

# INTERROGATING MOSES SAKALA'S FUNERAL SONG, 'CHOBABA': SOME DISCOURSE INSIGHTS

Naomi Njobvu, Kelvin Mambwe and Hambaba Jimaima

*University of Zambia*

## **Abstract**

*Funeral songs are a type of discourse commonly played or sung by Africans and Zambians in particular, to celebrate the memory of the dead. The songs could also be used to evoke emotive responses. 'Chobaba', is a typical Cinyanja funeral song composed and played by Moses Sakala, one of Zambia's famous musician. This song was composed following the passing on of Levy Sakala, Moses' once long time music partner. The main aim of this study is to conduct a discourse analysis of Moses Sakala's tribute song to his friend titled Chobaba 'pain' to show how language is constructed and represented to demonstrate pain, grief, and love. The study also aims at analysing how, by the same token, the song provides emotional release, honour the memory of the deceased, and offer comfort and support to the bereaved. Ultimately, the article demonstrates how funeral songs can capture the essence of the human experience of pain. The analysis identifies four themes, which include pain as a collective experience, pain as a personal struggle, the need for spiritual guidance, and hope and comfort. These themes provide insights into how human beings come to terms with pain resulting from death and how they are able to comfort themselves by invoking spiritual intervention in their experience with pain.*

**Keywords:** Funeral Song, Discourse Analysis, Music, Pain, Death

## **Introduction**

Funeral songs or dirges have been an integral part of the Zambian culture for centuries. These songs are significant because they help mourners to express their emotions and share their grief with others (Mukuka, 2020). Although funeral songs play a crucial role in Zambian cultural tradition, few studies have been conducted to explore how language in use portrays love, grief and pain in the Zambian funeral songs. The main aim of this study is to conduct a discourse analysis of Moses Sakala's tribute song to his friend and former music associate, Levy Sakala, titled *Chobaba* 'pain' to show how language is constructed and represented to demonstrate pain, grief, love, and how it provides emotional release, honour the memory of the deceased, and offer comfort and support to the bereaved. Specifically, the study aims at answering the following question: How do funeral songs use language to express grief, comfort the bereaved, and celebrate the life of the deceased in Cinyanja? By addressing the question, this article aims at contributing to a better understanding of the linguistic, cultural, and social significance of funeral songs in Zambia and their role in shaping the discourse surrounding death and mourning.

Moses Sakala and Levy Sakala formed a music duo famously known as *Sakala Brothers musical group* in the mid-1990s. The duo was often mistaken for biological brothers mainly due to their shared surname, 'Sakala'. The two met in one of Lusaka's popular township called Matero while at Matero Boys Secondary School in the mid-1980s and began working together as a music duo after completing their secondary education. They rose to fame with their first song titled 'kumawa' under the name Moses and Levy. Later, they changed their name to Sakala Boys before becoming Sakala Brothers in the mid-2000. They recorded successes at home and abroad before splitting after 25 years of working together. The duo were popular for performing traditional Zambian music mainly from the Eastern Province of Zambia. Their songs were accompanied by sounds from modern musical instruments. A few years following their split, Levy Sakala passed on. The passing of Levy led to the composition of *Chobaba*, a tribute from his former partner, to celebrate the shared longtime friendship and partnership. It is this song that is the focus of the analysis in this article. The analysis of the song has revealed four themes namely; pain as a collective experience, pain as a personal struggle, the need for spiritual guidance, and hope and comfort. These are discussed in Section 5 of this article.

### **Empirical Review-discourse of Funeral Songs**

Funeral songs have been studied in various parts of the world. The analysis of funeral songs in the case of Johnson (1998); Yamamoto (2017); Atoh (2017); Emmanuel and Jamila (2013); Nketia (1974); Zulu (2015); Chuba (1995) and Kapoma (2017) has been revealing. In all the studies, the analysis brings into the spotlight the complex nature of funeral songs as conveyers of emotions, honour, ideologies and intergenerational transfers of cultures that relate to funeral rites.

This study leans on those that employed discourse analysis to analyse funeral songs. For example, Johnson (1998) conducted a discourse analysis of funeral songs in the African-American community. Her study revealed ways in which these songs were used to express communal grief and resilience, as well as how they reflected the historical and cultural experiences of African Americans. In his work in Japan, Yamamoto (2017) reveals that funeral songs can be used to express a sense of continuity with the deceased, and that they establish social bonds among the bereaved and the broader community. This is in tandem with Ramshaw (2008) who notes that funeral songs are a way for mourners to express their emotions and come together as a community in mourning. For Koloko (2012:13), funeral songs help to create an atmosphere of mourning, allowing the mourners to collectively express their sorrow and pay tribute to the deceased. Thus, funeral songs are used to express grief and honour the deceased.

