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# Hip Hop Pantsula making Setswana fashionable: impact on Setswana orthography

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The aim of this article is to investigate how South African hip-hop lyrics break language rules and promote South African indigenous languages. The article focuses on youth participation in linguistic change in South Africa and illustrates how youth linguistic cultures are practised in everyday interactions. In South Africa, most rap musicians consider hip-hop to be the voice of youth culture. The challenge is that hip-hop has a bad reputation, mostly because hip-hop rappers were associated with bad language and violence. However, *motswako* (a South African genre of hip-hop) lyricists want to be associated with creativity and freestyling that make sense to the youth in a contemporary era. The study of hip-hop and identity from a factual narrative perspective is not well represented. In this article, discourse analysis is used to examine how the linguistics and identities are presented by *motswako* lyricists to associate creativity with freestyling from an African perspective. A few examples of *motswako* lyrics were selected to analyse the creativity of the lyricists and their contributions to linguistic and cultural change. The results show that youth in these spaces are active creators and contributors to linguistic and cultural change, which has led to the popularity of this genre.

## Introduction

The hip-hop genre emerged during the early 1990s as a musical and cultural force for young people. Hip-hop allegedly has the ability to transcend linguistic and cultural boundaries. This genre is conceived as an autonomous force that can change the future and affect human behaviour and attitudes. *Motswako* is a genre of hip-hop popular in South Africa and Botswana, where Setswana is spoken. In the South African context, hip-hop lyrics are generally in isiZulu and English. This creates a false impression that the Setswana language is not appropriate or suitable for hip-hop. There are even those who were sceptical about the use of the language in this genre because they were concerned about the sales (Maitso, 2014). It was taboo for commercial music to be in Setswana,

except for those performing in pop or gospel. There were lyricists such as Hip Hop Pantsula and Bafithile who brought this genre to the forefront because their lyrics were in Setswana varieties and English.

In Setswana, the word *motswako* is derived from the verb *tswaka* 'mixture' (Ditsele, 2017: 2). *Motswako* lyricists mix Setswana and English in their lyrics. In the context of the Setswana-oriented hip-hop genre discussed here, it implies a 'mishmash' of Setswana and English. The South African youth adopted hip-hop as their own. Most rap musicians consider hip-hop to be the voice of youth culture. Hip-hop has been considered as a genre that fights for racial equality and communicates anger at the poor socio-economic conditions of black people throughout the world. During the democratic transition in South Africa, hip-hop was thrust into the mainstream and became the main threat to genres such as kwaito, and more women

pursued a career in rap. In this genre, lyricists have the freedom to use terms and concepts as they please. The youth in these spaces are active creators and contributors towards linguistic and cultural change that led to the widespread popularity of this genre. Lyricists identified themselves with their own languages and culture. Unlike in the past where they were associated with drug addicts and violence, they associated themselves with creativity and freestyling.

Perullo and Fenn (2003) state that hip-hop emerged as a musical and cultural force during the late 1970s in the United States and has followed a global trajectory ever since. Escher and Rappaport (2006) attest that hip-hop music has come a long way in the past from the back rooms and block parties in South Bronx where the emcees rapping could be heard all over the world in different languages. In the past, hip-hop was associated with gangsterism. Gangsterism in South Africa is viewed as a culture of belonging to organised gangs of criminals involved in violence. This phenomenon poses a threat to society.

Hip-hop originated as an art of protest that resulted in new creative writing skills where they use standard form and speech varieties in their creative styles. This leads to rappers writing rhymes as their creative writing. South African hip-hop started to use creative writing as a tool to break the boundaries of language rules and promote South African indigenous languages. This article sets out to show how *motswako* lyricists write rhymes not only for fun, but to open minds in new ways. A hip-hop lyricist is like a poet who expresses syncopated words that tell stories and teach. The writing involves analytic thinking and creativity. By making Setswana fashionable, the late Jabulani 'HHP' Tsambo (Hip Hop Pantsula) wanted to show the world that hip-hop is not

the music of aggression, but the music that can change the narrative. The late HHP claimed to make Setswana fashionable by changing traditional utterances into modern ones. A few examples of *motswako* lyrics were selected to analyse the creativity of lyricists and their contributions to linguistic and cultural change. The emphasis is on the use of *motswako* lyrics as universally comprehensible and powerful on their own. *Motswako* lyricists' music such as *Bosso ke mang?* and *Music and Lights* both written by the late Hip hop Pantsula, and *manong* lyrics written by Motlalepule 'Mo'Molemi' Morule were selected to analyse the linguistic and cultural change brought about by this genre. The late Hip Hop Pantsula and Mo'Molemi are both from North-West province in South Africa. They rap in Setswana mixed with other languages. Mo'Molemi is the stage name of Motlalepule Morule and Jabulani Tsambo used Hip Hop Pantsula as his stage name. South African hip-hop is a strong commercial genre and popular throughout the country and internationally due to the creativity in writing patterns of rap verses.

