

**A Critical Study of the Contemporary Practice of  
Ululation (Ukukikiza) and its Current Social and  
Cultural Values Among the Zulus**

By

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(i)

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my children Nokuthula, Sifiso, Nombuso and my grandson Mthokozisi who endured tremendous inconvenience when I was working on this study.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	TOPIC	PAGE
<b>CHAPTER 1</b>		
1.0	Introduction	1
1.1	Aim of this Study	5
1.2	Statement of Problem	6
1.3	Motivation	9
1.4	Definition of Terms	10
1.4.1	Overview	10
1.4.2	Ancestor	11
1.4.3	Ancestor Worship	13
1.4.4	The anagnatic structure	14
1.4.5	Ululator (Umkikizi)	16
1.4.6	Ululation (umkikizo)	18
1.4.7	Traditional beliefs	19
1.4.8	African Societies	20
1.4.9	Folklore	21
1.5	Scope of the study	22
1.6	Conclusion	24
<b>CHAPTER 2</b>		
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORIES</b>		
2.0	Introduction	27
2.1	Literature Review	28
2.2	Literary Theories	39
2.2.1	Western Literary Theories	41

(iv)

2.2.1.1	Russian Formalism	42
2.2.1.2	Feminism	47
2.2.1.3	Structuralism	51
2.2.1.4	Structuralist Theories and Propp. (1958)	57
2.2.1.5	Syntactic distribution of words in ululation	60
2.2.1.6	Ease of effort theories.	61
2.2.1.7	The phonetic aspect of ululation	63
2.2.1.8	Action of characters	66
2.2.1.9	Charles Darwin's theory (1937)	67
2.2.1.10	Variation and ululation	68
2.2.1.11	Heredity and ululation	68
2.2.1.12	Struggle for existence	68
2.2.1.13	Conclusion	69

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **METHODOLOGY AND FIELDWORK**

3.0	Introduction	71
3.1	Phenomenological research method	72
3.2	Qualitative method	78
3.2.1	Descriptive survey method	78
3.2.1.1	Case Study	79
3.2.1.2	Field study method	83
3.2.1.3	Participant observation	85
3.2.1.4	Interviewing	88
3.2.1.5	Snowball method	89
3.2.1.6	Questionnaire	90
3.2.1.7	An inventory	91
3.2.1.8	The experimental method	96
3.2.1.9	The causal comparative method	97
3.2.1.10	Historical method	98
3.3	Quantitative research	99
3.3.1	Analytical survey	100

3.3.2	The language of numerals	100
3.3.3	Trilateration	101
3.3.4	Sampling	103
3.3.4.1	Urban areas	104
3.3.4.1.1	KwaDlangezwa	104
3.3.4.1.2	Esikhawini	104
3.3.4.2	Rural areas	105
3.3.4.2.1	Port-Dunford	105
3.3.4.2.2	University of Zululand	106
3.3.4.2.3	Manzamnyama	107
3.3.4.2.4	Ntuze	107
3.3.4.2.5	Mpembeni	108
3.3.4.2.6	Dube Village	109
3.3.4.2.7	Madlankala	110
3.3.4.2.7	Iniwe	110
3.3.4.2.8	Regions used as to authenticate data	110
3.3.4.2.9	Inkandla	111
3.3.4.2.10	Nongoma	112
3.3.4.2.11	Edendale	112
3.3.4.2.12	Msinga district	113
3.3.4.2.13	Gingindlovu	114
3.3.5	Summary of case studies	116
3.4	Exploration of public domain	118
3.5	Conclusion	119

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **ANALYSIS OF DATA**

4.0	Introduction	121
4.1	Philosophical approach	122
4.2	The phonological approach of ululation	123
4.3	Data analysis from interviews	127
4.4	The analysis of data from the questionnaire	127

4.5	Data analysis from interviews	151
4.6	Sliding scale interview	151
4.7	Responses from the field	152
4.8	Optional setting for ululation	156
4.9	Conclusion	158

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **INTERPRETATION AND FINDINGS**

5.0	Introduction	160
5.1	Assumed locale for ululation	160
5.1.1	The brain	160
5.1.2	The larynx	160
5.1.3	Uterus	161
5.2	Religious ceremonies	162
5.3	First Black woman	162
5.4	The mystery of soul and ululation	163
5.5	Relationship between ululation and ancestors	164
5.6	The symbolism of objects carried by ululators	166
5.6.1	Utselwa (Plant of gourd)	166
5.6.2	Broom	168
5.6.3	The whistle as a motivating factor	171
5.7	Ululation tags	172
5.8	Ululation and war	172
5.9	Ululation and African Renaissance	173
5.10	Impact of ululation among the Zulus	173
5.11	Conclusion	179

**CHAPTER 6**

**CONCLUSION AND REMARK**

<b>6.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>181</b>
<b>6.1</b>	<b>Ritual</b>	<b>181</b>
<b>6.2.</b>	<b>Celebrations</b>	<b>186</b>
<b>6.3</b>	<b>Findings and conclusions</b>	<b>198</b>
<b>6.4.</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>203</b>
	<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>204</b>
	<b>Addendum</b>	<b>214</b>



## CHAPTER 1

### 1.0 Introduction

Ululation is a folklore practise that is performed all over the world. In Europe for instance it signifies cries of pain. Among Arabic peoples it indicates an expression of joy. In Africa the practice of ululation is common in most cultures. It is common in most cultures of the South African people too. Ululation is gender specific in the sense that solely women perform it. During ululation spontaneous and shriek sounds are produced by women who act like they are possessed by evil spirits. People who do not come from ululating cultures do not understand ululation. They see nothing but disruption when people ululate. Hence white priests in churches discouraged it. The reason was that they thought it to be chaotic.

The disruptive nature of ululation portrays the uniqueness of African culture during celebrations. Ululation as a culture specific behaviour cannot be divorced from the way of life of the African people. As pointed out already, people commonly misunderstand the intended meaning of ululation. Therefore the research finding will make everybody to understand the significance of ululation for the practitioners of the custom. This understanding should go a long way towards cross cultural.

In spite of its 'chaotic nature', ululation is still a living art, which expounds and upholds Zulu norms and values which form the cultural framework of the Zulu people. Ululation is not only misunderstood by people who come from other cultures. It is also despised by black people who are in transition in the sense that they do not know what to choose between two pairs of polarities, that is, eurocentrism and afrocentrism. Traditional blacks appreciate the value of ululation because they acknowledge its significance during ceremonies. Colonised blacks are responding to the call for African Renaissance with the hope that research findings will educate and revive what is dear and innate in them. As it is they perceive ululation as one of those items which characterise a wedding ceremony whereas this is partially true. Research has shown that

Africans have a religion, which is like a soul to them. In this regard it is interesting to note that Iyasere, (1975:12) echoes the same idea in a comparison between a modern African writer to his indigenous oral traditions as a snail is to its shell.

Once an African writer gets an opportunity to write about his traditions he leaves no stone unturned because Africans, especially Zulu people want to fill the gap between the post Shakan and the democratic period. Writers like Msimang (1975), Mathenjwa et al (1992), Vilakazi (1993), Zondi (1997), Blose (1960), Ndelu (1962), Khumalo (1998), Shabangu (1997), Sithole (1997a), Maphumulo (1992), Nkabinde (1971), Mabuya (1981), Nxumalo (1968), Buthelezi (1982), Gcumisa (1978), Dlamini (1981), Made (1951), Fuze Magema (1882), Sikhakhane (1966) Dube (1892) Hadebe (1978), Kubheka (1973), Zondi (1993), have contributed a lot in the line of African traditions.

This view of life is reflected in a number of Zulu ululation tags and folktales e.g. *Ki-ki-ki! Balile oNdendazebululu!* (Ntuli, 1983:4). *Ondendazebululu* in this case refers to ancestors who disallowed the marriage between their beloved son to an older woman, they loathed. After death a man becomes a spirit, men are associated with hostile spirits. This will have to be confirmed by research. Women also become spirits but they are known as kind spirits (Msimang, 1975:20). They act as mediators between the living and uMvelinqangi (God) and his own people. Msimang states this idea clearly when he says "*Akudlozi laya kwenye indlu ladela kwabo*" (Msimang, 1975:17) that means ancestors rely on their folks for anything but not on any other person. According to the Bible, in the book of Luke, 16:19-31 Abraham who is close to God was unable to help his rich friend who needed forgiveness from God because according to the rich man the dead have no ties with the living. Abraham could not help his rich friend because he was not a member of his clan. According to Zulu cosmology the spirits usually look after their own people.

Africans believe that there is God, spirit and man. Now that there are traditionalists, Christians and purists, research will show whether ululation has the power to evoke the spirits to take care of the living. The internal aspect of ululation embraces the belief in God (uMvelinqangi); belief in the living-dead (abaphansi) and the custodians of the practise that is, the elders in the clan who are consulted before the practice is done.

The other feature of ululation which deals with (i) the characters involved in performance; that is, women who ululate; (ii) the objects which ululating women carry during the ceremony such as brooms, flowers, branches of trees; calabash are very important. Handkerchiefs and jerseys have also been introduced to substitute flowers. (iii) The setting for ululation is also very important because it must arouse women to ululate. The difference in settings need explanation too. The core-cliché and the following ululation tags also form the external feature of ululation.

Ululation is a folklore phenomena performed in all folk related ceremonies such as wedding ceremony and all the minor ceremonies which are performed as a build up to a wedding ceremony. Ululation does not have a fixed setting because it occurs in any place where women are moved to express their feelings by ululating.

Natural and artificial settings for ululation therefore exist. The natural setting is the place where it erupts from the woman's mouth and the artificial setting is the account of as captured in literature. The natural setting for ululation is usually the homestead, (esigangeni), traditional ceremonies such as the Reed dance (Umkhosi womhlanga,) Coronation of the king, (Ukubekwa kwenkosi), when attacking enemies (Ukuhlasela) and during the ceremony for the rain Queen (Nomkhubulwane) ceremony (Unomdede). After the war those who performed brave deeds are honoured by being given a token of valour, Msimang, (1975:340) confirms this when he says:

Izothi ingalanda induna bese benikwa izibongo  
labo abahlabene. Izingwazi ziyoxoshiswa

njalo. Sezethweswa iminyezane, sekuwa izinkomo kugujwa nesimame siyakikizela kunjeya.

(After the great captains' narration they are given praise names. Those who were valorous are given praise names. Renowned warriors are presented with cows. They are garlanded with twigs which are specifically used for heroes. Cows are slaughtered as a form of celebration and women ululate).

(Umkhosi wokunyathela uselwa or umkhosi wokweshwama)

During the above mentioned ceremonies ululation is at its best because women from all corners of the country attend. The natural setting for ululation also occurs in modern and sophisticated places such as the church, homestead, graduation ceremonies, inaugural address, reception and many more as shall be seen below. Twenty first birthday, engagement parties, giving of presents by the bride to the in-laws (*umabo*) are some of the ceremonies where ululation takes place.

There are four distinct sounds that are heard during ululation; (a) the original and genuine shriek sound, (b) the velaric *ki ki ki!* sound, the (c) prepalatal *li li li!* sound and the (d) palatal semivowel sound *yi yi yi!* There are also myriads of sounds that are produced by women who fail to produce the four recognised ululation sounds. In an effort to ululate some women bleat like a calf. The first type of ululation is effective in both the expression of joy and success and in evoking ancestors but the question on the ability of the alternative types to evoke ancestors needs to be confirmed by relevant sources during research.

Stock characters who are mostly complex and realistic are noted in ululation. Characters in ululation are stereotypes. All over Africa characters share the same performance. Ululation tags differ according to individual performers. Strutting differs according to regions and individuals. Objects that are carried by performers differ according to regions and individuals. During performance the core cliché is expanded according to the feelings of the

character who performs it. The core-cliché is expanded by adding ululation tags like *Ki ki ki! Kuhle kwethu!* (Ntuli, 1983:138). The ululation tags heighten the interpretation and the excitement in ululation though when it comes to traditional ceremonies, research is necessary to bring clarity as will be shown later on.

The style in ululation is structural as can be seen in other genres. The basic element of style is formed by good language which best expresses and communicates one's ideas and feelings. An example of this, is best portrayed by MaSibiya in a play by Ntuli 'Kwakhle kwethu' in his book *Ishashalazi* (Ntuli, 1983:138). When the failure of wedding plans of an unwelcomed girlfriend reached MaSibiya (the character), her response to the news expressed her feelings. On hearing the news MaSibiya spontaneously burst into tears saying:

Ki ki ki! Kuhle kwethu!  
Ki ki ki! Ngiyahalalisa mfana wami,  
(Ntuli, 1988:43).

MaSibiya rejoiced because wedding plans did not materialised. Some people cry when they are overwhelmed with happiness. She must be one of them.

### 1.1 Aim of this study

The aim of this study is not an analysis of ululation per se. Its main focus is first to assess those standard qualities of a cultural context which exist in ululation, second to look at the importance and role of ululation in the ceremony. Third to look at the hidden meanings of ululation especially those forms of it which do not sound important to an outside observer whereas they provide the gist of the ceremony as stated by Westermarck, (1925:227):

There is some act performed which is too slight or too practical to be marked by an observer as a ceremony, but which when analysed turns out to be a real marriage rite.

This thesis is meant to enlighten the class of blacks whose Christian upbringing and adoption of western value shave alienated them from the social context of the Zulu people and custom. Further to make the Zulu people realise the problems which are created when these things which look insignificant and yet are the backbone of the cultural context are overlooked. To make Zulu people look at ululation with depth rather than taking ululation as one of those sounds which are produced by women when they are happy.

The thesis aims to go beyond the sound we hear but to revive some valued and prized aspects of *ubuntu* in the cultural sense. The study keeps in the background the importance of ancestors in the ceremonies and in the lives of the people; the relevance of all the ceremonies where ululation takes place to the social fabric of the Zulu people. Its weaving nature in progression of the ceremony culminating in unbelievable calm among the people to show the power of ululation against demons.

We also look at the healing power of ululation especially in marriage ceremonies. The study also looks at the role of ululation as a motivating factor in the Zulu dance, propitiation of ancestors in times of war and other occasions.

## 1.2 Statement of problem

There is a scarcity of research on the topic of ululation. In South Africa there is a problem of blacks who look down upon their culture and customs. Seeing that many blacks despise their customs, there was no concerted attempt to promote research on African customs. Furthermore this observation is justified by the scarcity of financial provision for it in scientific research during the old regime. Now that the new government has given equality of status to all cultures, ululation is one of the cultural practices which merits study so as to promote better cross cultural understanding in our heterogeneous society.

The outstanding questions and issues which need to be answered by this thesis is the disregard of ululation especially at 21<sup>st</sup> birthday celebrations. The disregard of ululation by certain sophisticated classes of the African people where ululation is needed to heighten the occasion. The disregard for ululation by Zulu authors who know, admire and demand ululation in its absence and yet forget to write any thing substantial which will preserve ululation like a poem, a paper, an article, a dissertation or a thesis. This neglect poses a question to their appreciation of support by women. A question arises when people ululate in abnormal situations and these performances need clarification and attention. A situation is referred to as abnormal when in a cultural ceremony women are given a crater of beers and they burst in ululation. The gesture is nasty and it underplays ululation. Ululation is for dignified occasions where the presence of ancestors is attracted. When people stop ululation what form of substitution is available?

The unclarified issues about disregard of ululation is the fear that when people shift from their customs, their religion and cultural practices what kind of life are they going to live without the pillars of their lives or the core of their lives. What kind of ceremony can go on without ululation to heighten the function to its expected note? Who will invite the spirits of the ancestors to where things are happening without ululation? Excitement is known to be contagious and infectious and therefore who must ululate and who must not and why? The origin of confusion about ululation needs to be investigated and cleared. Looking down upon ululation needs to be eradicated because it is one of the stumbling blocks in making our ceremonies get the traditional outlook they deserve. The above issues and questions are aroused by the pressure one feels when people see our traditional practices being confused and misused resulting in people loosing faith in traditional practices as useless and in vain. This led to the crumbling of the Zulu nation and through the revival of practices like ululation, Zulu nation awakening can be achieved.

Furthermore, what can form a new aspect under folklore like folk dance? Structurally ululation is one sentence which carries the culture context and the feelings of the people about the ceremony at hand. Ululation has no beginning

and ending just like translation. What the ululator says and is going to say is individualistic. Ululators respond to the occasion in their own strange way. Ululation is formed by a combination of a core-cliché and ululation tags.

Ki ki ki! Kuhle kwethu!

(Ki ki ki! We are happy at home)!

The above example is a sentence that forms ululation. *Ki ki ki!* is a core cliché and *Kuhle kwethu!* is an ululation tag. The ululation tag differs according to individuals. It also changes according to the type of ceremony at hand, thus:

Ki ki ki! Wothi wabonani wemfazi ongazalanga!

(Ki ki ki! What would a woman who have not given birth claim to have seen)!

Ki ki ki! Langena iphofukazi lizokhanyisa!

(The arrival of the light complexioned bride is going to brighten the family)!

Ki ki ki! Babethi ngeke ushade, yini le!

(They said you were not going to get married, look at this)!

Ki ki ki! Siyakhuleka kuzinyandezulu! ...

(Ki ki ki! We salute the living dead or ancestors)!

Ki ki ki! Zimanzi izicamelo!

(Ki ki ki! The pillows are wet)!

The first two types of ululations can be used during the wedding ceremony or when cows for lobola are received at the bride's home. The third type can be used during the competition between the bride and the grooms parties after the wedding ceremony. The fourth type can be used when men go to war. The fifth type can be used as a warning to the bride about what to expect other than roses. There are myriads of ululation tags, moreover they are dynamic in the sense that they change with time and society. Ululation is situational in the



sense that elderly women express the expectations of the family, the needs of the family and the relief the bride is expected to bring to the family. What is expressed may be humorous but is not childish, trite or aimless. It is a way of empowering the bride as she enters married life.

### 1.3 Motivation

Social change in South Africa is making inroads into long established cultural practices even in the pockets of the country. The research will confirm this dictum since it is the core of this thesis. The church and its indoctrination at the expense of black culture contributes to the disregard for ululation in church and at the homes of its converts in fear of exclusion from the congregation, Vilakazi, (1971:56).

The revival of African Renaissance by the Honourable Mbeki, (1995:9) is understood by the educated blacks as contributing to the full return of the practice of ululation in social gatherings and in sophisticated functions such as, the graduation ceremony, wedding in church, wedding reception, kitchen parties and inaugural addresses. Ululation carries traditional value on traditional ceremonies in the sense that it enhances and heightens lively understanding or participation and interpretations of any performance at hand. This is also confirmed by Weinberg, (1979:17) that when men propitiate ancestors they actually call for ululation because they need the power, support and motivation which ululation has, to spur them on with their performance. This idea will be elaborated when the internal structure of ululation that entails life hereafter, is dealt with. Mbiti, (1975:34) supports this idea when he says that ululation has the power to evoke ancestors. It must be stated that the departed occupy an important place in African "religiosity" Mbiti, (1969:34). Zulu people ululate when they purport to arouse the spirits of the departed. Mbiti writes that:

It is natural consequence of the strong belief in African religion that human life does not terminate at the death of the individual, but continues beyond death.  
(Mbiti, 1975:70).

This study offers a striking example of what is meant by the concepts analysis and interpretation. Traditionally academic scientists tended to juxtapose analysis against synthesis. Analysis is understood to mean the resolution of a complex whole into its parts while synthesis may be regarded as the construction of a whole out of parts. By means of analysis the constituent variables that are relevant to the understanding of a phenomenon are isolated, that is the different causal events for ululation are separated. However by means of synthesis the relation between these variables are constructed to provide insight into the causal factors associated with the events being studied. In this thesis we shall use the term interpretation rather than synthesis to emphasise the interpretative dimension of explanation in ululation and its intrigue.

During analysis and interpretation data will have to be systematized in a meaningful manner, that is, by involving deductive and inductive, (introducing data systems critically) strategy respectively.

#### 1.4.2 Ancestor

An ancestor is the spirit of a dead person from whom one is directly descended usually remote than the parent such as the forefather. In Zulu they are referred to as *abaphansi* (ancestor). According to Zulu culture important people and important things as well as people with physical defect or blemish are given euphemistic names or *hlonipha* names. Ancestors therefore have many names depending on the social groupings of the Zulu people. Some of these names are (*abaphansi*) because they are buried down below. (*Izithutha*) because they sometimes do irresponsible things when they punish people (*Izithunzi*) (shades). They sometimes appear like shades at night and during the day. (*Amathongo*) ancestral spirit (*amadlozi*) human spirit or soul. (*Amakhosi*) they are given the position of a king. (*Inyandezulu*) they are compared to the most dangerous species of snakes the green mamba to show how dangerous they can be if they are not taken care of or ignored.

When looking at the variety of names that are given to ancestors one can deduce that spirits are important in the sense that each and every language accommodates them and they acknowledge their existence. There are also dangerous names like *Inyandezulu* which gives the impression that they are deadly. This deduction is confirmed by (Fortes, 1965:122) when he says:

The relation of the ancestors to their living kinsmen has been described as ambivalent, as both punitive and benevolent and sometimes even as capricious.

In general ancestral benevolence is assured through propitiation and sacrifice. Neglect or breaches of duty is believed to bring about punishment. Ancestors can become capricious when propitiation and sacrifice has not been done properly, or too long delayed. The above observation confirms the view that the relationship between the living and the dead can be complex.

The Zulus believe that when a person dies his soul goes to the world of ancestors. This is confirmed by (Msimang, 1975:16) when he says:

Uma umuntu efa, umoya noma umphefumulo  
awufi kepha uya ezweni lamathongo.

(When a person dies his soul does not die but goes to the world of ancestors).

After sometime which could be a year or two or five years depending on the affordability of the person concerned an unveiling ceremony which is a Christian guise of (*ihlambo* or *ukubuyisa*) will be done for the dead person and he will return home as an ancestor or (*idlozi*). On the ancestor's return he is intimately involved with the welfare of their kin-group but they are not linked in the same way to every member of the group. The linkage is structured through the elders of the kin group and the elders authority is related to their close link to the ancestors. In a way the elders are the representatives of the ancestors and the mediators between them and the kin-group.

Msimang, (1975:17) also confirms this belief when he enumerates the functions of the ancestors on their return home:

Umsebenzi wamadlozi ukwelusa abaphilayo  
emizini yabo. Balwa nezitha namalumbo.  
Bakhulisa abantwana balethe inhlanhla inala  
nobuhle ekhaya. Inkokhelo yabo ukuba  
basizwe, baphiwe ukudla, inyama utshwala.  
Babikelwe konke okwenzekayo ekhaya  
kungenjalo kuvela imikhokha.

(The role of the ancestors is the protection of the living. They ward off enemies and witchcraft related diseases. They help during the growth of children, they bring luck, fortune and goodwill at home. They are remunerated by being worshipped, given food, meat and sorghum beer. They must also be told about everything that is taking place at home, failing which misfortune takes place).

From the protective point of view, it is easy for observers outside African culture to misconstrue propitiation as worship ancestors. The problem lies with the structure.

#### 1.4.3 Ancestor worship

Ancestor worship is a family's reverence for the wisdom and leadership of its dead members. The word worship may be misleading because most people honour their ancestors rather than worship them. Many people believe that the spirits of the dead can plead with the Gods for blessings on their living relatives. Ancestor worship is common in the whole of Africa. The structure of ancestor worship is the same in Africa but it differs according to nationalities. It is characterised by the burning of incense on small carved objects called ancestral tablets or fragmented or broken parts of earthenware. The male elder will then explain the problem to the ancestors who will respond by solving the problem. Three types of ancestor structures are noted

among the Zulus. An agnatic descent structure, a cognatic descent structure and non agnatic descent structures (Makhudu, 1995:15).

#### 1.4.4 The anagnatic structure

Among the Zulus we get the agnatic descent structure that is, a kinsman who is descended from a common male ancestor through male links only. The Zulu royal family is a good example of this structure.

In a cognitive descent structure male and female filial links equally count in establishing a chain of descendants. The total category of those to whom an ancestor is connected could only be defined with reference to a concept of descending that recognises both male and female links that is, a cognitive descent construct. The honourable Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi is a good example of a chief whose mother got recognition because she belonged to the royal family.

Non agnatic structure or matriarchy refers to the line of descent from a female ancestor, the maternal side of a family or clan. Matriarchy refers to a social system in which the oldest woman is head of the family and passes possessions and power of control onto her daughters. Nyasaland is a very good example. Nyasaland tribes are matrilineal and uxorilocal, that is, the rights in land descend in the female line and when a man marries he goes to live in his wife's village. According to Zulu culture that behaviour is unacceptable and the man is referred to as (*isiyoyoyo*) a weak man. Among the Zulus the non agnatic structure usually refers to children who are born out of wedlock resulting in their assimilation into the mother's family and assuming the mother's surname. They assume the mother's surname for purposes of protection by the mother's ancestors. Some children encounter problems when they grow old. Paternal ancestors claim their grandchildren and the ancestral conflict occurs which puts the grandchild in a capricious position.

All the different types of descents define social categories of agnates, cognates and non agnates with reference to the founding ancestor. Where rituals and social functions are concerned the Zulus are strictly agnatic. The early coronation of King Goodwill Zwelithini was due to the agnatic nature of the Zulu people. National ceremonies like *Umkhosi Womhlanga* (Reed ceremony) and many more had to be ordained by the king (*inkosi yohlanga*). Msimang, (1975:75) confirms this when he says the welfare of the homesteads, clans and kinsmen is handled by the elder in the family because it has something to do with ancestors of that family line of descent.

The ancestors are worshipped by giving them food. Their favourite food is sorghum-beer which is kept at the traditional Zulu altar in a small clay pot (*isicathulo*) (Msimang, 1975:19). According to Mrs Biyela, Port Durnford, a respondent says unspiced samp and *inyongo* are the favourite food of the ancestors (Khumalo, 1998:227). When a cow has been slaughtered in the family a piece of meat called (*incekwa*) a gut or third stomach of cattle is sacrificed to the spirits and thereafter it is eaten by an old woman. When there are significant ceremonies like the twenty first birthday (*umemuloumhlonyana/umkhuliso*), marriage ceremonies (*umshado*) relocation (*ukusuka enxuweni kuyokwakhiwa kwelinye/ukuthutha*) and many more, they have to be told. In highly important occasions a cow is slaughtered for their attention. In less significant occasions a goat is slaughtered. The colour is very important when it comes to the slaughtering of a goat. A black goat is slaughtered to ask for pardon from the ancestors in times of trials and tribulations in the family. The white goat is for thanks giving when children especially boys have achieved something or it may be used to entreat the ancestors to bring more luck to members of the family.

Msimang, (1975:22) states categorically that female ancestors are characterised by their immediate response in times of trouble to their descendants. On the contrary male ancestors are known to be responsible for punitive measures among the descendants who happen to disregard them.

The propitiation of ancestors is done by the person who is solely responsible for the ceremony. The head of the family. He must know the people he is talking to lest he confuses issues. He must know his ancestors and call them by their names for example, a Blose person who is propitiating ancestors is expected to say:

Blose – Ndelu, Chobile, Sibade, Zenge, Mhlabethwa!

If he uses their names he will start thus:

*Baba Mosi, ezalwa uMozisi, ezalwa ukhokho uNgwenya siyakunxusa ukuba usikhonzele kuMvelingqangi ukuba asisize. Noma ingayiphi indlela uyazi-ke yena ukuthi sihlushwa yini.*

#### 1.4.5 Ululator (*Umkikizi*)

An ululator is a dignified woman who screams on top of her voice in an effort to express joy or excitement. Ululators come from the ranks of dignified married women naturally who are mothers. An unmarried mother does not participate in the performance of ululating. There is no construct of the society which debars them from ululating but they abstain on their own free will. Some unmarried mothers frown when they hear a woman ululating. The reason is that there is a ritual which is missing in her life which make them incomplete mothers like a marriage ceremony and all it entails in as far as ancestors are concerned. This goes to show the importance of a *hlawula* custom (pay a penalty for making a woman pregnant outside marriage).

The *hlawula* custom demands that a man sends a cow and a goat to the girl's family. The cow is meant to pacify the mother whose daughter has been made a woman without their concern. The goat is meant to clean the misfortune which occurred at the girl's home. The mixture of *umswani* and *ingongoni* grass and salt is very important in this regard. A woman who was not paid for (*hlawulwad*) turns to be riddled with problems and those are the women who frown when women ululate.

When the ululator ululates it is like she is possessed. When she utters the core cliché she shows unequalled excitement which is exclusive to ululators only. This is the excitement which thrills people especially men which make them demand ululation in its absence. This was beautifully portrayed by the late Mahlathini the singer, whenever he made his grand entrance in great stadiums, he opened his concerts by singing the song:

Sangena 3x  
 nezintombi zomgqashiyo  
 kothula umoya 2x  
 lilizela wemlilizeli  
 lilizela lilizela lilizela.

(We are making an entrance  
 with izintombi zomgqashiyo (group)  
 Ululator ululate 3x).

Whenever Mahlathini made an entrance at the stage he sang the above song which introduces him and his backing group *Izintombi zomgqashiyo*. Through experience he knows that he has a gripping effect on his audiences. They keep quiet when he is on the stage-the air is still (*kothula umoya*). He crowns his grand entrance by inviting the ululator when everybody is quiet. Ululators all over the audience will ululate thus heightening the whole performance with unbelievable excitement.

According to Zulu culture ululation is a sweet sounding noise which beckons ancestors to listen to what is going to take place in their homestead. When Mahlathini calls for ululators he is supposedly inviting his ancestors to come and embrace his performance so that he performs better than everybody. Ululation is also used as a motivating factor. He also need ululation to motivate him enheighten his performance. He also calls for ululation to clear the demons which may be on the stage. When he leaves the stage he sings the song *Sengikhala ngiyabaleka* which means I am leaving with a song. "*Khala*" is semantically used to mean "leave". By so singing he is telling his ancestors who have been with him on the stage that he is leaving the stage they have to leave with him. The ululator plays so many roles in the lives of



the people but some people do not acknowledge them because they do not know the significance of ululation as well as the ululator. An ululator can be invited or hired but she cannot be instructed to ululate at a certain point. Ululation is never itemised in a programme because it is spontaneous in its own time.

During the Shakan period the ululator belonged to African religion. Today we get Africans who belong to the African religion but do not subscribe to it personally. Those people are referred to as the lost generation because they have lost their belonging and what it entails.

#### 1.4.6 Ululation (umkikizo)

The ululation produces ululation. Ululation is one of those terms which are not readily amenable to formal definitions. All the same it is imperative that it be defined in order to channel the focus of this study. Through my personal observation (Sikhosana, 2000:4) in an unpublished paper stated that "ululation is a peculiar and thrilling sound which is produced by women in a dichotomous situation." When women are either sad or very happy they ululate but the difference lies in the mood. It is peculiar because it occurs in situations which demand it only. In a marriage ceremony many activities take place but none can substitute ululation. It either occurs or it does not occur. Absence of that causes concern.

According to Doke and Vilakazi, (1972:428):

Ululation refers to strutting about, uttering spontaneous shrill or joyous cries of pleasure by women.

Doke and Vilakazi is giving us a sensuous explanation of ululation. He confirms that women ululate and when they ululate they do not stand still and keep quiet. Doke and Vilakazi differ with Skhosana, (2000:4) in reference to the occurrence of ululation. (Vilakazi et al., 1975:1100) says ululation occurs

in times of joy or pleasure while Sikhosana goes beyond pleasure to times of sadness. Sikhosana, is a woman and she ululates.

#### 1.4.7 Traditional beliefs

By traditional beliefs it is assumed that Branford, (1994:98) refers to common things which are done by people, common practices that are done by people at a certain stage of their lives, occurrences and habits, that take place and are beyond peoples control. The origin of traditional beliefs is very difficult to access. Nobody knows when they started because even when the elderly people are asked, the answer is that traditional beliefs were there from time immemorial.

The Nguni social structure is so structured that every member of the society from the youngest to the oldest knows what society requires of him. Custom prescribes the behaviour patterns between groups of people in the society. Traditional beliefs are therefore what people think as a group and then put it into practice under the guise of a custom. A custom is beyond peoples control whereas a traditional belief is not.

In Nguni tribes, the behaviour of women especially in the homestead and to their elder relatives – in-law is so strictly regulated even by taboo on certain food. This is peculiar to Zulu society as opposed to the European concept of kinship. Krige writes thus:

... ideas of kinship and the family play an important part in Zulu society and ramify through almost every aspect of their culture.

Krige is explaining that ideas of the people play an important role in Zulu society. In this case ideas which supposedly are based on the experience of the elders become traditional beliefs. These traditional beliefs are passed down from generation to generation as the traditional belief of the family, the

clan, the tribe or the whole nation. A traditional belief can be promoted to a custom when it has reached the national level.

Ululation is not a traditional belief because it is nobody's idea. It has been passed down from generation to generation. Nobody can claim credit to ululation. It is spontaneous in occurrence and it belongs to women.

Ululation is a traditional practice that is common to African women. It is either practised in a positive or negative sense. When people are happy like in a marriage ceremony they ululate. When they are also sad they ululate, that is, when warriors go to war. Among the Basutho people, when the hearse arrives at home for the virgil women ululate and when it leaves home for the cemetery some woman ululates. This will be explained further in chapter 5.

Another assumption that awaits confirmation by research is that when warriors die it is painful to the living people but it is joy to the ancestors because they receive a new member in the family of the dead (*abaphansi*). The meaning that emanates from the definition will be treated in its entirety in chapter 5.

#### 1.4.8 African societies

For African societies to assume that name, it is because they are knit together by African culture. It is this African culture which makes a Black woman respond to any good or bad event which engulfs the family. African societies are based on a body of beliefs that they subscribe to or adopt. These societies consist of anybody who shares a black colour and was born and brought up in Africa. White Africans are deliberately excluded from this definition because they do not share the same colour and the same culture with the black people in Africa. Within African societies there is a strong bond among the people that is, the African religion. African religion is based on belonging, on being born into a community, a group of people, a clan, and a family.