One study that used discourse analysis to examine African dirges is by Atoh (2017). In this study, Atoh reveals the discourse strategies which the singer uses to communicate with his audience among the Luo people of Kenya. He avers that dirges often use metaphorical language and imagery to convey complex emotions related to death and grief. This implies that dirges often reflect the social and cultural values of the communities in which they are produced (see also Ohwovoriole, 2012).

In their work on rhetorical devices, in two songs of the Kilba People of Adamawa State in Nigeria, Emmanuel and Jamila (2013) explain that dirges and funeral orations often use rhetorical devices such as repetition and parallelism to create a sense of unity and shared grief among mourners. This is in consonant with Nwosu (2019) who argues that funeral songs help create a sense of community and connection among the mourners, helping them to feel less alone in their grief.

The centrality of dirges in works that focus on discourse analysis in Africa is further brought into the spotlight in the study by Nketia (1974). By implicating the language and themes of dirges among the Akan people of Uganda, Nketia attempts to show how language and themes in dirges intersect to express grief and social commentary. The authors found that dirges in the Akan culture often use stylistic devices and idioms to communicate.

While there is limited literature specifically focused on the analysis of Zambian dirges using discourse analysis, there are a few studies that have used other methods to examine the language and themes of dirges in Zambia. One such study is by Zulu (2015), who analysed themes and functions of dirges in society. In this study, Zulu used a combination of ethnographic research and literary analysis to examine the themes and functions of dirges in Zambia. The author found that dirges are an important means of expressing grief and honouring the dead, as well as a way of transmitting cultural knowledge and values from one generation to the next.

Zulu's (2015) study was preceded by Chuba's (1995) work, which problematises proverbs and dirges from various African cultures, including Zambia, to demonstrate the ways in which language is used to convey ideology and social commentary. Thus, he notes that dirges in Zambia often use metaphorical language and imagery to convey complex emotions related to death and grief, as well as social and political commentary.

The thematic connectedness in Zambian works on dirges is further implicated in Kapoma's (2017) work on Bemba dirges who used literary analysis to examine the language and themes of Bemba dirges in Zambia. Kapoma explains that Bemba dirges often reflect the social and economic realities of the community in which they are produced, including the impact of colonialism and globalisation on traditional cultural practices. As demonstrated so far, there is a dearth in literature on Zambian dirges focusing on the use of discourse analysis. This article, therefore, endeavours to use discourse analysis to analyse the Cinyanja song, *Chobaba*.

In the next section, the theoretical principles of discourse analysis as a theoretical framework are discussed.

## **Theoretical Issues**

The theoretical principle undergirding the analysis of this article is based on the theory and analytical framework of discourse analysis, which is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of language and communication. As a branch of linguistics, it deals with the study and application of approaches to analyse written, spoken or signed language (Cook, 1989). In other words, discourse analysis is the analysis of language in use in social contexts. It is a multi-disciplinary approach that has its roots in linguistics, sociology, psychology, anthropology, and philosophy. Stubbs

(1983) uses the term discourse analysis to refer mainly to the linguistic analysis of naturally occurring, connected spoken or written discourse (see also, Njobvu, 2010).

According to Fairclough (2003:4), discourse analysis ‘involves investigating how social practices, events, and phenomena are represented, constructed, and negotiated through language’. In other words, discourse analysis aims at understanding how language is used to create meaning, power relations, and identities in specific social and cultural contexts. For Fairclough (2013), discourse analysis deals with language use from the social and cultural dimensions of communication. It also investigates how language is used to enact social practices and how these practices are shaped by language. By analysing language use, discourse analysis can help us understand how social relationships are constructed through the funeral songs. One of the key concepts in discourse analysis is the notion of discourse itself. Discourse, according to Jørgensen and Phillips (2002:2) refers to a particular way in which the world is represented in talk as it relates to social practices and power relations.