In this article, fashionable is perceived as the importance and uniqueness of the writing patterns of hip-hop lyrics. Hip-hop is a popular style that brought changes in the understanding of cultural elements of language use and writing patterns. The narrative craft of *motswako* lyrics are influenced by modern lifestyles, and according to current trends and demographics that affect the standard forms of the language. For example, the writer's expressions, grammatical forms used, constructions and phonetic features all constitute the elements of creative writing. Satyo (2008) that young people create new words and do not follow traditional grammar and lexicography rules. Hence, this article examines language use and its impact on linguistic and cultural identities.

Nisphi and Armanto (2021) state that this type of creative use of language is technically known as language aberration. Aberration emphasises the modernity of the writer by characterising the multilingual and multicultural image of an individual. The argument is that creative writing in the South African lyrics breaks language rules and changes the behaviours of rappers in modern youth spaces. In the past, rappers were seen as violent people and drug addicts. Nowadays, rappers are perceived as positive influencers who can change the future.

Hip-hop emerged as a musical cultural force in identity formation and social status for the youth. Most scholars such as Mhlambi (2004), Perullo and Fenn (2003), Swartz (2008), Ditsele (2017) and Becker and Dastile (2008) emphasise the political development of young people, but do not mention much on their creativity in writing lyrics. Although some scholars (Satyo, 2008; Ditsele, 2017) have attempted to investigate the correlation between youth and music and lyrics, little attempt had been made to examine the orthography of their lyrics. Hence this article investigates how orthography (writing patterns) designed by the missionaries influenced the writing skills of *motswako* hip-hop lyrics. In the mid-2000s, HHP helped popularise the movement we see today.

To properly examine the possibility of creative writing skills in the indigenous languages, discourse analysis will be used to analyse how the lyricists played with words by crafting complex rhymes full of metaphor and alliteration and how concepts are given meaning and identities produced in

language use to improve the freestyling. The findings show that the lyricists encouraged young people to sing for an African audience as opposed to a Euro-African audience and to attempt to reach a wider audience in their country to promote Setswana culture.

### The history of *motswako* in South Africa

The early 1990s saw many changes in South African politics, economy, culture, and freedom of expression. The cosmopolitan nature of urban centres in South Africa makes their linguistic terrain highly intricate; for example, South African youth have the option of using different languages in different settings. The use of different languages might be influenced by the adoption of the Constitution of South Africa in 1996, where 12 languages were recognised as official languages. Hence, *motswako* rappers prefer to use language varieties to reach wider audiences and get the attention of young people by using English, Setswana and Tsotsitaal in their lyrics. Therefore, the lyrics provide a platform for language manipulation and deviation from conventional norms, triggering creativity in language use.

Setswana is the dominant language in the North-West province, particularly in Mahikeng where most rapping in Setswana started. The late HHP and Mo'Molemi are from Mahikeng where the language enjoys greater support and thus gained linguistic vitality. Many upcoming artists use hip-hop as a base to start their music careers because of its basic principle that a good *motswako* artist must learn creative writing skills so that the genre can be learnt and written easily. *Motswako* rappers touch on social issues, as a result the genre gained popularity. The late Hip Hop Pantsula basically applied Setswana rules in an English context to influence the nature and meaning of modern African's lives and experiences. On the other hand, Mo'Molemi took it further by using Setswana oral lore to deliver his sociopolitical themes. Furthermore, the youth have similar traits, irrespective of their origins, and the recognition of this sameness gives them a feeling of uniqueness in relation to other age groups. *Motswako* artists carry the burden of representing a unified notion of blackness. The idea of being burdened by generalised representations applies to the way blackness is historically defined as denying people individuality and agency. This notion stimulated the birth of *motswako* lyricists.