The people in question are the ancestors and the living. Now belonging to the wide community of people through your family group entrenches very strong

ties among people. Ties which are blood related. This is the relationship that makes the woman ululate in response to any occurrence among the people she belongs to. That is why it is imperative for a young woman to undergo all the important rituals before she gets married because she has to undergo a unification with all these people dead or alive before she can settle and be accepted in the new family.

#### 1.4.9 Folklore

According to Branford, (1994:358):

Folklore is the study of traditional beliefs and stories of a people.

The origin of ululation can be traced from Egypt where Black Africans claim their origin (Samuelson, 1928:22). On reaching Central Africa on their way down the Nile river they parted ways. It is interesting to note that blacks are known to originate in Egypt. A clash of ideas is noted when (Samuelson, 1929:56) says blacks came down the Nile river in a canoe. On the contrary the Nile river water starts at Lake Victoria and moves northwards to Egypt. Msimang, (1975:35) says that we moved down south from Egypt in a fire balloon (*isilulu*). This could be acceptable because some are known to have moved to the West as far as Saudi Arabia, Palestine and Ghana. In Ghana ululation is an item in national festivals. Ululation is found in the east as far as Ethiopia Zanzibar. Its trail moves through all the Sub-Saharan countries to the Cape. In all these areas ululation takes place among black African women when they express joy and other reasons which were mentioned earlier on.

After all these explanations it is noted that the only point of origin for ululation so far is a woman. It is stated that among the Ndebele people men ululate but research will confirm that. Among the Ndebele people women say: "*Kwa kwa kwa kwi!*" This shows the dialectical nature of ululation. This is beautifully portrayed in Brenda Fassie's song '*Ngohlala nginje*'. Ululation is by a Ndebele woman in this song. The song goes thus:

Ngohlala nginjena mina nkosi yami  
 Ngohlala nginjena 2x  
 Ngohlala nginje---na  
 Ngohlala nginjena mina nkosi yami.

Ululation—Kwa kwa kwa kwi! This kind of ululation confuses many Zulu people who do not know how the Ndebele people ululate.

## 1.5 Scope of the study

In this research the thesis will be structured according to the following chapters:

### Chapter 1

Chapter one examines the meaning of the practise of ululation. At the same time it touches the question of the history of this tradition and covers who the specific role players are. Lastly it seeks to uncover received perception of the meaning of ululation not only from the point of view of academics but also the practitioners of the custom.

### Chapter 2

This chapter is going to deal with reference books looking at their relatedness to ululation as a folklore phenomenon.

Theories of ululation by academics are given in chapter two. Theories dealing with abstract meanings and sounds are also looked into. Through theories it is hoped to shed light in this regard because theories are explanations based on observation and rational discernment of the practise. Scientific theories are generalizations that are reached by inference from observed particulars and then proposed as an explanation of either causes or relation. A theory therefore implies a larger body of tested evidence and a greater degree of probability. A combination of definition from dictionaries and theories should give light as to what ululation is all about.

### Chapter 3

In chapter three the researcher proceeds to enquire on how the methodology is going to be employed to extract data from the sources. After looking at inferences, implications and tested evidence of theories, the people who have inherited this custom and continue to practise it will be interviewed so as to work with a primary source of information.

### Chapter 4

#### Data analysis

Data from the questionnaire will be examined. The events will be broken up into their constituent elements or to their causes to reveal concealed content or form of ululation.

### Chapter 5

#### Interpretation and findings

Concealed content will be interpreted, pragmatic techniques will be used to get the meaning out of the elucidation of the dramatic aspects of ululation will help to give meaning of ululation.

Decisions will be made after the examination of the interpretation and findings from the techniques employed above.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion and remarks

It is an honour for me to discover that a popular traditional phenomenon like ululation has never been researched. It is exciting to foresee the possible depth of ululation.

In inductive strategy the researcher embarks upon the project without an explicit conceptual framework. Instead, general and vague hypotheses or guesses to guide the research are used. In actual fact this research is less structured. Data is generated and the researcher attempts to discover relationships or patterns by means of close scrutiny of data. The data is analysed and interpreted by means of inductive abstractions and generalisations. The eventual result should be in a more systematic explanation or even a conceptual framework. Inductive strategy seems relevant in ululation because at this juncture ululation is explored.

### 1.6 Conclusion

Since there is no literature on ululation per se, focus will be on ululation which is in the mouths of the people and ululation which is in literature books. The internet is showing another kind of ululation at [ululation.com](http://ululation.com). from Northern California to the Middle East. Their ululation was in the form of an e-mail which was spurred by the toughness of the times in the Middle East during the heat of the battle. Their reason for ululation was that it was in their interest to care for the loved ones in the heat of the battle. Their objects were morsels of love in the form of endearing recipes such as [ululation.com](http://ululation.com).2001.

2 cups of caring  
1 cup of concern  
½ cup support  
tablespoons of milk  
2 tablespoons of joy  
5 cups of love

All this shows positiveness on the part of Americans who by so doing they were motivating the soldiers to go on. This typifies what happens when Zulu women ululate in times of war. Nobody asked these people to write an e-mail but it is something from within which can not be expressed. Their ululation tags were peace and love keep bombing the Middle East.

In the case of California ululation it is expressed thus:

ululator	>	computer
ululation sound	>	e-mail
core cliché	>	heat of the battle (bombardments)
ululation tags	>	peace and love keep bombing the Middle East
objects by ululators	>	morsels of love in the form of recipes of endearment
	➤	positive attitude to what they are doing
		excitement during occasions, celebrations festivities and ceremonies.
	>	support

Ululation is as old as the custom and ceremonies where ululation is demanded. Nobody has bothered to look into ululation. They did not bother to know why women ululate and not men. Many people have written on marriage but mentioned ululation in passing. Looking at this omission, the standard qualities of ululation and the cultural context of ululation will be assessed in this thesis.

By way of concluding, this speculation about ululation one may safely say that from my observation and experience with ululation, it is a loud shriek sound which is accompanied by the strutting of feet by women carrying objects. The common parametric object during ululation is the broom. Other types of objects depend on the individual ululator. As far back as the pre-Shakan period solely women ululated. What sustains ululation as before and now is a mystery to be solved by research. At this point the custodians of this custom, women, academics, priests are curious to know more about ululation because



they only know the shriek sound that heightens the mood of excitement during occasions, such as celebrations festivities and ceremonies.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORIES

#### 2.0 Introduction

The theoretical view of ululation in the social fabric of the Zulu people is going to arouse a lot of turbulence in the academic world because folklore is looked upon as a field which is surrounded by theoretical stasis and therefore inadequate for graduate research. The academic world believes that research should be based strongly on experimentation with immediate results. However something is lacking in ululation because it is a sound and abstract. Ululation is ephemeral in nature, it cannot be experimented because it is spontaneous. It is never known when the ululator will ululate and thus set an experiment. What happens during ululation cannot be measured.

The main purpose of this chapter is to identify the significance of ululation in the social fabric of the Zulu people. It is believed that relevant methodologies when used skilfully can help to express the significance of ululation. In the social setting of the Zulu people methodology can be defined as the logic of the application of scientific methods to the investigation of a phenomena (Mouton et al, 1993:16). This means that sensible thinking is going to be used in an effort to arrive at conclusions. For the research to be scientific all possible situations in which the phenomenon will best display its structure which is related to ululation will have to be explored in order to get the exact knowledge. Kafman, (1944:230) defines methodology as a research based on correct scientific decisions. We would therefore agree with both Mouton et al and Kafman's definitions because what we are basically looking at in this chapter is the embodiment of the scientific planning and execution of this research to ensure that the findings will be most valid. The descriptive survey method is the best in the sense that in ululation, data can be derived from simple observational situations. Ululation is observed physically, that is, can be observed through the benefits of being an observer, through participant observation, and the questionnaire.

This chapter is going to deal with definitions by dictionaries, encyclopaedia and reference books looking at their relatedness to ululation as a folklore phenomenon. Although it is sometimes difficult to employ western theories in African phenomena, what cannot be included in the theory will be left hanging or treated separately. Theories by academics will also be employed in an effort to explain ululation. Unlike other phenomena, ululation is an indispensable appendage in and during the performance of some rites, customs and celebrations, absence of which calls for concern to the custodians of the practice.

Ululation is an abstract reality. Reality here does not refer to the concrete world of material objects but includes the philosophical psychological and social realities. The question for the literal theorist is how to formulate the relationship between the text and reality. This is the point where Russian formalism comes in. Lucien Goldman, (1969:33), Eikhenbaum, (1965:107) and Gorky, (1977:34) disagree on literal issues but together posit that social reality and literature either have a negative or a subversive relation to reality. This notion is implied in the Russian in Russian formalist concept of defamiliarization whereby reality is presented in such a way as to "make it strange." According to Shklovsky, (1976:17) defamiliarization is found almost everywhere as long as there is form.

## **2.1 Literature review**

Scholars of note know about ululation but did not write anything significant about it (Grout, 1869:59) (who has stayed with blacks and observed them closely) referred to ululation as a very good area for scientific research. Bryant, (1949:545) quoted ululation in many instances to explain and strengthen his research on marriage ceremonies. This is what he says about ululation:

This joyful cry of the matrons was termed *ukulilizela* – a very ancient custom and interesting study.

To Bryant ululation is a sound that was made by women to express joy. When Bryant refers to ululation as an ancient custom in 1949, this goes to show that ululation belongs in antiquity. Bryant realised that ululation can be studied but lacked the capacity to handle it because (i) Krige is a male; (ii) culture was going to be a problem.

Krige, (1950:139) refers to ululation as a:

.... high falsetto cackles *Ki ki ki!*

According to World Book Dictionary (Barnhart, 1992:1138) “falsetto” means an artificially high-pitched voice and “cackle” refers to a shrill broken sound that a hen makes after laying eggs. Krige’s observation was correct. Ululation is high-pitched but it is not artificial. It is either a woman can or can not ululate. The mere mention of falsetto shows that Krige was not impressed by the sound he heard, let alone the reason for making the sound. This high-pitched *Ki ki ki!* sound is an expression of happiness and acceptance of the bride at the groom’s homestead. That cackles refer to shrill broken sounds also fits ululation. Doke and Vilakazi, (1972:345) refers to ululation as a shriek sound. Shriek and shrill sounds are synonymous. This shrill sound is the utopia of ululation as it will be noted in chapter 2. The impression one gets about Krige’s observation is that he had a high sense of humour. What he did not understand, he reduced to the level of domestic animals. Secondly, he was a domestic person. What he did not know was associated with domestic animals for a better understanding and explanation. Further, Krige is noted to have said, referring to ululation as a yelling thus:

...singing of women of both parties yelling at the top of their voices, the noise is so great that it may be heard within a radius of several miles.

(Krige, 1950:140)

Krige's choice of words such as "yell" and "noise" does not truly reflect the mood during the marriage ceremony. It is obvious that he was worried about the great sound that was produced by the competing parties. The sounds they produced cannot be referred to as noise because they are unique and special to this occasion. Further, these sounds form the most important part of that celebration without which the occasion will be a flop. Like a white person it is understandable that a strange sound is noise to him. Bryant, Krige and others contributed a lot in an effort to explain and record Zulu traditional systems. Their reliability lies in their observations of abstract phenomenon like ululation.

B W Vilakazi in his highly rated book *Noma Nini* (1972:57) refers to an incident where Reverend Grout was conducting a marriage ceremony between his converts, uNomkhosi and Nsikana. When time was opportune for ululation to take place converts did not ululate. One woman who was referred to as "the wife of Nxaba" (unkosikazi ka Nxaba) who was not a convert did not understand peoples disregard for ululation in a situation like this and she erupted in ululating thus:

Ki ki kil, kanti akuphumi intombi yini  
sahamba sengathi kufiwe, siboshwe  
imilomo!. Sangquzuka sonke isimame  
sakikiza,

(Vilakazi, 1972:58).

(Is anybody dead? Why are you not  
ululating? She ululated and all women folk  
followed in a thunderous ululation sounds that  
filled the church with a strange noise).

Grout was surprised by the spontaneous response from his converts. The idea that ululation is a good area of scientific research might have emanated from that event bearing in mind that Vilakazi's book, *Noma Nini* is a historical novel. It is fitting to *believe* that the beginning of ululation in church after it was suppressed by missionaries was the result of that event and it spread all over the country just like any other event by daring people.

The same as above also applied in the event of the imposition of colonial rule among Africans which was generally accomplished through military means (Ray, 1976:155). As a result news of relief from oppression travelled very fast. Events by daring people also travel very fast. Each and every region has its daring people who take the initiative and help their people like in Zondi, (1975:46) in the book *Insumansumane* within a short space of time the whole of Natal knew about Bhambatha's rebellion. After the period of initial violence African response to colonial rule was largely peaceful though it was filled with constant tension and resentment. Hence we get people like MaNxaba in Vilakazi, (1972:58) showing rebellion against oppression of ululation in church. This is a good parallel to show the fast rate at which news of events spread.

Reverend Grout and Vilakazi's experience with ululation show that they realise the significance of ululation among the Zulu people and that is why Rev Grout overlooked ululation in church by women. Vilakazi might have noted that women and ululation are inseparable. Authors in Zulu language and literature did not take Reverend Grout's challenge seriously. Msimang, (1975:282) a leading Zulu novelist and scholar, mentions ululation in a comparative sense when he compares ululation to the sound made by the White Headed Fish Eagle. He also uses ululation to express the excitement in some of the marriage celebrations as it will be noted in chapter 5.

Ntuli, (1977:83) a Zulu short stories writer and dramatist used ululation as an expression of joy in a satirical sense when the detested love affair of MaMfeka's wild son failed, she exploded in a loud *Ki ki ki!* sound to show her unequalled happiness at the failure of the affair. Nkabinde, (1962:45), a leading Zulu linguist and poetry specialist used ululation as the title of his poem on success in his book "*Inkwazi*". *Inkwazi* is the name of the bird whose sound is compared to ululation by Msimang, (1975:78). Other authors used ululation on a referential basis depending on the subject in hand stating that "Women ululated as an expression of joy or women ululated to evoke the ancestors on the arrival of the cows for (*lobola*)."

Zulu, (1997:3) used ululation semantically in a conflict situation. The father did not want his daughter to get married before working for three years and refund his money he used as for her education. Contrary to the fact that the mother has already agreed with her daughter's decision. The father bawled out at the mother saying:

Wangijikela manje? Ngabe usujahe  
 ukukikiza ngempela?  
 (Zulu, 1997:3).

(Now you are turning against me. Are  
 you in a hurry to ululate indeed?)

Buthelezi, (1995:87) shows that ululation is an expression of joy and that ululation and the propitiation of ancestors are inseparable when he says:

Ngaphuma ngaqephuza ngiyibonga.  
 Wakikizela umkikizeli kwawubukikiki.

(I got out of the house, propitiated  
 ancestors and sang praises. The ululator  
 ululated in excitement.)

He means that when authors invited him to submit his poems, he was overwhelmed with joy and he praised the author, propitiating ancestors. The ululator ululated continuously. It could be his wife. He is using *ubukikiki* in an onomatopoeic sense. *Ubukikiki* is associated with the sound produced during ululation. The sound *ubukikiki* is adapted in the sense for rhetorical effect. The *ki ki ki!* sound wells with the sound made by the ululator during ululation.

Zulu, (1996:121) in the book *Umfelokazi* in an effort to show that Bhekani's father was happy about the failure of his son's marriage he should have allowed women to ululate but instead he used ancestors. This portrays a relationship between ancestors and ululation thus:

Kwenqabe lona idlozi mama.

(Ancestors did not allow this to happen.)  
(Zulu, 1996:121).

Zulu, (1990:138) has written many books about the plight of women and sometimes he ridicules them. (*Bathini osizwile* (1994), *Isigcino ngesami*, 1997) He has never mentioned ululation. When interviewed at his home about his neglect for ululation, his response was direct and to the point that women are an inspiration to him and his writings portray what he sees and think about women and not what they say. He was being honest in the sense that when a person sees somebody, something happens emotionally what follows is deep thought about the happen stance.

Khumalo, (1998:252) uses ululation on many occasions but in Khumalo, (1998:252) he uses ululation beautifully to express that everything is falling into perspective:

Kwezwakala ngakho ukulilizela ukuthi bala  
izinto zimi ngomumo wazo.

(Ululation sound indicated that everything is in order.)

Shabangu, (1997:46) also mentions ululation in his book when dealing with the arrival of the bridal party otherwise the scenario of the arrival of the bride could not have been captured as effectively as he did.

As stated earlier on that complete disregard for ululation in literary texts when dealing with marriage evokes ones awareness of patriarchy among some authors. Wedding and ululation are inseparable units. Separation of these two leaves a distasteful impression of disregard for women. One of the examples is that of Mthethwa, (1979:25) in his paper where he talks about marriage and the propitiation of ancestors. Propitiation of ancestors is a ritual where a man pretends to fight an imaginary enemy. Mthethwa does not say anything about ululation, whereas a man is spurred on by the strength of ululation to propitiate



ancestors successfully. On the contrary Weinberg (1979:13) mentioned the manner in which the songs were sung with special reference to the song:

Sizomlanda umakoti.

that means (we are here to fetch the bride). She stated that the song was sung with vigour and accompanied by an adult lead voice. The performance was also interspersed by adult ululations which enhanced the lively interpretations.

Weinberg notices the practice and yet it is foreign to her culture. It strikes one as odd when Mthethwa disregards ululation being a black man, who knows that propitiation of ancestors cannot be done without ululation.

Ululation is visible as an area for scientific research because there are many significant questions on why ululation should be performed by women rather than anybody else? The following are some of the questions that need to be answered by the custodian of the custom:

What arouses the ululator to ululate, because they do not ululate for one reason?

What happens if they do not ululate when the need arises?

Ululation is believed to connect the living and the dead. How does it cater for this situation in sophisticated places like

the graduation ceremony?

in inaugural addresses?

in church?

Essence (*impepho*) is also known as a means of communicating the living and the dead. Can ululation be substituted by essence?

Through ignorance, some students do not want their parents to ululate for them when they graduate. This thesis will enlighten students and other people about how they stifle their parents and relatives who are genuinely happy for them. How they lose a chance of being appreciated and connected to their ancestors on their big event.

The main objective of this thesis is to highlight opportunities that can benefit our disadvantaged people like the certification of ululators. Ululation cannot be taught in class like standard subjects or courses. It is a spontaneous performance. For ululation to take place there must be an emotional spark which will arouse an ululator to ululate. Certification will therefore be based on performance. There are four types of ululation. They are going to be dealt with in chapter 2. The best which is the utopia of ululation is the shriek sound. Ululators who can strike the shriek sound deserve certification. The big question is where to use their certificates.

Certified ululators can be hired at holiday resorts to welcome tourists. Holiday and tourist resorts are the image builders of a country. The unusual welcome of tourists in the form of ululation especially the shriek sound will definitely stun the tourists. Certified ululators will be expected to ululate on the arrival of tourists and give an in-depth explanation about artifacts that are displayed in tourist routes. Many tourist routes that have been identified in Zululand including the recently announced major tourist resort at St Lucia Bay. The Eshowe route which goes via Shakaland to Ulundi is an incentive to make women realise the economic boom ahead and the certified ululators will be posted in every resort to welcome, entertain, explain and sell to holiday makers.

There are other issues like the certification of ululators through recognised institutions to secure jobs. Yes there are educated ululators. These can be given preference provided they are gifted with a 'shriek sound'. Ululators can operate on a higher level as tourist guide who definitely need in-depth knowledge about their culture. Furthermore, the main objective of this thesis is to explain in all conscience about ululation as a custom to many people who need information like colonised blacks, tourists and people of other cultures. Ululation tags need to be explained by ululators because they vary according to the situation at hand and they also vary according to regions. Objects like different kinds of brooms, jerseys, flags, handkerchief during ululation need to be explained and why a vast regional difference among them.

The use of ululation as a communicative factor between the ancestors and the living goes back to antiquity. Today some people do not understand how these things happen. Further Ndlovu, (1992) in Mthiyane, (1971:38) stresses that the use of the vocative is a way of evoking the ancestral spirits, and make them alert and be ready to listen. This goes to show that ululation and the vocative are both stimulants that are used to awaken the ancestors to do their good job of protecting their clan. This explains why women ululate when men go to war whereas the generally known reason for ululation is expression of joy.

It is the same cries of pleasure which (Ntuli and Mbhele, 1988:139) refer to in the play "*Kwakuhle Kwethu!*" when MaSibiya the mother-in-law is relieved because of the failure of the proceedings towards the marriage of her son to a loathed girlfriend. In this sense ululation is used in a sarcastic manner, that is, to ridicule her husband who agreed to the marriage of their son to a girlfriend who is older than her, when she says:

Ngithi Ki-ki-ki! Kwakuhle kwethu!,  
Ki-ki-ki! Ngiyahalalisa mfana wami!,  
Ngiyahalalisa!.

(I say Hoorah! We are very  
happy at home Hoorah! I  
congratulate you my son.  
Congratulations.)

Ululation is used as an interjection which according to traditional grammar refers to words and phrases which are 'thrown in' in the course of speaking but with ululation words are structurally related. The structure in ululation is invariable, what varies is the ululation tag. In *Ki ki ki! Ngiyahalalisa!*. *Ki ki ki!* does not change with an interjection. Hoorah! can be substituted by Yoho! The spirit and the level of excitement will be maintained. In ululation, the moment *ki ki ki!* is removed, the nature of the sentence changes, and there is no substitution for ululation. This is portrayed by Khumalo (1999:103) when he says:

Kuduma ihhule nomkikizo .....

(A thunderous huraah and ululation)

This is enough to show that hoorah! and ululation are neither synonymous nor interchangeable.

Ululation is as old as the custom and ceremonies where ululation is demanded. Nobody ever bothered to look into ululation. They did not bother to know why women ululate and not men. Many people have written on marriage but merely mentioned ululation in passing. Looking at this omission, the standard qualities of ululation and the cultural context of ululation will be assessed in this thesis.

Abundance in literature as noted in Zulu, (1995:2) in the book "*Isigcino Ngesami*" when Mshengu reprimands his wife for listening to their daughter when she reported to her mother that Sifiso, her boyfriend wants to marry her Zulu:

Wavuma nawe ngoba usujahe ukukikiza.

(You entertained her story because you are desperate to ululate.)

It is the same ululation that relates to cries of pleasure by women but Mshengu uses ululation in a negative sense because he is against his daughter getting married before she honours their agreement, that is, she works for two years.

It is the same ululation that the wife of Nxaba alluded to in Vilakazi, (1972:58) when she reprimanded women who were afraid to ululate in church and erupted thus:

Ki-ki-ki!. Kanti akuphumi intombi yini  
sahamba sengathi kufiwe, siboshwe imilomo!  
Sangquzuka sonke isimame sakikiza.

(Vilakazi, 1972:58).

(Is a full-grown girl not going to get married?  
 Why are we walking as if somebody is dead.  
 Are we tongue tied? All women folk ululated  
 in a thunderous cloud of shrill voices.)

Buthlezi, (1995:87) says:

Bakikiza bakikiza.  
 (They ululated repeatedly).

Ululation is used as an expression of excessive joy and success. Buthelezi, (1995:87) is experiencing a series of successes. The success of this new book (*Isandlwana*) (Buthelezi, 1995:87) is a continuation of his success.

Ululation is well known to be ephemeral in nature but in Buthelezi's poem ululation is not short lived. In this poem Buthelezi is trying to express the level of excitement when his wife realised that he was accepted as one of the authors.

This poem shows the semantic nature of ululation. This line also shows that all types of ululation were noted. To some people ululation symbolises relief from the stresses and strains that occur in the build up towards a desired goal. Research has taught us that it is unbelievable happiness and excitement.

Ululation takes a turn in Msimang, (1975:95). It follows Doke and Vilakazi's definition of ululation where utter cries and shrill sounds are concerned but the reason for ululation changes when it is used to support and motivate warriors when going to war. This shows another dimension of ululation that it is multifaceted in application. When warriors go to war, the shrill sound becomes a cry of pain for those whose fathers may not return from war. Women ululate for purposes of support and to motivate the warriors in their course of war.

## 2.2 Literary Theories

The main concern of this chapter is literary theories and approaches that are relevant to ululation. The focus is going to be based on meaning that is conveyed by ululation as it occurs in contemporary social environments.

Analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of study material or data should involve literary theories in order to unearth meaning that is beyond the realm of the unknown. In literary studies, the main endeavour of critical analysis is to expound the knowledge and understanding of literature. This means that we cannot unravel literary theory from the activities of reading and critical interpretation. Theories are therefore a must in the quest for meaning from literature. Any study material is a textbook until someone reads it. Interpretation gives value to the text.

In the literal world that is the mirror of life in general, the senses and the mind interact with the material world around it creatively and in depth. It establishes a relationship between the writer, reader and the material world. The conceptualisation of the human mind making use of the surrounding world ultimately results in philosophy, science and art. The resultant conceptualised material could be either oral or written. Finally our analysis of written and oral material must enable us to understand and know exactly how Zulu's perceive and appreciate ululation as a natural phenomena.

According to World Book Dictionary, Barnhart, (1992:1172) a theory is a supposition or a system of ideas explaining something especially one based on general principles independent of the particular things to be explained. Kerlinger, (1973:9) defines a theory as:

a set of interrelated constructs, definitions and propositions that present a systematic view of a phenomenon by specifying relations between variables with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena.

In this definition it is indicated that an explanation is an answer to many questions. In other words a phenomenon is explained when one indicates why it has occurred, and when there is a problem. This implies that explanations are explanations when they solve problems or used in terms of causes or in terms of reasons.

People of other cultures believe that ululation does not provide an intellectual climate for scientific research because it is a mere primitive sound. Rev. Grout, Bryant and Krige were the first authors to mention ululation in their work. Grout, (1869:56) stated that:

Ululation is a good area for scientific research.

Bryant , (1949:545) referred to ululation as:

this joyful cry of the matrons which was termed *ukulilizela*. A very ancient custom and interesting study.

On the contrary Krige, (1960:140) only noted that:

ululation is a yelling noise which can be heard within a radius of several miles.

Though he was not specific like Grout and Bryant, it shows that there is something he noted about this sound but he lacked the aptitude to analyse it (Sikhosana, 2000:4) in an unpublished paper agrees with Reverend Grout that ululation can be researched academically. The reason being that ululation is a reality because it can be sensed. Ululation is assumed to have an origin in the cultural ceremonies and performances. Ululation is a sound that is innate to the ululator in the sense that it is present in the mind or soul as originally created. It is either learned or acquired. Sound is part of the ululators nature.

Ululation has characteristics in the sense that it is spontaneous. An ululator is not obliged to satisfy a need after ululation but she finds herself in a situation

where she is ululating. She feels fulfilled after ululating. The product of the ululator though abstract in nature is conspicuous by its absence. It is felt like the sound of the musical instrument though Krige, (1960:140) refers to ululation as a yelling sound. The ululator and ululation are inseparable. The sound is the soul of ululation. It is the soul of its objectification. The performance of the ululator is her delight. Her performance appears in cultural ceremonies as a cherry on top. Objectification is success and glory to the ululator. Ululation is never set aside for special use, or next time, because it is abstract and spontaneous in nature. It is prompted by a relevant situation.

The above family of resemblance has a direct bearing upon the claims and status of scientific statements. The collection shows theoretical beliefs about the nature and origin of ululation. The resemblance belongs to nations in the biggest continent, Africa and beyond.

### **2.2.1 Western Literary Theories**

Literary theories that are going to be applied in this study to analyse data are The Russian Formalism, Structuralism and Feminism. Theories of Dundes, Scheub, Propp, Darwin and Ease of Effort theories will be looked into because they have been looking at tales as folklore phenomenon. The above theories have been chosen in the sense that they are highly relevant in this study because they were expounded specifically to analyse Zulu and Xhosa folktales. The same theories have been successfully applied to African folktales in South Africa. Oosthuizen, (1977) in Msimang, (1986:22) applied these theories in her analysis of Zulu folktales in the Stuart Collection. Ululation has never been analysed, the closest folklore material that has been analysed is going to be used to help in the analysis of ululation.

Darwin's theory of natural selection is going to be used to show the resistance and survival of ululation from extinction despite its disregard by authors who can keep it alive and societies who ululate and forget.



The Ease of Effort theory is also going to be used to show and emphasise Dundes theory of the phonetic aspect of ululation.

According to Dundes, (1965(17) there are only two basic steps in the study of folklore, that is:

- (i) Folklore must not be studied in isolation.
- (ii) The phonetic aspect of folklore

### 2.2.1.1 Russian Formalism

Russian formalism as a theory will be used with special emphasis on Defamiliarisation and a New Criticism theory. Structuralism and Feminism will also be looked into although there will be modifications of these theories to suit the cultural elements of the people and language studied.

Russian formalism emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a direct result of historical, ideological and intellectual situation. The group that started this theory posed a reaction to positivists and biographical interpretations of the Romantics era. The formalist approach is associated with two groups, the "Moscow Linguistic Circle" (1915) under the leadership of Roman Jakobson and the "Society for the Study of Poetics." Which was stationed at Petersburg in 1916 under Viktor Shklovsky.

The term "formalist" was underrated by its opponents but to no avail because this theory came for a specific aim because formalists felt that other scholars were causing confusion in the literary world. Jefferson and Robey, (1989:27) echoed that:

The form that literary studies had taken during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, positivism was largely based on the genetic approach. Critics or rather scholars rather concentrated their energies on uncovering the sources and genesis of the particular works, and the role of biography, history and history of ideas in these genetic studies obviously reduced

the importance of literature itself in literary scholarship. The study of literature had become little more than a loose aggregate of history philosophy, psychology, aesthetics, ethnography, sociology and so on and the formalists felt that any specificity it might have had been swamped by its adjacent disciplines.

Formalists were against taking priority of some elements that were secondary according to their view and they feared that it might lead to the distortion of evidence. It was for this reason that the formalists directed their efforts towards being in agreement towards the independent existence of literary studies. There was therefore a need for a theory that was going to focus on literature and its functions. It was noted that a unique definition that was completely different from the previous scholars was going to be a solution. Jefferson and Robey, (1989:27) introduced a strategy for dealing with a definition of literature such as this:

The Formalist's definition of literature is a differential or oppositional one: what constitutes literature is simply its difference from other orders of facts. The operative concept in this differential specification is defamiliarisation or making strange (ostranenie).

Defamiliarisation means (making strange) or opposition to the habitual. According to Shklovsky, (1989:27):

Art defamiliarises things that have become habitual or automatic.

Walking for instance, is a daily activity which we have ceased to be aware of, but when we ululate the automatically performed gestures of walking are perceived anew. A dance is art that is performed to be seen. The art in dancing defamiliarises walking to something that is gripping like dance and other artistic activities. In the case of ululation a walk is also involved. The automatically performed gestures of walking such as the strutting of feet is perceived in a different light during ululation. Music and instruments can provoke dance whereas ululation can go beyond.

Graduation ceremonies, marriage ceremonies and the community gardens competitions to mention a few are situational areas of ululation in the sense that the above mentioned situations and many more provide a precursor for ululation. Ululation is a sound, the vibration in ululation defamiliarises sound. Sound is art and there is order in art. Once sound loses its order it becomes rhythm. Ululation is a sound with rhythm. The different types of ululation represent the different types of rhythms that are resultant to the different places of articulation. Should the disordering of sound become a convention, it will be ineffective as a device for disturbing the sound that is at peace.

In organised settings for ululation like in a school choir, where one singer is assigned a task to ululate at some point in a performance her ululation does not have the effective and disruptive spontaneity of ululation at its best. What is emphasised in this theory is that sound is the base for ululation and the vibration is art. Art is therefore a disturbance of normality. In the same breath ululation is a disturbance of normality like all other forms of art and it should be appreciated in that manner. In literature, the implementation of the formalist theory can elevate the way in which individual works can be conceived. Practically ululation is spontaneous in nature. The building up of events towards the occurrence of ululation must be clearly foregrounded to defamiliarise the situation. The eruption of ululation per se defamiliarises the situation. The events leading to the defamiliarisation of the situation are very interesting to follow thus:

Ntuli, (1988:138) in his book a letter is employed as a functional event to arouse ululation thus:

The disagreement between mother and son over the woman to marry is normal. Fathers supporting their sons' decisions over their wives' aspirations about their children is normal.

The disappointment of the son and father about the rejection is normal. Mothers are usually very sensitive where their children are involved. The mother's open excitement over her son's disappointment is strange. Though we know that she is happy about the outcome but transparency is not always the case. In the same vein her transparent eruption heightens the strangeness in events.

During ululation the words, *Ki ki ki! Kuhle kwethu!* are never used under normal circumstances. These words are representative of joy or success. These words are accompanied by a woman whose behaviour is also strange in the form of strutting her feet, a behaviour which is peculiar to ceremonies and strange under normal situations. Ululation can be compared to Samburu dance which expresses a protest against a regime imposed by the elders Spenser, (1985:26). It compares with ululation in the sense that it is performed by women. It is not known when it will erupt. They differ in the sense that ululation is an expression of joy whilst Samburu is an expression of anger. The relevance of dance to this theory is that it is not an everyday activity. It only comes in when there is a disruption in the normal routine, during ceremonies, during periods of anxiety, during boundary shifts and in many more situations in life. It is in contrast with normal life because it takes the dancer or ululator out of their structured routine into a realm of timeless charm. Sometimes the dance stretches beyond the immediate milieu to some higher association with spiritual beings.

Some people believe that ululators are in close contact with ancestors in the sense that when women ululate there is always a festivity at the end of ululation. According to Zulu culture success is celebrated with Zulu – beer. Ancestors will always follow ululators because they know that they will lead them to beer. By the way ancestors are our relatives, they know our culture and they know their people.