Therefore, discourse is not just about language use, but also about the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which it is used. Context refers to the social and cultural conditions in which language use occurs, including factors such as power relations, social norms, historical and political events, and the identities of the participants (Gee, 2010). Discourse analysis, thus, seeks to understand how language use is shaped and how it shapes the context in which it occurs. Van Dijk (1997) emphasises the role of power in discourse analysis and states that the study of language use must take into account the power relations that exist between participants, and that these power relations can be revealed through the analysis of language use. In the context of funeral songs, this perspective can help to uncover the ways in which power is negotiated among the bereaved, the deceased, and the broader community.

Ochs and Capps (2001) focus on narrative practices and how individuals use narrative to construct and communicate their identities and experiences in specific interactions such as the singing at funerals. Ochs and Capps argue that discourse analysis provides a means to study how language is used to construct meaning and emotion in cultural contexts. In the case of funeral songs, Ochs and Capps suggest that these songs can reveal cultural beliefs and values about death, as well as provide comfort to the bereaved. This argument is enhanced by Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995) who emphasise the importance of analysing the social and cultural context of discourse. Widdicombe and Wooffitt’s argument is centred on the idea of positioning, which refers to how individuals construct their identities and social roles through language use in interaction with others.

According to Widdicombe and Wooffitt, positioning involves a process of negotiation in which individuals draw on cultural resources such as shared narratives, discursive practices, and social categories to establish and maintain their positions in relation to others. In the context of funeral songs, individuals use language to position themselves and others as mourners, family members, community members, and as part of broader cultural and historical narratives.

The use of discourse analysis as a theoretical framework for the analysis of songs has become increasingly popular in recent years. Scholars have employed discourse analysis to examine

various aspects of songs, including their lyrics, melodies, and rhythms. In the following section, we will explain the methods used to collect and analyse the funeral song.

## Methodology

The study employed qualitative approach to collect data. The main source of the data used in this article was the song *Chobaba*. The song was transcribed verbatim for easy of analysis. The authors also reviewed relevant literature on funeral songs in order to deepen their understanding of such songs and the theories used in analysing them.

Since discourse analysis is a qualitative research method used to study language in use, it was used to analyse the funeral song. This method involves analysing the language and social context surrounding the funeral song. By using this research approach, social norms and practices associated with the song were examined. This approach helps to identify the cultural values and beliefs that are embedded within the song.

## Analysis of the Song

This section presents and discusses the song under study. The song *Chobaba* features a fusion of different styles, blending traditional Zambia rhythms with modern electronic beats. The song's lyrics are sung in Cinyanja, one of the official languages in Zambia as presented below:

### Chobaba

- |                           |                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. <i>Chobaba Chobaba</i> | Pain, pain, pain (death) |
| <i>Chobaba Chobaba</i>    | Pain, pain, pain (death) |

### Chorus

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 2. <i>Anzanga chobaba</i>                    | My friends pain (death)            |
| 3. <i>Anzanga chobaba</i>                    | My friends pain (death)            |
| 4. <i>Ku Lusaka, ciliko</i>                  | It is there in Lusaka              |
| 5. <i>Ku Migodi ciliko</i>                   | It is there on the Copperbelt      |
| 6. <i>Ku Ulaya ciliko</i>                    | It is there in Europe              |
| 7. <i>Konse, konse ciliko</i>                | Everywhere, it is there            |
| 8. <i>Caipira mabvuto tele, aye, aye</i>     | The loss is so saddening           |
| 9. <i>Caona ine anzanga, chobaba</i>         | Death has befallen me, my friends  |
| 10. <i>Caipira mabvuto tele, aye, aye</i>    | The loss is saddening              |
| 11. <i>Caona ine anzanga, chobaba</i>        | Death has befallen me, my friends  |
| 12. <i>Nzeru ndimphavu zanga, zacepekela</i> | My intellect and strength are weak |
| 13. <i>Niyangana, kwanu mbuye</i>            | I look up to you God               |
| 14. <i>Kulibe cholepheleka, kwa inu</i>      | Nothing is impossible with you     |

- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 15. <i>Ndipelekeni kutali ndi nkhondo yii</i>  | Spare me from this battle        |
| 16. <i>Ndimasuleni mbuye</i>                   | Release me God                   |
| 17. <i>Mubweletse kuwala pali mtima</i>        | Bring light to the heart         |
| 18. <i>Cipangano canu cosatha</i>              | Everlasting promise              |
| 19. <i>Munandilenga ndinu</i>                  | You created me                   |
| 20. <i>Caipila mabvuto tele, aye aye, aye</i>  | The loss is saddening            |
| 21. <i>Caona ine azanga cobaba</i>             | Death has befallen me my friends |
|  |                                  |
| 22. <i>Caipila mabvuto tele, aye, aye, aye</i> | The loss is saddening            |
| 23. <i>Caona ine anzanga, cobaba</i>           | Death has befallen me my friends |

The song is centred on the theme of pain and grief of a loved one and features modern musical instrumentation, while maintaining the *Zambian* traditional tune.

