-ho, a-ha, a-hem*, adverbs such as *so, well, never*, conjunctions such as *and* and *but*, adjectives such as *beautiful, true* and *nice*, nouns such as *shame, nonsense, rubbish* that function as feedback expressions together with a host of fixed expressions such as *come on, oh dear, you don't say, so what, says who*, etc. Aijmer (2002: 2) views such derived forms as instances of grammaticalization when she says, ‘discourse particles have been grammaticalized which has resulted in a class of words with unique formal, functional and pragmatic properties’. The unique formal, functional and pragmatic properties of grammaticalized discourse particles, in contrast with the typical grammatical function words, not only function at the sentential level, but also at the more general interactive level. Haselow (2011: 3603–4) gives an interesting illustration of the significant changes that take effect when an expression assumes grammaticalized interactive functions – in this case the English word *then*:

[...] an analysis of final *then* in spoken language shows that it has diverged from the original temporal meaning and that of an optional conjunct in *if ... then* constructions. Rather than indicating an inference drawn from a prior discourse segment or introducing the second part of a condition it is increasingly used to indicate information at the illocutionary level: it signals a contrastive relation between an expected and an actual state of affairs, thereby strengthening the illocutionary force of the utterance it accompanies, and it is used to express surprise or impatience on the side of the speaker. Both effects derive from the occurrence of an unexpected turn within the conversation, i.e. a sudden change in the information status of one of the participants.

Thus, discourse particles do not only relate to *what* (propositional) is being said in communicative interactions, but also to the *how* (manner) and the *why* (intention) of the communicative interactions.

Let us now turn to the details of the functions and significances of discourse particles. First, let us consider the functions and significances of discourse particles from the speaker's perspective.

The speaker's perspective

According to Allwood (2000: 69),

each communicative act, e.g. statement, question, request, exclamation, can be said, on the one hand, to count as an expression of an attitude (with a content) on the part of the speaker and, on the other hand, to count as an attempt to "evoke" a reaction from the listener.

In another publication, Allwood et al. (2003: 7) add that 'the expressive function lets the sender express beliefs and other cognitive attitudes and emotions [...]. The evocative function is the reaction the sender intends to call forth in the hearer'.

Some discourse particles typically perform both the expressive and the evocative function in communicative interactions. The discourse particles *yes* and *no* together with *fine* and *man* in English utterances such as *yes fine, carry on* and *no man, don't do that* perform the expressive function of conveying the attitude of the speaker towards an action performed by the hearer. In the English utterance *come on, let's go*, the discourse phrasal particles, *come on* perform the evocative function of, say, encouraging the hearer to change his mind and go along with the speaker.

Through the responsive, expressive and evocative functions of discourse particles, they often have an attunement effect between speaker and hearer when a speaker elicits feedback from the hearer. In English this is typically done by consensus soliciting expressions such as *you know, you see, you follow*, etc.

The hearer's perspective

According to Hopper and Traugott (1993: 69) both speakers and hearers are involved in the pragmatics of discourse which they characterize as,

[Discourse pragmatics is] primarily concerned with the beliefs and inferences about the nature of the assumptions made by participants and the purpose for which utterances are used in the context of communicative language use. It concerns both speakers' indirect meaning, beyond what is said, and also hearers' interpretations, which tend to enrich what is said in order to interpret it as relevant to the context of discourse.

From the hearer's perspective interactive expressions have two functions. On the one hand, they enable the hearer to interpret all the functions of utterances, especially the expressive and evocative functions of utterances, including the speaker's intentions, attitude and emotions (which when they are expressed would be included in Hopper & Traugott's 'indirect meaning' in the quote above). Aijmer (2002: 2) observes that 'discourse particles seem to be dispensable elements functioning as signposts in the communication facilitating the hearer's interpretation of the utterance on the basis of various contextual clues'. The hearer, on the other hand, very often uses discourse particles in short unobtrusive feedback utterances that overlap with the utterance of the speaker in order to confirm contact, perception and understanding as well as attitudinal and emotional attunement with the speaker, e.g. in the formal context of parliament the English expressions *shame*, *hear hear*, etc. are used for this purpose. Feedback discourse particles can also be used by the hearer to express his/her own attitudes and emotions. Examples of such comprise disagreement, disbelief, shock, surprise and so on. An account of specific English examples may include expressions such as *no way*, *oh my word*, *never*, etc. Furthermore, feedback expressions are at the disposal of the hearer to clarify an indistinct utterance or to avoid potential misunderstanding, e.g. the English expressions *come again*, *really*, *you don't say*, etc.