Msimang, (1975:111) confirms this when he says:

Ezizweni ezimhlophe nezinsundu kukhona yini  
ukudla kokubusa nokubungaza abantu  
okungedlula utshwala? Bekuthi lapho abantu  
sebexokozela sebeswakeme kuthiwe abaphansi  
nabo bayathokoza basondele emzini wabo  
nezilokotho ezinhle kube ubuhle ekhaya.

(Among Black and White nations, is there any  
better form of food which is used for entertaining  
people other than liquor? To our great grand  
fathers, it was extra ordinary when guests showed  
signs of intoxication it follows that the ancestors  
were around bringing good wishes and fortune at  
home.)

Shklovsky's theory of defamiliarisation looks like a solution to the problem as experienced by previous scholars in the sense that it shows that literature is not just a mere repository of values, truths and experiences but proves that literariness is produced in relation to other experiences. This means that literature is multifaceted when it comes to interpretation. Literary as well as figurative meaning can be extracted from the literary text.

Further Shklovsky's theory of defamiliarisation and Jacobsen theory of metaphor and metonymy are interlinked. They deal with meaning that is transferred from its familiar object to an unfamiliar one. This is common in African Languages due to the heavy use of metaphors especially in isiZulu. Shklovsky's theory is highly relevant when it comes to understanding unfamiliar experiences that are represented by these metaphors. It is also noticeable that emphasis is put on content than on form. Taking an example of IsiZulu Riddle where the broom is referred to as the man:

Ngikuphicaphica ngendoda egiya igiye ibuye esangweni.

Would you decipher the riddle of a man who  
dances to and from the gate.

Answer : umshanelo ( broom).

The theory of defamiliarisation does not look at these objects and phenomena as familiar as we know them in everyday life. Rather it makes them unfamiliar by looking at their relationship that goes beyond ordinary meaning to symbolism. Defamiliarisation therefore helps to descent any basic meaning of the term used in language communication.

### 2.2.1.2 Feminism

Feminism is the belief that women should have economic, political and social equality with men. The term feminism also refers to a political movement that works to gain such equality called the Women's Rights Movement.

Feminist beliefs have existed throughout history, but feminism did not become wide spread in Europe and the United States until mid 1800s. At that time many people regarded women as inferior and less important than men. The law reflected this opinion, for example women were barred by law from voting in elections or serving in juries. Most institutions of higher education and most professional careers were also closed to women. Despite strong opposition, Feminism grew in power during the 1800 and 1900centuries and won new rights for women. Many people regard the feminist movement and the resulting changes in the status of women as a turning point in the history of society.

One of the feminist writers was Mary Wollstonecraft whose contribution was in the form of a book called "A Vindication of the Rights of Women" (1792) She described the state ignorance in which society kept women and she pleaded for better educational opportunities.

Another early feminist was the American anti Slavery Leader, Sarah Grimke. She wrote a pamphlet called "Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Women" (1838). Grimke presented a powerful argument against religious leaders, who claimed to find support in the bible for the inferior position of women.

At first the Feminist Movement concentrated on gaining suffrage. In 1893 and onwards women in New Zealand were the first to win this right. Women in Australia, European countries, and the United States followed suit.

Feminist Movement nearly disappeared after women had received the right to vote. Their entry into the labour force came with many discoveries but most importantly was that many high paying jobs were closed to women. A new concern with economic and social equality helped create a revival of the Feminist Movement in the 1960s. They fought to end educational and job discrimination against women. Large numbers of women entered law, medicine, politics, business and other traditionally male fields.

All these discriminations which feminists fought, were not a problem among Zulu women, then, because all blacks putting gender aside did not have a right to vote. Zulu women did not seek employment then, they were self-sufficient. Zulu women were highly respected in their societies and homesteads. They even participated national affairs, to mention a few Mkhabayi, Ntombazi and Nandi. Sporadic beating of wives occurred but was condemned hence we get the proverb :

Induku ayiwakhi umuzi.

(A stick does not build a household.)

Meaning, to scare a woman is not the best way to keep her.

Disregard and abuse of women was first noticed with the emergence of townships.

The emergence of the Feminist Movement in the Zulu society had no impact because most of the serious issues were sorted out before they could organise themselves into a powerful organ.

The elaboration of the contemporary practise of feminism and its current social and cultural values will be preceded by a brief outline of feminist

theories. This endeavour will be aided by theories espoused by various authors such as Carol Boyce Davies (1994), Toril Moi (1990), Rosemary Tong (1989), Roger Webster (1990), Learner (1986), Chondorov (1978) to mention a few.

Feminists seek to identify the origins of power relations between men and women and to deconstruct the male centred notions perpetuating women's subordinate positions. Research has shown that the marginalisation of women is reflected in all spheres of existence economically, socially politically, and culturally. Feminists therefore see an urgent need to transform myths regarding gender.

As a discourse aiming to liberate women from all forms of oppression, feminism is subdivided into a variety of strands. Liberal feminism fits into the 'welfare' or egalitarian model of analysis.

Tong, (1989:12) states that according to liberal feminists female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that block women's entrance or success in the so called 'public world'. Our society is accused of holding false beliefs about women. Amongst these beliefs are that women are by nature less intellectually and physically capable than men. These notions exclude women from public forums, academy and market place. In view of the above it is no surprise that feminism is a discourse which is looked upon to drive the liberation of women.

Women and ululation is the same thing in the sense that, marginalisation of women means the oppression of ululation. There is a racial feeling that Zulu men are outstanding culprits of oppressing women, however, when it comes to ululation they love ululation to the point that they call for it when women are too busy to ululate. Ululation as a practise was oppressed by white priests because they did not understand ululation. This is beautifully portrayed by Vilakazi, (1972:58) when one of the daring women in church did not understand women's disregard for ululation when it was crucial that it be employed at that time when she bursted into ululation as quoted earlier on.



White Priests have a problem with ululation because it is not in their culture. Secondly ululation sound is irritating to them. Krige is one writer who showed clearly his dislike for ululation when he referred to ululation as a yelling sound, a sound that shows fear or excitement.

Levi – Strauss offers a theoretical explanation in which women's subordination is seen as crucial to culture rather than being related to their economic value. To him the exchange of women is the first form of trade. Women were turned into a commodity and 'reified' They were thought of more as things than as human beings. According to feminist language, they are objectified. Davies, (1994:28) states that small self sufficient tribes had to relate to neighbouring tribes either in warfare or to find peaceful co-existence. Women were therefore sent to neighbouring tribes as pawns until they got married. Beasts that were paid towards her exchange increased wealth in her original family. This objectification of women in Zulu culture was noted in Nxumalo, (1900:23) where women were used as human shield to protect Shongweni's cows.

Another case was noted among the Qwabe tribe in Gwayi, (1974:56) "uNtombazane" a character in Gwayi, (1974:56) was given to Dingiswayo in exchange for his loyalty to the Ndwandwe people. They control the exchange of women, enforce restrictions on their sexual behaviour, and acquire private property in women. The young man must offer labour services to the old men for the privilege of gaining access to women. Under such circumstances the woman becomes the spoil for warriors which encourages and reinforces the dominance of older men over the community as depicted in many Zulu books which deal with culture.

Further in Blose, (1975:47) young girls were forced to marry grooms who were hardened soldiers who were old enough to be their fathers (*Ukujutshwa kwezintombi*). Those who disobeyed the Kings ruling like Maqanda and Nontombi were killed.

All these issues which feminists fought for were not a problem among Zulu women because in Zulu culture there is a construct called Hlonipha or Avoidance custom. This custom accommodates arranged marriages even today in some parts of the country. The South African constitution is against forced marriages and women have a right to disagree. Women who are exposed to this kind of marriage like it. In contemporary societies no woman is forced into a loveless marriage.

### 2.2.1.3 Structuralism

Structuralism is a method of analysis that examines the structure of relationships between things, rather than the things themselves Levi Strauss, (1949:35).

Levi – Strauss derived the structural approach from structural linguistics, a science that studies languages through the structure of their sounds and words. Structuralism has been employed in the study of family relationships, the myths of North and South American Indians and even cooking methods.

According to Levi – Strauss, myths throughout the world are transformations of one another. The myths of different cultures appear to be different, but if the myths have the same structure, they may actually be saying the same thing. Some scholars do not believe that universality of structure can bear the same meaning in literature. Mathenjwa, (1999:67) is of the opinion that:

in isiZulu there is a multiplicity of meaning which is brought about by images which are found in this language. Further it should be noted that most images used in isiZulu literature are culture based.

This then suggests that the structure of the language may show all possible similarities but the meaning will never be the same because of the cultural background of the language concerned.

In English we get a proverb that says, "Don't judge a book by its cover," which means do not accept things as they present themselves to you. In isiZulu, the same proverb can be interpreted like this, "*Ayihlabi ngakumisa*." English culture looks at books as the store house of the country or of the peoples values and culture whereas among the Zulu people, cows mean the wealth of the man or the nation.

Since we are dealing with sound structuralism is the relevant theory to be employed to unbundle the myth of ululation. Families are knit together by an unknown strand that makes them share the same feelings for each other. These are the same feelings that are shared by ululators when the member of the family has achieved any form of success that needs acknowledgement. Ululation sound comes spontaneously among African women. It is also interesting to note that the structure in the production of ululation among Arabic women (Palestinians) is the same as African women. Levi – Strauss' idea that if myths have the same structure they may be saying the same thing is true. If we compare the reason for ululating among African women and Arabic women, we find that they ululate as an expression of joy or success, therefore ululation means the same thing to them. The structure of the sounds they produce is the same *li li li!* sound which is an alternative of the shriek sound.

Further if we look at the *ki ki ki!* sound, the [k] in [ki'] is articulated inside the throat hence a velar sound, This sound is articulated internally which shows that it has something to do with the heart. The [i] sound in [ki'] is a high front vowel. This shows that it has something to do with issues in higher levels of thinking. Ululation and war; and ululation and marriage; can be easily understood when using this theory. When men go to war women ululate because they love them deeply. They want them to succeed because they fully support their mission. The strangeness of this deed lies in the fact that, ululation is an expression of joy and success but when people go to war some will die. In that case there is no success and there is no joy. Walbank, (1981:173) says Spartan women during the social revolution in Sparta ululated when their men went to war saying:

Go to the battlefield with your shields  
And come back with them or on them.

It is interesting to note that Spartans believed in ancestors as a result they wanted to restore the ancestral government under Cleomenes in the third century. Walbank, (1981:174 ) confirms this when he says:

...and these referencies to restoring the  
ancestral government seem to mean a return to  
the situation before the reforms.

These women have accepted either way of the results because they know that when the family of the 'living' loses a member there is great joy in the family of the 'living dead.' The ki ki ki ! sound therefore refers to joy in the hearts of the people concerned and the joy of the living dead (abaphansi) The manner in which the Spartan women respond to ululation is the same as that of all the Zulu women.

Previously folklore has been denied a place in scientific research, it is only now that it has finally been acknowledged among human sciences. Ululation features in the sense of involving objects (signs) and forms of expressions whose meaning depend on conversions, relations, and systems rather than on any inherent factors.

Barthes, (1972:72) confirms the above when he says culture is a language, meaning that culture consists of signs which are structured and organised like those of language itself. Saussure, (1978:71) speaks of polite formulas that are imbued with certain natural expressiveness. This is beautifully expressed in Zulu culture when the need or situations demand ululation failing which, men turn to women and demand ululation saying.

Ngabe amakhosikazi awekho yini ?

(Where are the women?)

Women without questioning anything will burst in ululation because they know that it is the convention of the society.

Secondly the arrival of the Zulu King in his palace is met by thunderous ululation by all women even those who are not necessarily his wives. On the contrary, among the Venda people the departure of the King from the palace is expressed by ululation.

Ululation in both palaces signifies something although this might seem to be an unequivocal expression of deference, it becomes clear that it is a purely conventional as soon as one imagines the departure of or the arrival of an English King accompanied by women ululating. In the Zulu and Venda context the meaning of the gesture is perfectly transparent whereas in the English context this behaviour would be totally bewildering because it is not known in the English conventions. Structuralism is a certain mode of analysis of cultural artifacts, in so far as this mode originates in the methods of contemporary linguistics. Barthes, (1970:412) The analysis is based on cultural artifacts which refer to anything made by human skill or work. Artifacts abound in ululation and they are significant to the occasion. Artifacts are found in the form of Signs, Signifier (written or spoken and signified concept.)

The sign referring to the ululator – Married women are the best candidates for ululation. Young women who ululate are referred to as naughty (*Bayaphapha*).

The signifier being ululation tags – The emphasis is based on the fact that words do not depend on reality for their meaning. Language may be a self sufficient system but meaning is not determined by the subjective intentions and wishes of its speakers. It is not the speaker who directly imparts meaning to his utterances but the linguistic system as a whole produces it.

Barthes, (1966: 51) says:

A work is eternal not because it imposes one meaning on different men, but because it suggests different meanings to one man.

When looking at a woman ululating during a marriage ceremony, it could be an expression of joy because the couple was able to walk over all the problems of their love life. Secondly it could be an expression of sadness and loss, because the families loose a daughter and a son when they get married. This is confirmed by the bible in Genesis, (2 : 23-24 ) when it says:

.... she shall be called woman because she was taken out of a man. For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and cling to his wife and they shall be one flesh.

Even if they still belong to the family, the parents can no longer claim them from their new family.

Structuralism also contains another linguistic category called narration. Barthes, (1966:51) refers to narration as referring to the manner in which a story is told. In the case of ululation it depends on how the ululation tags have been expressed as in structuralist theory is chosen in this case because it confronts issues that were previously unconsidered in linguistic approaches. Most importantly however is the way in that structuralist principles lead to a questioning of nature. In structuralist theory the language of criticism ends up posing as many problems, which is a good sign in writing a thesis. At whatever level of generality, culture consists of signs that are structural and organised like those of language itself. Saussure, (1978:338) uses the language of polite formulas that are imbued with natural expressiveness. Although they are based on convention because nobody is reminded to ululate. Failure to ululate when the need arises there is always a very serious reason for them to defy the convention.

The signified (concept)

The signifier may be important in ululation but the signified carries more weight when we look at the power imbued in ululation.

Dundes dealt with folktales but this thesis is dealing with ululation. They are both similar in the sense that they both form part of oral lore and can be studied under one social and cultural context; but their structure and setting is completely different.

Considering the setting of both ululation and folktales: In ululation the setting is identifiable and grandiose in the sense that it has large audiences, to mention a few:

- |            |   |   |
|------------|---|---|
| the church | > | during a marriage ceremony and during the announcement of a marriage ceremony |
| halls      | > | during graduation ceremonies, inaugural address, and other functions          |
| open space | > | during the propitiation of ancestors, traditional dances                      |
| at home    | > | when celebrating whatever arouses an ululator to ululate                      |

In a folktale the setting is described in very vague terms. The purpose is that it must not be readily identifiable. Even identifiable places like the stone-of-*Ntunjambili* (*Itshe lika Ntunjambili*) has a mythical atmosphere about it, that at some stage in history, it was possible for this stone to open in response to the birds singing and let them in especially swallows (*izinkonjane*). There is an exception of two out of twenty folktales that are known to me that show identifiable localities. The first folktale is called uDemane noDemazane. The setting for uDemane noDemazane is next to *Itshe lika Ntunjambili* which lies not far from the banks of Thukela river, an area which is occupied by the Ngcolosi people. Whites refer to this place as Kranskop. It is about 60 km north east of Greytown in Kwa-Zulu-Natal.

The second folktale with an identifiable landmark is *Intombi namaZimu* where the uMngeni River, which runs through Howick and Durban to the Indian Ocean is mentioned in a song, Msimang, (1986:262).

What sustains the life of ululation in the midst of changing cultures and governments in this world is a big question. One of the most sophisticated contributions was made by Giddens, (1984:14) in a theory called Structuration under Structuralism. The key element of Structuration is the process through which social life is recognised to be structured. Structure thus refers, to the structuring properties that make it possible for the similar social practices to exist within a long span of time (Chaney, 1994:59). The structuring properties are characterised by a combination of rules and sources which are both focussed through codes of signification. This therefore gives the impression that rules and sources of social order are recursively implicated in social reproduction.

In the case of ululation there is an ululator (source) and the performance (rules) that exists. The two properties that have been mentioned are candidates for change. Ululation has the extra quality of spontaneity that cannot be accounted for. That element of spontaneity in ululation is as mysterious as the origin of ululation.

#### **2.2.1.4 Structuralist theories and Propp (1958)**

As stated earlier in chapter one that ululation has been disregarded by both academics and literary authors, structuralist theorist accommodate the structure of any written material. Ululation like any written form that conveys a message does have a syntagmatic organisation or structure. Material in ululation is spontaneous but there is a structure in the sense that there is an initial core cliché that is invariable, that is *ki ki ki!* which is followed by a message which conveys the feelings and understanding of the people concerned. *Kuhle kwethu!*, which conveys the message is going to be referred to as "ululation tag". The structure of ululation is therefore going to look thus, core cliché + ululation tag;



-core cliché ki ki ki! +	-	ululation tag > <i>kuhle kwethu!</i>
-invariable	-	variable
<i>Ki-ki-ki!</i> means	>	hey! Hoorah! who ever you are, something great is happening here
Kuhle kwethu!	>	tells the respondent about the initial call or beckoning that we are happy at home.

There are myriads of varieties of messages that are used by women as a message to the couple, the audience or to the supernatural being (God) or to the ancestors (abaphansi).

The above division categorises messages or ululation tags due to the level of excitement during ululation, nobody notices the different categories but the relevant researcher and the speakers of the language.

Resultantly ululation can be divided into two component parts, that is, the core cliché + ululation tags – to – couple

- audience
- God
- ancestors

That is why some people refer to ululation as a prayer and this will be explained in Chapter 5.

When Propp, (1958:20) says the *dramatis personae* changes he refers to ululators. In each and every event we get different ululators, that is for example in the Gumede wedding we get ululators who belong or are related to that family. The ululation tags change according to the need of the situation at hand. They change in accordance with their attitude toward the wedding. Some want the marriage to be a success whereas some are totally against the marriage. Some are ululating genuinely because they want the ancestors to keep the whole ceremony calm so that no fighting takes place while others are having fun.

When (Propp, 1958:20) continues to say “neither their actions nor functions change” he refers to the manner in which they strut their feet when ululating, their forward and backward movement when ululating does not change. The beauty depends on the skills and effort employed by the ululator. What they carry during ululation is the same depending on the affordability of the ululator. They all know what they need to carry during ululation. The functions of ululation do not change. Occasions on which ululation is rendered does not change the function of ululation to the culture of the people.

Every character in a performance has a function to fulfill. (Propp, 1958:21) defines function as an act of a character seen from the point of view of its significance for the cause of the action.

Besides entertaining the audience an ululator performs a very important function during the ceremony with her broom, branches of trees and a calabash and many more objects depending on the type of ceremony. The function of the ululator is constant and this shows its significance. In this case characters become variables and function become invariables in the sense that ululators change but function does not change. Propp supports this dictum when he says:

The *dramatis personae* changes but neither  
their actions nor functions change.

(Propp, 1958:20).

In all African countries the pattern is the same. In Ghana where ululation was closely related to ancestor worship, they made use of one national ululator, but this did not work because ululation is spontaneous. All women ululated when they were moved by the understanding and internalisation of the action at hand. Today there is no national ululator in Ghana. Women ululate as they please. Structurally it is maintained that the core cliché is the basic structural unit of ululation. It is constant no matter who performs it. Ululation has one structure irrespective of its application.

Scheub, (1975:30) like all structuralists, looks at the structure of written material but he goes beyond as far as the theme and style which is not common to other structuralists. Theme refers to the subject of a talk or text. Leedy, (1994:1003) all ululation tags have a theme which explains the understanding and feelings of the woman concerned.

When the woman ululates > “*Wangena umakoti uzosithengela ama cellula!*” (Here comes the bride. She is going to buy cellular phones for us.) It is not that the bride is expected to buy cellular phones for all the members of the family per se but they mean that great things are expected from her like means of communication is going to be improved. ‘*Halala! Wangena umakoti ekhaya!*’ The arrival of a bride at home means relief from household chores. During graduation ceremonies we get tags like, ‘*Halala! Yaphuma indlala ekhaya!*’ which means whoever is graduating is going to relieve the parents from the burden of providing everything for the family. The theme of these tags is relief from a stressful situation.

Scheub, (1975:94) speaks of a core cliché that is noticeable in ululation that is *ki-ki-ki!* Further he speaks of a core image which is meant to beef up the structure. In ululation a core image can be referred to as a likeness or an alternative of the core cliché which is *ki ki ki!* alternatives like *li li li!* or *yi yi yi!* can be referred to as core images. We can go further and look at the distribution of words in ululation as a sentence.

#### 2.2.1.5 The syntactic distribution of words in ululation

We are going to look at the (a) surface structure  
(b) deep structure

##### (1) Surface structure of ululation

- (i) core cliché > ki-ki-ki!
- (ii) ululation tags > their flexibility which results in new categories of ululation tags.

## (2) Deep structure

This category demands in-depth knowledge of Zulu traditions and customs because there are aspects that need understanding of things that have never been seen.

### 2.2.1.6 Ease of Effort Theories

The employ of these theories is based on the fact that during ululation articulation decides the type of ululation. These theories are referred to as Ease-of-Effort-Theories in the sense of ease of articulation. Today there are very few women who can strike a shriek sound. In each and every congregation only one or two women can strike a shriek sound. Today a shriek sound is prevalent at Msinga district. Msinga district is one of the backward areas in KwaZulu-Natal. Msinga district is characterised by a rocky terrain which is infested by aloe trees. History and literature has it that people who were running away from white persecution lived there like Bhambatha ka Mancinza. There is a huge rock which Bambatha used to hide from the Whites who undermined his chieftaincy and wanted to dethrone him (Zondi, 1972:68). Going back to the prevalence of ululation at Msinga district Max Muller a linguist in the 19<sup>th</sup> century claimed that:

Owing to a laziness inherent in civilization, sophisticated people do not use the forceful articulatory movements required for primitive tongues ... In civilized languages, speakers avoid difficult guttural sounds and show a preference for relatively easy sounds produced fairly far forward in the mouth.

Aitchson, (1991:124).

When women ululate they either produce a shriek sound which is natural, traditional and the best or the alternative velar and prepalatal sounds. Due to either laziness to articulate forceful sounds or avoidance of difficult guttural sounds women avoid the shriek sound for the velar *ki-ki-ki!* sound. Generally speaking the majority of women prefer the relatively easy *li-li-li!* sound which is produced by the tapping of the tip of the tongue on the prepalatal region.

This is the simplest form of ululation and people accept this assimilation of sounds in pronunciation as aberrant. Assimilation of consonants by alternating consonants is found in many languages as a sequence which is most natural for human vocal organs. During ululation *li li li!* sound is comfortable on the vocal organs compared to the *ki ki ki!* sound. The alternation of *ki ki ki!* for *li li li!* is understandable. O'Connor, (1973:251) states that:

Language does what it has to do for  
efficiency and gets away with what it can.

All women can pronounce the *li li li!* sound and for a thorough performance during ululation women have to be comfortable with what they are doing. For a better performance of ululation by many members, *li-li-li!* is a better option to the difficult varieties of ululation. Once a change has entered into a language it can either be accelerated, exaggerated or slowed down by linguistic factors or the people. Subsequently the *li li li!* version has been accelerated by the exposure of ululation to civilised societies. Civilised societies have money to finance these ceremonies. Civilised societies have access to all forms of exposure for these ceremonies. People end up knowing what is exposed to them, even though it is at the peril of the genuine staff. On the contrary the *yi yi yi!* sound is slowed down by the limited number of people who use the *yeyeza!* dialect.

The *yeyeza* dialect is a kind of pronunciation where people substitute the *l* sound by *y* or *w*. The Zulus refer to this substitution of sound by another as *ukuthefuya* (*yeyeza* dialect). This kind of dialect is common among the amaChunu and the Qwabe people in Northern Zululand. These people use this type of speech intensely practically in every instance except in concords of classes 3 and 6. According to Doke's classification we get examples like:

Leliya – hhashi lihle lilalela umninilo becomes  
Yeyiya – hhashi yihle yiyayeya umniniyo.

(Doke and Vilakazi, 1972:789).

At Gingindlovu there is a mountain which is called uNomanyela. When it is going to rain that hill is covered by dark clouds and people start behaving accordingly. They say:

UNomanyewu usenje ngenisani izingubo.

(UNomanyewu (mountain) is covered with dark clouds, collect the washing.)

UNomanyela changes to uNomanyewu

*l* changes to *w*

The meaning is contextual and the sound changes are dialectical.

There is also *Amatigulu* district and *Amatigulu* river in northern Zululand. People in this area who use yeyeza dialect when they refer to *Amatigulu* as *amatiguwu*

*l* changes to *w*.

The same applies to uThukela river. People who use the yeyeza dialect in the areas around uThukela river refer to *uThukela* as *uThukeya*. *l* changes to *y* (Doke and Vilakazi, 1972:789).

### 2.2.1.7 The phonetic aspect of ululation

Ululation is characterised by a loud and thrilling shriek sound which is accompanied by strutting of feet and waving of the broom in the air. The phonetic aspect of ululation refers to the sound which is heard during ululation. The Zulu name for ululation is *ukukikiza* or *ukulilizela* which is derived from the sound produced by women during ululation. It is onomatopoeic in the sense that the Ndebele refer to ululation as '*Ukukwawazela*' because when they ululate the sound produced is *kwa kwa kwa kwi!*. Ululation can be divided into four distinct sounds, that is the shriek sound, the velaric *ki-ki-ki!* sound, the prepalatal *li-li-li!* sound, and the *yi yi*

*yi!* which is dialectical. The last sound is derived from the yeyeza dialect of the people of Dlangubo and Gingindlovu regions. There are a few sounds which are exceptions to the four known sounds which are produced by women who fail to produce the three recognised ululation sounds like women who bleat like a calf in an effort to ululate. What they produce is ululation though it cannot be classified.

#### 2.2.1.7.1 The original, traditional and genuine shriek sound

This kind of ululation resembles the sound produced by the White headed Fish Eagle bird, which is a quick repetition of shriek sounds, Msimang, (1975:79). In some regions like Msinga district this kind of ululation is commonly used immediately after the marriage ceremony to welcome the bride into the new family. This shriek sound is also noted in times of war or unrest in support of warriors or rioters. This sound is indescribable because the manner of its articulation and the place of its articulation cannot be identified. The production of this sound is a mystery which needs intense research. This ululation resembles a war-cry. It starts with a loud sharp sound which is followed by a shrill voice with staccatos which sound like the bursting of a child into sobs (*isilokozane*). This is ululation at its best. This is the mysterious sound which has the power to evoke ancestors.

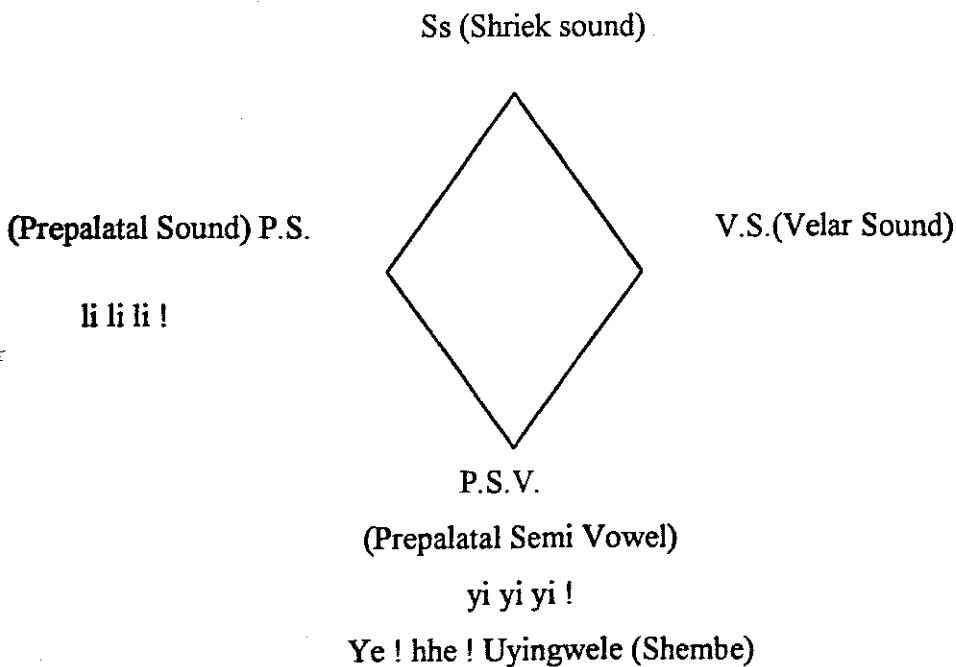
The next sounds are *ki-ki-ki!* and *li-li-li!*. These sounds are an alternative to the shriek sound. These sounds are optional in production depending on the ability of the ululator. *Ki-ki-ki!* is a velar explosive sound which is mild on the vocal cords and articulators when compared to the shriek sound. Many women can articulate this sound.

The *li-li-li!* sound is a prepalatal lateral continuant. All women can articulate this sound. In an effort to produce a shriek sound, women in Zimbabwe use a *li-li-li!* sound accompanied by the tapping of the lips with fingers. The problem in producing a shriek sound which is genuine, traditional, quality and above all, it is believed that it is more effective in evoking ancestors, is common all over the continent. Educated women seem to be vocally wounded

when it comes to the articulation of a shriek sound while country women and uneducated women do not have much of a problem. This idea is going to be tested in the field. It was noted that educated people ululate when they are involved directly like in the case of kinsfolk.

The four types of ululation are effective in the expression of joy or success but the question on the ability of the alternative types to evoke ancestors needs to be confirmed by relevant sources in Chapter 4. That ululation evokes ancestors is believed strongly by Africans. Ululation is used to welcome and show direction to the ancestors.

The four points in this diagram show the Diamond structure of ululation. This diamond structure of ululation shows that there are four types of ululation as shown in the diagram below:



In ululation, the shriek sound is abstract in the sense that it can not be described in terms of its place and manner of articulation. Usually sound is produced by putting together two objects or articulators, but in the case of the shriek sound there is no collusion of parts of speech. What is felt is the hardening of a certain area in the neck region. Further the shriek sound cannot



be written down like the *ki-ki-ki!* and *li-li-li!* sounds. It belongs to an unknown level of sounds. Ululation is unique because it entirely belongs to the feminine sex. When a man tries to ululate, his sanity is questioned. Ululation is innate in women. There is no specific locale that can be pointed out as the origin of ululation. It is believed that it originates from the womb. It is binary in action in the sense that the after delivery pains (*izinseka*) which are experienced by women are converted to excitement and joy that is why ululation is practised by women who have given birth to children.

#### **2.2.1.7.2 Action of characters**

The action of character involve (i) male and females; (ii) females only. There are instances where a man is motivated to propitiate ancestors because he has noted the presence of women who will support him when he performs during the graduation and wedding ceremonies. There are instances where women ululate spontaneously, like in a wedding ceremony. Women do not need support when it happens to them.

The strutting of feet (action) is meant for entertainment, they entertain the audience as well as the ancestors but the waving of a broom in the air is functional. It is meant to clear the way for the bride in a wedding ceremony, graduate student in a graduation ceremony from demons which may harm the person concerned through ill feeling by who ever.

#### **2.2.1.8 Charles Darwin theory (1937)**

Charles Darwin's theory of evolutionary mechanism was propounded as an explanation of organic change. In the case of ululation organic change refers to the body organs. A child may be born with an apparatus for ululating which is the larynx but until it matures that is, fully grown she cannot ululate. After adolescence stage when the larynx is well developed a child can ululate through observing her mother. Cultural constructs will debar that girl from ululating during ceremonies because she is not a married woman. Organic change in this case looks at the development of the larynx from a

dysfunctional stage to a functional stage. Today this theory is used to explain any form of change be it abstract or concrete. Further he stated that his theory of evolution is brought about mainly by the interplay of three principles, that is, variation, heredity and struggle for existence. Ululation is related to women. Ululation does not change but women change with time and environment. Ululation is as old as the first generation of womenfolk.

#### **2.2.1.9 Ululation and variation**

Literally variation means the act of changing. According to the Barnhart, (1994:1079) variation means departure from normal standards. Ululation is not affected by variation because it is performed by women of African origin for the same reasons. In order to test the validity of the resistance of ululation to variation, two independent variables can be put to test in the form of ululation during the times of missionaries and ululation in the times of apartheid. Missionaries related to anything that was traditional as evil as a result people had to distance themselves from such. Christianity and its kind of life was in vogue then. People easily shed their culture and opted for Christianity. Despite all those mammoth obstacles ululation survived because it is the soul of women as stated in the definition and it can neither be substituted nor thrown away. During the apartheid regime people could develop their cultures without the disturbance by whites but Africans were too honest to Christianity.

Today we find that Africans are the ones who are talking about African Renaissance, Africanisation and many more theories of rediscovery of oneself. Despite its disregard ululation withstands all forms of challenges because it does not welcome new experiences though it adjusts to fresh challenges like the use of available objects during ululation rather than the traditional brooms, branches of trees. It accommodates new settings like hall, open space, stadium, theatre, church. Ululation is one of the two steadfast traditional practises, the second being the Zulu war dance that is not affected by change.

### **2.2.1.10 Heredity and ululation**

Scientifically heredity refers to the qualities of body and mind that have come to a child from its parents. Heredity is a passing on of physical and mental characteristics genetically (Mendel, 1994:436). Ululation is one of those folklore phenomena which is passed down from generation to generation. There are neither initiation schools nor education institutions where ululation is offered but it occurs every time a situation arises for ululation to take place. Heredity is the reason why offsprings resemble their parents though people sometimes differ greatly in some features. Due to the dominant trait the inheritance of different combination of traits from the same parents can explain this situation, Mendel, (1800:172).