The late HHP is well known for using standard language rules of articulating Setswana words for English terms; this differs from other *motswako* artists who would adhere to the rules of the words used in their lyrics, like Kuli Chana who uses Setswana, Sesotho and slang/tsotsitaal alongside English words. Similarly, Mo'Molemi would use traditional Setswana words alongside English words. It is their awareness of uniqueness that allows them to acculturate fast and forsake their rural linguistic idiosyncrasies for urban or rural creative and coded varieties.

### Rationale

Hip-hop emerged as a musical and cultural force, carrying identity formation and social status for the youth in a community. Hip-hop associates itself with culture and language, unlike kwaito where young people did not

associate themselves with the rural life. Kwaito is seen as current and vibrant by young people and distances itself from the rural life. Young black people who adopt kwaito-speak do not want to be seen or classified as being 'rural' or 'backwards' and therefore employ this variety of language as an identity marker (Satyo, 2008). Escher and Rapport (2006: ix) state:

Hip-hop music has come a long way in the past 30 years. From back rooms and block parties in South Bronx in the late seventies to the golden age in the late eighties through gangsta rap in the nineties to today, where you can hear emcees rapping all over the world in dozens of languages. In Poland and Italy, in China and Korea, in India and Ghana, in Peru and Columbia, a whole generation has adopted hip-hop as their own. They are not just listening; they are writing rhymes too.

The adoption of hip-hop by a young generation shows that it is the voice of youth culture. Hip-hop music originated as an act of protest and ended up encouraging new creative writing skills where rappers break the boundaries of language, and locally promote South African indigenous languages. Hip-hop artists were not ashamed to be associated with rural life. According to Ditsele (2017), since the late 1990s *motswako* has become popular despite not originating in Johannesburg and without having grounded its lyrics in either Jozi Sotho or Jozi Zulu. In South Africa, a multilingual country, where Setswana and English are official languages, *motswako* hip-hop rappers code-mix these languages with other varieties to gain popularity and wider audiences. The late HHP brought creativity into writing his lyrics in *motswako* hip-hop to entice his audience. The lyricist plays with words. The role of this creative writing is to ensure that the audience better remembers the lyrics and transforms the music industry.

### Research methodology

This research focuses on creative writing patterns and how the meaning of concepts was used to gain popularity. Patterns in language emerge from the multiple interactions of its users as they make meaning and position themselves as they wish. Rappers use their own uniqueness in a specific context for a specific purpose. To properly examine the possibility of creative writing skills in indigenous languages, discourse analysis is used to analyse how the lyricists played with words by crafting complex rhymes full of metaphor and alliteration and how concepts are given meaning, and identities produced in language use to improve the freestyling. A qualitative approach is used as an interpretative approach to examine the specific meanings of concepts and language used in the style of various *motswako* lyrics.

According to Palmer and Bolderston (2006), qualitative research is an interpretative approach that attempts to gain insights into specific meanings and behaviours experienced in a certain social phenomenon. This approach is used to understand the style of writing *motswako* lyrics and how fashionable they are. This approach is applied to the writing patterns and language usage in literature perspectives and acquisition of vocabulary where all Setswana dialects and varieties are considered during examining the creative writing skills. Although, it was not easy to access researchable

information about creative writing in the hip-hop genre from a South African perspective, I managed to get relevant information from the website, journal articles, books and other newspapers which has been used as a secondary method to gather more information about the linguistic and cultural change brought about by hip-hop lyricists globally.

In the content analysis, some *motswako* lyrics from Jabulani 'HHP' Tsambo songs such as *Bosso ke mang?* ('Who is the boss?') and *Music and Lights*, and Molemi's song, *Manong* ('Vultures') were selected to examine and understand the creativity of these rappers. The intention was to find how their writing skills contribute to making Setswana fashionable and to what extent the use of hip-hop influences vocabulary acquisition and understanding of the language usage.

### Hip-hop, creative writing skills and its impacts

The use of Setswana as an example in *motswako* lyrics explores the language style in new lyrics with a view to understanding modern writing patterns that can be used in future.