The interactive situational perspective

Talmy (2000) uses a building constructional metaphor to characterise the syntactic function of grammatical function words, viz. a *scaffold* for the syntactic structuring of lexical items in

sentences. This metaphor is equally appropriate to visualise the function of interactive expressions from the perspective of the speech situation, i.e. a scaffold not for the structuring of utterances, but rather for the structuring of the whole interactive speech situation. As scaffolding expressions, some discourse particles manage, control and organise various aspects of the speech situation. In the following list some of the speech situation functions of interactive expressions are identified (cf. Allwood, 2013 for a more elaborate exposition of the communicative management functions of interactive expressions):

- Sequential control: In his study of the English discourse marker *no*, Lee-Goldman (2011: 2627) observes that '[t]hese senses [of *no*] do the work of (i) topic shift, (ii) misunderstanding management, and (iii) turn-taking conflict resolution'.
- Regulation of information flow: Stede and Schmitz (2000: 125) note that discourse particles 'seem to be innocent little words that contribute little to the propositional information conveyed; however, they do play important roles in steering the flow of the dialogue ...'. In English, for example, expressions such as *and then*, *so*, etc. call for more information, while *OK*, *so what*, etc. may signal the conclusion of the communicative interaction.

Typical interactive speech situation-related interactive expressions in English are single word feedback utterances of the hearer followed by a pause such as *yes ...*, *and ...*, *so ...*, *well...*, *then...* and so on. Some own communication management expressions also fall into this category. For example, the English vocal gestures, *uh uh uh* and *mm mm mm* often indicate that the speaker wants to retain the speech turn while reorganizing his/her line of thinking or while planning how to express his/her thoughts. Similarly, a speaker may switch the topic in the same turn in English by using phrasal expressions such as *come to think of it* and *by the way*.

Finally, we need to mention some of the functional linguistic views of the nature of the words and expressions used as discourse particles. Contrary to the words that they derive from, some linguists claim that discourse particles do not have a conceptual, literal, referential or propositional meaning. They believe that their meanings are therefore rather difficult to specify or capture succinctly in clear and unequivocal semantic definitions. Their significances seem to be highly context-dependent similar to deictic words and they seem to be more polysemous and multi-functional than other words. For these linguists, the classification and sub-classification of discourse markers thus seem to be rather difficult if not impossible. Brinton (1990:48) observes

that '[s]tudies of individual pragmatic markers underscore the difficulty of subclassification, since they reveal that any one marker may have a wide variety of meanings which overlap with the meaning of other markers'. However, as we have noted earlier, Aijmer (2002:2) disagrees with this view when she claims that 'discourse particles have been grammaticalized which has resulted in a class of words with unique formal, functional and pragmatic properties'.

In the following section we will explore and identify possible subcategories of discourse particles in spoken Xhosa.

Communicative interactive function words and the functional word category Interactive

Discourse particles epitomize one of the two language functions identified by Langacker (1998: 1) namely the '*interactive function*, embracing communication, expressiveness, manipulation, and social communion'. In order to capture the fact that many discourse particles are typically used in the interactive function of language, Allwood et al. (2003: 7) introduced the descriptive term 'communicative and interactive function words' for words and expressions that have interactive functions. We will now consider this functional category of communicative and interactive function expressions and use the short name 'interactive' to refer to it.