This is one reason why some women can ululate while others cannot. Further the environmental factors also determine the general potential or ability to ululate. For example heredity determines the shape of one's vocal cords but the actual use of vocal cords to produce ululation sound depends largely on ones development of vocal cords and exposure to ululation as performed by people not necessarily by one's parents. Firstly ululation will therefore survive because it enjoys the protection of being embedded in the genes and chromosomes of a woman. Secondly, ululation is spontaneous and ephemeral in nature. Instantaneous occurrences have an impact on people compared to a daily occurrence. It heightens the mood of the situation and people of all levels enjoy it. Afterwards they forget what heightened the level of happiness in the ceremony. This is one mystery that needs attention. Nobody complements ululators after their good contribution but people demand ululation if it does not occur when due.

### **2.2.1.11 Struggle for existence**

Scientifically struggle for existence refers to a competition between living animals or plants for survival. Literally it means the circumstances helping one form survive and cause another to die out. Struggle for existence does not apply with ululation because it has no competition. Nothing can substitute

ululation, be it in Africa, Europe or America. When an African woman sees a relevant situation for ululation to take place, it occurs spontaneously. Larmarcian theory of inheritance of acquired characters supports this dictum in the sense that he strongly believes that acquired traits are uninheritable. Ululation can both be acquired through exposure and it can be inherited. This therefore means ululation is unique. It goes beyond human theories and reasoning therefore it does not belong to earthly being but it belongs to a world of the unknown or a world of ancestors.

From all the ideas that have been gathered from noteworthy theorists it is noted that the location of ululation is in the genes and chromosomes of women, Darwin, (1937:278). The idea that ululation is a folklore phenomenon is proved by Propp, (1958) and Dundes, (1965) in their syntagmatic analysis of ululation. The division of ululation into two that is the core cliché and the ululation tag (Sikhosana, 2000:4) in her unpublished papers are the common aspects in folklore and orality. The Ease of Effort theories of the 19th century show how and why ululation was broken down into four sounds, that is, the shriek sound, the velaric sound, the prepalatal sound and the semi-vowel sound *yi yi yi* by civilisation and education (Aitchison, 1991:124). After all the ideas above have been stated, the exact locality for ululation is still mysterious.

#### 2.2.1.12 Conclusion

History has taught us that change is inevitable with concrete objects. Change against abstract things still poses a humangous argument Objects that are employed during ululation are controlled by features of social order that is those aspects of collective experience that can be seen to act as stabilising and confirming structural relationships of property, privilege and power. The physical structure of ululation does not change. What sustains the same reproduction of ululation through the test of times is the cause of the present argument and turbulence among academics. The origin and structure of ululation will always pose strong arguments among academics who attempt ululation in a scientific manner. The only people who can attempt to decipher

the paradox of ululation are traditionalists by employing families and religion that are known to be primary vehicles of change and continuity

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY AND FIELDWORK

#### 3.0 Introduction

All kinds of performance be they dance, athletics or hunting are learnt at home from mothers, aunts, grandmothers, grandfathers. Any form of cultural education among the Zulu nation claims its origin from elderly people, that is why they cannot be overlooked in research. Young girls observe performances from their elders and they practise with their peers when they go to fetch water, during wood gathering or cutting of species of the tall sedge (*ikhwani*) and long rush growing in swamps which is used for making sleeping-mats (*incema*). Children are well exposed to ululation but they do not ululate. This is due to the fact that their apparatus for ululation is not well developed.

Originally ululation was noticed on cultural settings that were both open space and indoor centred. Today we get ululation everywhere where there is an excited, successful, culturally liberated woman. Participant observation and interviewing of relevant people in the ceremony is therefore very important because information is drawn from the relevant field. The researcher is able to observe and interview the participants in an effort to obtain the reason behind the performance on the sport. The intricacy of what spurs the woman to ululate and what empowers her with courage to make noise in front of everybody including, the King, the State President and his Cabinet, all dignitaries in the form of men and women of the country. It is assumed that the participants and the retired matrons in the practice are the only people who can explain their behaviour convincingly. Besides the fact that Reverend Grout noted that Ululation need to be researched scientifically it is imperative for black women especially those who do not ululate, to know and understand why their counterparts ululate. It is on the strength of this dilemma that ululation qualifies for academic research.

### 3.1 Phenomenological Research Method

The phenomenological research method starts with the theory that people normally make certain assumption about their experiences. They consider the things they have been taught, and remember past experiences. Such presuppositions limit their experience of the phenomena. Phenomenologists realise that it is impossible to entirely eliminate these presuppositions from the mind. In stead they try to expand their experiencing of the phenomena by dealing with the presuppositions critically. One critical method involves fantasy variation. The philosopher varies the presuppositions, imagining how the experience will be perceived under varying circumstances. The features of the experience that remain constant despite the variations are considered its essence.

The first phase of research is the preliminary identification of interest. The phenomenon to be investigated must be circumscribed, be clearly nameable and describable. The phenomenon that was identified in this particular study was ululation as an expression of joy. After the phenomenon has been identified a selection of the situations in which the phenomenon will best display its structure so that data can be produced for analysis. The data that the researcher will use are the respondents descriptions. Initially the situations to be selected in this study are the following.

The phenomenological research method was looked upon as an appropriate method for researching something as deep seated as ululation. The goal of the phenomenological research method in cultural practices is to generate clear descriptions of human behaviour and experience As stated clearly by Polkingstone, (1989:34) that:

By focussing exclusively on the person's experience, the researcher can explore all that can be known directly because all knowledge is inseparably based on human experience.

The first phase of research is going to be the preliminary identification of experience of interest. The phenomenon having been investigated is circumscribed, must be nameable and describable. The phenomenon that was identified was the expression of joy and success by ululators. The selection of situations which best display its structure and function so that data can be produced for analysis was done. The data that the researcher will use are respondents descriptions.

The respondents who are suitable for this type of research are those who have the experience of the phenomenon which is being investigated. According to Stones (1986:117):

They have to be verbally fluent, have the ability to give complete and sensitive descriptions of the experience under investigation, be able to express their feelings, thoughts and perceptions concerning researched phenomenon and communicate and communicate their willingness to be open to investigators.

In the present study, the researcher took a sample of 50 randomly selected women at Port Durnford who attended a church woman's organisation called Mothers Union. In addition to the aforementioned criteria that had to be met by every respondent, respondents were expected to speak IsiZulu to avoid loss of meaning resulting from translation. All subjects were suitable for interviews in terms of the selection criteria.

Stones, (1986:117) states that the researcher must establish an atmosphere in which the subjects will feel relaxed and be assured of anonymity and confidentiality of the interview if they so desire. There should preferably be one leading question that should be repeated during the course of the interview. Participants are asked by researcher to describe in detail examples of their experience with the topic that is being investigated. The researcher's additional questions should be restricted to asking for clarification or elaboration of what the subject has already said. Unstructured open ended



interviews which require sufficient time of about 30 minutes to an hour to explore the topic in-depth are recommended.

In this particular study four questions were formulated which would be used to focus these interviews. The first three questions were important to orientate the interviewee to the main question. They were relationship building culturally and humanely acceptable open ended questions.

- What happens when a woman ululates. Describe the act as concrete as you can.
- Could you explain how you became an ululator.
- Describe concisely how you feel after ululating.
- Is ululation an expression of joy? If so explain this expression as explicitly as you can.

The descriptions of the respondents were tape recorded, transcribed and dissected into natural meaning units that were blocked into themes. Each subject was synthesised into a general concise description in isiZulu language. This descriptive statement which was referred to as situated structure, disclosed the unique and essential meaning the phenomena had for each individual. Those themes which were expressed and shared by the majority of the subjects were grouped into a general structure of four categories such as: wedding ceremony, Graduation ceremony, arrival of cows for lobola and when men go to war.

The four themes are presented as follows :

#### 1.

The respondents indicated that *Isigcawu* (open space) is not a place where people express their excitement about the event but creates a platform in which women and relatives can express their thoughts and feelings. Ululators are neither invited nor asked to ululate. They find themselves in the open – space ululating. Ululation is spontaneous but some look at it as a shared experience of which one is conscious. The level of excitement in the ceremony

does not only give her support to do better but enhances her feeling of belonging. As members of the family ululators experience a significant change in their lives. A feeling of fulfilment and acceptance due to recognition as a mother in the family (izinzalabantu) that makes their existence phenomenal.

2.

There is no institution that teaches ululation. Some believe that ululation is a gift from God. As it is there are women who cannot ululate. Phenomenologists want to understand human experience. Some do not know how they became ululators. Some think that the excitement during the ceremony and objects of consciousness, that is, (the things of which one is conscious) caused them to ululate.

3.

Ululation cannot be explained in words because it is an expression of an individual feeling. The same applies with the feeling. After ululation they usually find themselves in a state of unbelievable excitement.

4.

Ululation sound is multifaceted in the sense that it gives different meaning to different people. Some think it is a traditional way of inviting people. Since Africans do not invite people to their ceremonies, the loud shriek sound is meant to travel over hills and valleys conveying a message of happiness and success. Some believe that it is an African way of welcoming people to the ceremony. The sound produced by women is a way of advertising the beauty, agility and success of the event. To some women ululation is a reminder of their wedding ceremony and thus it serves as a revival to their wedding vows and they ululate more.

What is common in all the responses is happiness because of success. Success is therefore the essence in ululation sound in the sense that many things can derail a love affair to the point that marriage does not take place. Ululation during the wedding ceremony is the glorification of success.

During the graduation ceremony graduands celebrate success. Women do not ululate because they are at the ceremony but they ululate at the sight of their child and when the name is called. Therefore they celebrate success.

During the day of the arrival of cows for lobola, women do not ululate at the large number of cattle because they ululate even at a small number of cattle. What they celebrate is the success of the groom to get all the cows that are expected of him.

When men go to war women ululate the success of the agreement that the enemy must be fought. Failure of the agreement on fighting a common enemy was beautifully portrayed on Saturday the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2003, when all the great and small countries of the world disagreed with the United States of America to fight Iraq under the rule of Saddam Hussein.

The descriptions of the respondents were tape recorded, transcribed and dissected into natural meaningful units. The descriptive statement that was referred to as situated structure, disclosed the unique and essential meaning the phenomena had for each individual. Those themes that were expressed and shared by the majority of the subjects were grouped into a general structure of categories. Residual material will be fitted in where possible in the thesis.

### 1. Spiritual Fulfilment.

Respondents indicated that during the ululation process the woman forgets the stressful situation around her and indulges in excitement and happiness. The ululators are afforded an opportunity for presenting their problems in the form of ululation tags, namely;

Ki ki ki! , Wamuhle mkhenyana usacothoza  
Hhohhe kazi kusasa ungiphatheleni ?

Further the fulfillment that she can ululate because some women cannot. The task of ululating is not limited to specific women in the homestead but it is spontaneously extended to all women.

## 2. Healing mechanism

When women ululate they carry certain objects, flowers, weeds, to mention a few, the broom especially. Respondents indicated that the use of a broom is meant to deter demons which may affect the bridal party or cause people to fight during the wedding ceremony. Some respondents maintained that evil spirits could also be driven away by the power of the ululation sound that was invoked during ululation.

## 3. Cohesiveness

The ululators work in a spirit of togetherness from the beginning to the end of the ceremony. The implication of this contribution by ululators appears to be the enhancement of a sense of inner satisfaction and self esteem of each member. The respondents compared the behaviour of the ululators to that of women in congregations where they are afforded an opportunity of expressing their thoughts, feelings, actions, needs and problems.

## 4. Recommendations

Du Toit, (1991:39) mentions three requirements for evaluating a phenomenological investigation. In the first place it is essential to assess whether the research methodology has succeeded in disclosing the essence of the phenomena in question. Secondly one needs to establish the extent to which the exploratory research has been able to identify new knowledge that can stimulate further research and theory building. Finally, it must be considered whether the methodology has identified areas that will need further analysis.

There were clear indications of range and diversity in ululation. While the study shows the richness and variety in ululation in terms of the phenomenon experienced by individuals, these are essentially distilled into three categories, namely; spiritual fulfilment, healing mechanisms and cohesiveness. Finally it

can be concluded that this research methodology confirmed that ululation is an expression of joy and success.

### 3.2 Qualitative method

Qualitative research seems to be one of the relevant tools that can be used to unearth this mystery as confirmed by Leedy (1992:185). When he says:

Qualitative research is characterised by the fact that most of the time it is concerned with human beings and human behaviour, inter personal relationships, personal values, meanings, beliefs, thoughts and feelings. The qualitative researcher endeavours to attain rich, real deep and valid data from a rational standpoint.

All these qualities are the crux of this thesis. The preference of qualitative research methodology over others is the data gathering methods specifically the descriptive survey method of research, that is case and field study research which are relevant and possible, participant observation and interviewing are very reliable pending good organisation.

#### 3.2.1 Descriptive survey method

Generally people look at ululation casually or innocently but this thesis is going to look beyond the casual glance, using the descriptive survey method. First, researchers are going to observe with close scrutiny the population that is bounded by the research parameters. Secondly, they make a careful record of what they observe, so that when the record is made, it can be used as reference in the study of the observations that have been described. In the case of ululation, ceremonies that are a build up to marriage and afterwards, provide the population which is bounded by research parameters with research material that is in abundance though respondents are not easily available. There are other settings like the community gardens, churches, inaugural address, graduation ceremony, war and volcanic ululation that accommodates new settings. But even here it is not easy as stated earlier on that ululation

cannot be set up like an experiment. In these settings many things happen which look like they are unimportant to the observer but whose absence can derail the whole ceremony. These settings are important because they are the source of ululation. Moreover they tell us more about the occasion and the people involved in the occasion. Ululation has transcended time frames which means it is applicable in both urban and rural areas, modern and olden times. Ululation is flexible because it can be used in traditional/cultural situations as well as sophisticated ceremonies. Application of the methodology is therefore not going to be hindered by unavailability of research material.

### 3.2.1.1 Case study

Knowledgeable people in cultural studies like Dr Donda a man who fought in a war with women ululating was interviewed on why women ululate when men go to war. In his own words he stated that women ululated to motivate them to go and fight knowing very well that they have their support. Secondly, women ululate to welcome men who die and go to a world of ancestors. We believe that when people die they go to join people in the world of the living dead (*abaphansi*). Ethnographic records support Donda (2000) when they show that many African people including Zulu people have a notion of an underworld that is inhabited by the shades. Further there are informants who support this idea according to (Berglund, 1975:370). Laduma Madela a well-known diviner in northern Zululand strongly believes in this world. He uses gestures with his hand to explain and demonstrate his belief about this world.

The case studies are going to be done at the following places. The following people are also going to be interviewed:

	<u>District</u>	<u>Name</u>
1.	Gingindlovu	Dr Donda
2.	Dlangezwa	Prof Maphalala
3.	Esikhawini	Mrs Mbuyisa
4.	Port Shepstone	Mrs Zulu

5.	Umlazi	Mrs Madlala
6.	Glenmore	Mrs Sibiya
7.	Ezingolweni	Mrs Mavundla
8.	Port Dunford	Mrs Mhlungu
9.	Nquthu	Miss Nyawo

Prof Maphalala was also interviewed on the same question. He stated that when women ululate they welcome the dead who have been invited to the occasion by burning incense at the traditional temple. When women ululate in times of war, they welcome the spirits of those who died during the war into the world of the living. They are needed to help the warriors win the war as well as protect the warriors from expected danger. Msimang, (1975:16) supports this idea when he says:

Kwabe kuyinkolo yobabamkhulu ukuthi uma umuntu efa umoya noma umphefumulo wakhe kawufi kepha uya ezweni lamathongo.

(According to African belief, people die but their souls or spirits go to the world of ancestors.)

These two folklorists (Donda and Maphalala) never thought of ululation academically. After this case study many things came to the fore in their minds about ululation as a worthwhile subject.

The following two cases were noted because of their psychological similarities and differences. They are similar in that they both have anxiety, hysteria, emotions and different in that one is sensitive and the other is insensitive.

An ordinary woman Nomalanga Mbuyisa, (1999) from Esikhawini was interviewed on the same question, she indicated that as an individual she will never ululate when men go to war. When she sees men go to war on television she fears for their lives. It will definitely be more intense when it is her relatives who will be going to war. When she was asked to explain her situation, she was adamant and stated categorically that the ululation sound

will not come out of her mouth because she will be cold with fear. Her excitement is not aroused by fearful situations. She is no exception there are many people who fall under this category. They are referred to as phobic individuals. They are phobic in the sense that they have an extreme irrational fear of a specific object or situation. Fear of war does not fall under the known psychiatrist classification of phobias like the xenophobia that means fear of strangers or foreigners.

A school teacher in the name of (Sibongile Zulu: 2000) from Gamalakhe township in Port Shepstone stated that she can ululate to set one man against the other. Looking at men fighting gives her great pleasure. She went on and stated that on T.V. she watches news, wrestling, boxing and karate only. She believes that the world could be a better place without men. At this stage a psychiatric disorder which is the opposite of a phobia was sensed. One wonders how many women ululate with the same idea. On further enquiry about her life it was noted that her family was wiped out by a group of men during unrest at Shobashobane and she moved to Gamalakhe to stay with her aunt.

After this enquiry it was noted that this is a clear case of psychological disorder. According to Freud, (1985:59) individuals repress feelings, such as aggressive impulses and punishment linked with these feelings in the unconscious mind. Her behaviour could be a symbolic repression of fear where she displays aggression in a safe and secure territory. Concerning pleasure when people are fighting is another symbolic repression of fear when an individual does not want sympathy. Since that day she hated men and vowed to kill them when given a chance. We tried to bring sanity to her by making it clear to her that she is destroying herself by brooding over something she can neither do nor change. She must get help to forget about what happened and enjoy life with men.

One woman (Regina Madlala) from Umlazi compared the functionality of ululation in times of war to cause men to go and fight, to the crowing of a cock in the morning which cause people to wake up and go to work. In Zulu,



ululation is *ukukikiza* and the crowing of a cock is *ukukikiliga*. There is the core cliché called *ki ki ki!* in ululation that we also get in the sounds made by both women and the rooster. In the morning the cock is waking people to go to work so does the women who are motivating men to go and fight (work). During the day and other times when the cock croaks it wants all the fowls to feel safe and protected. The same applies to women when they ululate in other circumstances other than for men going to war. They welcome the ancestors, they want them to feel at home in the homestead, appease the malice of the evil spirits and invoke the protection of the benevolent ones.

The idea of ululation as a factor in the protection of the kinsfolk is strengthened by the above comparison. This protection by ancestors is not uncommon among the Zulus, even Shamanism one of the oldest religious beliefs in Korea upholds this idea as stated by (Jung Young Lee, 1989:11) in the book *Ancestor Worship and Christianity in Korea*.

There is sense in what is said about the protection and the comparison sounds obvious. What is left hanging is why compare a human being with a cock? Freudal experiments where animals are used to prove a fact about human nature and behaviour has influenced me in this direction. Ancestors are sometimes called fools (*izithutha*) that is, they are still able to act foolishly or irresponsibly (Makhathini, 1965:2). Further, the punitive nature of male ancestors has given them this name (Msimang, 1975:22). In the same vein chicken are referred to as "*olamthuthu*" (fools). (Oral evidence) *Izithutha* means stupid whereas *lamthuthu* comes from *isithutha* which means a fool. Fowls are also slaughtered for *izithutha* (ancestral spirits). We are forced to believe that there is a relationship between "*ulamthuthu* and *izithutha*" and therefore "*ukukukiza*" and "*ukukikiliza*". The origin of both "*ki ki*" sounds is derived from the sound that is produced during the pronunciation of the *ki ki ki!* sound by both woman and the cock. There is also a relationship between the woman and the cock in the sense that the cock wakes up very early in the morning and the woman also wakes up very early in the morning to do household chores.

Women and children also hold a secondary role in the propitiation of ancestors in the sense that during the propitiation of ancestors by men, women ululate in support of men. The goat is used to propitiate ancestors.

Ngaphandle kokuthetha amadlozi imbuzi  
yaziwa njengempahla yezipho.  
(Msimang, 1975:44).

(A goat is used either for the propitiation of  
ancestors or as a gift animal.)

Research has taught us that in the absence of a goat chicken can also be used in the place of a goat. This is the secondary position of a chicken.

### 3.2.1.2 Field study method

Researchers observed certain recurring features of answers from indigenous groups to urban social groups.

The given social groups are from the following areas:

Nongoma

Nquthu

Esikhawini

Port Dunford

Umlazi

Port Shepstone

Preference of these areas is threefold:

- (i) These are rural areas where traditional practices are still in full force in that sense the gist of traditional practices and ceremonies is still available from these people.

Areas like      Nquthu  
                         Ezingolweni

## Gingindlovu

- (ii) These areas are closely located to cities and townships. Influence by urban areas has played a role on these people.

Port Dunford

Dlangezwa

Esikhawini

Umlazi

Dube Village

- (iii) These are urban areas. Their input in connection with their culture was very important because some people believe that some people live in urban areas because they loath black people or they do not want to associate themselves with black culture. Some are known to seek sanctuary in urban areas from political enemies. They know and love their culture because they know where they belong, urban areas are merely a residential area of their choice with valid reasons which suit them.

+ A group of people attending an M-Way meeting at Empangeni.

+ A group of people attending an M-Way meeting at Glenmore Durban.

It is very interesting to note that these people worship their culture in as much as they embrace Christianity. Some of them did not take note of ululation. It was only after the discussions that they realised the beauty and function of ululation. We ended up looking at the bible to support that the bible is not against our traditions as long as we do not forget the word of God and the Bible. This is noted in Paul's Epistle to the Thessalonians Chapter 3: 15, when he says:

Therefore bretheren, stand fast and hold the traditions which ye Have been taught whether by word or our epistle.

Being reminded of the triangle of initial education which consist of the church home and school, the awareness of their traditional background was aroused.

### 3.2.13 Participant observation

Participant observation refers to the method in which the observer participates in the daily life of the people under study. The researcher can participate either openly in the role of a researcher or covertly in some disguised role. According to Kluckhöhn, (1940:331-43), the participant observer, observes things that happen, listening to what is said and questioning people. As stated before that ululation is spontaneous and ephemeral in nature. It is therefore wise for the participant observer to observe potential social events where ululation is going to take place before data gathering. In as far as ululation is concerned observing one social event cannot help the observer in any way.

Attendance of social events with the potential for ululation to take place, gathering of information and explanations on the meaning of data by participants and spectators before, during and after its occurrence should be fruitful. Ululation is spontaneous and sporadic in a group. The behaviour of the person who is going to ululate can neither be sensed nor detected. Further, ululation has a very unique locale, that is, in the vocal cords of a woman. On account of this the researcher must therefore be exposed to more than one social events where ululation occurs before collecting data.

During the course of my participant observation on this current study at Esikhawini, which is a black suburb with sporadic white patches. The arrival of a bridal party at the groom's place on a Friday before the wedding day was welcomed by thunderous ululation. This occurrence is strange according to Zulu culture. According to Zulu culture the bridal party arrives at night but things have changed. They arrive in the morning now. Any researcher other than the participant observer, that is, a researcher who did not observe the

situation before the event that took place and listened to the grapevine would definitely record wrong information. All possible circumstances for collecting data permitted but understanding would have been impossible.

The nature of data in this instance dictated the methodology because of the unusual form of presentation of data. Under normal circumstances the bride does not go to the groom's place before the marriage ceremony. An explanation is needed in this case. Participant observation is the solution in the sense that the researcher will know the relevant people with information. Ululation tags were not going to be understood by the researcher if participant observation was not done.

Participating in the daily lives of the people under study can best be achieved by a person who belongs to the same cultural group because he knows what he is looking for. It will therefore be very easy for him to discover new things, to note abnormalities, shortcomings and will know where to look for relevant answers. He will also know and understand the subtle shade of feelings of the people in the sense that he will know when to participate in the open as a researcher and he will definitely know when to operate covertly under some disguise, listening, questioning and observing things as they happen. Surprises may come as happenstance.

Concerning ululation that is rather, abstract a participant observer may try to figure out the cause of ululation which is highly hypothetical. People ululate but they do not know why, how, and what ululation is all about. Some people abuse ululation not knowing what they are gambling with.

My perspective about participant observation is that it provides an opportunity of avoiding errors in ones findings. Further it provides a rich experimental context which causes the researcher to be aware of incongruous or unexplained facts.

In one case a situation occurred where the groom and the bride were both unemployed and one ululator said:

Saphumula ukupheka  
Sesizodla ehhotela.

(What a relief from cooking  
We will eat at the hotel.)

Which means we are no longer going to cook because the bride is going to take us out. The correct interpretation of this ululation gap rests with the person who knows that the couple was unemployed and therefore this ululation tag is sarcastic. This goes to show that the ululator is not happy about this marriage.

During participant observation the researcher gets a better view of what is involved in ululation like the strutting of feet by ululators. This strutting of feet seems important because all women who ululate perform this action. Today the problem lies with modern arenas like halls and churches where there are rows of pews that contain free movement. In such cases it depends on the type of the ululator.

The boisterous and self-confident ones sometimes halt the proceedings when they perform. The researcher gets a closer look at the ululator and ululation itself by the owners of the practise. The participant observer is exposed to ululators in action. He observes how they choose the objects they use and carry during ululation. This aspect is as intricate as the ululation tags because to the members of the family, they express their feelings and opinions through the objects they carry during ululation.

Participant observation enables the researcher to note the best ululator in the midst of plenty. One gets the best training by observing the best performers. The feelings of the ululators about ululation are best expressed in the process of ululation and one realises the reason for ululating. The spontaneity of ululation is best expressed, felt and observed. The different types of ululation express themselves.

### 3.2.1.4 Interviewing

As stated in the beginning of this chapter that interviewing is one of data gathering methods, according to Barnhart, (1991:105) an interview means a meeting generally of persons face to face to talk over something special. Since ululation is abstract, it is imperative to have a pilot study before an interview takes place. Interviews before data gathering may help the interviewees to think seriously and deeply about ululation before providing a reliable data. The researcher gets ample time to explore many facets of his interviewees concerns. He is also able to treat subjects he may not have thought about in his conversation. New and interesting leads may arise which need to be pursued to allow his imagination and ingenuity on beliefs and folklore phenomena to develop his understanding on the subject.

The aim of the interviews is to gather information and the adequacy of the data gathered depends on the questions asked by the interviewee. In an employment interview the focus of the interviewer is on the job, candidate's work, experiences, and occupational goals. In a diagnostic medical interview considerable attention is paid to the patient's medical history and to any symptoms of behavioural disorder he may have displayed over the years. In the case of ululation, it is ephemeral in nature, it is a sound, and it is done during pleasurable times in most cases. Some black Africans other than Zulus look at ululation as a form of dance. An interview on ululation is taxing on the part of an interviewee because they have never taken ululation seriously. The success of the interview solely depends on the interests and ingenuity of the interviewer for purposes of analysis and scoring points.

In this sense an interview is focussed when compared with participant observation. In an interview the subject is dealt with face to face whereas in participant observation the researcher looks at other things like the behaviour of the people whose results cannot be guaranteed. In an interview on ululation respondents are willing to supply information because it does not deal with sensitive issues, instead they have to deal with depth. In some places where the communities are torn by political tensions, covert observation is employed.

The researcher uses a guise as one of them. The respondents must be deceived about the actual purpose of the researcher's visit in the area. Data collected in a bus situation is reliable but without depth because commuters usually have too much in mind other than responding to researchers in disguise.

Participant observation as well as interviewing may both have serious problems in the sense that interviewees may dislike the researcher for no reason or for racial and political reasons. In political ridden areas a researcher may not get information through suspicion that he may belong to the rival political party.

Further, concerning the above reason participant observation makes the researcher to be sensitive to interviewees possible implications and connections with other observed facts and thus pushes the researcher continually to adapt to his theoretical orientation and specific problems in the direction of greater relevance to the phenomena in question, that is, *ululation*. This kind of context and benefits cannot be reproduced in interviewing but interviewers can gain from an awareness of those limitations of methods like participant observation and questionnaire and through comparison perhaps improve their *batting average* by taking account of them.

### 3.2.1.5 Snowball method

In snowball method the researcher poses questions to people who are willing and available to answer them. Attendance of functions that provide a setting for *ululation* is also another form of data gathering which opens avenues for research methods like snowballing.

Non-probability sampling is divided into *non-probability* sampling and probability sampling. Non probability sampling is further divided into convenience or accidental sampling and quota sampling. Convenience sampling deals with units as they are presented to the researcher.



There is no need for forecasting or control measures. Quota sampling selects the first number of respondents they need from the general population. Leedy, (1992:1004) refers to snowball method as non-probability sampling. A marriage ceremony at Ongoye was attended but it was very difficult for a researcher to know the elements in the population which will be attending the wedding and thus the exact representation of the people in the sample. Units of people who were available and willing to be interviewed were interviewed. The opinions that ululation is another way of inviting ancestors was obtained from the thirty three women and two men. The data from this accidental sample gave me what we needed because we were in the centre of the situation where ululation was taking place. In this case the requirement of research that data does not need to be sterile was met. Data from this sampling was reliable and valid.

Question 25 was another hot potato during research. There are fanatics who assumed the qualities of confused Christians. The distinct quality that was noted among them was their unreasonable dislike for customs. Secondly their inability to differentiate between a custom and a practice. They renounce any form of participation in tradition and customs. For some strange reason they make their grooms to pay *lobola*. *Lobola* is a custom. They participate in marriage ceremonies and eat and drink everything that is offered. When the bride give presents to her in-laws and members of the household, they ululate and accept presents without any guilt. Some people do not want to accept the fact that they are lost and confused. Ululation frustrated them further because there is no ululation in the bible and yet they ululate everyday.

#### 3.2.1.6 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is available at the addendum. It was drawn in such a way that it helps in solving a research problem. The questionnaire was quality tested for relevance, objectivity, suitability to the problem situation and probability of reception and good return. The questionnaire that is very easy to understand, that is, it was written in simple English and simple isiZulu languages. The questions must be thought provoking and interesting to make

the respondent eager to answer all of them. Counter-check questions are employed to detect respondents who may give answers that are prudent rather than true. The following example will show how a counter check was done.

#### Questionnaire

Q Who ululates

A Women ululates

Then towards the end of a questionnaire a counter check question on the same information especially if it is important can be given thus;

Q Choose one answer within the brackets

(Children, men, women and girls) ululate

Answer: women

In this case the researcher is able to realize that the respondent is still with him and she is faithful in her responses.

*Which is the most important object during ululation?*

Hand kerchief, broom, stick, branches of trees

The above mentioned objects are carried by ululators during ululation but the broom is the most significant because of its special function to ward off evil spirits.

Answer: broom

When a cloud of misunderstanding prevails after the questionnaires have been used, an observational technique called the inventory will be used.

#### **3.2.1.7 An Inventory**

An inventory is a list of items with a check mark (Leedy, 1992:195). Sometimes this check mark may hinder or appraise findings as indicated in the

diagram below. The misunderstanding in the findings which need to be sorted out in this observational technique is why women ululate?

Item No.	Inventory	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
1.	Women ululate when they are happy and excited					X
2.	Women ululate to motivate men				X	X
3.	Women ululate to invite ancestors			X		
4.	Women ululate as an expression of fear	X				
5.	Ululation is another form of crying			X		
6.	To acknowledge the presence of the soul in their midst.					X

From the above inventory it is noted that the bulk of the votes went to question 1 because many women are exposed to marriage ceremonies. A marriage ceremony embraces all the exciting parts which provoke ululation such as dancing singing wearing of the ring bride giving presents to her new family (*ukwaba*) propitiation of ancestors (*ukuthethelela*).

Question 2 is closely related to question 1. It may happen that they thought about the propitiation of ancestors.

Question 3 These candidates think that ululation has something to do with ancestors. They look at it as weird. This response is common among born again Christians.

Women ululate when they are happy, inviting ancestors and excited like in a wedding ceremony. Women also ululate when they motivate men during the ceremony of the propitiation of ancestors and also when men go to war. Ancestors are always with us therefore there is no need to acknowledge that. Line six may look weak but experience has taught some of us that more than fifty percent (50%) of black people do not know that ancestors are always with us. They know and believe that God is with us. The idea that women ululate as an expression of fear is unthinkable. Only one respondent indicated this kind of feeling. She may be one of those Africans who were never exposed to cultural practices as a result prefers Christian upbringing.

Out of fifty three respondents the following table explains the inventory.

Question 1	=40
2	=5
3	=7
4	=0
5	=0
Total	<hr/> 53 <hr/>

Many Zulu people believe that God (Umvelingqangi) is a soul. They believe that there is mutual attraction between souls, that is, the soul in men and the main soul, God. There are also those who believe that the soul is neither matter nor visible, but it has mentality and is the immortal part of man. The most popular idea is that the soul can see, hear, love, hate, it can remember past events and in some cases predict future events. It is supposed to leave the body at death and go to either heaven or hell, according to the kind of life the individual has lived. It is interesting to note that in physiology and anatomy books nothing is labelled as a soul.

The bible has taught the researcher that there are three Hebrew words in the Old Testament and one Greek word in the New Testament which mean the term soul. They are:

- (i) 4.0 Neshamah is translated once in Isaiah 57: 16  
Last part.  
“The souls which I have made”
- (ii) 5.0 Nedibahis translated once in Job 30 : 15  
Second part,  
“They pursue my soul as the wind.”
- (iii) 6.0 Nephesh is the only other word in the Old Testament which is sometimes translated as soul. It appears 752 times and is translated by forty three other words.
- (iv) 4. Psuche is the corresponding Greek word in the New Testament which occurs one hundred and five times and is translated by six different words.

The bible definition for soul is varied. In some places it speaks of the soul as life of the individual; in other verses soul refers to the living person. Other verses refer to soul as an animal. The soul may refer to the love and affection of an individual, or the spirit of man. Nowhere does the bible use the term soul to indicate an entity or personality that can live an immortal existence apart from the body.