#### South African orthography

Linguistically, according to Taljard and Bosch (2006), Northern Sotho and isiZulu are two South African Bantu languages that make use of different writing systems, namely a disjunctive and a conjunctive writing system respectively. The south-eastern Bantu languages are grouped together in language groups based on their similar grammatical structure and vocabulary, that is, the Nguni language group consists of isiZulu, isiXhosa, isiNdebele, and siSwati; and the Sotho language group consists of Sepedi (Northern Sotho), Setswana and Sesotho. Orthography is the writing pattern that makes use of an alphabet to present the sounds of the language. Therefore, comparison of orthography has been displayed to show how South African creative writing was influenced by the way the writing should look. *Motswako* lyrics show the linguistic confusion brought by the missionaries to Africa. *Motswako* lyrics seem to be influenced by these writing patterns where they used the writing patterns that look like the disjunctive orthography in Setswana music verses and conjunctive orthography in isiZulu music verses. For example, in *Manong* composed by Mo'Molemi.

#### Verse 1

- (1a) *Ba re monna ke selepe wa adimisanwa*  
'They say a man is an axe to be lent to other women'  
(1b) *Ga a itirele botsotsi o tshola ka leswana*  
'He is not fully cheating himself'

The words in *Manong* are written separately, while in the song *The way kungakhona* lyrics performed by Bongo Maffin (2008) shown below are not written separately (conjunctive orthography).

#### Verse 2

- (2a) *The way kungakhona*  
'The way things are'.  
(2b) *Ndinengqondo yokuthatha izinto zami ngingoduke.*  
'I have thoughts of taking my things and leaving'.

In (1a) and (1b) above, the disjunctive writing system, with which Setswana was bestowed, was like other Sotho family languages such as Sepedi and Sesotho. In (2a) and (2b) above, Nguni family languages were seen as a conjunctive type of word construction which brought full conjunctive writing to the Nguni language group (isiXhosa, isiZulu, isiNdebele, and siSwati). However, writing patterns diverge with respect to language use to local responses to broader historical forces in the region. What is important is that rappers were proud of their languages. *Motswako* rappers in (1a & b) use Setswana only, but in (2a) the rapper uses isiZulu and English. The process of language choice in *motswako* lyrics depicts rappers practice as functions of explicit and implicit language ideologies that underline social life. The *motswako* lyric adopts the disjunctive orthography where words are written separately. It has always been taken for granted that standardisation has a role to play in the writing system, but here it proves that the standard form that has been preached is not relevant as it shows that languages need each other to achieve a certain goal. HHP calls the genre *Tsw-English*, pronounced *tswee-ng-lishi* in Setswana.

### Language use

Perullo and Fenn (2003) point out that language ideologies are people's beliefs and interests concerning the structures and the use of language in social life. It seems that Hip Hop Pantsula was motivated by the way individuals use language in both music and more general social situations. *Motswako* gained acclaim for the ability of its artists to incorporate a South African language, Setswana, into hip-hop music without negating its Western sound. HHP, in his lyrics, developed a new phenomenon that does not have rules because the patterns vary according to the platform and situational context. Therefore, varieties of languages to code-mix Setswana with other languages were used to make hip-hop fashionable. For example (*Music and Lights* by HHP):

#### Verse 1

- (3a) *Oh check...*  
 (3b) *Ke le tlela ka GT, fly like serontabole (Yet)*  
 'I will bring you GT, Fly like an umbrella'  
 (3c) *Another hit like it's wonderful (Ke bothhale)*  
 'Another hit like it's wonderful (I am intelligent)'  
 (3d) *Beat you like a Flabba lebole (ke mokone)*  
 'Beat you like a strong fist (I am Mokone)'  
 (3e) *Make Tswana fashionable (Le mpone)*  
 'Make Tswana fashionable (watch me)'

In (3a) above, 'Oh check...', here the author pauses to allow the listeners to make their own decision. In (3b), some words are harvested from traditional indigenous colloquialism such as *serontabole* which means umbrella and derives from the word for round table. Traditional indigenous colloquialism is regarded as an unwritten lexicon. The words *mokone* and *serontabole* are normally used by elders. Most young people do not use them. Though some of the words do not appear in the Setswana monolingual dictionary, young people will make efforts to look up the meaning and use them in their lyrics. This creativity encourages young rappers to dig deep into

the Setswana vocabulary to spice up their lyrics. This acquisition of vocabulary by artists encourages young people to make efforts in learning Setswana terminologies and to respect their culture.