The category Interactive has a number of subcategories. For the identification and description of these subcategories we need to find appropriate heuristic guidelines. As a first guideline we could use the broad outline (presented in the previous section) of the functions of the category Interactive from the speaker's, the hearer's and the interactive speech situation perspectives. These different functions quite naturally map to different clusters of communicative and interactive function words and could therefore be used to identify some of the subcategories. A significant observation made by Lee-Goldman (2011:2627) in his contrastive study of the discourse and non-discourse functional senses of the English word *no* suggests two further heuristic guidelines:

While they share key semantic and pragmatic features with other DM and non-DM senses of *no*, especially negation and indexicality, they are distinguished from each other and other senses by their position within the utterance and larger discourse.

Thus, from Lee-Goldman's observations it is clear that the Interactive *no* retains some semantic correspondence with the non-Interactive *no*. Secondly, Lee-Goldman's observations highlight the crucial importance of contextual information for the identification of both senses, but perhaps especially for the identification of the functions of communicative interactive function words and hence also for the identification of the subcategories to which they belong.

In a spoken corpus study of the two Xhosa Interactives *wethu* and *bethu*, Nomdebevana (2013) shares findings that are somewhat similar to those of Lee-Goldman. The Interactives *wethu* and *bethu* derive from the possessive pronouns *wethu* 'you' sg. 'of us' and *bethu* 'you' pl. 'of us' respectively. As Interactives *wethu* and *bethu* assume a vocative function with evocative effects such as 'my dear'. Part of the possessive significance is retained in the Interactive, namely the relational significance. Thus, *wethu* and *bethu* are also used evocatively in addressing non-relatives, for example to gain empathy or support from the addressee. For instance, Nomdebevana (2013) found a case where the chairperson of an academic department addresses her colleagues at a departmental meeting with the Interactive *bethu* rather than *colleagues*, obviously with the intent to evoke their support in a certain matter.

We can thus suggest three heuristic guidelines, viz. the general communicative functions of Interactives, the sense correspondences between Interactives and their non-Interactive counterparts, and the discourse context together with the situational context of the spoken language activity. The latter is probably the most important basis for the classification and semantic descriptions of instantiations of the category Interactive. For this reason, the availability of a spoken corpus is an important aid in the study of the category Interactive and its subcategories in any language. For the purposes of this article we have used the Gothenburg-Unisa spoken Xhosa corpus.

A sample of the Xhosa category Interactive and its subcategories

Given the guidelines set out above we would like to suggest the following sample set of functional subcategories and do a preliminary survey of some of their respective instantiations as well as their context-dependent senses. Below, we first present the general types followed by their respective specific subcategories and their functions.

A sample of subcategories of Xhosa speaker-related Interactives

Vocative

Pragmatically, a vocative expression is used to address or call the attention of an addressee. As a subcategory of Interactive, a vocative expression, in addition to the standard functions above, can have at least four other discourse functions. These functions are:

- an emotional expressive vocative, i.e. an evocative function,
 - a provocative function,
 - an invocative function,
 - a self-directed vocative function in Xhosa.
- The evocative function

The following are typical evocative expressions in Xhosa: *wethu* (pl. *bethu*) ‘my dear’, *mntakwethu* (pl. *bantakwethu*) ‘my dear’, *mfowethu* ‘my brother’, *mfondini* (plural *bafondini*) ‘my friend’, *kwedini* ‘specific boy’ and *ntombazanandini* ‘specific girl’. A speaker uses such expressions to evoke empathy, positive attitudes and feelings in his/her audience or to express his/her own attitude and feelings of endearment, empathy, sympathy, etc. towards the addressee(s). Furthermore, a speaker may use an expression such as *mfondinilbafondini* to convey solidarity, camaraderie or social and emotional closeness in relation to a peer group.
 - The provocative function

Vocatives with a provocative function are used as forms of address to deliberately provoke a reaction in the listener(s) or to convey a negative attitude towards the listener(s) such as implicit criticism, a reprimand, or a form of derogation. Depending on the context, evocative expressions such as those listed above can also be used provocatively. Thus, *wethu*, *mfondini*, *kwedini* may be used, for example, to express anger and disgust or to tease and embarrass the addressee. Particularly rude vocative expressions used provocatively are the second person pronoun *wena* ‘you’ and the word *nantsika* ‘what’s the name’. In the following utterance the two vocatives are used together, *Yhe nantsika, uthi kutheni na wena?* ‘Hey whatever your name, what do you say, you?’
 - The invocative function