A question may arise about the relationship between man and the soul.

According to the Bible, (Genesis, 2:7) God formed man from the dust and the soil and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul.

Sometimes the term soul may refer to the entire person, or the natural life of man, or it may refer to the mind. In Exodus, 16 : 16 “soul” and “person” are used interchangeably. Resultantly it was the union of the breath of life with the dust that produced the first living person.

The person or soul is therefore capable of doing things such as directing man's action as in (Psalm, 119:167) where soul is referred to as the agency of obedience. In (Romans, 7:25) this agency is referred to as the mind.

Man's soul is known to take counsel as in (Psalm 13 :2)

It refuses things (Job, 6 : 7) It can be grieved (Job, 30 : 25)

It feels bitterness of sorrow (Job, 10:1) It is satisfied with good things (Psalm, 63:5)

Men do not ululate because the first representative of men was not born by a woman but was made by God in his image from dust and he breathed the breath of life in him. On the other hand a woman was made out of the man's ribs in that case a woman is dependent on a man. When a man is happy a woman has to ululate to express joy on his behalf. When women do not ululate men demand ululation from them because they are dependent on them for their existence. The soul women have is obtainable from men. The soul that women transfer to their babies at birth is obtained through the unification of the male and female specimen, (ova and spermatozoa) the same unification by God of the breath of life and dust in the formation of the first person on earth.

In their daily lives men disregard ululation because it involves the soul from the uterus, which is realised at birth. The first scream or cry by the baby is an expression of the presence of the soul. Men disregard anything from the uterus. When a child is born they do not touch the child until six months (6) have passed by making an excuse that the child is fragile they cannot handle it. Msimang, confirms this (1975:51):

Laba abambonayo kuba abesifazane ngoba  
abesilisa abangeni lapho okunomdleane khona  
uze aphume exhibeni.

(Males do not enter a room where there is a  
woman who has recently given birth.)

Ngoba phela izinyanga zonke lezi eziyisithupha  
usuke eluhlaza nje engavunule lutho.

(For six months the woman stays nude.)

Women stay nude in order to avoid a lot of washing. Today women give birth in hospitals, those who happen to deliver their babies at home go to see the doctor immediately thereafter in pursuit of immunizations. Long ago children were immunised by performing a ritual called *'ukulahla umntwana esishozini'*. Enema was performed on the child where ashes from the place where lightning stroke were used to protect the child from nervousness and mental derangement.

Women are taken for granted by men because they menstruate and fall pregnant. They look at menstruation and pregnancy as a shortcoming on the part of women because they cannot do anything laborious while they are pregnant. Men know that they are minus this soul which women have and which makes them feminine and they demand women to ululate when this soul is needed in the propitiation of ancestors. Men have testosterone gland that makes them wild and masculine. It drives them to look for women and continue the regeneration of the family and other families.

### 3.2.1.8 The experimental method

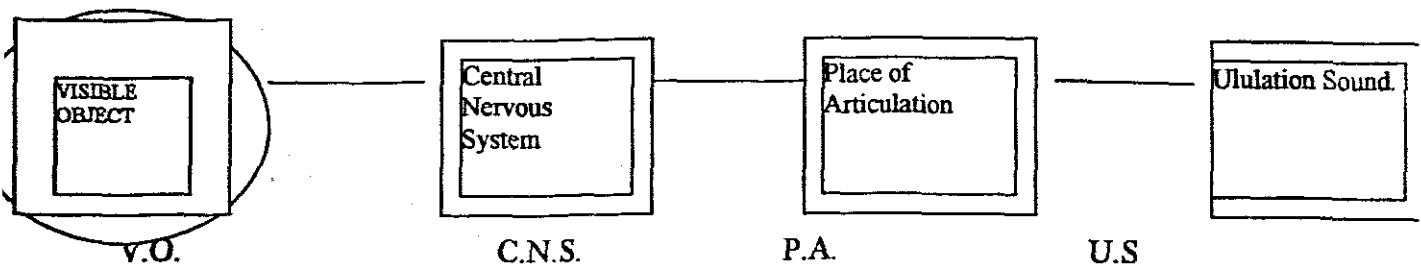
This method is an attempt to account for the influence of a factor or factors of conditioning in a given situation Gage, (1963:171-246). The objective of the experimental method is to seek for "cause and effect" relationships between two sets of data. In this case the bride and the groom clad in bridal attire are the cause for ululation. Ululators look like they are conditioned to ululate after sensing the situation. This means that the cause is sensed by the ululator and then ululation follows spontaneously. Further in this case a ululator sees a man propitiating ancestors, the woman bursts in a shriek sound rejoicing over what she sees. This therefore means that a man propitiating ancestors is "cause" for ululating and a woman is "effect".

The relationship between the ululator and the propitiator is brought about by the cultural understanding of what is happening between the two of them. This experiment is a field event that can be conducted by the researcher without any assistance. What he needs is understanding of the culture and the custom, the rest is observable. After this experiment the cause for ululation lies between customary celebration and the object the ululator sees during the ceremony.

### 3.2.1.9 The causal comparative method

The causal comparative method or the ex facto factor method is the subtype of the experimental method according to Leedy, (1992:124). This method observes existing conditions and then searches back through the data for possible causal factors. It is sometimes referred to as the detective method in the sense that the crime is discovered and then the cause for the crime is sought. As it is, the crime is ululation and the cause is the occasion that sparks ululation. Ululation is a phenomenon that can be explained in terms of the specific contextual factors that obtain at that particular moment. In ululation a universal relationship is sought between certain determinants and the collective behaviour of ululators. The situation presents itself and what precurses spontaneity in these women needs detection. According to Mouly, (1970:357-376) the ex facto experiment begins with a given effect and seeks the experimental factor that brought it about. The following diagram shows a personal imagination of how the ex factor experiment begins with the object that could be the bride in the quest for the origin of ululation.

Diagram of the ex- factor experiment.





The visible object could be the bride whose image is taken by the optical nerve to the Central Nervous System for interpretation. The Central Nervous system will in turn emit impulses through a network of nerve fibres to the organs of speech where articulation takes place. Places of Articulation will produce sound that is Ululation Sound. We can conclude that the origin of ululation as well as the cause for ululation arise from one source, that is, cultural celebrations.

### 3.1.2.10 Historical method

This method refers to an attempt to solve certain problems arising out of a historical context. The first historical data that mentions ululation is in the books by Grout, (1869) Bryant, (1949) and Krige, (1960). Ululation per se is not like human beings who are responsible for their history but the history of ululation depends on the human beings. Despite its dependence on humans it does have a past present and future. Likewise it carries with it a tradition, culture and hope.

For the history of ululation we look at the history of traditional customs which are the root-cause of ululation. Their history runs through long periods of time where the consistency of ululation will be tested against time. How ululation was able to withstand the test of time lies with the fact that it is a reality. Secondly its origin and cause is people. Consequently it follows that as long as there are people ululation will exist. It is a reality because it exists now and existed as far back as 1869. Nothing specific is said about ululation in this book but the fact that it is a good area for scientific research calls for concern. Krige, (1960:146) was annoyed by this sound and referred to it as a yelling sound. On the contrary Bryant, (1949) was amazed by this sound and referred to it as a "joy cry".

This is recorded material but the heart of the historical method is with any other type of research, not the accumulation of facts but the interpretation of facts.

An interesting comparison between a woman and ululation can also help to show that ululation is static and dynamic. During the Shakan period women were respected by men. Mkabayi and Ntombazi are good examples of this idea. Something inexplicable changed this situation because today the majority of women look at men as abusers rather than protectors. The advent of township life leaves much to be desired in this opinion. On the contrary ululation is neither affected by change nor continuity instead it adapts to change. Time is therefore opportune for a phenomenon like ululation that originates from women to be noted. Further now that the issue of African Renaissance is raging, traditional phenomena are revisited. Through qualitative research ululation is one of the traditional phenomena that is going to be used to prove that genuine traditional phenomena can withstand the test of time. Those phenomena that have a history and are popular among people especially in contemporary societies need to be acknowledged and developed.

### 3.3 Quantitative research

Mysteries and residual issues about ululation which qualitative research left unsolved will be tested through quantitative research.

Leedy, (1992) believes that by the mystery and expressiveness of numbers we can express what is inexpressible, describe what is indescribable, predict what is reasonable to expect, or infer a logical conclusion to a series of events. Statistics is a language that can speak where other tongues are mute. Words cannot express the concepts that have been reserved for the eloquence and expressiveness of statistics alone. I believe that statistics is an ancillary to every language because there are very few aspects in a language which cannot be represented or be expressed statistically. Further statistics is a process by which numerical data is collected and eventually presented in a usable and understandable form.

### 3.3.1 Analytical survey.

The form of quantitative study that is relevant in this study is called analytical survey. Analytical survey is best understood by comparing the difference between it and the descriptive survey. The descriptive survey method refers to what the researcher sees, observes like the strutting of feet by ululators (behaviour) and the objects they carry during their performance. Analytical survey refers to what can be described in words and what can be concluded from those words. For instance the sound produced by ululators can be heard and described. This means descriptive survey demands fieldwork while analytic survey needs data to operate.

### 3.3.2 The Language of Numerals

According to Kahn and Pompea, (1978:606-611) on the contrary the analytical survey uses a language of numerals. As far as ululation is concerned both ideas by Leedy, (1992) and Kahn and Pompea, (1978) are appropriate in quantitative research. Ululation is divided into four types of sounds pending research outcomes. The first sound is immeasurable with a naked ear, that is the shriek sound. It can only be described like many kinds of sounds such as the buzzing of bees, the clatter of pots and pans, the roar of the traffic and the voices of the people.

The intensity of the sound can be differentiated by its loudness and weakness. The weakest is called the decibel that is equal to three thousand hertz tone, that is, ululation sound  $psv = 3000$  hertz which means that the prepalatal semi vowel is the weakest ululation sound. The loudest is called the phon that is equal to one 1000 hertz (Lord Rayleigh, 1878:47) in the book called The Theory of Sound.

Another problem that confronts us is why do women ululate and not men? Hopefully a comparison between men and women can help in this regard. A minus sign will represent what these two characters do not have. A plus sign

will represent what they have. A plus minus sign will represent what these characters have but is not well developed.

<u>Woman</u>	<u>Man</u>
+ breasts	± breast but they are not well developed
+ ovaries	- ovaries
+ uterus	- uterus
+ menstruation	- menstruation
- testosterone	+ testosterone

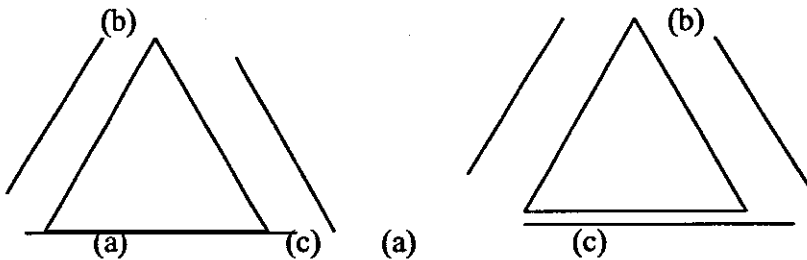
When looking at the values of both men and women it is clear that women have all four pluses (+) and men have one plus and all minus (-) values. These four values are important in regeneration of life.

The ovaries produce an ovum that combines with the sperm to form an embryo. When new life begins in the uterus menstruation stops. Who stops menstruation? it is not the woman. The embryo develops in the uterus into a foetus that is a human being. The foetus is mobile to show that it has a soul like the heart. A child is born with a soul to show that in the womb there is a soul. Who or What is responsible for all these mysteries. Beyond the competence of numbers there are unfathomable mysteries which surround us sometimes make conclusions inconclusive.

### 3.3.3 Trilateration

Trilateration is the combination of both the descriptive and Analytical survey methods. Trilateration is a method of surveying, that is, a method where the lengths of the sides of a triangle are measured, from this information a series of triangles adjacent to one another are constructed. A surveyor can obtain other distances or angles that would not otherwise be measurable.

Surveying is a technique for precise determination of distances and angles for location of position. It is based on the fact that if one side and two sides of a triangular are known the other two sides of an angle can be readily calculated. According to Moise, (1952:32)



If A to B is known, B to C will be a comparison A to C will negate the information in A to B and B to C. A to B will represent the shriek sound. B to C represent the ki ki ki and li li li sounds which take the second position when compared to the shriek sound. A to C represents the different types of ululations that are unusual when we consider the ululator, the setting and the gender. The three sides of a triangle are expected to come up with an answer after looking closely at what is known, as against what is abstract and then negate both, definitely an answer will come out.

If we look at the structure of ululation we notice that the structure that emanates from A and C sides is referred to as miscellaneous in this thesis. It is miscellaneous in the sense that if we look at the structure of ululation, in an institution like Kwa- Shembe where they say:

Yehhe he he Uyingcwele Jehova, UyiZulu!

(Oh! Lord thou art holy.)

We need to see the core cliché ki ki ki! or li li li! which is common to all ululation sounds. Any structure which does not show the two core cliché sounds is a negation of ululation sound. In places outside the borders of Africa like Palestine, where they use the fingers to pronounce the li li li! sound, the structure is the same as in Africa. According to oral evidence the Ndebeles pronounce the following sound when they ululate thus,

### Kwa Kwa kwa Kwi !

They maintain the velar plosive sound “k” but the structure is different. There is neither a core cliché nor an ululation tag. They only maintain the spontaneous sound.

Qualitative and quantitative study combined helps to overcome the limitations of each and therefore have what it takes to analyse ululation is the precursor for ululation in the sense that the ululator sees the situation for ululation. The optical nerves sends impulses to the central nervous system for interpretation which in turn sends messages to the relevant speech organs, in this case it is the larynx which releases air to the relevant places of articulation. It is therefore clear that the origin of ululation is in the traditional functions, with time and changes in Africa it radiated to new settings.

#### 3.3.4 Sampling

This method is going to be employed in this study because we are dealing with a phenomenon. The name method implies that whatever we observe at any time is normal and under the same conditions can be repeated in the future (Leedy, 1992:185). The same applies with ululation. Sampling is the choice of a sample of the population in a microcosm. What is observable in ululation in any area must also be seen in the survey population. The survey population must be able to bring out more information on the topic which is under scrutiny. The survey population is going to be in the following regions, that is urban areas:

Sampling is employed in these areas because the population has an outward semblance of homogeneity that is black women who share the same traditional values in respect of the areas they live in. The universal data is also going to consist of a totality of data within certain specified parameters like black women because they are ululators. In this case it is obvious that the universe of data is too large therefore a process which is logically and statistically sound is needed, that is, the process of sampling.

### 3.3.4.1 Urban areas: Esikhawini and Kwa – Dlangezwa

### 3.3.4.2 Rural areas: Ongoye, Manzamnyama, Port-Dunford. and Ntuze.

#### 3.3.4.1.1 KwaDlangezwa

KwaDlangezwa 250 questionnaires were given to pensioners on five different meetings at the ratio of 1:50. The choice of pensioners was arrived at because they are the people who ululate or who have ululated and retired from ululating because of their age. They know exactly what happens during ululation. The quality of questionnaires from this area showed that the respondents understood the questions. Their answers showed relevance. The level of education also played a role in their answers. Dlangezwa district consist of Dlangezwa township and people from rural areas around the University of Zululand. Marriages be they traditional and christian, twenty first birthdays (*umemulo*), engagement parties (*umthembiso*), kitchen parties, (*Ukucimela*). This is new in our culture but ululation has entrenched itself at an alarming rate.

When the girl introduces herself to her in-laws by bringing food (*umbondo*). The unveiling ceremony (*ukubuyiswa kwabazali ekhaya*) we get all these ceremonies from different levels of the society. What was common among the respondents and responses from questionnaires was that all levels admire ululators and ululation. They admired their agility during ululation, more so they admire the manner in which ululation heightens the occasion. What they liked most was that ululation aroused the unbelievable emotions in their husbands which they were not aware of.

#### 3.3.4.1.2 Esikhawini

At Esikhawini 250 questionnaires were distributed among twenty women who were chosen randomly after a choral music festival. Their addresses were taken and were visited at home where questionnaires were filled. In the same place in the evening Best Prepaid company was launched and distributorship

contracts were sold. The quality of people in this occasion demanded that the questionnaires be distributed randomly because they showed signs that they can understand everything that is expected of them. While waiting for lunch we brainstormed about ululation and I led the conversation with the sole aim of provoking their minds so that they explain and talk about the complex aspects of ululation like numbers 14, 16, 21, 24, 26 and 27. Thereafter they were asked to fill the forms and return them the following day before they left. All the forms were returned with further questions. Choral music festival was targeted because a lot of ululation takes place during and after the choir sings. When choirs sing traditional songs like:

Qhude we ma lakhala kabili kathathu.  
Sekusile amanzi awekho.

(Oh mother the cock has crowed twice or thrice  
Its morning and there is no water.)

choirs are interspersed by ululation until they finish.

Esikhawini is my place of abode. At Esikhawini we get people from all over South Africa. The majority of people are from northern Zululand, that is, north of uThukela river. People from these areas know their culture though some of them do not practise it. They know why it is practised. What was strange was that the majority did not know the meaning of ululation. They all know its functionality. Their contributions led us to come to a sound conclusion about question 2 in the questionnaire.

### **3.3.4.2 Rural Areas**

#### **3.3.4.2.1 Port-Dunford**

At Port-Dunford, black Zulu women were targeted. At Port-Dunford women ululate when need arises. Port-Dunford is an urban black area. Women of all levels abound in this area with the exception of women who wear women's leather kilts (isidwaba). In this area one hundred (100) questionnaires were



given to women, (100) one hundred questionnaires were given to girls, that is, teenagers, those whose age range between 12 and 19 years. 50 (fifty) questionnaires were given to men as a control measure of their feelings towards ululation.

### 3.3.4.2.2 University of Zululand

50 (fifty) model C students from Empangeni High, John Ross College and Umfolozi College former Richtek (north coast) students were also furnished with the questionnaires, these questionnaires were given to black students only because whites did not know ululation. Some white students have never seen or heard a person ululate like Claudia Cuelho and Sarisha Perumal. They were referred to listen to Radio Zulu at 10 a.m. on Saturdays where ululation is in abundance. These two schools were chosen because Umfolozi College has students from all over the world. Claudia is from England and Sarisha is from Namibia. At John Ross College it was discovered that black students know and like ululation but it ends there. What is encouraging was their interest to know about ululation. White children like Dolores Apollos and Nathan McCarthy showed interest.

Another fifty (50) questionnaires were given to students in black schools who sang at a wedding of their teacher. In one of their songs a student ululated in accordance with the song. When asked why she ululated she stated categorically that she was told to ululate at that point of the song. She claimed she did not feel anything. Nothing provoked her to ululate. To her ululation was one of the variations in their song. When asked about the meaning of ululation, she had no idea, she only knows that people ululate when they are happy. The type of ululation she struck was the li li li sound Randomisation of units was employed. Questions were asked and questionnaires were filled at the same time. Esikhawini is the largest unit of my universe data that is why all parameters of data had to be exploited. Moreover all these parameters of data are available unlike in other areas like Manzamnyama , Ntuzze where some parameters are not available.

### 3.3.4.2.3 Manzamnyama

At Manzamnyama the target area was Dlangezwa Township and the neighbouring rural areas. The only place where data from these areas can be obtained is the pension posts. Talking to pensioners before receiving their money was a necessity because they get bored while waiting for their money. After receiving their pension fund they are happy and they leave immediately. Convenience or accidental sampling is employed where units (people) are taken as they arrive at the scene. For example the researchers positioned themselves next to people who had stalls and were selling fast foods. All the people who came to buy presented themselves by mere happen stance. One hundred and fifty (150) women were interviewed and questionnaires were filled, fifty (50) men who were pensioners were interviewed.

The venue shifted to boarding school students from Kwa-Dlangezwa High School, 50 students who were invited to attend a cultural course were hijacked to a class where a small lecture on African religion was given and questionnaires were issued and filled. 50 Students from Dlangezwa High School were also invited to a class where a lecture on African religion was given to give them direction when they answer the questionnaires. Kwa-Dlangezwa was chosen because it is located on the northern part of Mkhwanazi area. There are slight differences in the words they use and the manner in which they conducted their rituals. In the north eastern part of the Mkhwanazi area they speak of *uswela* and Esikhawini they speak of *uselwa* as referring to plant of gourd or calabash. Coastal areas *ihluzo*, northern region *ivovo*.

### 3.3.4.2.4 Ntuze

Ntuze district is a place where most traditional practices are still in place. The communities are not under pressure of work and therefore they have time to spare with researchers. Fifty (50) women who work for Schmidt poultry farm and those who work in his sugarcane farm plough vegetables for consumption as well as economic needs were interviewed. Twenty (20) men who sell

chicken and serve as security in the farm were unwilling to respond because they felt that ululation belongs to the feminine sex, all the same, they were interviewed with great difficulty. Twenty (20) girls from black schools were interviewed. Only ten (10) students from model C schools were interviewed, that is, they were from Eshowe High School. Ntuze still upholds its traditions though there is a lot of mixing tradition and Christianity.

From their responses a lot was explained, enlightened and confirmed. During a wedding ceremony, it was noted that there is a session given to ululators after the rings were blessed and during the procession of the bridal party after the service. All forms of ululation were noted, the known and unknown, new stuff and old stuff. The different types of ululation were noted because at Ntuze we get Zulus and Sothos. We get a lot of Mkhwanazi, Majolas, Ncube, Zulu and one family of the Molefes, Radebe, and Mabusela. As a result we get the unusual setting for ululation, that is, when the corpse arrives in church and when it leaves the church.

#### 3.3.4.2.5 Mpembeni

Mpembeni was used for purposes of comparison between Mkhwanazi region and Mpembeni regions in the northern coastal area of Zululand. Mpembeni was another area for research on the basis of its nine districts which are hopelessly backward. Mpembeni is backward in the sense that the government itself is busy helping in development projects by making use of technicians, engineers and community officers to help the communities with projects which will help them to access income of any kind. Projects like sewing school uniforms, poultry farming and community gardens are common. Problems like one sewing machine for the whole project speaks dividends about the poverty and backwardness at Mpembeni. After their harvest from community gardens very little goes to the market because they themselves need food for their families. There are nine areas under the control of Amakhosi, thus: they will be divided according to their sizes, that is, the small and big areas under their Amakhosi. Inkosi Ngobese's area which consists of Mpembeni Primary School, the community hall, where all

significant functions are held. Mpembeni Mpembeni court and Mpembeni business area. Mpembeni is backwards because it cannot provide jobs to sustain itself as a small area.

Inkosi Mdlalose's area, consists of Kwahlahlindlela tribal authority which is named after this region. Inkosi Mdlalose's area is one of the most backwards districts in KwaZulu-Natal. A lot of activities are taking place in an effort to develop this area. Development projects are in place with the employ of technicians, engineers, community workers (*abeluleki*). They help communities with skills which will help them to be self sufficient.

Inkosi Molefe rules an area which has both Sothos and Zulus. They are also undergoing the same development projects irrespective of whether you are a Zulu or Sotho. Both Zulus and Sothos keep and uphold their traditions. The Basuthos even do their traditional rites and the Zulus tolerate them.

#### 3.3.4.2.6 Dube Village

The small district under the tribal authority of Inkosi Dube is called Dube Village. All empowerment projects are also in practice in this area. Ululation is at its best. The new setting for Ululation in this area is the arrival of a tank of water from the municipality when there is a disturbance in the normal water supply very close to Dube Village. There is also an area called Gobandlovu. In this area people still live their traditional type of life where they practice all the customs. Women still wear their traditional head gear (*isicholo*). These were the main targets because they truly uphold and respect their traditions. Research in this area was very fruitful though men had a nasty attitude towards researchers. They are misinformed. They think researchers collect information and get millions of rands and thereafter forget who helped them up the economic ladder. Patience and tolerance helped us to scoop fifty questionnaires from this area.

### **3.3.4.2.6 Madlankala**

We also have Madlankala under the authority of Inkosi uDube. People in this area are very hospitable and very cautious of visitors and their behaviour. There is a squatter camp and Houses are widely dispersed. People outside Mpangeni are known to be poor but research revealed another side of the people from Madlankala. Only 25 questionnaires were filled with the same information. It was noted that people in this area are closely knit. These women ululate for anything that have traces of success. They ululate when their children passed at school. When one of their friends come with a tray of wine, they ululate. This behaviour shows that ululation is part of their daily lives.

### **3.3.4.2.7 Iniwe**

An area called Iniwe under Inkosi uZungu was also visited. All empowerment projects are also in place but progress and development is very slow due to lack of equipment. People know their culture and they practise it. They have a powerful Inyanga, Mr Khumalo who is consulted freely to show that they still believe in traditional medicine. This is one of the cradles of Ululation. We also get ululation at its best, that is, the shriek sound.

### **3.3.4.2.8 Regions used as to authenticate data**

Various areas were interviewed to ascertain the validity of data obtained from places around Kwa-Dlangezwa area. That all traditional ceremonies are characterised by ululation is a standing fact, that women are neither invited nor paid to ululate is known by every woman. The difference occurs when we look at the settings for ululation. The Inkosi and the role he plays in the betterment of his community has developed new settings for ululation as it will be noted in the chapter which deals with data analysis. The following areas were chosen at random to provide sample areas which substantiate or refute the validity of data from the Kwa-Dlangezwa region.

### 3.3.4.2.9 Inkandla

Inkosi Zondi is also one of the Amakhosi at Inkandla. His district is divided into two because both Zulus and Sothos live in his district. The Sotho section of his area is called Emagala and the Zulu section is called Fahlaza. All these districts whether they are small or big they have schools. We get both civilised and uncivilized people, rich and poor people, christians and non christians, but they all ululate when need arises. They do not know the origin of ululation but they know that it is a cultural practise.

Isilutshana is one of the nine districts at Nquthu. All empowerment projects are in place. Women still wear their traditional head gear every day of their lives. Women had almost all the answers we needed concerning culture. Fifty questionnaires were obtained in this area.

All these districts practise ululation when exposed to the known settings for ululation. There are new settings which were discovered at Nquthu district. When community officers arrive at the community posts or gardens women ululate to show excitement that they are bringing new ideas which are going to alleviate their situation. When community officers come with equipment for the popular no Tillage Development Project ululation is at its best. They like this project because new scientific methods of farming which guarantees good harvest are used. The ground is not tilled but sprays are used to eliminate weeds. They do not have enough equipment to help them work effectively on their areas but the No Tillage Project helps them because they do not have to till the ground but they plant their seeds and then kill the weeds scientifically. Even lazy women (*amavila*) who do not like to till the ground are no longer exposed to their communities.

The arrival of community officers in all these districts especially at Silutshana and Hlazakazi is appreciated by ululation. Their arrival brings hope, excitement and added vigour to work harder for a better harvest under the guidance of able and knowledgable hands of community officers in the name of Zodwa Nyawo and others.

In all these districts annual events or functions are held by the community officers where they invite their superiors from regional offices to see for themselves the rate of progress and what women are doing. This function is called the "Farmers Day" function. All their best products in the line of farming, sewing and baking are displayed to the population. When women from different regions come with the best products their arrival is met by thunderous ululation to show how they appreciate each other.

When the winner is announced in all categories they ululate. When their superiors congratulate them they ululate. This was a very good and profitable area for interviewing. All the types of ululation as stated earlier on in Chapter 2 are available. There are educated women at Nquthu but they ululate and strutt their feet like women at Msinga district. Ululation heightens the excitement in their functions. What is surprising is that ululation is growing with times.

#### **3.3.4.2.10 Nongoma**

Nongoma is a rural area with a small one street town. All big traditional functions are staged at Nongoma because it is the home of the Zulu King Zwelithini. One of the great traditional function is Umkhosi Womhlanga which is an annual event. All the people at Nongoma know ululation. All women ululate when need arises at Nongoma. Even educated women ululate in a sophisticated manner. Fifty (50) women were interviewed 30 men and 20 girls from black government schools. Girls who go to multiracial schools were not available because they are borders where ever they learn.

#### **3.3.4.2.11 Edendale**

Edendale hospital was a very good area for research because people from all the surrounding townships and residential areas are found together. Cleaners were caught during their lunch time and their response was very interesting. Hundred (100) women were interviewed, 50 men who were also at lunch time

were interviewed though they did not like the idea because they believe that women must be interviewed about women traditional practices but not them. 25 girls from Pietermaritzburg Girls High and 50 girls from Sobantu High School were interviewed. It was interesting to note that girls from Pietermaritzburg high were very curious to know about ululation and Zulu traditional ceremonies. On the contrary girls from Sobantu high school showed less interest in theory but wanted to ululate for us.

Pietermaritzburg area was chosen because it is going to give us data that is relevant to a region in the Natal midlands. In this area ululation is practised with reservations especially in rural areas because it arouses men to fight.

#### 3.3.4.2.12 Msinga district

Msinga district consists of five very wide regions. We get the utopia of ululation in this area. In these areas we get great fighters. These regions are aMabomvu, oMajozi, abaThembu, amaChunu, oMabaso. The aMabomvu live on mountain tops hence their place of abode is called Msinga top. These are known as experts when it comes to the control of lightning.

Majozi district is divided into two areas. There is an area that lives like the rest of UMsinga district and the mission station called Pomeroy which is looked upon as the enlightened spot at UMsinga. This area consists of Pomeroy Mission with the Presbyterian church which was run by white priests but now they have a black priest who resides in Pietermaritzburg. They have one garage and Indian owned stores like Donny and Amod Jilmeet trading stores. There is a clinic that is run by Tugela Ferry hospital. Hospital days are Monday and Friday. There is an organised community farming. There is one Pomeroy primary school and one high school. There is a police station and a post office.

As stated by Muller in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in chapter 2 that primitive tongues, difficult guttural sounds and preference of sounds produced at the back in the mouth are a recipe for producing the shriek sound, lack of which leads to



settling for the alternative sounds, that is the *ki ki ki!* and *li li li!* sounds. At Umsinga there are educated people and uneducated people. All still believe in ancestor worship.

The BaThembu are also characterised by fighting spirit when they are provoked. The Mabaso clan is known for their bravery in spite of their minority. AmaChunu are the most provocative of the five districts. They are serial fighters. Their provocative attitude led to their expulsion from UMsinga district to Nongoma area called Ukhukho. On their arrival their provocative character was obvious.

A clinic day is held at Pomeroy Mission on Mondays and Fridays. 50 women were interviewed because women seem to be alive and kicking. 5 men from church and 12 men from their homesteads agreed to be interviewed while others wanted money for their information. They wanted (R10-00) ten rands per questionnaire. Twenty (20) men were interviewed and R200-00 was paid. Thirteen (13) girls were interviewed from Gordon Memorial High School. The responses were very interesting and useful in the sense that they know ululation. They know when to ululate but they do not know why women ululate. They think it is their way of showing happiness.

My observation about the unusual setting for ululation was that when men arrived at home after three to six months absence, they were greeted by great ululation. They expressed joy at their safe return home and that they were bringing relief from poverty in the form of clothes, money and food.

#### **3.3.4.2.13 Gingindlovu**

This area is located north of Uthukela river under Inkosi Mathaba. Gingindlovu is divided into three districts Nqutshini, Mbizimbelwe and Ngulule. These districts are torn apart by politics and tribal warfare. Even today that is, 06-05-2002, schools are closed in fear of students' lives because the districts of Ingulule and Imbizimbelwe are at each other's throats. People in this area are engulfed by deadly hatred. The only unifying factor is the

marriage ceremony or the small traditional ceremonies that are a build up towards a marriage ceremony and the graduation ceremonies. Strange enough this time faction fights started at a small traditional ceremony. Ululation by women in these ceremonies is also a unifying factor. Interviews at home, that is, homes of peace loving people, academics, teachers, religious people or born again Christians were visited. These visits ended up with 50 questionnaires and valuable information that was obtainable. Getting information without money is very difficult if not impossible.

This area was chosen because it was ravaged by war. Curiosity to see how they respond to emotional situations and ululation being the root-cause of emotions. The need to see the people's reaction before during and after ululation was important. Their response on the questionnaire was also very important in the sense that it provided data we never expected like a mother-in-law who ululate with the spear and shield. For her ululation tag she says "*Nansi impi nansi impi*" She cried war. To the mother-in-law, the bride personifies war. This shows how much war has corrupted their minds. This will be detailed in chapter 5.

## 3.4 Summary of case studies

ITEM NO.	REGION	DISTRICT	SOURCE	NO. OF QUESTIONNAIRES
1.	Northern Zululand	Nongoma	Gqikazi College of Education Nawe meeting	50  50 2x50 = 100
2.		Nquthu	Hlazakazi Isandlwana Emagala} Fahlaza } Rocksdrift Nondweni Silutshana Chief Sithole Chief Ngobese Chief Molefe	25 50 50  50 50 50 50 50 8x50 = 400 + 25 = 425
3.	North Zululand Coastal	Gingindlovu	Nqubo} Mbizimbelwe} Ngulule) Chief Mathaba	50 25 1x50 = 50 2x25 = 50 = 100
4.	Southern KwaZulu-Natal	Umlazi	A – D E P M & N K L BB Mothers Union Anglican Church – KwaMdladla	50 50 50 50 50 50 50 50 8x50 = 400
5.		Port	Murchison	25

		Shepstone	Ezingolweni Enqabeni Harding Assisi Mission Gamalakhe	25 25 25 20 50 $4 \times 25 = 100$ $1 \times 20 = 20$ $1 \times 50 = 50$ Total = 170
6.	North Zululand Coastal	Esikhawini	Township Residential areas Port Dunford Empembeni Dube Village Mandlankala Gobandlovu	100 100 50 50 50 50 50 $5 \times 50 = 250$ $2 \times 100 = 200$ Total = 450
7.		Empangeni Richards Bay Tongaat	Empangeni high school John Ross College Crawford College	25 20 20 $1 \times 25 = 25$ $2 \times 20 = 40$ Total 75
8.		KwaDlangezwa	Ntuze Ngoye mountains Dlangezwa township	100 50 100 $2 \times 100 = 200$ $1 \times 50 = 50$ Total = 250
9.	Natal Midlands	Pietermaritzb	Edendale hospital	100 women

		urg	Pietermaritzburg Girls High Sobantu high school	50 men 25  50 $1 \times 100 = 100$ $2 \times 50 = 100$ $1 \times 25 = 25$ Total = 225
10.		Msinga	Majozi   AbaThembu Mabaso AmaChunu AmaBomvu	Clinic day 50 Gordon Memorial 154 High school 5  50 50 20 50 Total = 272

Overall number of questionnaires = 2751

### 3.5 Exploration of public domain

Magistrates in courts and social workers know where traditional marriages are going to be held which are fertile resources for ululation. They were also helpful in providing the rota for pensioners on pay day meetings. Graduation ceremonies and churches are other areas of data collection in as far as ululation is concerned. There is no written information on ululation. This is going to be the first public domain with ululation as the subject. Authors that have been mentioned earlier on used ululation in passing or to support a fact or to show excitement.