This blending of traditional and modern elements is reflective of *Zambia's* unique cultural heritage and its increasing integration into the global music scene. However, the analysis will only focus on the lyrics and the social context in which they were produced. The analysis will follow discourse analytical framework.

Different lines of the song will be presented to discuss the different themes emanating from the song. The song has been numbered for easy reference when analysing it and the following sections discuss the themes that have emerged from the analysis of the song:

### **Pain in Death**

Pain is a common theme in funeral songs as it represents the deep sorrow and grief that one feels when they lose a loved one. According to Finnegan (2007), the experience of pain and grief is not universal and can vary depending on cultural and individual factors. She, however, highlights the important role that music and cultural practices can play in helping individuals navigate the pain and grief of losing a loved one. In the song *Chobaba*, the concept of pain is first expressed in the title of the song, *Chobaba*, which literally means ‘pain’. Titles are generally important devices for establishing a topic because they usually create expectations in the receiver to understand the text. Therefore, the title, ‘*Chobaba*’ summarises the entire song. In line 1, the same word *Chobaba* is repeated two times as below:

- |                           |              |                    |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| 1. <i>Chobaba chobaba</i> | Pain, pain   | (literal meaning)  |
|                           | Death, death | (intended meaning) |

In the above line of the song, the term death has not been explicitly presented. It is camouflaged in the word *chobaba*, ‘pain’. The repetition of the noun *Chobaba* throughout the song is a key feature of the discourse. As Emmanuel and Jamila (2013) note, repetition can be used to reinforce the message that is being communicated. In ‘*Chobaba*’ the repeated use of the word *chobaba* serves to honour the memory of the person being eulogised and to emphasise the emotional impact of the loss on the singer.

Another key feature of the discourse in ‘*Chobaba*’ is the metaphoric representation of death by the noun *chobaba*, ‘the pain’, which is repeated in most of the lines throughout the song. As Lakoff and Johnson (2008: 239) note, the use of the ‘metaphor shapes our thoughts and actions’. In the song, the metaphor of ‘*Chobaba*’, which literary means ‘pain’ refers to ‘death’ in Cinyanja. The selection of the word *Chobaba* in the song is used to describe the nature of the relationship between the artist and the person being eulogised.

The theme pain has been expressed at three different levels of experiences in the song. These are collective experience, personal struggle and suffering discussed in subsequent subsections.

### *Pain as Collective Experience*

In the song ‘*Chobaba*’ the collective experience of pain has been expressed in the way language has been used in lines 2 and 3 as shown below to depict death.

- |                           |                              |                    |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 2. <i>Azanga chobaba</i>  | My friends, pain             | (literal meaning)  |
|                           | The pain of death my friends | (intended meaning) |
| 3. <i>Anzanga chobaba</i> | My friends, the pain         | (literal meaning)  |
|                           | The pain of death my friends | (intended meaning) |

In lines 2 and 3, the use of the expression *azanga chobaba* literally meaning ‘my friends, the pain’, creates a sense of community between the artist and the listener, as they share in the experience of mourning. The repetition of the word *chobaba* and the phrase *azanga chobaba* ‘my friends, the pain’ throughout the song creates a sense of urgency and emphasises the pervasive nature of pain and loss. The use of the word ‘friends’ suggests a shared experience of pain, as if the singer is speaking to a group of people who are all going through the same thing.

Further, the combination of the metaphor *chobaba*, ‘the pain’ and *azanga*, ‘my friends’ in line 2 and 3 creates a sense of affection between the artist and the listeners, as they are invited to share in the artist’s personal relationship with the deceased. Additionally, the use of *azanga chobaba*, ‘my friends, the pain’ seems to be a call-and-response. Considering that discourse analysis deals with language in use, to create meaning, the use of repetition, metaphor, and call-and-response creates a particular discourse that reinforces the emotional message of the song and connects the artist and the listeners in a shared experience of grief, which is the social context - the communal nature of mourning among the Nyanja speaking people. The repeated reference of *azanga chobaba* as a chorus invites the listener to join in the mourning process and it creates a sense of solidarity between the artist and the audience (see Gumperz, 1982).