Vocative expressions with an invocative function are rather odd instantiations of the category Interactive as they are used to address an entity that is not a real participant in the communicative situation. They seem to function as an appeal to some or other power, person

or thing to intervene in a difficult or distressful situation. Typical invocative expressions in Xhosa are *Thixo* 'God', *Nkosi yam* 'my Lord', *Bawo* 'Father' and clan names such as *bantu basemaQwathini* 'Qwathi people' or more specifically 'Qwathi ancestors'.

- The self-directed vocative function

Another odd function of the vocative as a subcategory of Interactive is the self-directed function whereby a speaker addresses him/herself, for example, to express satisfaction with an accomplishment or success, to express joy related to an experience, or to express self-criticism because of an error. For example, a speaker may address himself with the vocative *kwedini* 'boy' in an utterance such *Ndaligqiba kwedini eli phepha* 'Boy, I finished this paper!' A young man passing a nice car in a parking area may address himself with the vocative *bafondini* 'young men' in the utterance *Sii, bafondini, intle le moto!* 'Man isn't this a nice car!'

Own communication management (OCM):

Allwood (1999: 15) defines own communication management as follows:

OCM: Own Communication Management consists of procedures and mechanisms which enable a communicator to manage his/her own communicative activity online. OCM includes mechanisms for signaling and displaying that the speaker needs time for planning and choice of expressions (such as the hesitation sound *eh* and behavior of the gazing away type) and mechanisms for changing a made contribution in a way that does not confuse the interlocutor.

The most pervasive Xhosa OCM expression which is used when a speaker wants to indicate to the audience that he/she is trying to recall a word from memory is the copulative demonstrative *nantsi(ka)*. In this context this copulative demonstrative assumes a special meaning, namely 'what's the name'. For instance, a speaker might say *Ndifun' inantsika maan* 'I want, **what is it**, man?'

Another OCM strategy that is used when a speaker can only partially recall a word or a name, is the repetition of the remembered part. For instance, say, a speaker can remember only the *uNo*-part of the name *uNomonde* he/she will repeat the *uNo*- several times while attempting to recall the full name.

A sample of subcategories of Xhosa hearer-related Interactives

Feedback:

The hearer's communicative participation in an interaction is largely expressed through linguistic feedback. According to Allwood et al. (2007: 275), '[p]articipants in a conversation continuously exchange feedback as a way of providing signals about the success or failure of the interaction'. Failure of interaction is shown by means of feedback expressions that indicate inability or unwillingness to continue, perceive, or understand as well as disagreement while successful interaction is shown in positive feedback expressions. Feedback is typically accompanied by emotions and attitudes (cf. also Allwood et al. 2007) and in many instances these emotions and attitudes are expressed by means of exclamations.

- Exclamatory function

Exclamatory feedback typically conveys the expressed emotions and attitudes of hearers such as anger, joy, appreciation, shock and disbelief in reaction to what has been said by the speaker (cf. Hjelmquist & Gidlund, 1984: 329). The following sample of exclamatory feedback expressions represents some of the most common exclamations in Xhosa:

tyhini (expressing dismay, disappointment, astonishment)

yho (expressing shock or disbelief)

yhu (expressing shock or disbelief)

yhe (expressing joy or pleasant surprise)

bo (expressing dismay or disbelief)

owu (expressing sorrow or dismay or reprove or surprise)

kwowu (expressing astonishment, praise, consolation, impatience)

Exclamatory feedback expressions are normally used in combination with evocative expressions such as *mfondini*, *wethu*, etc. The exclamations *he* and *bo* regularly co-occur with other interactive expressions; *he* with the linking word *ke* as in *he ke* 'well done' and *bo* with *hayi* as in *hayi bo* 'oh no'.