### 3.6 Conclusion

Gathering information on ululation was not a problem. The problem was the fear of the people about our presence in the area. They demanded to know if the Inkosi knows about us and our business in his area.

After the population that was bounded by research parameters was identified, a careful record of observations was done. The possibility of the success of the western tools in the explication of traditional phenomena was thought provoking. Excitement in this study was based the dire need to accomplish our task using the available tools. Further the available tools were the eyes which were needed during the descriptive survey method. The analytic survey method needed the brain to interpret its observations and articulatory organs that were all available.

Fulfilment after this study was based on the fact that settings for ululation are freely available. Prior arrangement of meeting the Amakhosi for purposes of getting permission to talk to his people paid dividends. The idea that a bottle of whisky is demanded before one can speak to the Inkosi, was never experienced during my visits to the Amakhosi residences. Every business that was performed with Amakhosi was free of charge. A list of families where traditional marriage ceremonies were to take place was made available without any query. Respect at the Amakhosi residences is the trump card. Caution was adhered to during the distribution of questionnaires because of political rivalry.

What causes women to ululate was beautifully portrayed at Lamula's residence at the late arrival of the bride due to a breakdown in her car. The spontaneous eruption of ululation at the sight of the bride's car was at its best. The causal comparative method was at its best.

The idea that ululation is a reality is noted when we observed the consistency of ululation during ceremonies. Different people at different places at different

times performed the same thing. This made us believe that ululation carries with it tradition, culture and hope.

The method called triliteration, made it clear that the three sides of a triangle are expected to come up with an answer after looking closely at what is known as against what is abstract and then negate both. This method can be applied in any abstract traditional phenomena.

It was very interesting to note that ululation is common in all the chosen samples of the population. The survey population was productive and relevant information was brought out. What surprised the author is that people ululate in every traditional occasion but they cannot define the sound. They neither know the meaning of the sound they produce nor how they produce it. What makes phenomenological method tick is that it deals with personal experience and therefore it is reliable. It is reliable in the sense that what the subject reports is what he/ she experienced in the field. What came out clearly was that all ululators find themselves ululating. Nobody instructs them to ululate. Some responds to demands made by males in the absence of ululation while others do not because they cannot ululate under duress. Under instruction ululation is no longer genuine and spontaneous. Women merely make noise to please their men. The mood during the ceremony is guilty of provoking ululation. Unfortunately a lot of residual information which cannot be accounted for was left for another topic.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### 4.0 Introduction

The origin of ululation can be traced back to the Greek word “ulatio” which means cries of pain. These cries of pain are associated with King Dionysus, a Greek King, (600 BC) and the Maenads. The sounds that were produced by the Maenads while they danced for the King during the festivals and marriage ceremonies is called ululation. This is confirmed by the decorations on vessels of Dionysus and the Maenads at the Bibliotheque in Paris Encyclopaedia Britannica, (1989:313). Greeks ululate but they ululate for one reason when compared to the Zulus. In English, ululation means to howl like a dog or wolf or to lament loudly, Barnhart, (1991:1142). The above meanings show that English speaking people do not ululate.

If ululation can be traced back to ancient empires like Athens and England, it means that this phenomenon exists. In Palestine women ululate like Zulus and they ululate for the same reasons that is to express joy and also in times of war. In Palestine a woman ululated on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 as an expression of joy and success at what happened at the World Trade Centre, New York in the United States of America. Usually we lament the dead, this is confirmed by the loud noise of the siren when the hearse arrives at or leaves the church when a funeral is conducted. This is a European or Indians’ version of ululation. According to the above definitions ululation exists as a folklore phenomenon, the difference lies in the manner in which it is practised. In Zulu ululation is *ukukikiza* which means or refers to women strutting about uttering shrill cries of pleasure which are an expression of joy or success. Women also ululate in difficult times and in sadness. Doke and Vilakazi, (1972:428). The thunderous sound which Vilakazi, (1972) refers to in the book *Noma Nini* is a very good example of ululation. He refers to an incident where Rev Grout was conducting a marriage ceremony between his converts Nomkhosi and Nsikana. In this book he shows that ululation has a very



important place in the hearts of the Zulu people with special reference to the wife of "Nxaba and the converts".

#### 4.1 Philosophical approach

The ululator, the strutting of feet, the shriek sound, the objects carried during ululation are all manifestations of ululation. What we see is a representation of ululation. True ululation is in the realm of the ultimate truth. A representation of a human being which we call MaBlose is not the real MaBlose. MaBlose is encapsulated somewhere in the heart or brain. MaBlose the person dies and is buried but the real MaBlose goes to join her ancestors. So does ululation, the ululator ululates but ululation cannot be seen with a naked eye, it can only be heard. Ululation can be sensed but it cannot be touched. A deaf person cannot understand the concept ululation. A deaf person can see a woman strutting, carrying objects but will not understand until she hears the sound.

Philosophers say that for an object to be considered real, it must be amenable to definition (Leedy, 1992:118) According to philosophers, ululation is real in the sense that it can be clearly defined although it does not exist physically because no one can see or hold ululation. This means that the real ululation is a soul.

The absolute truth about ululation is a problem in this chapter. The researcher observes a happening, that is, ululation, women strutting and screaming carrying objects in their hands. The researcher is trying to deduce the cause of this unique behaviour without provocation. To a stranger in the African culture the woman looks possessed, on the contrary to people who share the same culture, they admire the beauty, the majesty and agility of her behaviour as sacred and unique. Others appreciate the presence of the ancestors in the majestic strutting of the ululator.

Simple minded people look at the ululator as a person who wants to draw attention to herself as one of the interviewees from Umlazi indicated. Others

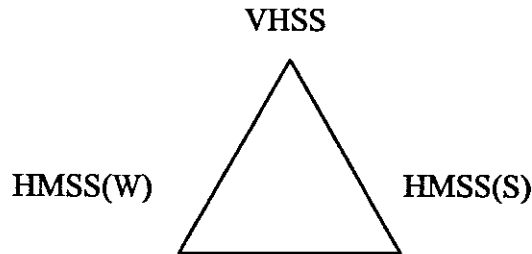
know that when a woman behaves in this manner, she is expressing excitement and joy in relation to what is happening. The difference in deductions poses a cultural problem. People may belong to the same country, cultural group but see things differently due to racial groups, levels of education, difference in religions and beliefs.

#### 4.2 The phonological aspect of ululation

The Definition of ululation emphasises that it is a shriek sound accompanied by strutting of feet which is produced by women as an expression of joy and excitement. (Doke and Vilakazi, 1972:1111). The shriek sound in ululation differs according to women. The vocal chords in women differentiate the different types of ululation especially the shriek sound. There are different types of shriek sounds. There is the high pitched shriek sound which strikes like lightning, followed by the high pitched medium shriek sound which strikes like the sound which is made by the White Headed Fish Eagle (Inkwazi).

There is a very high pitched medium shriek sound which has five initial waves followed by a long high pull. This one was used at Msinga by women who welcomed a bride from her wedding in church. This form sounded more like the sound of a siren we get to indicate the beginning and the end of working hours. As stated in chapter 1 the other varieties are used by women who cannot strike the shriek sound. Some women in an effort to strike the shriek sound end up with *ki ki ki!* and *li li li!* sound. Elderly women also contend themselves with the palatal semivowel sound *yi yi yi!*

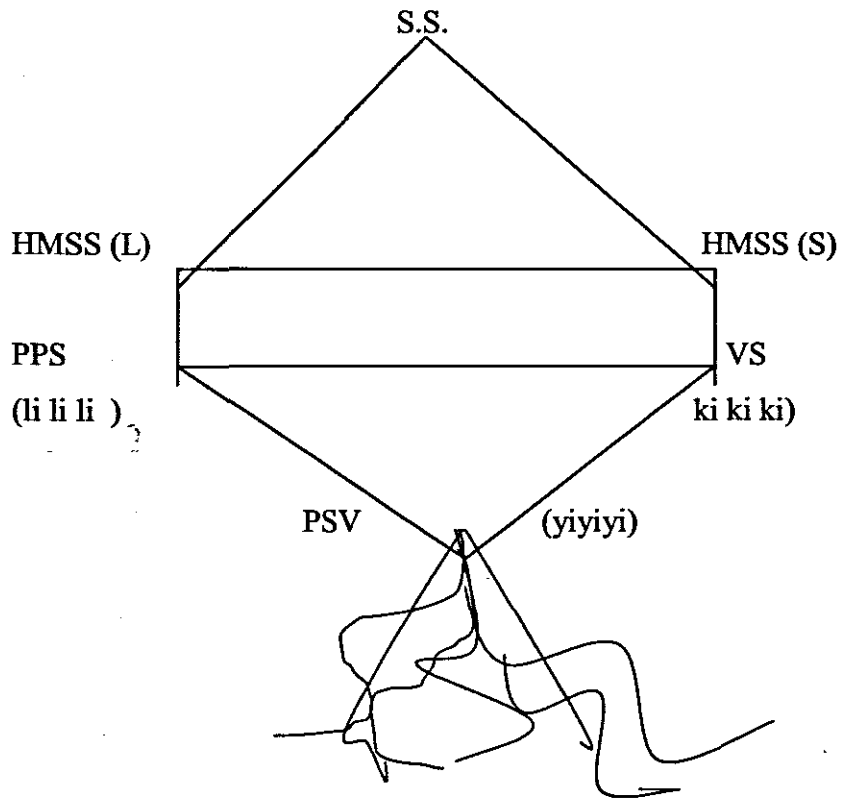
This can be illustrated by the following diagram which I refer to as the pyramid structure of ululation.



This triangle represents the three types of shriek sounds which are observable in contemporary societies as stated in chapter 2.

- VHSS** refers to the utopia of ululation, that is, the highest shriek sound.
- HMSS(W)** high medium shriek sound. W represents white headed Fish Eagle (Inkwazi).
- HMSS(S)** high medium shriek sound. S represents the sound made by the siren.

The shriek sound is the ultimate ululation sound. It is common in rural areas where women are used to shouting with undue loudness. Places like Manzanyma, Ntuzi, Port-Dunford and Msinga districts are the nests for this type of ululation. Very few women can strike the VHSS shriek sound. These are the women who are hired to ululate in wedding ceremonies, and who can also be hired to welcome tourists in holiday resorts.



This kite diagram serves to show that the shriek sound is the utopia of ululation and it can be articulated by very few women. The velar and prepalatal types of ululation are ordinary in production and effect and they can be articulated by many women. From the diagram it is obvious that the shriek sound is quality and the alternative sounds are quantity. The fourth sound is restricted to a certain dialectical region and therefore very few people use this sound during ululation. When grannies try to ululate they go as far as the PSV sound.

This is a complete picture of ululation when we consider all types as explained above and before in Chapter 2.

The line between HMSS(W) AND HMSS(S) is a bit tilted to show that the sound HMSS(W) is slightly higher than the sound HMSS(S). This is the kind of ululation which we find when men go to war. This is the kind of ululation which sounds like a siren in a funeral. The same kind of ululation which we hear when the bride leaves her homestead to the groom's homestead. The ululation we hear when the bride is received by the elderly women at the groom's place. This will be elaborated further in chapter 5 where it will be accompanied by ululation tags. We get the shriek sound in every event which is cultural. We also get all other types of ululations simultaneously but the shriek sound is outstanding, it shoots up above all.

The strutting of feet depends on the agility of the ululator. They move their feet in order to colour what they are doing especially to give emphasis on what they are saying. There is a wide range of variety when it comes to the strutting of feet. Some women pace their feet very close together shaking their bodies in wavelike convulsions. The objects that they carry have a bearing on what they mean and say to their bride.

### 4.3 Data analysis from interviews

The initial interviews which were conducted on individuals were meant to prepare the interviewees for the coming questionnaire. It is also meant to show the researcher the weaknesses and strengths of the questionnaire.

### 4.4 The Analysis of Data from the Questionnaire

Ululation is abstract. Through observation it is noted that below the audible surface and a complex depth lies a deeper structure which determines the reality of the appearances. The only instrument for extracting and observing data beyond appearances is a questionnaire.

#### Question 1

From your observation how would you define ululation? The general opinion was that ululation is a shriek and thrilling sound accompanied by the strutting of feet by women as an expression of affection, appreciation, and joy.

The Definition of ululation emphasises that it is a shriek sound that is accompanied by strutting of feet produced by women as an expression of joy, excitement and success. (Doke and Vilakazi, 1972:1111) The shriek sound in ululation differs according to women. The vocal chords in women differentiate the different types of ululation especially the shriek sound.

	No attempt	Success	Joy	Excitement	Total
No.	500	1561	420	270	2751
%	19	57	17	7	100%

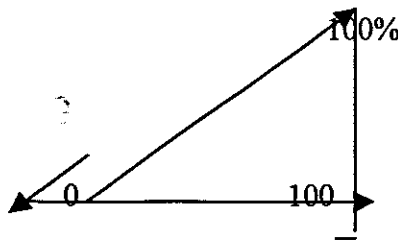
The above table is an indication of the responses to question one.

## Question 2

Who ululates and why?

Females ululate to express their indebtedness and appreciation to the occasion. Research has taught us that among the Ndebele people ululation is does not have the sole monopoly of women. Men also ululate but in the absence of women.

All respondents knew the answer .The graph soared from zero to one hundred percent.



## Question 3

What dramatical props do ululators employ and why?

They use brooms, branches of trees, flowers, jerseys handkerchiefs plant of gourd and whatever they need to use in order to drive the point home. Originally objects which were blown by wind in their natural habitat were used. Today due to development in the settings for ululation new objects have emerged such as the fern, umbrella, torch light, shoes and many more.

Many respondents were not even aware that ululators carry something in their hands. Responses varied according to their places of abode, their belonging to certain regions also played a significant role. Exposure to traditional ceremonies proved to be highly educative to the younger generation. Intellect combined with common sense helped others to remember.

Out of 2751 questionnaires which were distributed the responses were shocking.

	Tradition	Modern	Ignorant	Total
No	200	2103	448	2751
%	8	76	16	100

#### Question 4

What is the meaning of the core cliché ki ki ki ?

Respondents either did not know or were not sure about the meaning of ki ki ki! Most of the people interviewed thought ululation is an expression of joy which can be translated thus; “Hoorah ! we are happy at home” or it is a traditional way of inviting people to a festivity. The following table shows the distribution of responses to

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	Expression	Traditional Invit	No response	Total
No.	956	1 300	495	2751
%	35	47	18	100

Question 4 and the percentages. There was a response that the researcher did not record in the questionnaires because it was an isolated interview where a respondent said ki ki ki ! is the associative meaning embedded on velar sound [k'] in [ki] [ki] [ki] proves that voiceless [k'] is being voiced by the employment of the high front vowel [i] this means that the secrete is exposed or the secrete will be exposed.



### Question 5

Why do ululators use ululation tags after the core cliché ?

Ululators use ululation tags to express their feelings about the bride, the groom, the celebration itself, what they know about the bride, what they expect from their bride.

Although the responses differed according to regions, the expression of feelings in the ululation tags was loud and clear.

### Question 6

What is the significance of the broom, plant of gourd or calabash, branches of trees during ululation?

The responses to question 6 were marred by ignorance among the respondents. Some respondents did not know that ululators carry something when they ululate, let alone the significance of the objects they carry. Some respondents were exposed to traditional celebrations, have seen the object in use but they did not know the importance of the objects. Research findings showed that some people know that ululators carry objects and they also knew the significance of these objects. On the contrary some people did not know that there is anything important that was done by ululators. Knowing something that is carried by ululators was nerve racking for them. Many did not attempt the question. The following table shows the summary of responses to this question.

	No attempt	Success	Joy	Excitement	Total
No.	500	1561	420	270	2751
%	19	57	17	7	100%

Some were figurative about the whole thing saying that, the bride will sweep all the houses clean that is misunderstanding and grudges will be swept away.

#### Question 7

What do they get after ululation ?

All respondents knew that there is no pay after ululation but they varied about the reason for ululation. Some claimed that they ululate for satisfaction while others ululate to express happiness for the couple or whatever. The researcher's view is that; the answer to question 1.7 is responsible for the disregard of ululation by people. We live in the days of incentives and pay after a good job has been done. Ululation with a strong impact on the success of the occasion, is ephemeral in nature and performed by women who by nature support each other when it comes to domestic work, hence we get things like *ilima* (communal cultivation) Doke and Vilakazi, (1972:457).

	Nothing	Satisfaction	Enjoyment	No response	Total
No.	400	1789	562	00	2751
%	15	65	20	00	100

#### Question 8

Do all mothers ululate, if not why?

As stated above that women like to support each other, the same thing applies to ululation. All mothers wish to share the joy and success of the occasion but others are handicapped by lack of the equipment to produce the shriek sound and they resort to the easier option, that is the *ki ki ki* and *li li li* sounds failing which they refrain from ululating. Some are handicapped by shyness while others abstain because of jealousy, otherwise all mothers like to share in the success of what is happening. That is one of the reasons why ululators are not rewarded for a good job well done.

My observation was that married mothers like ululation. Their responses to the questionnaire show depth and very strong feelings about ululation whereas unmarried mothers did not show interest and in most cases were critical. This is due to lack of experience in this regard. This was first observed in Port Shepstone and a control test was made at Esikhawini. The results were positive. The negative response by unmarried mothers reminded me of Noorie a white woman who was a visitor in Greed (the programme in TV 2) which took place on Sunday 17 June 2001. She said tap dancing is a stress reliever. The strutting of feet by women is nothing but tap dancing. The only difference is that tap dancing is organised and is sometimes uniform whereas strutting of feet by ululators is individualistic and spontaneous in nature. These differences show that strutting and tap dancing are poles apart. Tap dancing is man made but strutting is spontaneous and natural. Ululation therefore needs acknowledgement as something that belongs to the world of ancestors.

Ululation is beautiful as a performance. All women like to ululate but the above stated hindrances have an effect on the woman's feeling.

#### Question 9

Give all the settings for ululation you know ?

Nothing but the questionnaire could be able to bring up so many ideas and issues about the setting for ululation. Ululation is one of those strong customs withstood the test of time. Ululation withstood its disregard by missionaries who looked upon all traditional practices by black people as evil. It was rejected by priests because it was disorderly in presentation but returned to church without any bill being signed. The setting for ululation is entwined in the lives of the black people. All black people be they sophisticated or natural know ululation. There are normal settings for ululation, that is, which are in line with the definition. There are also abnormal settings for ululation, that is, where people ululate but the situation is not in line with the definition. It is

interesting to note that there are exceptions to the rule. The following are some of the known settings so far.

Any chosen open space. (isigcawu)

Marriage ceremony

21<sup>st</sup> birthday celebration. (umkhuliso)

All traditional ceremonies that are a build up to the marriage ceremony.

Graduation ceremony

In augural address.

The arrival of somebody who brings relief or help to people .

Community gardens.

All the respondents knew three or more settings for ululation depending on the place of abode .

Some believe that any place can be the setting for ululation as long as there is a precursor for ululation.

	Traditional places	Anywhere	No response	Total
No	1021	1560	169	2751
%	37	57	6	100

#### Question 10

How do you feel when women ululate ?

Ululation gives a feeling of excitement and happiness for the bride and groom.

Some cry when they look back thinking retrospectively about the struggle and problems that the successful person, couple, or people went through before they reached their goals. Contrary to the above there are women who are irritated by ululation. During the propitiation of ancestors especially men are inspired and motivated by the support of ululating women. They feel important and they excel in what they do. The following table illustrates this idea.

	Excitement	Sadness	Nothing	Irritation	Total
No	2265	338	103	45	2751
%	82	12	4	2	100

### Question 11

What specific attire do they wear when they ululate ?

As for the attire there is no special attire for ululation. Women wear what they have as noted in the questionnaire in question (1.11). During celebrations and ceremonies women used to wear full traditional attire. The arrival of missionaries came with the advent of uniforms, skirts and pinafore dresses. Today very few women wear traditional dresses per se but they wear modified ones. Ululation catches them in any form of attire or dress. There is no special dress for ululation. In churches we find special uniforms for women who feel that their religion, that is, Christianity, has reached a point of no return to traditional practices. These uniforms are nothing but a denial of who they are. White women do not wear uniforms in church unless they are in the choir on a special occasion. Our sisters wear these uniforms every Sunday and Thursday of every year. This uniform practice has gone on unabated to the point that there are women who believe that nothing can stand on their way if they are in their uniforms. They look down upon women who do not wear uniform as ungodly. They wear this uniform twice a week. On other days they do not shun their traditions. It would be understandable if they wear their uniforms every day like Moslems. Moslems are who they are and they cannot be removed from their beliefs (steadfast). That is why they are so powerful in their humility, that is, they do not boast about their religion but they are constant in their practise like the northern star.

### Question 12

What arouses the ululator to ululate since they do not ululate for one reason.?

What arouses the ululator to ululate is in her mind or soul. This aspect of ululation is highly individualistic hence we get different settings for ululation. Some people claim that women abuse ululation in some settings. This perspective cannot be guaranteed because what arouses an ululator to ululate is between her vocal chords and the type of messages that have been sent to her central nervous system for interpretation. The perfect example or answer is what happens when people watch boxing. Some people cry or feel sad when a boxer is punched mercilessly while others laugh their stomach out. What makes a woman to ululate may make another to cry because of what she knows.

### Question 13

Are ululators chosen or invited before the event ?

As stated above that ululation is spontaneous in nature, women are neither chosen nor invited to come and ululate. It comes like crying. Nowadays due to lack of women with a shriek sound, through urbanisation and shortage of work, women are hired to ululate. Even then they should be involved in the situation which will provoke ululation. Ululators are not expected to hold a qualification or certificate, it is a question of performance. Ululation cannot undergo qualification standards because it can neither be measured nor started and opened or closed. It is not acquired. It is either you can or you cannot.

### Question 14

Is it possible for a woman to improve her ululation skills through practise ?

Earlier on we stated that ululation is spontaneous in nature and therefore individualistic. This is the cognitive aspect of ululation which means it is not

possible to improve ululation skills even when a woman marries into a homestead where ululation is practised on every occasion. Through close and constant observation ones ululation skills can be improved. This is a practical aspect of ululation. Ululation is both cognitive and pragmatic in essence. The cognitive aspect is beyond human manipulation and therefore cannot be changed while the practical aspect which can be sensed is open to human manipulations and infringements.

#### Question 15

Do men appreciate women when they ululate.?

In nature men need women for support. A woman's support gives a man strength to do better and excel. In a strange way ululation is conspicuous by its absence. For example when a man propitiates ancestors and women do not show support to what he is doing, he will stop and question the absence of women in their presence thus "*amakhosikazi awekho yini?*" which means (are women absent?) Women will ululate, the man will dance for his dear life to impress women so that they ululate more. Women do not ululate when the man in the open field (*isigcawu*) is known to be a sorcerer or a witch.

Women do not support people who kill their family members. Women have aspirations. They look forward to succeeding generations to uphold the name of the family. Sorceres work against regeneration of families and goodwill. Such a person is working against the aspirations of women. They cannot therefore support such a person.

	Yes	No	Not sure	Total
No	2417	68	266	2751
%	88	2	10	100

## Question 6

How many types of ululation do you know?

It is not easy to tell because ululation is individualistic. The different types of ululation depend on the different types of ululators.

In ululation the loudest is the shriek sound SS = 1000 hertz tone which means the shriek sound is the loudest ululation sound as confirmed by Krige, (1960:140) who said:

It can be heard in a radius of several miles.

Its frequencies have never been measured. This is due to the lack of relevant apparatus. The following analysis of frequencies was calculated through observation. By frequencies we mean the number of rare factions produced by a vibrating object each second. The velar sound has frequencies of 3x5x1 followed by a long pull.

3	=	Ki Ki Ki!
5	=	Ki Ki Ki Ki Ki!
1	=	Ki!....

The prepalatal sound has variables of 5x7x10.

5	=	Li li li li li !
7	=	Li li li li li li li !
10	=	Li li li li li li li li li li !

The palatal semi vowel sound has variables of 5x and 1 long pull, that is Yi yi yi yi yi !..... The grammar is the syntax of mathematical operations. By the grammar of the syntax of mathematical operations we refer to symbols as the numbers and grammar is what you do with the numbers. For instance, when we look at the chemistry of water two atoms of hydrogen combine with

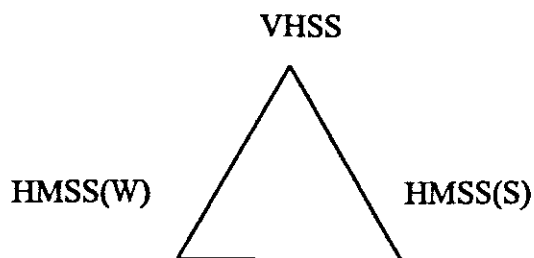


one atom of oxygen and they form a chemical compound  $H_2O$  that is water.  $H_2O$  tells a short story in 3 numerals. In fact everyday facts can be translated into numerical forms of expression and in the process make those facts more meaningful than they otherwise would be.

There are different types of shriek sounds. There is the high pitched shriek sound which strikes like lightning, followed by the high pitched medium shriek sound which strikes like the sound which is made by the White Headed Fish Eagle (Inkwazi).

There is a very high pitched medium shriek sound which has five initial waves followed by a long high pull. This kind of ululation was used at Msinga by women welcoming a bride from her wedding in church. This form sounded more like the sound of a siren we get to indicate the beginning and the end of working hours. As stated in chapter 1 the other varieties are used by women who cannot strike the shriek sound. Some women in an effort to strike the shriek sound end up with *ki ki ki!* and *li li li!* sound. Elderly women also contend themselves with the palatal semivowel sound *yi yi yi!*.

This can be illustrated by the following diagram that I refer to as the pyramid structure of Ululation.

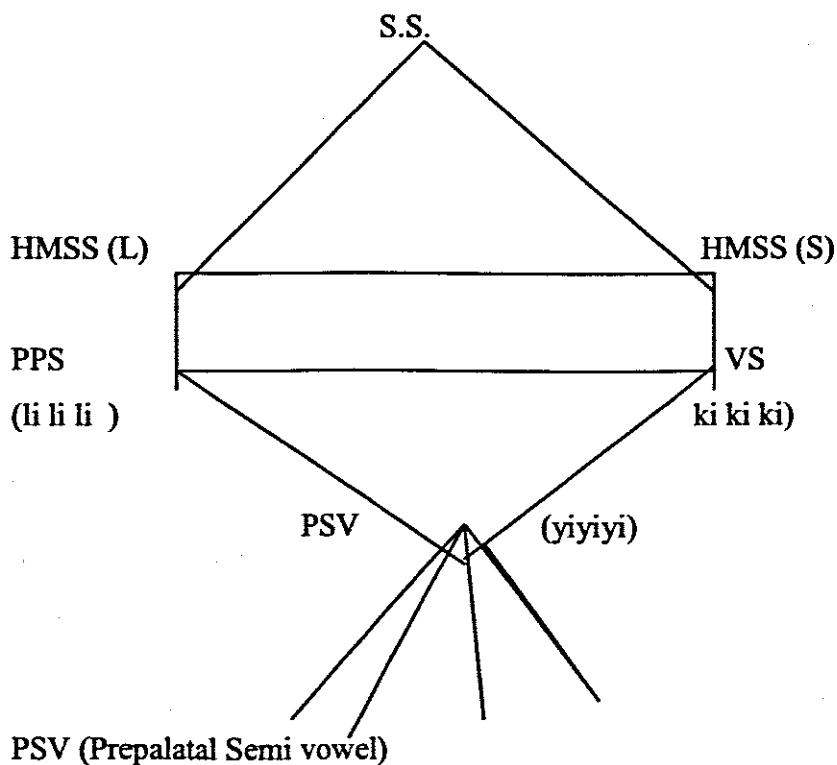


This triangle represents the three types of shriek sounds that are observable in contemporary societies as stated in chapter 2.

- VHSS refers to the utopia of ululation, that is, the highest shriek sound. (V) refers to very and (H) refers to high (S) refers to shriek and the last (S) refers to sound.
- HMSS(W) high medium shriek sound. (W) represents white headed Fish Eagle (Inkwazi) (M) refers to middle and SS refers to shriek sound.
- HMSS(S) high medium shriek sound. (S) represents the sound made by the siren.

The shriek sound is the ultimate ululation sound. It is common in rural areas where women are used to shouting with undue loudness. Places like Manzamnyama Ntuze Port-Dunford and Msinga districts are the nests for this type of ululation. Very few women can strike the VHSS shriek sound. These are the women who are hired to ululate in wedding ceremonies, and who can also be hired to welcome tourists in holiday resorts.

This illustration is a representation of the kite structure of a shriek sound. The researcher refers to this structure as the kite structure because it looks like a kite.

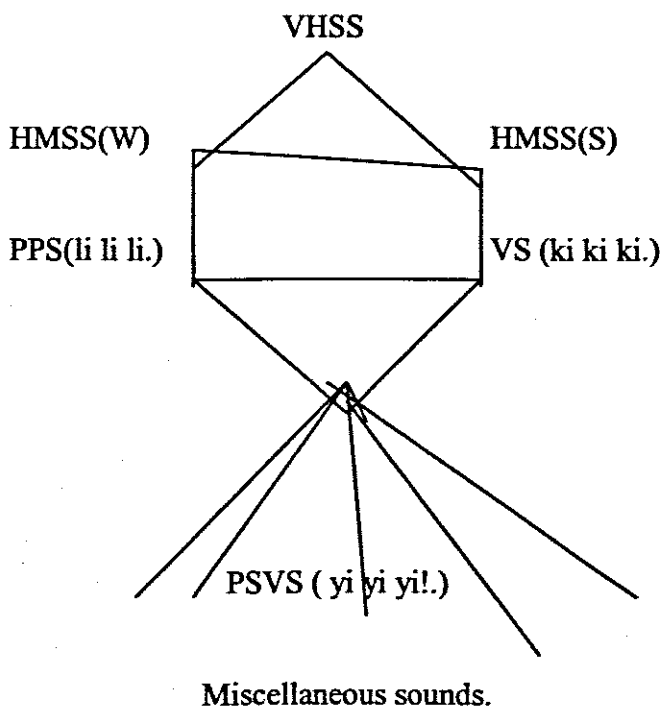


The tails at the bottom of the structure represent the miscellaneous sounds that are produced by women who are unable to strike any of the recognised ululation sounds. They usually end up making sounds that cannot be classified. Ye! He! Uyingcwele! (Shembe )

Kwa kwa kwa kwi! (Ndebele people)

This kite diagram serves to show that the shriek sound is the utopia of ululation and can be articulated by very few women. The velar and prepalatal types of ululation are ordinary in production and effect as a result they can be articulated by many women. From the diagram it is obvious that the shriek sound is quality and the alternative sounds are quantity. The fourth sound is restricted to a certain dialectical region and therefore very few people use this sound during ululation. When grannies try to ululate they go as far as the PSV sound.

This is a complete picture of ululation when we consider all types as explained above and before in Chapter 2.



The line between HMSS(W) AND HMSS(S) is a bit tilted to show that the sound HMSS(W) is slightly higher than the sound HMSS(S).

This is the kind of ululation which we find when men go to war. This is the kind of ululation which sounds like a siren in a funeral. The same kind of ululation that we hear when the bride leaves her homestead to the groom's homestead. The ululation we hear when the bride is received by the elderly women at the groom's place. This will be elaborated further in chapter 5 where it will be accompanied by ululation tags. We get the shriek sound in every event which is cultural. We also get all other types of ululations simultaneously but the shriek sound is outstanding, it shoots up above all.

PPS refers to Prepalatal sound li li li !.

VS refers to velar sound ki ki ki!.

#### Question 17

If you were unemployed would you join ululators to welcome tourists to a tourist resort?

Before women ululate there must be a root-cause. Even in a root-cause which will be the advantages of the coming of tourists into tourist resorts will need to be known before their arrival to arouse ululators. At this stage ululation will be directed at the success of the organised arrival of the tourists and the hope of earnings which will bring joy and happiness to them in the form of money which they need.

The responses were interesting because this question meant the advent of a new setting for ululation.

	Yes	No	Not sure	Total
No	2511	99	266	2751
%	91	4	5	100

### Question 18

Would you register for a certificate or diploma to become an ululator.?

Further A certificate is a proof of the fact. In this case it is a proof that a woman can ululate. Ululation can not be measured in certificates because it does not have a beginning or an ending. It is situational, further it is intertwined in a particular situation. Ululation cannot be removed from its normal situation to a classroom situation. If it is dramatised in a classroom setting students will be told to ululate when their roles demand them, in that case it will not be spontaneous and therefore artificial. Ululation by students is definitely different from ululation which we find during the graduation ceremony, wedding ceremony, the arrival of cows for lobola to the brides homestead. The spontaneity, the excitement, the strutting of feet and unbelievable take over by men who get excited and propitiate ancestors. All this cannot be done in a classroom situation. It will be a mockery of ululation. Ululation is best done by its people at the relevant settings.