In lines 4, 5 and 6, there is a predominant reference to places. In line 4, the artist uses Lusaka, which is a capital city of Zambia, a cosmopolitan environment. People from all walks of life have settled in this place either for work or to conduct business. Another place that has been referred to is *kumigodi*, ‘the mines’ (line 5) which is another region in Zambia called the Copperbelt, which is the heart of Zambia’s mining activities. Due to the mines, people from different parts of the country and the neighbouring countries have settled there. The song also refers to the pain

associated with death to be found in Europe ‘*ku ulaya*’ in line 6. To show collective experience of pain in all these places, *konse, konse* ‘everywhere’ has been used in line 7 to refer to the shared experience of pain in death and the role played by society as in the lyrics below.

- |                                |                            |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 4. <i>Ku Lusaka, ciliko</i>    | In Lusaka, it is there     |
| 5. <i>Kumigodi ciliko</i>      | On Copperbelt, it is there |
| 6. <i>Ku Ulaya ciliko</i>      | In Europe, it is there     |
| 7. <i>Konse, konse ciliko</i>  | Everywhere, it is there    |
| 8. <i>Caipila mabvuto tele</i> | The loss is so saddening   |

The specific references to Lusaka, Copperbelt and Ulaya suggest that the pain and loss described in the song is not an isolated incident, but rather that it is a shared experience among the people in the city and overseas. The expression ‘everywhere’ in line 7, suggests the fact that the pain of death is also part of a larger universal problem. Pain is also expressed in line 8. *Caipila mabvuto tele* ‘the loss is saddening’ provides a brief moment of reflection, acknowledging the emotional weight of the pain and loss being described. This theme highlights the idea that pain and struggle are not isolated experiences but are instead shared by many people.

### ***Pain as Personal Struggle***

While the concept of pain is used to convey a collective experience as explained above, it is also used to describe personal struggle and hardship. This is demonstrated in lines 9 to 11 of the song as presented below.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 9. <i>Caona ine anzanga, chobaba</i>       | The pain (death) has befallen me, my friends |
| 10. <i>Caipira mabvuto tele, aye, aye,</i> | The loss is so saddening                     |
| 11. <i>Caona ine anzanga cobaba,</i>       | The pain (death) has befallen me, my friends |

In the lyrics of the song, the artist expresses a deeper personal struggle due to the death experience particularly given the long working and cordial relationship that the two had shared before splitting. The use of the expression *caona ine anzanga chobaba* ‘death has befallen me, my friends’ in lines 9 and 11 of the song, suggests that pain is not only a collective experience but also a deeply personal one. The repetition of the phrase ‘the loss is saddening’ reinforces the emotional weight of the pain and loss being described. This theme emphasises the idea that even in the midst of shared hardship, individuals may still experience personal struggles and challenges. Further, the personal struggle of pain and the plea to be spared from death is also expressed in lines 15 and 16.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 15. <i>Ndipelekeni kutali ndi nkhondoyi</i> | Spare me from this battle (actual meaning) |
| 16. <i>Ndimasuleni mbuye</i>                | Release me God (actual meaning)            |

Line 15, *ndipelekeni kutali ndi nkhondoyi*, ‘spare me from this battle’ suggests that the artist is going through a difficult and trying time. The phrase ‘battle’ can be interpreted as a metaphor for



the struggles and challenges that the speaker is facing in life. Suffering is a recurring motif in the song *Chobaba* as evidenced by the repeated use of the word *chobaba* (pain) throughout the lyrics. In line 16, *ndimasuleni mbuye*, ‘release me God’ also suggests personal struggles and the desire for freedom and peace.

Overall, the use of the concept of ‘pain’ in the song *Chobaba* serves to convey a sense of collective struggle and shared grief and also personal pain. It also highlights the need for empathy and compassion in the face of hardship. Another theme noted in the song relates to the need to seek supernatural guidance.

### Need for Spiritual Guidance

Spiritual guidance is an important aspect to Zambians and the Nyanja speaking people, in particular. Whenever there is death, prayers are usually offered, while songs of comfort and hope are sung at the funeral house. To this effect, the song ‘*Chobaba*’ also emphasises the importance of faith and spirituality in providing comfort and guidance in the face of difficult circumstances as expressed in the lyrics below (lines 12-15 and 19).

