

# An analysis of Shona verbal extension of intensive with their Chinese equivalence

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Generally speaking, a verb in one language can be intensified in other languages. However, different languages have different methods of intensify verbs. From the perspective of the Shona “-is-” intensive extension, the present study examines the method(s) by which Chinese verbs are intensified. The motive for this research is based on the fact that, Chinese grammar does give particular attention to the intensive verb markers, yet the Shona “-is-/-es-” intensive marker is an important component of Shona grammar, discussed under the broad topic of Shona verbal extension, which forms part of the basis of Shona grammar system. Through the present research we found that, Chinese words for verb intensity are far much more diverse than their equivalent Shona intensive extensions “-is-/-es-”. Chinese verb intensifier are derived from other word classes such as adjective, adverbs and verbs. Hence, the Chinese grammar system does not have a special classification and designation for the intensive marker. Shona is an agglutinative language. Its verbs use the extension “-is-/-es-” as the main intensive maker. The intensive extensions “-is-/-es-” is sometimes substituted by adverbs: *zvikuru*; *chazvo*; *zvakananyanya*; *kwazvo*. These adverbs have the same meaning of “*very/very much*”. In this study we will exclude them because their equivalent Chinese words “*很 hěn*; *非常 fēicháng*; *太 tài*; *挺 tǐng*; *十分 shífēn*” are not used as verb intensifier but as adverbs of degree.

## II. METHODOLOGY

We collected Shona verbs with their Chinese equivalent meanings from Shona-Chinese Dictionary by way of physical enumeration. We selected the data to eliminate verbs that cannot feasibly be intensified. By means of questionnaire, the Chinese verbs were given to 4 Chinese L1 speakers to suggest their intensive forms. We systematically grouped intensive words obtained from the questionnaire according to the manner of intensive, and the word class for each intensifier was identified.

## III. BACKGROUND

The “intensive” is a very important part of the Shona grammar that is discuss under the broader heading of “Shona Verbal Extension”, which forms probably the main back-born of the Shona grammar. The verbal extension have been discussed by major Shona grammar text books such as, Shona Grammatical Construction volume 2 by Fortune ; Jekesa Pfungwa by Chakamba et al; Ngatizevei Mutauro by Hwiridza ; Dudzira Mutauro by Mashiri and Warinda and other. Fortune (1984) grouped Shona verbal extensions into four main types ranging from types “a” to “d” . Based on this categorization, the intensive extension belongs to the verbal extension of “a” type. The intensive radicals “imply that the action of the unextended radical is heightened or made more vigorous or effective”. (Fortune, 1984:23). Those verbs radical with vowels “a/i/u” will have the extension “-is-”, while those verbs radicals with vowels “u/o” will take the extension “-es-”. This is further illustrated in the table below.

Table 1

Type of Extension	Vowel	Example V.R	Intensive Extension
-is-	-a-	<i>famb</i> -(walk)	<i>Fambisa</i> (walk faster)
	-i-	<i>timb</i> -(dig)	<i>Timbisa</i> (dig with more effort)
	-u-	<i>sund</i> - (push)	<i>sundisa</i> (push with more force)
-es-	-e-	<i>tem</i> -(chop)	<i>Temesa</i> (chop with more power)
	-o-	<i>rov</i> -(strike)	<i>rovesa</i> (strike with effort)

The table 1 above attempts show what determines the of Shona allomorph of intensity “-is-” “-es-” for different verbs. It shows that verbs with vowel “a/i/u” in their core radicals use intensity allomorph “-is-”, while verbs with that have vowels “e/o” in their core radical use the intensity allomorph “-es-”. The verb extension in Chinese is much akin to that of English than it is to Shona. The table below attempts to illustrate this relationship.