	Yes	Never	Not sure	Total
No	90	2590	71	2751
%	3	94	3	100

### Question 19

How did ululation originate. ?

People were interviewed about the origin of ululation. Even the well known intellectuals wanted to be given time to think about it because they have never bothered to know about the unbelievable position which is occupied by ululation in their lives. Nobody ever wondered why women made this sound during certain occasions, all the time and absence of which leaves a glaring gap during ceremonies. As a response to the question about the origin of ululation some claim the origin of ululation from the Zulu regiments under Shaka when looking at the sound that was made by women when they urged them to go and fight or attack the enemy. The acceptance of this response tends to be problematic on the realisation that women existed before Shaka and his regiments. Traditional ceremonies which look like the origin of ululation existed before Shaka. The soul which is also looked upon as the origin of ululation existed when God made the first person on earth.

Some people think that the woman is the source of ululation, the source of ululation is the vocal chords. The vocal chords differentiates the different types of ululation when air moves out through the process of egression.

The origin of ululation can be traced to the first woman called Joyce who lived in the fifteenth century in Egypt (Samuelson, 1929) who we believe was exposed to the setting for ululation and responded emotionally.

Ululation existed during the pre Shakan period as well as the post Shakan period. Reverend Grout's (1869) proposition and acknowledgement that people should consider ululation for research purposes proves that it existed before Shaka's reign. The majority of people who live today know ululation but they do not know when and where it started. Existing literature is proof of its existence though it is mentioned in passing by great authors who are observant. The age of the book gives us direction to the existence of ululation.

We say ululation is spontaneous in nature. This means it belongs to the central nervous system in origin. Before it can be sparked, the woman must sense this occurrence and interpret it. The first generation of black women knew the settings for ululation or situations which spark ululation. Some women cry when they see a bride and groom while others ululate. Those who cry have a reason to do so which arouses sorrow while others become overjoyed and ululate. Ululation is neither inherited nor copied, it is within a woman. In the questionnaire, question 2.14 some respondents believe that a woman can improve her ululation skills through observation. A woman who can be improved is the one who has the fire to ululate. A woman who cries and the rest who show no interest cannot be improved. Ululation therefore started with the first generation of black women and permeated all generations to the present generation that ululates. The first generation of a black woman in Africa dates back to (1½) one and a half million years ago, that is, human beings who made fire. Fossils indicate that homo erectus (the ancient advanced type of human being) was found at Lake Turkana in Kenya and other areas in Eastern Africa. This theory is acceptable when compared with the idea that blacks originated in Egypt and flew down in a hot air balloon. In the process of searching for the origin of ululation blacks can claim their origin in Kenya and that they flowed to Egypt in a canoe (Samuelson, 1929). The brain and the exquisitely complex nervous system, which ramifies throughout the body, work out in close collaboration with the blood-borne hormones. These are the body's in built control systems, orchestrating all that we are and we do (World Book 350). This is the most relevant and closest idea to the source of ululation.

Interviewees had no idea about the origin of ululation

## Question 20

What is responsible for the strutting of feet by women during ululation?

The strutting of feet depends on the agility of the ululator. They move their feet in order to colour what they are doing especially to give emphasis on what

they are saying. There is a wide range of variety when it comes to the strutting of feet. Some women pace their feet very close together shaking their bodies in wavelike convulsions. The objects that they carry have a bearing on what they mean and say to their bride.

Some respondents did not know but some thought that excitement as in a dance situation caused the strutting of feet.

	Excitement	Sadness	Nothing	Irritation	Total
No	2265	338	103	45	2751
%	82	12	4	2	100

#### Question 21

Are there any hidden secretes about ululation especially the shriek sound ?

Respondents did not even try to think and my view is that,

The ululator, the strutting of feet, the shriek sound, the objects carried during ululation are all manifestations of ululation. What we see is a representation of ululation. True ululation is in the realm of the ultimate truth. A representation of a human being that we call MaBlose is not the real MaBlose. MaBlose is encapsulated somewhere in the heart or brain. MaBlose the person dies and is buried but the real MaBlose goes to join her ancestors. So does ululation, the ululator ululates but ululation cannot be seen with a naked eye, it can only be heard. Ululation can be sensed but it cannot be touched. A deaf person cannot understand the concept ululation. A deaf person can see a woman strutting, carrying objects but will not understand until she hears the sound.

Philosophers say that for an object to be considered real, it must be amenable to definition (Leedy, 1992:118) According to philosophers, Ululation is real in



the sense that it can be clearly defined although it does not exist physically because no one can see or hold ululation. This means that the real ululation is a soul.

The absolute truth about ululation is a problem in this chapter. The researcher observes a happening, that is, ululation, women strutting and screaming carrying objects in their hands. The researcher is trying to deduce the cause of this unique behaviour without provocation. To a stranger in the African culture the woman looks possessed, on the contrary to people who share the same culture, they admire the beauty, the majesty and agility of her behaviour as sacred and unique. Others appreciate the presence of the ancestors in the majestic strutting of the ululator. Simple minded people look at the ululator as a person who wants to draw attention to herself as one of the interviewees from Umlazi indicated. Others know that when a woman behaves in this manner, she is expressing excitement and joy in relation to what is happening. The difference in deductions poses a cultural problem. People may belong to the same country, cultural group but see things differently due to racial groups, levels of education, difference in religions and beliefs.

## Question 22

Do you believe in God ?

There was a problem where other people thought that God and Umvelingqangi are two people who are worshipped differently. As a result some people claimed to worship God while others claimed Umvelingqangi. In every race there are atheists.

	God	uMvelingqangi	Atheists	Total
No	2017	570	164	2751
%	73	21	6	100

## Question 22

How many Gods do you believe in ?

A lot of confusion was noted among people. Some claimed to belong to both Gods, that is, the God of the Christians and God of the traditionalists. Others we either traditionalists (Shembe) or Christians.

	One	Two	None	Total
No	381	2245	125	2751
%	14	82	4	100

## Question 24

What happens to human beings after death?

The general notion is that of life after death in heaven. Some believe that people die and go to the world of the spirits or the underworld. There are also those who believe that everything ends on the death bed (Washtower). This table shows the distribution of respondents who believe in the following ideas.

	Heaven	Under world	No life	Total
No	1470	1223	58	2751
%	53	44	3	100

## Question 25

Can ululation evoke ancestors?

Ululation can evoke ancestors. The unusual shriek sound from the throat in ululation stuns a human being like the sound made by the cock when it crows to wake everybody in the household. Ululation arouses or awakes ancestors to

look out and take charge of everything in the household until the end of the ceremony.

Ancestors are our parents and relatives. They know ululation and when it is performed, they know what is happening. Before the ceremony commences great quantities of incense (*impepho*) is burnt to call the shades or ancestors to restore order in the household. Berglund, (1975) refers to Laduma Madela as one of the diviners who used excessive quantities of *impepho* to call on the shades to restore order. Berglund, (1975): when the bride comes out ululation takes place to emphasise to the ancestors that what they have been talking about when they burnt incense is really happening.

Berglund, (1975:289) confirms that the throat of a human being is the seat of feelings which are peculiar to man:

The invisible familiars enter huts at night and  
suffocate people ..... the witchcraft of strangling  
a human being .....

That is what white people call nightmares. Ululation was looked upon by white people as evil because it had something to do with the throat. When a woman strikes a shriek sound, to people of other cultures it is as if she is strangled hence it was stamped out in church.

What Berglund is putting across is that the throat of a human being is unique and therefore capable of producing inexplicable sounds. Ululation comes from the throat. Ululation is peculiar in the sense that it is neither the usual laughing nor crying sound. It being peculiar is therefore capable of producing intricate sounds. The shriek sound is peculiar even phonetics fails to describe the place and manner of articulation of the shriek sound. On the whole, many people do not know whether ululation can evoke ancestors or not. Very few people are aware of the mysteries of folklore especially ululation.

	Yes	No	No response	Total
No	1002	1597	152	2751
%	36	59	5	100

Question 26

Is there any relationship between ululation and incense?

Some people believe that ululation is nothing but an expression of joy or excitement. On the other hand some believe that ululation has the capacity to invite or draw the attention of the ancestors to the homestead when necessary. Some believe in both of the above statements. On the contrary the denial of any kind of relationship between ululation and incense is very strong. However when reporting any traditional occasion that is about to take place incense is used to draw the attention of the ancestors. There is a relationship in the sense that both are used when dealing with traditional customs. The following table will illustrate the thinking of the people about this relationship.

	Yes	No	No idea	Total
No	1895	811	45	2751
%	69	29	2	100

Question 27

If ululation is capable of evoking ancestors, how can we account for the presence of ancestors in sophisticated gatherings like the graduation ceremony, inaugural address and in a wedding ceremony in church?

All the people who believe that there are ancestors know that ancestors are always with them. Born again Christians pretend that there are no ancestors. The idea of ancestors is borne by the language they speak. When a person had

a narrow escape, the quickest response to that situation is that “*unedlozi*”. You have an ancestor or *Abakini banawe*, meaning your people are with you, by people they refer to the dead people, or *unenhlanhla*. We get luck from our ancestors. The luck we talk about is safety or protection from evil and dangerous things. That protection is provided by our ancestors who know us is because they get power from God who provides strength to everybody. Ancestors serve as intermediaries between God and the living (Mbiti, 1975). They respond to us when aroused by either incense or ululation or the propitiation of ancestors by men.

### Question 28

Is there any relationship between ululation and a chorus?

Another comparison can be made between ululation and a chorus. There is no relationship between ululation and a chorus because a chorus is sung in church related activities. However, ululation is related to traditional ceremonies. Ululation is not sung but uttered by women only, while a chorus is sung by everybody male or female young and old. In a chorus there are many independent routines which are followed by many singers whereas ululation is performed by women and there is one sound and one movement which is the strutting of feet. The response was that the relationship is strong, weak, inexistent.

	Strong	Weak	Inexistent	Total
No	541	874	1336	2751
%	20	32	48	100

Those who think there is a strong link between ululation and a chorus is because they look at these compared items as an expression of joy by women.

#### 4.5 Data analysis from interviews

The initial interviews that were conducted on individuals were meant to prepare the interviewees for the coming questionnaire. It is also meant to show the researcher the weaknesses and strengths of the questionnaire.

Ululation is something which people do and enjoy unaware. When people ululate they do not prepare themselves for ululation. In most cases they are emotionally strung and they find themselves ululating or they realise afterwards that they have ululated. This is due to the element of spontaneity in ululation. This is in actual fact an awareness interview. The first interview was a sliding scale interview where either or responses are expected and a column for a checklist where varying degrees of intensity are acknowledged. All the same this research activity is very helpful in the sense that interviewees start thinking about ululation for the first time in their lives.

#### 4.6 Sliding scale interview

	Yes	No
1. Sound is musical and pleasant	X	
Noise is harsh and unpleasant	X	
2. Ululation is a sound	X	
Ululation is a noise		X
3. Men ululate		X
Women ululate	X	
4. Men strutt their feet during ululation		X
Women strutt their feet during ululation	X	
5. Ululation is Afrocentric in nature	X	
Ululation is a Eurocentric in nature		X

6. We hear ululation during wedding ceremonies	X	
We hear ululation during swimming sessions		X
7. Ululators are invited to ululate		X
Ululators ululate on their own volition	X	
8. Ululation is spontaneous in nature	X	
Ululation is caused by what we see		X

#### 4.7 Responses from the field

Some people expressed a feeling that this interview was an examination or a trial. Their shortcomings and lack of knowledge about ululation made them feel inadequate as sources. It was noted that they wanted to get the interviewer's opinions or experiences on particular questions before they respond. Tape recordings of questions were made to reduce interviewer's bias

Responses from interviews and questionnaires are also marred by a subjective component in the sense that our beliefs, motives, attitudes, values and ideas can never be prevented from impinging on ones observations. The reason being that we are unaware of important aspects of our lives because these aspects are socially rooted and taken for granted and implicit. What people need is a serious relationship between their ideas and the social structure at a particular time and place. A stark example of how a subjective component impinges on our observation is portrayed in question 1.6 in the questionnaire.

It is clear that some people know ululation, they know that women carry objects during ululation. They can enumerate some of them but they do not know their significance. This shortcoming is blatant among black people of the post-Shakan period, that is, the period which was menaced by missionaries telling African people that what is traditional and folklorish is ungodly. To quote the Roman Catholic dogma, "extra ecclesiam nulla salus" that is

("outside the church no salvation"), this idea is in place even today. These ideas were in fashion then and they eroded African values that were then excluded from the church beliefs. Ululation is one of the black values that were eroded in the sense of exclusion from church.

It is portrayed in the book *Noma Nini* by Vilakazi, (1972:457) which shows a spontaneous reaction by women who responded to MaNxaba's (or character) demand for ululation in church. Ululation was restricted in church by christian dogma because it was looked upon as chaotic. The reason being the lack of a subjective component on the part of the white priests who also had a destructive component on motives, values, ideas and attitudes of the black people. The broom which is one of the objects which is carried by ululators has deep seated values which are both medicinal as well as customary, that will be elaborated in Chapter 5. The same applies for the plant of gourd and the branches of trees.

Ululation is spontaneous in nature. When women attend a ceremony they do not think about ululation, they do not plan to ululate. It comes on its own accord at its own time. It is only women in the household where the occasion is taking place who carry special objects because they want to send a special message to the bride. Even then they do not plan when to start. For example we get a woman carrying a primus stove, pumping it, ululating and strutting to the four corners of the yard uttering ululation tags which are a message to the bride concerning how she is expected to behave in her new home. .

As we stated in the definition that ululation is an expression of joy, who is happy to see a witch. In this case women hold a very serious position of indicating that a person is or is not a witch to the community through ululation. A traditional doctor or *inyanga*, herbalist or diviner is a person who practices as a doctor, who uses charms. (Doke & Vilakazi, 1972:620). A witchdoctor is a person who practices witchcraft (*umthakathi*) (Doke & Vilakazi, 1972:781). According to Msimang, (1975:303) the word *inyanga* is polysemic in the sense that the relevant meaning relies on the context in which the word is used.



Inyanga can be used to refer to a heavenly body or a natural satellite of the earth that shines in the sky at night and looks bright because it reflects the sun's light. *Inyanga isindilingene* > It is full moon. Again *inyanga* can refer to an expert or one skilled in a particular profession or any form of work like

(inyanga yengoma) > composer of songs

(inyanga yensimbi) > skilled metal worker

(inyanga yezinwele) > *hairdresser*

It can also be used in reference to calendar months.

(ukuhlala izinyanga ezintathu) > to stay for three months

(izikole zizovula ngoNtulikazi ebusika) > in winter schools will open in July.

It is very difficult to declare a person a witchdoctor. What happens is that a person who helps people when they suffer from all forms of diseases (*ukwelapha*), one who helps families when they need something to protect themselves against evil spirits and wild animals (*ukuvala noma ukuqinisa umuzi*). To strengthen with medicinal charm. One who practices as a doctor openly is a traditional doctor. The traditional doctor heals people but a witchdoctor bewitches them. There is a *sangoma* and an *inyanga*. A *sangoma* is consulted for purposes of divining the evil spirits that has shown itself. *Sangomas* diagnose the disease (*Isangoma siyabhula*), and then refer the patient to a traditional doctor. The traditional doctor will doctor the patient by making use of traditional medicine (*amakhubalo*). Strengthen home from invasion by unwanted evil forces. Protect the family as well as the homestead from witches who perform conjuring tricks (*abalumbi*). Msimang, (1975:303) confirms this when he says:

Kukhona lezo eziphatha amakhubalo .....

Kukhona olunye uhlobo olugabe ngokubhula lubone imbangela yokubhula.

(Some make use of traditional medicine. There is another kind that concerns itself with divining and get the root cause of the disease.)

Before we talk about the hiring of ululators, it is imperative to explain the word root-cause. Root-cause is a self made word to try and explain what causes ululators to ululate. Root means a part of a plant that grows down into the soil in search of food and water. (Barnhart, 1992:1810). Cause means a reason or occasion for action (Branford, 1993:141). Root-cause therefore has depth in the sense that development from the root cannot be accounted for by humans because it does not involve human reasoning. To use the word cause or motive for an ululator to ululate is weak. 'Cause' and 'motive' can be used to explain anything but ululation is related to a spirited kind of dance called *isisusa* in Zulu. This dance is performed at wedding ceremonies accompanied by clapping of hands. The clapping of hands is the root-cause of the dance. There is no clapping of hands before an ululator ululates but there is something that drives her to ululate. It is that abstract and unknown drive which forces her to ululate which is the root-cause that belongs to another world.

According to 1.13 we agreed that women are hired to ululate, this hiring is not based on professionalism but they are given an agreed upon amount by a person who likes ululation but cannot ululate. Sometimes a person may be holding a ceremony with depth in the sense that he needs the attention of the ancestors. Ululation at its best is a sealing factor in that case.

Doke & Vilakazi, (1972:730) *umshado* is to undergo Christian marriage where a couple marries by civil rites as distinct from native custom. He refers to *umgcagco* as a wedding ceremony. *Udwendwe* is a bridal party or company conveying the bride to her wedding. This is a very long and serious ceremony. In every move it is cemented by ululation.

Women ululate in sympathy of the girl who is leaving the most precious and enjoyable stage of being a girl to a married woman.

*Ukukhuleka* (to pray).

Women ululate in low tones in accordance with the prayer. They ululate in support of the prayer by elderly men. This is beautifully portrayed by women at Shembe celebrations where they show a special kind of ululation such as:

Yehhehhe! uyingcwele!

(Hehe! Hehe! Thou art holy!)

Women ululate as an expression of joy for the bride's family, because their daughter has been chosen in the mist of rivals. They adjourn to the cattle kraal where the prayer continues. There is no ululation during prayers in respect of ancestors. They sing the anthem of the family. When the whole family is in the cattle kraal they dance and women ululate in appreciation. After the dance by the bridegroom's party elders from this party propitiate ancestors:

Kukhulunywe nabakhulu izinyandezulu zomuzi.

Bakikizele omama bekikizelela phansi.

(Msimang, 1975:287)

They respect and support the groom's elders when they introduce the bride to the elders of the family.

#### 4.8 Optional setting for ululation

The normal settings for ululation need no explanation but the settings that are an exception to the rule or which are optional or abnormal to be insensitive, settings for ululation need to be explained or accompanied by a story for purposes of explanation.

- (a) abnormal settings
- (b) for purposes of motivation
- (c) birth of a baby
- (d) ululation at the graves of fallen soldiers
- (e) appreciation of a present or a good deed

Men do not have the spontaneity which women possess. Men need to be spurred on by something before they respond to any stimuli. In cultural issues

women are the stimuli for men. Men need women to support them when they propitiate ancestors and in almost everything they do. There are many instances where men are inspired by ululation to perform better than usual.

During Zulu dance men are motivated by the clapping of hands and drums to dance better than without motivation. Once women come in and ululate *kusiphuka izidindi* (clump of roots are uprooted by feet of dancing men.) This expression shows the intensity and enthusiasm that is shown by men in the presence of ululators. Secondly, men will never propitiate ancestors in the absence of women. They start at a very low gear, talking but the moment women start ululating he will leap like a tiger and start fighting an imaginary enemy. Ululation brings out the animal part in man.

Men are people and people unlike water do not all flow in the same direction. Yes there are a few men who do not appreciate ululation for reasons best known to them but they know ululation. From my observation during my research men who did not like ululation looked like people who have serious psychological problems. One was of the opinion that ululation is embarrassing if it occurs in the midst of other races. Ululation belonged to the primitive people. There is no need for us to ululate these days because we no longer need ancestors. Little education was given to him on the spot but resented it claiming to be a pure Christian. These are the people who are an embarrassment to Christians.

Women ululate but they have not realised that there is more than one type of ululation. This research has made many women to have a different outlook at ululation. Many people have grown to listen to ululators and they end up talking seriously about ululation. Ululation tends to be more interesting because there are no resources in the library but the people, women especially tend to be reliable sources because they are the ululators.

There is a relationship between folklore and ululation because incense is burned in a special place *umsamo*. There is an announcement to the unseen about what is going to happen. During the burning of incense smoke preceeds

speech whereas in ululation, sound preceeds speech in the form of ululation tags and the propitiation of ancestors. Incense burns and rises roof high because it is burnt inside the hut or house and the smell can be sensed far and wide. Ululation on the other hand the sound rises sky high and is heard very far. This is confirmed by Krige when he says the noise is so great that it may be heard within the radius of several miles (Krige, 1960:140). Incense and ululation are both used before talking to ancestors which means there is something smoky (confusing or hidden issue) about them. There is literature on incense but none on ululation.

#### 4.9 Conclusion

In depth knowledge on ululation was avoided by many people instead they would rather give situations where ululation takes place. Academics like Dr Donda, Prof. Nxumalo and Dr Nene are the only people who delved deep into the structure of ululation. Although the male factor inhibited them in their understanding, they were able to realise that women who have given birth produce the soundest and genuine ululation ever which is mostly the Shriek sound. This could be based on the idea that the seat of ululation is the uterus. One of the most common ululation tags is:

‘Uyadela wena mfazi ongazalanga’

(Happy is the woman who did not give birth)

They say so because whenever they see an object for ululation they suffer from the after pains of labour. Screaming on top of their voices relieves them from that pain. The pain which is only understood and shared by women. This is quite an interesting observation. It becomes more interesting when female researchers realised some of these women behaviours in the field. The majority of ululators believe that excitement spurs ululation. In this case the origin of ululation could be Religious celebrations, ceremonies, rituals and festivals. What causes the ululator to ululate could be any object in the area of the origin of ululation as shown in the Ex Factor Experiment.

Talking to respondents about ululation was very fruitful because a lot of unknown information came to the fore especially among the Abakhwanazi women who belong to Shembe denomination. New and unknown situations for ululation came to the fore. Ululation is excitement made strange because it does not fall under the normal excitement that is expressed as *ncinci* as in hooray in English. Strange performances that are eye catching and grandiose remove ululation from ordinary performance by excited people to the realm of the unknown. This is one of the reasons why ululators and people in communities cannot explain this intricate phenomenon.

This chapter deals basically with responses from the questionnaire that were rather intriguing in the sense that responses differed. Looking at the number of the same responses and ideas from reliable elderly people, the analysis was allowed to take the present direction pending the interpretations and findings as the thesis progresses.

The origin of ululation is a mystery to most respondents but the reason for ululation is universally common amongst all of them with the exception of one lady from Gamalakhe who sounded emotionally disturbed. The majority of women and men showed that ululation occupy a very important part in the hearts of the Zulu people.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **INTERPRETATION AND FINDINGS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

After the analysis of data the researcher ended up with speculations and generalizations. Many complicated areas of ululation that need further attention were looked into like the origin of ululation. Generalizations give us the impression that ululation can be categorized into the following parts in an effort to come up with its origin. The origin of ululation is a very complicated issue. Research has provided many locales for ululation like,

#### **5.1 The assumed locale for ululation**

##### **5.1.1 The brain**

The closest origin so far is the brain because we believe that it is responsible for our actions. When we think of the brainpower that is the intellectual power considered as a force. This is the force that we refer to in an effort to explain the root-cause. It begins when the woman sees the bride and the picture is sent to the central nervous system where interpretation of the sent messages take place. The central nervous system sends impulses to the relevant organs of speech. In this case which is the throat and the relevant sound is produced just like it happens during the production of speech sounds.

##### **5.1.2 The larynx**

The larynx is the origin for explosive sounds. Ululation, that is the shriek sound is the utopia of explosion in sounds. Looking at the place of articulation and manner of articulation when women ululate they keep the neck straight to show that the larynx is involved in the production of this sound. The “ki” sound in the core cliché [ki’] [ki’] [ki’] is a velar explosive sound. All explosive sounds originate in the larynx and they can be articulated

wherever. It can therefore be accepted that ululation originates in the larynx, as the result of the laryngeal air stream mechanism.

### 5.1.3 Uterus

Both men and women get the soul from the uterus. This soul identifies a person's nationality. A nation grows in a specific culture that brings it together or unite it. This soul is latent and in very small amounts in men but very active and in abundance in females. It could be accepted as true that females get a reasonable amount of soul as compared to men because their soul is going to be passed on to their children as they give birth. It is this soul which causes a woman to ululate during religious festivities. It is the attraction between the soul in the womb and the soul in the air which could be ancestors or spirits who are also happy about what is happening that sparks ululation. The latent soul in men feels the need for ululation. This is the reason why men complain and demand ululation when it is ignored by women. This therefore could be one of the reasons that men do not ululate. On the whole it could be accredited that ululation originates in the womb. In actual fact it is the soul in the womb and the soul in religious festivities = ululation.

Since ululation is abstract, one cannot point a finger at the place where it originates but the assumption around the origin of ululation is satisfactory to believe that one of them is the place of origin for ululation. The bible says a Hebrew word for soul (Nephesh) is translated as meaning of life in the Old Testament (Gen.:30) (Ex.4:19) (Esther 7:7) in the new Testament the only word referred to as soul in the New Testament is Psuche. Its translation in Greek is Nephesh. Nephesh means a living being (Rev.8.9; Acts 20:10). So every living being has a soul because it has life. This confirms that both men and women have a soul.

Hebrew	Greek
hephesh	nephesh
soul	soul
life	life



This could be the reason why men and women are sensitive to the lack of ululation during ritual ceremonies.

## 5.2 **Religious ceremonies**

The role of ululation among religious ceremonies is very interesting. According to African belief a religion can refer to one's centre, one's past, one's culture and one's religious tradition. This involves a human being as a whole including his environment and his identity. African religion is one of the toughest religions known to history. African religion has traded blows with powerful and resilient religions like Christianity and Islam but survived with its centre.

Ululation as a strong part of African religion displays a very flexible but mulish character. As stated earlier on that ululation is disregarded by some Africans who have lost their centre, ululation was stamped out at some stage in churches and social gatherings as being chaotic. Ululation being more than the centre of African religious ceremonies could not be rooted out of a black woman. I say ululation is more than a centre because it is neither environmentally based nor time based but it is something that is embedded in a woman's woman. To stamp out ululation one must kill all African women. What a genocide? Ululation is one of the pillars of African religion that contributes its strength against other religions.

## 5.3 **First black woman**

Concerning the first black woman who is traced back to Egypt, in as much as we cannot guarantee that she ululated, religious festivities existed then. She was a woman, she had all the necessary apparatus for ululation, in that case we have no grounds to refute that she did not ululate and therefore the origin for ululation.

#### 5.4 The mystery of soul and ululation

Womb – is a uterus of a woman. In the uterus there is a placenta which provides food and oxygen to the baby. When a person runs short of oxygen death occurs. The placenta has oxygen therefore it has life. So every living being starting from the smallest animal on land or sea is a living soul because it has life King James Version. (1976:177). Confirms that the placenta in the woman's womb is the second soul. When the child is born it is imperative that the placenta is removed with the child, if it is forgotten inside the womb the mother dies. Will it be wrong to say the womb becomes the guardian angel of the child in its new life? This sounds like a mystery. A mystery compares with the soul and ululation in the sense that the Bible looks at the mystery as the secret that separated one religion from another and found outward expression in the rites and ceremonies. In the New Testament the word 'mystery' denotes a secret hidden from the world until the appointed time (Romans, 16:25):

According to the Revelations of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began.

(Mark 4:1)

refers to mystery as something known to God which is not known to men until God chooses to reveal it. The same applies to the soul and ululation. What causes a woman to ululate is best left to mystery and the third coming of God where we can get answers to these burning questions. The placenta differentiates man from woman in the sense that they have the second soul which man do not have. It is this placenta which gives them the power to ululate when they see anything good which is done by people hence they are the mothers of the nation. Khumalo, (1998:252) uses a very appropriate word to describe mothers when he refers to them as *izinzalabantu*. They give birth to people. Each and every child comes out with its own placenta and no scientific theory can explain this.

## 5.5 Relationship between ululation and ancestors

Men are known to represent ancestors in a homestead. As stated earlier on that ancestors follow women because wherever there is a woman there is food in a ceremony. When women ululate men jump up and propitiate the ancestors. In this case ululation turns to be a “wake up call” for ancestors in the world of the living just as the cock provides a “wake up call” for humans.

Many responses about the definition of ululation have been received from questionnaires and lexicographers like (Doke and Vilakazi, 1972:438) but the most outstanding definition is that by Doke and Vilakazi, (1972) stating that ululation is a thrilling sound or a spontaneous sound. To me this definition is outstanding because the utterance of this sound thrills anybody around, when the ululator ululates excitement and happiness is written all over. According to World Book a thrilling sound refers to wild obsolete or piercing sounds. Ululation may sound obsolete and piercing but that is exactly what ticks in the nerves of blacks. The same applies for ululation especially because people do not ululate for one thing.

Ululation is a wild sound that is no longer heard anywhere but in the setting for ululation be it archaic or modern. The severity of the sharpness of the sound is referred to as piercing. This must be the worst sound one can think of but strange enough it is the most loved sound by both young and old Africans. Krige, (1949:140) referred to this sound as a yelling sound which shows that it irritated him because he belongs to a different culture. Disregard for ululation in times of its need evokes an urgent demand by males about its absence. This shows its importance in its field or territory. Thrilling and spontaneous sounds are complimentary in the sense that the spontaneity should shock the listener and the thrill should devastate the listener, on the contrary the listener is either urged on in what he is doing or it becomes contagious in the sense that the next person is instigated to ululate too. It is this kind of response from the listener and the spontaneity of the ululator which makes ululation intricate.

It is believed that ululation is accompanied by the living dead (*abaphansi*). Ululation therefore has the power to arouse the living dead through its sounds which belong to antiquity and yet are highly acceptable to living black Africans. Antiquity is the world of the unknown to the living. Ululation therefore belongs to the world of the unknown it cannot be touched but it can be heard. Leedy, (1992) says no one has ever glimpsed ultimate truth. Likewise no one has glimpsed the spontaneity in the sound which is produced by ululation. It would therefore appear that ululation is a spontaneous as well as a thinking sound. It is a thinking sound in the sense that women do not ululate from the blue but there must be a reason for them to ululate.

The idea that ululation is produced by women that are very happy about what is happening indicates reasoning. During a wedding ceremony and all other ceremonies and parties that are related to a wedding, women are very happy especially relatives because the family is going to grow; they are going to get new relatives. Some are going to get money from (*lobola*.) They are going to get sinew (*usinga*) from the cows for sewing (Msimang, 1975:14). It works in the sewing of traditional skirt (*izidwaba*); in stitching beads together and the sewing of a girl's frontal covering formed of an oblong patch of beadwork (*isigege*). They are also going to get skin blankets (*isiphuku*) cow fat which is going to be used in the making of *inhloko* and buttock skin covering (*ibheshu*) which is worn by men and (*umutsha*). The front part of (*ibheshu*) buttock skin covering. All these examples are enclosed in the medulla oblongata of the ululator.

Sometimes women ululate accompanying their husbands to war. In this case they are being supportive. Further they ululate strongly motivating them to go and fight for what they believe is good for all of them. Recently on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August 2001 women at Weenen accompanied men who went to lodge a complaint about their land at the Magistrate Court. The strength of ululation and the determination of men to get their land back was grandiose. In this case ululation is used as a motivating factor.

Ululation has a very serious effect on men especially if it is the man's wife who is ululating. When the wife ululates, the husband jumps into the open space which is prepared for dancing (*isigcawu*). He propitiates ancestors and outshines everybody because of the motivating factor in ululation. A true story is told which took place at Umlazi during the night. *Tsotsis* ambushed a husband and wife who were from work on the pay day. The husband had the money. On realising that it was Friday and the end of the month, the husband decided to give money to his wife so that she can hide it in her brazier. *Tsotsi* came, they wanted to kill the husband because they thought he had the money. The wife told her husband to run away saying "*Qaqa baba*". As the husband ran for his life the wife ululated, the man easily outran the *tsotsis* who followed him like mad dogs hounding a hare. The wife took the other way home and arrived safely with the money.

Further ululation is a unifying factor among relatives and neighbours. Nobody is asked, invited or told to ululate but it comes spontaneously among women and they find themselves in the centre of the ceremony ululating together and enjoying it.

## 5.6 Symbolism in Objects Carried by Ululators

### 5.6.1 *Uselwa* (Plant of gourd)

This is one of the objects which are carried by the ululators during ululation. (*Uselwa*) is the fruit of the calabash, it is eaten as a vegetable. The dry shells that cover the fruit are used as a container for water, milk, ladle and many other things which need a container in the household. (*Uselwa*) is a very significant part of the celebration of the first fruits (*Umkhosi (wokweshwama)*). The *uselwa* which is used by the ululators is the calabash which is not wild. The wild plant of gourd is usually found next to the sea. It is eaten by pythons. For human consumption it has to be cooked by chiefs otherwise it does not get cooked. It should never be used by ordinary people otherwise they droop or become weak (Msimang, 1975:349):

Kuthiwa endlini yomuntukazana alungeni  
uselwa, uma lungenile abakulowo muzi  
bayafeketha.

(It is assumed that when used in the household  
of an ordinary man (plant of gourd) men in that  
household get weak or die).

The calabash we are dealing with in this thesis is one used by the ululators. It is sometimes called *isendelenja* (dog's testicle). The general interpretation of the use of the calabash as one of the objects which are used during ululation is that it has seeds. Seeds have something to do with regeneration. The bride is therefore entreated to produce as many children as possible.