Phonologically, to illustrate the Setswana writing pattern, Setswana has two tones, that is, a low and a high tone, for example, the vowel *e* in (3d) *ke mokone* means 'I am Mokone' is a high tone for the first person. *Mokone* is a clan name that identifies a certain group of people. The rapper used this name to show that he belongs to a certain strong clan. It seems he was warning people not to take him for granted. This shows that HHP's lyrics in the *motswako* hip-hop genre crafted how the group would like to be perceived by society. The lyrics also lock certain people out of the conversation or even offend others.

Writing systems have rules for writing language that make use of the orthographical rules for that language. These rules are grouped to the development of a standard form of that language. In the case of hip-hop, the rules apply in a different way. See *Music and Lights* by HHP.

#### Verse 2

- (4a) *It's lekke, got bojwang ka seke*  
 'It is nice, I got grass with sickle'  
 (4b) *Chicks ba bang ba go tswa Pietersburg*  
 'Pretty girls or ladies from Pietersburg'  
 (4c) *Le nchecke, I got my cellphone back*  
 'Check on me, I got my cell phone back'  
 (4d) *Le ntracke, ke tladiitse seno ka Jack*  
 'Track me, I have filled a jug with drink'  
 (4e) *Le nthole, ko morago ga lori*  
 'Find me at the back of a truck'

The words used here are a mixture of languages. The words brought with them a system of word formation that is confusing, particularly for the custodians of the language but enjoyed by youth who understand them. For example, the lyricist used lexemes that are not found in the Setswana lexicon such as in (4a) '*lekke*' (slang from the Afrikaans word *lekker* meaning nice), in (4b) '*Chicks*' (sexist slang from English) meaning young girls, in (4c) '*nchecke*' (slang from English) meaning check on me, in (4d) '*ntracke*' (slang from English) meaning track me, and in (4e) '*nthole*' (Sesotho) meaning find me. In (4d), the word '*Jack*' is articulated as a noun used as polysemy, that is, a personal noun and also refers to Jack Daniels, a whiskey. It is important to note that in this discussion the lexicon used in the urban and non-standard varieties of Setswana and other indigenous languages point to the problem created by colonialism in separating the languages as standardised and dialect languages. Listening to these lyrics, the rapper articulates this word the way Setswana speakers pronounce it, lengthening the sounds in its articulation. The pronunciation like this is evidence of the mistakes made by the missionaries when writing the indigenous languages. They wrote what they heard from the speakers of the language. The issue of writing patterns led to discrimination of other languages perceived as dialects or speech varieties, for example, Serolong, Setlhaping, Setlokwa, Setlhako, Sehurutshe, Sengwato, Sekgatla and others are not considered standardised languages.

The exclusion of these languages means that they do not enjoy the privileges enjoyed by other official languages. *Motswako* lyricists used them in their lyrics to make them recognised and respected. Ignorance of these languages created problems in the writing, teaching, and learning of Setswana in a formal way.

Hip-hop culture has now been around for nearly three decades, moving from urban neighbourhoods in the Bronx across the USA and to other countries around the world, but linguists have only begun to document the language associated with it (Cutler, 2007:1). Ditsele (2017: 1) indicates that many South African music genres, such as bubblegum, kwaito and local Afro-pop, originate in Johannesburg and mainly use 'Jozi Sotho' or 'Jozi Zulu'. Rappers create new words and do not even follow traditional grammar and language rules. This is not different from *motswako* genre. The *motswako* genre gained popularity by breaking the language rules to increase the number of fans from the local population. The style of writing and the ways in which lyricists transform cultural and linguistic elements were noticed in Hip Hop Pantsula's and Mo'Molemi's lyrics. An example of Hip Hop Pantsula's lyrics (2011) is used to examine the style of writing.

*Bosso ke mang?* by HHP: Chorus

- (5a) *Bosso ke mang (K' wena)*  
'Who is the boss (It is you)'
- (5b) *Bosso ke mang (K' wena)*  
'Who is the boss (It is you)'
- (5c) *ke mang (K' wena)*  
'who is that (It is you)'  
[Verse 1]
- (6a) *Ba re bosso ke motho o spinang koloj asa e namela*  
'They say the boss is someone who spins a car without being in the driver's seat'
- (6b) *Ke ya go tshayela, asa e namela*  
'I am telling you not inside'
- (6c) *Ba re Bosso ke motho 'spinang koloj asa e namela*  
'They say boss is someone who spins a car without being in the driver's seat'
- (6d) *Ke ya go tshayela, asa e namela*  
'I am telling you not inside'
- (6e) *Ke moriski*  
'He is a risk taker'
- (6f) *Oja rice crispy ka whiskey, ka whiskey*  
'He eats rice crispies with whiskey, with whiskey'
- (6g) *Ja, ga uitsi*  
'Yes, you do not know'
- (6h) *Oja rice crispy ka whiskey, ja ga uitsi*  
'He eats rice crispies with whiskey, yes, you do not know'
- (6i) *Dai man ke moriski*  
'This man is a risk taker'