- Agreement function

The most common agreement feedback expression in Xhosa is *ewe* 'yes'. More emphatic forms of agreement in direct relation to what a speaker just said are expressed by the copulative

demonstrative *nantso* followed by the linking expression *ke* as in *nantso ke* 'there you are' or the exclamations *he* or *yhe* also followed by *ke* as in *he ke* or *yhe ke* 'exactly/there you are'.

- Disagreement function

The disagreement function is generally expressed by the negative feedback word *hayi* 'no' and combinations of *hayi* with other words such as exclamations, e.g. *hayi bo* 'oh no' and the locative pronoun *khona* 'there' in *hayi khona* 'no ways'. Stronger forms of disagreement are expressed by the predicative expressions *unotshé* and *soze* 'never'.

Feedback elicitor:

- Attunement function

As was mentioned earlier, there are also expressions that are used by the speaker to elicit responses from the listeners to ascertain whether the listeners are cognitively attuned to what he/she is trying to communicate. As in many other languages, Xhosa uses cognitive verbs such as *qonda* 'understand' and *azi* 'know' as well as perception verbs such as *va* 'hear' and *bona* 'see' in attunement expressions such as *Uyaqonda?* 'Do you understand?', *Uyazi?* 'Do you know', *Uyeva?* 'Do you hear?', *Uyabona?* 'Do you see?'. The speaker may get assurance of the audience's attunement in various forms of feedback, both by vocal verbal utterances and in the form of non-verbal gestures such as head nods, smiles, frowning, etc.

A sample of subcategories of Xhosa speech situation-related Interactives

Content linking

One of the important functions of the functional category Interactive is to link successive contributions to each other. Interactive expressions in the subcategory content linking serve this linking function to maintain coherence in communicative interactions. One could therefore say that linking expressions are discourse anaphoric expressions. The most common discourse anaphor in Xhosa is the word *ke* 'so', 'then' or 'and'. *Ke* used in a one-word response to a preceding contribution prompts the previous speaker to elaborate on, to continue with or to complete his/her point, a function which can also be accomplished by feedback in general. Often *ke* combines with feedback words such as *hayi* 'no', *ewe* 'yes', *he* 'precisely' and conjunctives such as *kanti* 'yet', *kaloku* 'now then', *kodwa* 'but' to convey the listener's attitude towards what has been said. Thus, *hayi ke* may convey disagreement, disappointment or a suggestion for change in action while *ewe*

ke and *he ke* indicate agreement or approval with what has been said in the preceding contribution. The use of conjunctives with *ke* clarifies the nature of the listener's attitude towards the preceding contribution. Thus, *kanti ke* 'and yet' conveys partial or qualified agreement. The linking expression *kodwa ke* 'but then' indicates that the listener may have additional and perhaps more reliable information that needs to be taken into consideration. With the use of the linking expression *kaloku ke* 'at present, now then' the listener indicates that current information may append or amend the viewpoint expressed in the preceding contribution.

Turn-taking management

Basically, turn management helps to maintain the order and flow of conversations and to minimise overlapping. Allwood et al. (2007) identify four functions of turn management namely, turn accept, turn gain, turn end and turn hold.

- Turn accept function

No special expression indicates the acceptance of an offered turn in Xhosa. The following interaction illustrates the offering and acceptance of a turn: 'What do you think of this opinion, Dlamini?' (Here an opportunity to respond is offered to Dlamini, i.e. Dlamini is offered a turn.) Dlamini accepts the turn and responds as follows: *Hayi hayi madoda ndiyawuxhasa nam lo mbono* 'No, no fellows, I support this viewpoint'.

- Turn gain function

According to Allwood et al. (2007: 276), '...a gain in turn can either be classified as a *Turn take* if the speaker takes a turn that wasn't offered, possibly by interrupting, or a *Turn accept* if the speaker accepts a turn that is being offered.' In most instances in Xhosa, turn gain is brought about by the repetitive use of verbs such as *mamela, mamela, mamela* 'listen', 'listen', 'listen' or *jonga, jonga, jonga* 'look', 'look', 'look' or *yiva, yiva, yiva* 'hear', 'hear', 'hear'.