Table 2. English- Chinese -Shona verb intensity

Intensity word	Verbs	Example phrase	Shona equivalent
Firm	Hold	<b>Zhuājīn</b> <i>Hold firmly</i>	<b>Batisisa</b>
(Very) much	Love; talk;	<b>Téng'ài</b> <i>Love much/a lot</i>	<b>Disa</b>
Powerfully/hard	hammer	<b>Yònglì chuí</b> <i>Hit hard</i>	<b>Komesa</b>
Widely	Open	<b>Dà kāimén</b> <i>Open wide</i>	<b>Vhurisa</b>
Atentive	listen	<b>Zìxì tīng</b>	<b>Teereresa</b>

		<i>Listen carefully</i>	
Loudly	speak	<b>Dàshēng shuō</b> <i>Speak loudly</i>	Taurisa
Fast	Run	<b>Kuài pǎo</b> <i>Run fast</i>	Fambisa

From table(2) above, it can be observed that English and Chinese makes use of several words to intensify actions words, while Shona maintains the “-is-/is-” .

**Data collection; processing and selection:** We physically conducted enumeration of Shona verbs in the Shona-Chinese—Chinese-Shona Dictionary. A total of 92 verbs collected. These verbs were then examined in terms of relationship with the “-is-” intensive extension and selected. Below are the observations made in the screening process.

**(1)Non-intensifiable verbs :** From the list of verbs, we also found some few verbs which cannot be expressed into the intensive form. These may include, *dzidza* (learn); *yewa(gaze) mira* (stand); *gara*(sit) *zendama*(lean) *batanidza*(join or connect)and *zemberera* (lean against) . We are of the opinion that these verbs can not practically be intensified in Shona.

**(2)Non-compatible with “-is-” intensive :** *Dzidza*(learn), *nyara*(be ashamed); *tondera*(recall) ; *yeuka* “recall”; *shandisa* (working) are some of few exceptional verbs with are not usually intensified in “-is-”.

**(3) Semantic shift :** We identified certain verbs which undergo semantic shift when extended in “-is-” . For instance,the verbs “fara” (happy), its “-is-” intensive in Shona is usually not understood as “extremely happy” but carries derogatory sense of “getting over-excited”. “Chenjera”(clever/be careful), changes to “chenjer-es-”, which is usually understood in a derogatory sense of “cunning/crafty”, rather than “be extremely careful/clever”.

**(4)Synonymous and near-synonymous verbs :** Some verbs were identified as synonyms, for instance, “*baka/pfuta*”; “*tondera/yeuka*” ; some were near-synonyms which simply translate to the same Chinese verbs, for example -*dya* “eat” and *yamwa* “suck milk” both have “*chi*” as core verb in Chinese; “*ridza*” (play/cause to make sound)and “*rira*”(play/beat/make sound) both translate to “*fang/jiao*”.

**(5) Intensifying verbs :** Some verbs are indicate state of intensity by their nature, and would not necessarily need further intensification. In some few usages they are intensified only as a way of adding emphasis. We identified such verbs like *kambura* (gobble); *yaura* (anguish); *yuwira*(yell).

After the screening process, the number of Shona verbs reduced to 73. The corresponding Chinese verbs were given to four L1 speakers of Chinese language who were assigned to give the possible intensive forms of the verbs. These participants were 2 graduate and 2 under graduate students of Hebei University majoring in Teaching of Chinese As Second Language(TCSL). The participants were expected to be more knowledgeable of Chinese grammar. We ensure that the participants were working independent of each other in order to got more representative sample.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The four participants completed the task. For some words, more than one suggestion could be provided. For the majority of the verbs, the participants gave similar basic intensifiers for each verb, with slight variations especially resulting from differences in the extra suggestion each one had to provide. We eliminated some few intensives which we deemed as not meeting the expectations of the research. Below are examples of substandard intensive:

- 铺 pù (to spread) → 迅速铺 xùnsù pù (promptly spread)
- 想 xiǎng (to think) → 反复想 fǎnfù xiǎng (think repeatedly)
- 咳嗽 késòu (to cough) → 连续不断咳嗽 liánxù bùduàn késòu (incessantly cough)
- 撒谎 sāhuǎng (to lie) → 总是撒谎 zǒng shì sāhuǎng sāhuǎng (always lie)
- 撒谎 sāhuǎng (to lie) → 撒谎成瘾 sāhuǎng chéng yǐn (habitually lie)

From the questionnaire, we came up a representative list of the possible intensifiers for the Chinese verbs. The various Chinese verb intensifiers were analyzed and categorized on the basis of their word classes. This is presented in the Table below.