12.	<i>Nzeru ndimphavu zanga, zacepekela</i>	My intelligence and strength are weak
13.	<i>Niyangana, kwanu mbuye,</i>	I look up to you God
14.	<i>Kulibe colepheleka, kwa inu</i>	Nothing is impossible with you
15.	<i>Cipangano canu cosatha</i>	Everlasting promise
19.	<i>Munandilenga ndinu</i>	You created me

The lyrics in line 12, *nzeru ndimphavu zanga, zacepekela*, ‘my wisdom and strength are weak’, in line 13, *niyangana, kwanu mbuye*, ‘I look up to you, God’ suggest a need for spiritual guidance and support in the face of this difficult time. The reference also to, *kulibe colepheleka, kwa inu*, ‘nothing is impossible with you’ in line 14, *cipangano canu cosatha* ‘your everlasting promise’ in line 15 and *munandilenga ndinu* ‘you created me’ and in line 19, emphasise the role of faith in providing hope and comfort. This theme highlights the idea that spirituality can provide a source of strength and resilience in the face of adversity. It also resonates with shared spirituality in a largely Christian nation.

### Hope and Comfort

While the song generally underlines the experience of pain and grief, it also emphasises the importance of hope and comfort. This is expressed in line 17 *mubweletse kuwala pali mtima*, ‘bring light to the heart’, which suggests the need for emotional comfort, while line 14, *kulibe colepheleka kwa inu* ‘nothing is impossible with you’, emphasises the importance of hope and optimism when death takes its toll on one’s life. This theme highlights the idea that even in the face of difficult circumstances, hope and comfort can provide a source of strength and resilience as presented in the lyrics below.

- |     |                                     |                                |
|-----|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 17. | <i>Mubweletse kuwala pali mtima</i> | Bring light to the heart       |
| 14. | <i>Kulibe colepheleka kwa inu</i>   | Nothing is impossible with you |
| 19. | <i>Munandilenga ndinu</i>           | You created me                 |

Further, in line 19, the lyrics *munandilenga ndinu*, ‘you created me’ suggest the everlasting promise of God’s help and protection and the confirmation of God being the source of life. This stresses the role of faith and spirituality in providing a sense of comfort and hope during the time of pain.

## Conclusion

The analytical and theoretical approach of discourse analysis has been used to analyse the song ‘*Chobaba*’ by examining the way language is used to create meaning and social relationships. The article has shown how the use of repetition, metaphor, and call-and-response serves to reinforce the emotional message of the song and connect the artist and the listener in a shared experience of grief.

Zambian funeral songs are an essential part of funeral rites in Zambia, reflecting the country’s rich cultural heritage and providing comfort to mourners. The study of the funeral song *Chobaba* has significant implications for understanding the Cinyanja speakers’ cultural and social dynamics. The article informs that funeral songs also play a critical role in the process of mourning and bereavement and providing comfort and support to mourners during a difficult time.

A discourse analysis of the song has established four themes emanating from the song *Chobaba*. These are pain as a collective experience, pain as personal struggle, the need for spiritual guidance, and hope and comfort for the bereaved. We, therefore, argue that funeral songs when read as discourse, orient towards the three multi-dimensions of meaning – ideational, interpersonal and textual. The ideational aspect of the song highlights the collective experience of grief, pain and loss contained in a song; the interpersonal aspect resonates with shared relationships. The use of such phrases as *anzanga chobaba* potentiates the interpersonal meanings, which exist among the community of practice.

Finally, the textual meaning of the funeral songs is encased in the overall composition of the song, which in this article was taken as a discourse text. Each expression in the song constitutes a text amenable to create differing sheds of meanings to the overall mourning process. It is important, therefore, to underscore here that the textual meaning of the song *Chobaba* is created by drawing on shared experiences and allusion to the fact that death is not just locale, but a phenomenon experienced in polities such as Lusaka and the Copperbelt. Arguably, this reference to cities lifts pain from the confines of homes and makes it a notion of universal reach.

As has been demonstrated above, the funeral songs are discursively packed with historical and cultural knowledge of the people and seek to honour the departed in their attributive sense. These ideas, including the idea of pain, grief, and loss, are shared by the bereaved and those that come to provide comfort.

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