Though the late HHP used 'Tsw-English' in his lyrics, the lyrics capture a feeling of his experience and knowledge of both languages, Setswana, and English. The lyrics do not represent the writing pattern as expected in a standard form. HHP used his lyrics to gain popularity and market himself. The chorus shows how the lyricist infused

the Setswana rules by recognising all the dialects in lyrics to make Setswana a trendsetter. Like, the word in (6h) above, *oja* ('eats'), the standard form is written separately as *o ja* ('eats') and '*ga uitsi*' (You do not know) the correct standard form is '*ga o itse*' (You do not know). Linguistically, the word *oja* here is written as one word. It is classified as conjunctive orthography, which is unacceptable in Setswana orthography. The word *uitsi* is incorrectly pronounced, but in correct standard form is pronounced as *o itse* and written separately in disjunctive orthography. The lyric is for the ear of the audience, the writer is the centre of his audience, and he used rhyme and metaphor to fashion his lyrics. This indicates that written language is influenced by spoken language.

In (6d) above, *tshayela* means 'I am telling you'. The word 'tshayela' is not used in Setswana standard form but it is used in South African townships as a spoken language (*Kasi*, as in the language from the '*lokasie*' 'location' [township]). Ditsele (2017) indicates that it should be noted that Setswana in this context includes its standard variety, in addition to non-standard (or colloquial) varieties. Linguistically, the standard form *tšhaela* in Setswana is correct because Setswana uses the graphemes *š* and *tšh* as a phonological condition. Therefore, HHP broke the bridge of orthography by adopting his stylistic selection of words and used spoken language to represent current popular music that resulted in an increased following. *Motswako* lyricists use the language as a form of identity.

### Fashionable style

The article explores other styles of writing which are used creatively to speak directly to the youth to address the social and cultural issues pertaining to them. Wentink (2023) states that rhyme can take place in different places within a verse. *Motswako* lyricists infuse rhymes with metaphors in multiple languages. Escher and Rappaport (2006) mention that perfect rhyme is the rhyme in which the final accented vowels and all succeeding consonants or syllables are identical, while the preceding consonants are different. Rhyming in hip-hop music is built upon two main pillars of (1) storytelling and (2) using similar sounding words as a tool to make the story more musically appealing. Here are the examples of rhyming:

In Bosso lyrics above:

- (6f) *Oja rice crispy ka whiskey, ka whiskey*  
'He eats rice crispies with whiskey, with whiskey'
- (6g) *Ja, ga uitsi*  
'Yes, you do not know'

In (6f) and (6g) above, HHP makes the language fashionable by creating the rhyme in using the English word 'whiskey' to rhyme with word that looks like the Setswana word *uitsi* that is wrongly spelled because in Setswana it should be written as *ga o itse* 'You do not know' not *ga uitsi*, but with the same meaning as *ga o itse*. HHP claimed that his creativity in writing lyrics made Setswana fashionable. The article finds that making Setswana fashionable basically is opening a can of worms by attacking Setswana

grammatical rules. But for African youth, this to some extent influenced and shaped the way they identified themselves.

In stanza (1a) from *Manong* by Mo'Molemi, proverbs are used to gain popularity, for example, *Ba re monna ke selepe wa adimisanwa* 'They say a man is an axe to be lent to other women'. *Monna* 'man' is being referred to as a tool that can be used by any woman. An axe is a tool that is normally used to cut or shape wood, or as a weapon. The lyricist used this metaphor to compare *monna* 'a man' with *selepe* 'an axe'. Culturally, the women should not ask men where they come from or their whereabouts. This proverb encourages man's dominance and superiority but here the rapper chooses it to show how the Batswana culture can be manipulative. Although, Mo'Molemi in *Manong* knows very well that this proverb is used traditionally as manipulative language, he uses it to impress his followers and for his lyrics to attract the youth as an audience. In turn, this promotes Setswana. Therefore, young rappers will learn proverbs in their indigenous languages for creative expression. Possa and Makgopa (2010) and Mogapi (1998) claim that proverbs are meant to teach moral lessons, shape society and are more interesting and vibrant because they reflect the accumulation of human experiences and demonstrate human experiences that are built on frequently occurring situations of human behaviour or tradition in a country.