Table. 3 Classification of Chinese intensive markers based on their Shona equivalents

Nature of intensive	Intensifiers	Shona verbs with English glosses
1.audio	dà (adj)1 <i>big</i>	Taurisa; ridza; rira;chema;kososa <i>(speak;play; sound;cry;cough)</i>
2. Physical force	yònglì(v) shǐjìn (v) Jǐn(adj) <i>Use power</i> <i>Exert</i> Nǚlì(v) pīnmìng(v) <i>At full split</i>	chovha;Zvuwa;vhara;bwaira;kakata;mara;zunza;Tomuka;om bera; tema;Bwaira;bvuruka;baya;bhururuka;tamba;Ridza;rumba;sung ga; svina;cheka; chera;dzvanya <i>(pull/close/scretch/shake/jump/clap/chop/blink/fly/prick/danc e/beat/</i> <i>fasten/bite/squeeze/cut/dig/press)</i>
	láo(adj) sǐ(adj) <i>Firm;rigid</i> zhù(v) <i>Tight</i>	Bata;rumba;zvuwa;dzvanya ;kakata;yeuka;vhara;sunga vhara ;sung <i>(hold;bite;pull;press;remember;close;fasten)</i>
	Hěnhěnh(adv),6 Xióngxióng(adj)	Ramba; mara;chema; bvaruka Mara

	Yán(adj) <i>rigorous</i>	Vhara; svina
<b>3Profundity</b>	duō(adj)1 <i>more</i>	Funga;;ita;ongoror;idya; mwa-( <i>think; do; examine; eat; drink</i> )
	shēnrù (adj) <i>Deep into</i>	Funga <i>(think)</i>
	jiā (v) <i>adj</i>	funga( <i>think</i> )
<b>4Attentive</b>	zǐxì(adj) rènzhēn(adj) <i>Attentive 'Serious</i>	Tarisa ;Teerera ;cherechedza( <i>look; listen; observe</i> )
<b>5.Motion</b>	kuài(adv) <i>Fast</i> chāo(v) <i>Exceed</i> Gāo(adv) <i>high</i>	Chovha( <i>drive</i> ) Tomuka ( <i>jump</i> )
<b>6Extend</b>  <b>/exceed</b>	dà (adj) <i>Big</i> Guò(v) <i>pass</i>	Vhura ; fema' kunda'svuta;yamwa ;zara; rara <i>(open; breath; win; suck; inhale; sleep; be full )</i>
<b>7Efficiency</b> effectiveness  Totality	qīngchǔ (adj) <i>Clear</i> dǒng(adj) <i>understand</i>	kunzwisisa Yeuka Ndaverenga ndikanzwisisa
	Tǒngtǒng(adv) Wánquán(adv) chèdǐ (adj) <i>Entirely;Thorough</i> Dìng(adv)	Ramba; Bhuroka Pisa;tadza ziwa <i>(reject; be broke; heat; know;fail )</i>
<b>8Carefully</b>	Hǎo1 (adv) <i>Well</i>	Bata( <i>hold</i> ) funga ( <i>think</i> )
<b>9Special term</b>	Xióngxióng <i>Raging; ablaze</i>	Pfuta( <i>burn</i> )