- Turn hold function

As was mentioned earlier, the turn hold function is typically expressed in Xhosa as in most other languages by vocal gestures such as *e... e... e...*, or *u... u... u...* or *um ... um ... um....*

- Turn end function

According to Allwood et al. (2007: 276), there are three different ways of realizing the turn end function.

Similarly, the end of a turn can also be achieved in different ways: we can have a Turn yield if the speaker releases the turn under pressure, a Turn offer if the speaker offers the turn to the interlocutor, or a Turn complete if the speaker signals completion of the turn and end of the dialogue at the same time.

In Xhosa some examples of expressions that signal the completion of a turn and the end of the dialogue are *hayi ke kulungile* 'no OK then', *hayi ke kuhle* 'no fine then', *kamnandi* 'fine', *nantso ke* 'there you are then', *he...ke* 'there you are', *masiye* 'let's go', *masithathe khona* 'here we go', *kuhle* 'nice', *sigqibile* 'we are done'. For example, the speaker may say *Ukusuka kwethu apha masingqale ngqo kuye, masithathe khona* 'From here let us go straight to him, here we go'. The speaker uses the expression *masithathe khona* 'here we go' to indicate that his turn is complete and to close or end the dialogue.

Overlapping expressions

Overlapping expressions are not a separate subcategory of the category Interactive, but rather a feature of the manner in which expressions from some subcategories are used in communicative interactions. Thus, feedback expressions commonly overlap with the contribution of the speaker. Similarly, turn gain expressions typically overlap with the speaker's contribution. Although these overlapping expressions seem to intrude into the speaker's turn, they are essential elements of communicative interactions. On the one hand, they help the speaker to ascertain the effects of his/her communication, the intelligibility of his/her communication or the impact and acceptability of his/her expressed views. Without such feedback, the speaker may feel lost. On the other hand, the tolerance by a speaker of overlapping expressions of his/her audience, gives an opportunity to the listeners to vent their responses and reactions to what has been said *in situ*. For instance, in the interaction between two Xhosa speaking Medunsa female students, the speaker \$fB introduces herself to her colleague, telling her in detail about her family at her home, while the listener, \$fL, gives continuous overlapping feedback.

\$fB: <1 ..olipolisa>1 ngaphaya <2 kugatyana>2 ibe ndim abanye ke omnye ke abanye ke bazihlalele nje abanye abazange bafune <2 sikolo>2 uyayiqonda ke la meko yokungabikho mzali uqhubayo uthi aba baza emva kwam bobabini abazange bafunde kuyaphi kodwa ke andigxeki nto kuba ke [1 ndibakhona ngethuba le ngxaki nobhuti ke abeyinkxaso kakhulu]

‘the policeman one is there in Gatyana then I am the second born after him, others are at home they never wanted to go to school, you can imagine a situation where there was no parent, the two after me did not spend much time at school. But I am not complaining because at least I am available at home when there is a problem, and my brother is very supportive’.

\$fL: [I ee: ee: ja mhmm mmm ewe]I hayi izinto zikuthixo azikho kuthi...

‘yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, no everything is in God’s hands not with us...’

Conclusion

We have attempted in this article to show that communicative interactive function expressions in Xhosa can be systematised contrary to the traditional view that the classification of such expressions is difficult if not impossible because of their semantic variability and multi-functionality. We have attempted to systematise this range of interactive functional expressions in Xhosa in terms of various functional subcategories, offering a beginning of a taxonomy of the category Interactive in Xhosa.

Since research on the category Interactive and its subcategories in language is really only in its initial phases it would be presumptuous to suggest that our study of the Xhosa Interactive is comprehensive and exhaustive. Several important aspects of the Xhosa category Interactive have not been addressed in this study. The fact that some subcategories co-occur in linear sequences subject to ordering constraints and with significant mutual effects has not been fully explored in this study. Another aspect that has not received direct attention in this study is the fact that some instances of certain subcategories are phrasal expressions, that is, they go beyond the boundaries of words and particles. The category Interactive is therefore not a category exclusively for discourse particles or communicative interactive function words, but rather an inclusive category for all the expressions constituting the scaffold for structuring, managing and facilitating communicative interaction.

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