Morule (Mo'Molemi), unlike HHP, in *Manong* tried to minimise the non-standard varieties by employing figurative language to influence the audience to understand his lyrics and use a standard writing format, though he mixed Setswana and English in some of the lyrics. *Manong* 'Vultures' is associated with the proverb *Manong a ja ka ditshika* 'Vultures eat with their blood relations'. This is similar to the English saying, 'Birds of a feather flock together'. The proverb has unifying elements among the Batswana because it contains principles that meaningfully guide, counsel, and influence their behaviour. Mo'Molemi's creativity is noticed in his artistic style of choosing words, omission, syntax, and the expression that he uses in his figurative language. This is confirmed by the word *manong* in his lyrics. The word *manong* in Setswana shows how society determines ways of survival that should be transferred to posterity and ensure social control, group thinking and continuity. Mo'Molemi knows and understands this proverb very well and crafted it carefully to attract his audience. The lyrics used by Mo'Molemi confirm that the Batswana as a nation have forms of communication that are peculiar to them.

## The findings

*Motswako* is characterised by its unique creative writing skills and production of poetic style. The creative writing skills in *motswako* are a fashionable phenomenon which is directly connected to the language use and selection of vocabulary. This creative writing represents a unified notion of blackness where the South African indigenous languages do not enjoy the same status as English. *Motswako* music often involves a fusion of languages, with artists incorporating Setswana, English and sometimes other South African languages into their lyrics. The hip-hop lyricists use English to boost the status of their languages. They use code-switching and code-mixing of languages to make their lyrics fashionable.

HHP often incorporates traditional African rhythms, percussion instruments and melodic elements into the music to create a sound that resonates with both hip-hop and local musical influences. This linguistic diversity is a key characteristic of the genre.

What makes Setswana fashionable is the modernity emphasised by Hip Hop Pantsula in borrowing words from other languages and integrating them into his own language. For example, HHP mingled Setswana and English to capture a feeling of his experience with both languages and infused the rhymes with metaphors in multiple languages such as slang, Setswana, English, Sesotho, and other languages, breaking the standard rules. Mo'Molemi employed a poetic style as in traditional teaching. Mo'Molemi used figurative language in a stylistic form, not changing much in standard form but making the language fashionable. Although, *motswako* hip-hop artists learn how to write perfect lyrics, this does not stop them from code-mixing languages. In the case of the use of words in their lyrics, the analysis shows that the acquisition of vocabulary from traditional indigenous colloquialisms such as *serontabole* ('umbrella') which derives from the word round table in English, and *mokone* (clan name), *manong* (vultures) from the Setswana proverb *manong a ja ka ditshika* 'birds of a feather flock together'. The conjunctive and disjunctive orthographies designed by the missionaries did not influence the construction of the *motswako* lyrics. It looks as if Setswana orthography as displayed by hip-hop seems to be influenced by online grammar where electronic communication breaks the correct language. Therefore, *motswako* lyrics confirm the linguistic orientation of Setswana, including standard and non-standard speech varieties and English.

## Conclusion

*Motswako* lyrics provide a platform for language change and deviation from conventional norms and thus trigger creativity in the writing patterns of Setswana. Rapping in local vernacular makes the music accessible to most people and allows the music to reflect the language and culture of the region. As far as the modern writing skills of hip-hop restructure the process of mediation and the construction of meaning, there are no exceptions in their writing patterns. Hip-hop rappers reformulated writing mechanisms not only because of the new techniques per se, but also because of the attachment of cultural identity. Hip-hop lyrics maximise the process in which speech and writing were separated and redistributed in different time-space configurations, and therefore serve as an ideal site for examining writing's social function and the writing subjectivities that were created under the new social relations. These creative writing skills need to be scrutinised, like how do people perceive the writing pattern of South African languages. For a language to be developed, it needs to change with the times and *motswako* lyricists help promote and develop indigenous languages.

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