<p><b>10Adverbs</b></p>	<p><b>Degree</b> zhēn;hěn;shífēn; duōme; tèbié</p> <p><b>Frequency</b> yīzhí, zǒngshi,bùduàn</p>	<p>Shuva ;svora Nyepa; kosora;Tomuka <i>(wish; despise; lie; cough; jump)</i></p>
<p><b>11General</b>  gravity, seriousness  of situation</p>	<p>lìhài(adj) yánzhòng(adj) <i>serious</i> Tǒngtǒng(adj) <i>Terrible</i></p>	<p>Kosora;nyepa; tsvisa <i>(cough; lie; burn)</i></p>
<p><b>11Miscellaneous</b></p>	<p>wěn(adj) jīli(v); hǎo(adv) <i>Firm; make utmost effort/</i></p>	<p>Kunda bvunza;ramba <i>(win; ask; reject)</i></p>

For the 73 Chinese verbs under study, we came up with 11 different natures of intensification as shown in the first column of the table(3) above. The results of the survey shows that a verb intensifiers in Chinese are so varied in nature. Those classified as “miscellaneous” are ones that were not frequently used(used once by only one respondents), and we had the challenge of categorizing them. The second column is a list of the intensive words. In some cases these will also be divide based on specific manner of intensification. After the screening process we came up with 45 different kinds of word used to intensify Chinese verbs from the dictionary. As shown in table, 8 of them happened adverbs of degree, hence, based on the study scope of the present research, 37 intensifiers were collected. In this study we assume that these 37 verb intensifier are representative of the verb intensifiers in Chinese Language. The research found that, 10(24%) of the intensifiers were verbs; 7(16%) were adverbs and 25(60%) were adjectives.

HSK level	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Non	Total
Number								
Of words	4	5	7	7	4	4	2	37

This study hypothesizes that, Shona speaker are likely to face challenges in using` Chinese verb intensive words. This because of the following reasons:

- (1) The concept of intensive verb markers seems to have no place in the Chinese grammar system. Consequently, teaching and learning materials do not have special attention to these words.
- (2) The grammar system of intensive verb marker in Shona can depend on the same marker, in this case the “-is-/-es-” verb extension, while for Chinese several words have to be mastered. From the results of the survey we can hypothesize that, for one to be able to intensify all the 73 Chinese verbs, one would have to master approximately 37 intensive markers.
- (3) The various words used as verb intensifiers in Chinese are usually not very simple vocabulary, they belong to advanced levels of Chinese proficiency. For instance, we identify the 8 of the intensifier, namely: “Tǒng; xióng; Hěn;pīnmíng; shíjīn;chèdì; wěn; láo” are advanced level (HSK5-6) and another 7 words belong to HSK4, yet According to research by Zimhindo (2017) students learning Chinese at the University of Zimbabwe graduate (3<sup>rd</sup> year) with minimum of level 3. We can hypothesize therefore that, the majority the level 3 graduates complete before they they master about 15 (41%) of the verb intensifiers. Two (5%), of the intensifiers do not belong to any level 1-6, indicating that its is vocabulary not listed teaching of Chinese to foreigners. **Seven**(19%) of the words were level 3 words. However there is no guarantee that students mastered these words at level 3. The remaining(35%) comprises simple vocabulary of level 1-2 such as “hao”(well); “duo”(much); “da”(big) and others.

However, we cannot conclude that these this figure can represent the intensifiers that could be mastered. This is because these words may be simple to learners in their core meanings such as adjective and adverbs, but may not be as easy when used in their extended sense as verb intensifiers. For instance, in “*da pingguo*”(big apple) is a very simple phrase at elementary level, but the learners may not be able use “*da*”(many), in the context “*da kai*” (open wide) in shona “*vhurisa*”. This phenomenon may also be true for word in the upper level.

## V. CONCLUSION

Through a survey, this study came up with 37 difference Chinese words used to intensify 73 verbs, which in Shona where intensified by only one marker, namely the verbal extension “-is-/-es-”. Chinese makes use of numerous words from adjectives; adverbs and verbs to intensify verbs. We claim that this phenomenon poses a challenge for learners to express Chinese verbs in their intensive form. As a result, teachers and learners must pay special attention to this phenomenon.

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