Referring to the word *isendelenja*, *isende* means testicles. The testicles are two male reproductive glands. They hang behind the penis in a sack called the scrotum. Their main function is to produce sperms and to secrete male sex hormones particularly testosterone. Sperms are known to unite with an egg during fertilization resulting in reproduction. The calabash usually looks like the testicles but now it is used to represent the calabash and their function is the same, that is to cover seeds which are responsible for regeneration. The relationship of the sperm to the ancestors is based on that a sperm moves to the ovary and they both end in the uterus where there is a soul. The relationship between the calabash and the ancestors is that during ululation ancestors are around. Anything that was once blown by wind in its life has a soul that is, during its growth the calabash plant was blown by wind and therefore it has a soul. The soul in the air and the soul from the calabash attract each other and follow the ululators who give them direction to where things are happening. This is confirmed by the Bible, (King James Version, St John 3:8) when he says:

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and though hearest  
the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh  
and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the  
spirit.

St John was trying to tell us that as the wind blows wherever it pleases or wants, there is a mysterious sound whose beginning or ending cannot be deciphered. The same applies to all of us who are born of the spirit. The sound in the air and the ululation sound readily come together and form unformidable power which repel evil. "The wind bloweth where it listeth." Listeth is the archaic form of English. This shows that as far back as medieval times they were also aware of this wind and the power of this wind. This is the wind which drives waves and storms at sea. The wind that racks ships and steamers, that kills and saves sailors and people. The wind that drove wild fires raging and devouring anything it came across. The wind that blow people's roofs and break trees which are used as barriers against strong winds. It ends up as the spiritual against the physical power. The strength and power of these winds can neither be detected by men nor his man made instruments. The power of this wind can clear devil on the way as well as people with evil intentions. It can move stationary rocks which may end up closing roads.

From the above observations one can deduce that there is external power with concrete results. There is also internal power that is abstract in nature whose results are strange. Ululation is conceived internally and when it comes out spontaneously it becomes a surprise to viewers. "And so is man that is born of a spirit." This goes to show that man himself also has power to effect changes like the wind because he is born of a spirit. Enumeration of man's power will be endless because this world is what it is because of the power of man. The observable development of men from fossils into the present day it is because of the power of the spirit in men. Internally this power is referred to as the spirit or soul but externally it is called wind.

### 5.6.2 Broom

The broom, basically is used to sweep the floors, roofs and the yard depending on the type of broom. The broom that is used by seasoned ululators is the short handled broom. This broom is used for sweeping the floors. It is believed that when a woman sweeps she bends forward like a woman in an avoidance situation (*ukuhlonipha* custom). By so doing she respects her

ancestors (*abaphansi*) who are in the house. The broom is in touch with ancestors in its function in the household every day.

As a custom the broom is also used to beat the initial young girls breasts (*izilinga*) (Msimang, 1975:174) by the grandmother in the family. It is imperative to explain *izilinga* for purposes of linkage. *Izilinga* are the initial empty breasts of a young girl. They are called *amawuwa* around Nongoma areas. They are named after a barren maize corb or an unfertile egg. It is known that the initial breast of a young girl will not develop into a useful breast. The second set of breasts which will be productive comes after the initial set of breasts. The power of the broom comes into play when it is used to brush off the initial breast by the grandmother of the child. Msimang (1975), refers to these girl's breast, after ten years a young girl begins to show these breasts. At this point the young girl goes about naked. It is then that her grandmother will give a soft blow to her young girl's breast with a short handed broom and say;

Kuyini lokhu osekuphuma izilinga kungakabi lutho.

(Look who is developing breasts at such a tender stage).

The grandmother is very happy to realise that her granddaughter is growing. To show her happiness immediately thereafter, the elders will agree that the young girl is growing and she must wear *umutsha* (man or girl's loin covering of skin or fibre) at this stage *umutsha* is made out of the fruits of *umsilinga* tree. The fruits are joined together with *usinga* (a thread which is made out of cartilage which is pulled along the vertebral column.) The cotton like thread is stronger than the western ropes and cotton. The young girl in question makes a one layer girdle out of the fruit of *umsilinga* tree. The layers of the girdle grow with age until the girl gets married. Today young girls use beads instead of the old fashion girdle with the exception of those who have no access to beads or who cannot afford them.

During ululation the broom is used to clear the way of any possible demons which may harm anybody in the family so that peace prevails in that occasion.



The broom has power, when men propitiate ancestors it gives them more power to excel in what they are doing. There are many instances where the broom shows its power in the household.

Further ululators use a broom which is made from the palm tree when the bride is marrying the youngest brother. The youngest brother does not leave the household. He stays with his wife at home and look after his parents. This bride is expected to shield the family matters and the family like a palm tree does to its stem. Palm tree leaves as we saw when Jesus entered Jerusalem he was welcomed with palm branches. A leaf of a palm tree symbolises peace and victory (John, 12:13) (Rev 7:9). The bride is therefore expected to be victorious in everything she does and bring peace to the homestead.

The wild gourd is popular because it is a receptacle for many seeds. The calabash that is carried by ululators when ululating is dried and contains dry seeds. According to Zulu culture it symbolises fertility (uselwa). When ululators carrying the plant of gourd during ululation they indicate to the bride that she is expected to produce as many children as possible.

The interpretation of the symbolism of the branches of trees is a bit controversial. Some people believe that the branches of trees which are carried by ululators mean that the bride is expected to sweep the yard when she settles in her new home. Others believe that the branches of trees mean that she is expected to form a new branch in the family tree by giving birth to many children. After all these beliefs are regional.

Reverend Koka in the T.V. programme called Issues of Faith on the 21-10-2001 stated that branches of trees mean that they must both help each other to build a house which is going to be their home. Long ago branches of trees were used to build the house. Branches of trees are still noted in rural areas especially in the pockets of the rural South Africa. In urban areas branches of trees are substituted by flowers. Flowers are soft and delicate. They have a taming effect on wild and violent people. The flowers are used these days to soften people who attend gatherings with evil intentions. A flower is that part

of a plant that produces seeds. Flowers like the branches of trees carry the same idea of regeneration. In antiquity flowers were used or mentioned in Zulu culture by suitors. Flowers were used to describe the beauty of a girl as in *uqhakaze njengembali ebusika* (she blooms like a flower in winter). In winter most of the plants are lifeless because they have no leaves. Her beauty outshines everything around her as if she is the only one alive. Flowers represent beauty. Suitors want a beautiful woman with the idea of regeneration in mind that is, she will beget beautiful children. That idea prevails even today. Flowers which women carry are believed to have a soul. Flower like carnations. The soul in the flowers has the power to remove invisible things in the minds as well as in the air that may cause people to fight and thus disrupt the ceremony.

In some families their expectations from the new bride are portrayed by ululators when they ululate. All the objects they carry have a meaning. In one instance at Port Shepstone women carried unusual objects when they ululated. One woman carried a shield and a stick, her ululation tags were 'nansi impi; nansi impi' (here is war; here is war). The mother-in-law did not like this bride. The bride was aware of her ill fate but she agreed to marry her son anyway. The mother-in-law carried the shield because she wanted to tell the spectators that she has to protect herself from imminent war with her bride. The bride did not mention anything in the line of anger but the mother in law, knowing that she erred is spilling it out in front of everybody, may be in fear. The stick was a symbol of war. The mother-in-law was trying to convey to her bride that she is going to be beaten at some stage.

Some carry a hoe to show that the bride is expected to plough. Some carry a primus stove and it depends on what they do with it which shows exactly what they expect their bride to cook and how.

### **5.6.3 The use of a whistle as a motivating factor**

Many people are of the opinion that a whistle can substitute ululation. A whistle can be used when women dance in order to add flavour to their

performance. Performance can continue without a whistle where as ululation is demanded during cultural performances. It becomes obvious by its absence and resultantly its immediate performance is demanded by males.

### 5.7 The ululation tags

Some of the ululation tags are said in excitement and they have no specific meaning like ki ki ki! Kuhle kwethu! Which means we are happy at home. It is obvious that everybody is happy at home when there is a wedding ceremony.

In earnestness ululation tags are words with an emotive value. Usually ululators express their innermost feelings about the bride. Some are the mouth piece of the family, to the grooms party or to the bridal party. Words that are usually expressed by the ululator have a tendency to arouse emotion or inspiration to the listener. His expressions may either be jovial, annoying or amazing. Ululation tags may be categorised as follows.

Annoying tags:

Cothozisisa makoti ngoba bazokwelama kusasa.

(Better move majestically because sooner or later  
your husband is going to get married again )

Hhawu ! noTozi uzoshada.

(Wow !, even Tozi is going to get married.)  
This expression is usually said when the bride is ugly.

### 5.8 Ululation and war

Ululation is generally known to occur as an expression of joy and excitement. Sometimes ululation occurs during dangerous situations like when men go to war or under serious confrontations between races like the case at Weenen. In that case ululation is used as a motivating factor. Ululation can motivate an individual as well as the whole regiment at once. In Ghana one woman used

to ululate for the whole nation. This shows the power of ululation. It is this power which makes men forget themselves and look at the common goal. The intricacy of this power is expressed in the book of John chapter 13 when he says anything that is blown by wind has God given power. The combination of the sound by ululators, the objects that are carried by ululators, the traditional weapons that they wave as they move along all have the power of the ancestors.

## **5.9 Ululation and African Renaissance**

The sound of ululation halts anybody into thinking that a festivity is taking place nearby. People who are not sensitive to ululation are the highly urbanised people. Some people for some strange reason do not want to be what they are. They loathe anything that associate them with African. Sometimes they are referred to as Coconuts. They have a black exterior and a white interior. In America they are referred to as Oreos that is associated with oreo biscuits. This is a disease or problem that exist all over the world.

As stated before ululation is one of the customs that withstood the test of time. All generations to this day know ululation. The majority of black Africans like ululation. This research has proved that Renaissance wants customs that are of value to be revisited in an effort to find out their impact and need in the present society.

## **5.10 Impact of ululation among the Zulus**

The theme of ululation is what makes ululation tick among males and females. Males demand ululation from women when the situation demands ululation. Among females, what makes females to forget themselves and shout on top of their voices to express joy or to motivate their men is intriguing. What kind of joy is this that makes people scream. What kind of motivation is this that is achieved through a loud shriek sound. Why males do not ululate when they see the need arising instead of calling women to ululate for them? It is obvious that ululation is central among males and females. What is common among

males and females is that they were both born by a woman. They obtained their source of life which is a soul from one place that is a womb and their nourishment and oxygen from the placenta. They both have one soul that is obtainable from the womb. When the mother gives birth she does not cry but she screams on top of her voice. This scream is a combination of happiness and pains.

When the child is born the mother observes her child's developments that bring great pleasure to the mother. These developments and pleasure are recorded in the mother's heart and soul. The mother and father share pleasure of observing the child's developments. When the girl or boy succeeds in life, it could be marriage or a graduation ceremony. When women ululate during the occasion they internalise what the mother of the bride or groom or graduate went through while helping her child to reach her success.

More often than not the ululators who take the front line in ululation are those women who are closest to the mother or child. They express extreme happiness after overcoming unbelievable hurdles in the child's life. Once that feeling is over women stop ululating. That is why ululation is ephemeral in nature. It is because it is in line with a feeling. When a person feel like drinking water, once that feeling has been met and it is over, so is ululation. The same applies when a woman is giving birth when the actual delivery comes, a woman screams on top of her voice, when the baby is out she will sleep like a log because the delivery process is over.

If males and females share a soul which is obtainable from the mothers womb, the centrality of ululation among men and women emanate from this sharing of a soul. Why is ululation not practiced by other nationalities. Is it because they do not have a soul? It is because they express joy and excitement differently. Whites clap hands when they are happy. The smallness and the bigness of the applause indicates the acceptability and the unacceptability of whatever.

Ululation is a custom whose roots are embedded in cultural practices. Ululation is in line with their way of life and especially how they celebrate their festivities and success. As stated earlier on an Arab woman in Palestine was seen ululating for the same reason as black African women. Other nations have their way of expressing the presence of the soul from the womb in their cultural dances that are practiced and known by both men and women and practices that are shared by all people.

Folk dancing being the traditional form of a social dancing of a particular nation or ethnic group is also a way of expressing their unity, feelings of pleasure or helplessness. It is also passed down from generation to generation as stated in Darwin's theory of heredity. This dance becomes spontaneous in the sense that it is aroused by a common root-cause that could be a song. A person may be anywhere in the world but the mere sound of his traditional song will cause him to jump spontaneously to his feet. The same thing applies with ululation. Black South African women shocked Americans at a wedding ceremony in the Anglican church in America (1999) when they bursted in ululation when their daughter got married to another black South African though he is an American now. What aroused them to ululate was the pleasure that she is getting married, secondly because she married another Zulu person.

At this point it can be accepted that what connects or binds males and females around ululation is the soul that is obtainable in the womb only. The uniformity in ululation is shaped by their culture through the process of enculturation.

Another question arises as to what kind of motivation is achieved through a loud shriek sound? We have agreed that ululation is a factor in motivating men to better their performance in dancing and in war. By definition motivation means the act or process of furnishing with an incentive or inducement to action. World Book Dictionary, Barnhart and Barnhart, (1991:1100). In this case ululation is an incentive to action. An incentive is something that urges a person. Can ululation urge a white person on? No,

ululation can only urge on a person with a kind of soul that is based on the same cultural motivation or background. A white man with the same African background, that is, who actually grew up with black people and shared their Africanness in all respects can be motivated by ululation.

Through my personal experience there are many white people who are referred to as "black person trapped in a white skin." It will be possible because they love and adore black culture and they behave like blacks because a white person is also a human being with a soul. Many references have been made to the soul and it is proper to define it at this stage. According to World Book Dictionary, Barnhart et al. (1991:1100) the soul is that part of the human being that think, feels and makes the body act.

As indicated earlier on that ululation has never been attempted before, this study is more of an exploration of a relatively unknown research area. Ululation being a new area of research has one of its aims as to gain new insights into the phenomenon. After conducting research in various places one noted that ululation has no boundaries. There are known settings for ululation that have been indicated in Chapter 3. Sometimes we find that people ululate in strange settings like people ululating when the *sangoma* is diagnosing a disease (*ukubhula isifo*). Under such situations we know the general response which is "*siyavuma*" or "we agree" or "*makhosi*" which refers to the dead. All the people who witnessed the short programme called "Issues of faith" at 6 p.m. SABC were surprised by a woman who ululated out of the blue. Everybody did not understand the significance of ululation at that point. Speculations are that may be she has been complaining about somebody's behaviour in the household. The *sangoma* may have indicated or said the same thing. She could not control herself but ululated out of joy that her speculations about the sorcerer may be true. Ululation when a child is born is not common but it happens when a couple has stayed for five or ten years without a child. The birth of a child after that dry period will call for ululation from that family especially the mother of the bride.

Again an undertaking of a preliminary investigation before more structured studies of the phenomenon shows many things. From my observation on this study every aspect of ululation is a root-cause of something totally new if not strange. Another topic that came to my mind during this study is “ululation and feminism.” Ululation in Zulu literature.” These are the areas that need academic research.

The explication of central concepts that are related to ululation which are only known by the custodians of this custom also need attention. What is interesting with this custom is that the majority of the people love ululation but they do not understand the nuances of ululation. They only know that ululation is an expression of joy by women who are excited over something. People use ululation everyday but there is no proverb or idiom or saying which involves ululation. There is only one saying of disapproval that is used when a woman has a problem with ululating and they would say:

Wakikiliga njengeqhude

meaning, ‘You are crowing like a cock’ in an effort to ululate. Earlier on we indicated the relationship between ululation and the crowing of a cock where it was explained in detail in Chapter 3. Concerning the constructs in ululation it is common knowledge that everybody thinks ululation refers to ki ki ki! sound.

Research has proved that there are four sounds that strongly have something to do with ululation. The theoretical frame work that was employed shows that a lot more than meets the eye is involved in ululation in the form of objects, the dance, the language used and the temporary trance in which the woman finds herself.

After looking at ululation per se the priorities for future research on this subject will be determined. New hypotheses about this phenomenon may be developed.



In my effort to interpret the data collected of in - depth interviews which were used to fulfil the need to follow an open and flexible research strategy regarding this complex study of ululation. My conclusions were clouded with shades of mystery. Ululation gave me the impression that it is a mysterious phenomenon that needs a joint effort of an ululator, phonologist gynaecologist, psychologist, psychiatrist doctor, a priest, and a witch doctor in an effort to handle this problem. A question as to why women ululate and not men, was very interesting to discuss especially with men who are sexists.

What made it more interesting is that when men see a chance or a need to ululate they call for women saying "*abasekho yini omama?*" (Don't we have women anymore) "*Yini umona bomama anikikizi ngani?*" (Mothers are you jealous, why don't you ululate? This kind of question demands a certain level of intelligence on the part of a mother. Answers like, naturally it is women who ululate and not men, are common. It was very interesting to note that Ndebele men ululate in the absence of women. It was stated that Ndebele men are opportunists even the type of problems they have as a province show that they are opportunists. The first MP to be expelled from parliament was from Mpumalanga.

From my discussions with men and women who are custodians of this custom it was gathered that women are the providers of food, liquor (*utshwala besiZulu*) which is a prerequisite where ancestors are involved. When women ululate they invite ancestors to come and enjoy with everybody because everything is available. Women do not ululate until they see the root-cause or object for ululation as stated in chapter three. They invite ancestors for something they see because they wouldn't dare invite them without a reason. Ancestors as well follow women who ululate because they know that where there is a woman, there is food. Today we find working women who do not mind preparing food for their families. What they loathe is to be yoked to the kitchen even if they are not up to cooking with a sound reason.

When it comes to ancestors it is not a daily issue that is repeated thrice or four times in some families a day. During ceremonies all women folk in that

homestead help in preparing food. It is these women who take the leading role in ululation because they know what is happening. After everything has been done successfully women ululate to spur men to do their part. Excited men join and start propitiating ancestors to thank them for the success of the occasion. They have been part of this life, they know their families and people. Since antiquity propitiation of ancestors is performed by men and women ululate in support of their men.

### 5.10 Conclusion

As stated earlier on that African renaissance wants African customs that are of value to be revisited, what I think we need to come to terms with is, unconditional love for our customs and ownership for our customs. We also need to empower our customs fully. Section 30 of our Constitution puts inheritance of our languages, culture and traditions on our laps. What is now left is for us to demonstrate that we are worthy of such a heritage. In other words there should be a process whereby we come to terms with our inheritance, acknowledging its value and significance. This can be achieved by using the existent Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB) structures in the country. For me the ideal situation would be using the language structures because language is culture. The culture of the people is expressed through their language. A structure like that of the Provincial Language Committee (PLC) can be employed to effect this change, that is, eleven members representing eleven cultural groups could be used as a basic number of members. This structure could be called Provincial Traditional Committee (PTC.) The number can be increased according to the large variety of customs and the dominance of the group in the province combined with representation from relevant areas of influence in the community. A structure like this would ensure that each province finds its self in possession of at least the valuable components of the culture of the people in that province. In that way Section 30 of the Constitution would have been addressed and a firm base would have been set for the growth of all indigenous traditions and customs on an equal basis.

Another aspect of note is, how do we make the customs and traditions that we own equally available to all of us. The first requirement will be for these traditions to be available in some of the schools in the various communities. It will not cost the Department of Education to have a few teachers from areas of concentration of certain customs teaching those traditions in various schools and communities. This is quite practical. People who share the same culture will be easily identified and it will be easy for the PTC of that province to provide facilities and ensure that every one is well exposed to the attainment of her traditional practices.

The third aspect is the empowerment of traditional practices among our people. Black people will not waste time on something that does not have economic power. Tradition is not yet a "buzz word" for attracting industrialists into indigenous and provincial programmes. Traditionalists have no money to plough into the development of traditional activities in the form of bursaries, research grants and commissioned publications. We are aware that South African universities, indigenous or culture studies are either clubbed together under one department like the department of isiZulu at the University of Zululand, it caters for isiZulu, isiSwati, isiXhosa under one department, one funding, while English and Afrikaans continue to enjoy the status of being free-standing departments.

In conclusion it is the truth that our traditions play a crucial role now that we desperately need our customs that we ignorantly deserted during the times of the missionaries. The universities that are centres of learning and research are exercising the final blow to our culture by closing down departments of African languages which are vehicles of our culture. I would strongly suggest that matters like subsidies for universities should include the issue of how these universities are promoting the indigenous languages and culture. All these structures which we need to develop our culture of which ululation is part of it, ululation will always survive with or without these structures because ululation belongs to the world of the unknown.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION AND REMARK

#### 6.0 Introduction

Ululation is performed in most cases during traditional or cultural ceremonies and that does not mean it falls under popular culture. Popular culture has a short span of time because it caters for any form of exciting bubble in the society like bubble gum music and Kwaito music whereas ululation was in existence in antiquity, it exist now, it is still going to exist in the near future because it is not composed nor song written. It is a spontaneous occurrence which cannot be stopped when it has started even by the ululators because they have no control over a spontaneous eruption like ululation.

#### 6.1 Ritual

A ritual being an observable kind of behaviour, which is based upon established tradition and custom. Its formality, its idea of a definite purpose and that it can be repeated without variation at the appropriate occasion qualifies ululation to be a ritual. Ululation is observable in the sense that people see ululators every day. The mere fact that the absence of ululation is demanded shows that it is a behaviour with an impeccable need, moreover which is appreciated by audiences. Ululation is based upon established tradition and customs like a marriage ceremony to mention one. Marriages existed during the advent of Kings in every continent. African marriages were and are still characterised by ululation. Ululation is not itemised in the programmes of whatever function but it fits itself and heightens the situation. It is therefore formal because it does not interfere with items in the programme nor with the master of ceremonies. Its incalculated entry into the programme is appreciated by everybody irrespective of their culture, with the exception of western culture. People from the western culture misunderstand ululation for ecstasy or a disturbance.

Sunday Times, 1999, 18 February, reported that an ululator from Swaziland was also arrested for making noise in Switzerland when she showed joy and excitement when their proposal went through in a conference. City Press, July 9, 2000 also used the same story to support culture clashes between Europe and Africa and the need for tolerance in this regard. This shows the difference in culture patterns. What was excitement to Swazi people, it certainly was a grievous irritation and fault to the Swedish people. It is clear that rituals make the nation. Ritual ceremonies are the life and soul of the nation. The nation is bound together by the fact that they show the same rituals.

Ululation is accepted in spite of its unpredictable occurrence into the programme because it has a definite purpose which is undoubted by anybody, that is, the expression of joy in support of the occasion. A ritual can be repeated without variation at the appropriate occasion, so does ululation. For purposes of comparison, we can look at the ritual which is the climax of the wedding ceremony, that is: the fetching of the gall bladder from the kraal by the bride.

*Ukulandwa kwenyongo esibayeni ngumakoti.*

This ritual has no variation whether the bride is from the rural areas or urban areas, the gall bladder is fetched by the bride for safe keeping. This is confirmed by (Msimang, 1975:292) when he says:

Inyongo lena iyinsila, inele ingakhishwa enkomeni kanye nezibindi zayo, bese kubikwa kumakoti. Usezophuma nezimpelesi zakhe eshaya ingcekeza, eyongena esibayeni alike ayithathe ayoyigcina nezibindi zayo. Uyifaka emgodleni wakhe.

(The gall bladder becomes part and parcel of the girl. Once it is taken out together with the liver, the bride is notified. Together with her bridesmaids she will go in a dancing fashion, to the cattle kraal to fetch the gall bladder. She keeps it in her bag that is made either of grass or palm leaves).

In urban areas where there is no kraal, the cow is slaughtered at the back of the house. The back of the house has a dumping site very close by. The ancestors are believed to reside in the dumping site. Ancestors visit at night and they reside in the corners of the house. When women sweep in the morning they collect refuse (*izibi*) from the house to the dumping area (*ezaleni*). The ancestors are swept together with refuse because they come in all forms and remain in the dumping area. This is in agreement with (Nxumalo and Nyembezi, 1966:86), when they say a woman who has a problem with getting married has another option of getting married, that is, by going to stand next to the dumping site in the homestead of the man she wishes to marry. She stands next to the dumping area so that she can be seen and embraced by the ancestors of the family before members of family see or meet her. The first person to meet her will be the old lady in the family. The oldest lady wakes up earlier than everybody in the homestead. More importantly she is very close to becoming an ancestor if she is not the next in line of death. Having tried to emphasize the idea of the back of the house as a place where ancestors reside.

In both cases, that is, the fetching of the gall bladder by the bride from the kraal in rural areas and the fetching of the gall bladder by the bride at the back of the house in urban areas is the same thing. The difference has been explained and therefore there is no variation between two rituals. The appearance of the bride in both cases arouses ululation. It arouses ululation because they are happy that the ancestors are going to be with her all the time. Ancestors like gall bladder, if the bride takes it with her, sleeps with it on her head, and smeared on her feet, ancestors will definitely be attracted to her, Msimang, (1975:21) confirms this idea when he says:

Lowo othethelwayo uthelwa ngenyongo yayo.

(The one who is introduced is smeared with gall).

Unlike European culture Zulus believe that ancestors are with us all the time. As in Axel-Ivar Berglund, (1975:29) Zulus assume a very close and intimate relationship and association within the lineage between the departed and their survivors.

Further Douglas, (1957:46) underlining the communicative aspect of symbols in rites and rituals, differentiates between ritual acts which contain a meaningful and appreciable symbolic interpretation and acts which are magic because they lack interpretation. When we observe this unusual ritual during the arrival of the bridal party where women in the homestead arm themselves with sticks and shields, beat them together including roof tops. In the process they are ululate vigorously uttering scarrying ululation tags thus:

Nansi impi! Nansi impi!  
 Nansi impi! Nansi impi!  
 Nansi impi ingena ekhaya!  
 Vimba! Vimbani bo!  
 Vimbani ingangeni ekhaya!  
 Vimbani uthuli lwezichwe!  
 Vimbani impi! yabafo!  
 (Khumalo, M.E., 1977)

(War! War!  
 War! War!  
 Warriors have entered the household.  
 Stop them from evading the homestead.  
 Stop the wizards! Stop the strangers!)

The above ululation tags have myriads of interpretations but the main idea is that the arrival of the new member of the family especially a bride means trouble. The new bride will come with new ideas trying to impress the in-laws. The members in the homestead may reject new ideas especially when they come with the newcomer. This may cause a rift in the family because some will take the side of the bride.

Secondly, these tags generally mean that when the bride enters her husband's homestead, she believes that she is solely married to her husband only, whereas the truth is that she is the bride of her father-in-law. Her husband's

bride will be brought home by her sons. This is a very sensitive issue which is very difficult to adopt when the bride is not properly orientated in this direction. This misunderstanding usually lead to the initial stages of divorce when the bride decides to take her husband away from her mother-in-law. This is the war the ululators refer to because the mother brings up her child only to be left destitute when he gets married. This is not in line with the Zulu idiom which says *Umzali udla izinyoni zabantwana bakhe*. (The parent survives from her children's sweat or earnings). Christians strongly believe that the holy bible gives the best solution to this problem when it says:

A man shall leave his father and his mother  
and cling to his wife and they shall be one  
flesh.

(Genesis, 2:24).

This is the war, the ululators refer to in their ululation tags. In short it is a sarcasm which is meant to veer the idea of disregarding mother's in-law by the brides before it actually happens and also to caution the bride against this behaviour. According to IsiZulu saying,

Izulu likhwifwa, likhafilwe likhuzwe lisekude  
ukuze lithenwe noma ligwegwese.

(Khumalo, 1999:247).

(Thunder is spitted at and spurted out and  
stopped while it is at a distance so that it is  
deflated or derailed).

Ululators do nothing but that in this situation. This is one of the reasons why researchers should opt for participant observation and interviewing when it comes to folklore phenomena because it is very difficult to decipher some of the rituals. A ritual may be practised everyday but its interpretation by ululators, researchers, scholars and the audience may differ according to the depth of the individuals.



Living together of the bride and her mother-in-law has never promoted good relations in the family. The mother-in-law will exaggerate the bride's mistakes and claim that she was not brought up well. Forgetting that she was born in her family consequently she cannot know everything that is expected of her in the new home. She must be taught the nuances of this new home rather than to be seen as war (impi).

## 6.2 Celebrations

We are going to look at the African cultural celebrations where ululation plays a pivotal role. The reason for the resilience of ululation through the centuries will have to be noted in these celebrations. Focus is going to be on Zulu cultural wedding ceremony.

The beginning of the marriage ceremony starts with the arrival of the bride at the bridegroom's home. Krige, (1950:138) noted this when he says:

On the arrival of the bride at the bridegroom's kraal the marriage celebrations can be said to begin.

What Krige says is true because the arrival and the acceptance of the bridal party is applauded by the bridegroom's party in many ways. This is one strange incidence where mothers carry shields and sticks and shout out sportingly as in the case of a war-cry as stated earlier on. In spite of their unnerving behaviour signs of jubilation can never be concealed. Their boastful actions which are accompanied by unbelievable ululation spells jubilation. Krige noted this too (Krige, 1950:139).

When the bridal party enters, the wives of the bridegrooms father begin singing in high, falsetto cackles *Ki ki ki!* interspersed with praises of the groom because he is getting a new wife.

This kind of excitement and jubilation on the arrival of the bride shows that the bride is accepted with both hands and with no reservations by the ancestors at the groom's homestead. The excitement of the mothers is a premonition of a bright future because it is usually the mothers who are sometimes troublemakers when they do not like the bride. It is during this ululation period where the excitement of the wedding is heightened to the point that the mother of the groom relives the after-pains of childbirth (*izinseka*). The mother of the groom will remember the songs she used to sing to lull his son to sleep when he was a baby. It is a very emotional time for the mother and a very exciting moment in the groom's homestead. Bryant confirms the excitement that exist during the arrival of the bride thus: (Bryant, 1949:545)

Then from their huts the matrons of the family emerged, and, holding small sticks upright in their hands, joyously strutted about the open spaces, crying shrilly as they went, *li li li li! Kuhle kwethu!. kubi kwabo kaNtombi!*

Intending thereby, no doubt, to cheer the bride by telling of their own experiences for her present comfort. This joyful cry of the matrons was termed "*Ukulilizela*" – a very ancient custom and interesting study.

It is clear that mothers welcome the bridal party in their own style. This is how they show their happiness because they got what they wanted. Their job is to ululate and invite ancestors to grace the wedding in their ancestral fashion. In the process they carry brooms, small sticks, which have a very mysterious significance when it comes to their protection from abuse; small sitting mats, small eating mats woven from *umuzi*, *umhlahle* or *induli* wiry type of grass used in mat making.

They are very happy because a new branch in the family tree is growing today. More than everything that takes place at this stage of the wedding, the significance, depth and power of ululation becomes obvious even to a stranger in this culture. Ululation is a very old custom but even today it has incredible power. This is the mystery which revolves around ululation and caused my

inquisitiveness not to rest. Ululation is a traditional custom which expresses joy by women when everything is falling into perspective. Khumalo, (1998:252) confirms this when he says:

Kuzwakala ngakho ukulilizela ukuthi bala  
izinto zimi ngomumo wazo. Inzalabantu lapha  
idlulisela uhlangothi lwayo kwabalele  
ngomalokazana ongena ekhaya ...  
Ngomlilizelo nje nokubhula kwayo izindlu,  
inxusa ukuthula phakathi kwekhaya. Inxusela  
umntwana kuzibangamlotha zekhaya ukuba  
zimamukele.

Women (*inzalabantu*) are expressing themselves to the ancestors showing approval of the bride. As stated earlier on in the theses that ululation and the beating of roof tops and the walls of the hut by women are the only customs where women propitiate ancestors. At this stage of the wedding we find that both customs work hand in hand where women beg and urge for peace in the homestead. They entreat the ancestors (*izibangamlotha*) of the family to welcome the bride into the family. The hitting of the roof tops by women during wedding celebration carries a resemblance between the difficulty when the child is born and the difficulty of adjustment by the bride when she is born into a new family in the form of marriage.

During the post-Shakan period, there was a ceremony which was called *umshado wasebusuku* (night wedding). Both parties competed by indulging in Zulu dance. Women ululated to express joy as well as to welcome ancestors who are believed to arrive in the middle of the night. This part of the marriage ceremony no longer exist today because criminals got a chance to do their evil deeds under the pretext of a custom. It is interesting to note that it is the custom that ceased to exist but not ululation. A clash between the procedures in a Christian wedding and a traditional Zulu wedding led to the cessation of this night wedding. The reason being that people have a tendency to mix a christian wedding and a traditional wedding. Some people marry over two weekends in an effort to give both weddings enough time it deserves. This is a

solution though it is costly and time consuming. A great author like (Msimang, 1975:282) recounts the paucity of this wedding when he says:

Namhlanje lobu buhle bokuqhudelana  
abusekho ngenxa yobuxhwanguxhwangu  
babantu abasuke badale impi ngoba bengafuni  
ukuba bavume laphe kuthiwe behluliwe.

(Today people lament the loss and beauty of  
the competitive spirit of the night wedding.  
This was due to people refusing to accept  
defeat).

It is characteristic of Africans not to take defeat lying down. Due to that characteristic which Msimang relates to has caused them to lose a very interesting part of a wedding ceremony. This ceremony involved forming of a guard of honour for the ancestors when they arrived at midnight. Further it deprived the bride to go through a guard of honour by her peers into her new homestead.

During the "*gqumshela* party" that is, a dance competition in or outside the hut between the bride and the groom's parties on the night before the wedding. Both parties exchange messages where the groom ends up committing himself to this union. Finally the groom himself either in the form of a poem or song expresses that he is now a man because of his wife, in front of everybody, dead or alive. Before the groom could finish his song mothers applaud his decision to enter a new stage in life by ululating strongly. Msimang noted that too when he says:

... Kukikizela omane  
(Mothers ululated).

(Msimang, 1975:282)

Mothers are thankful that the groom has accepted manhood. They are thankful that through him the regeneration of the family name is assured. They are happy for the bride because the man she is hoping to marry has

agreed that he will be her husband. His assurance to his bride in the form of a poem or song annoints the whole ceremony. Women ululate because it is the best way to utter congratulations. At this stage ululation is heard on both sides of the families. Krige noted this:

What, therefore, with the drumming, the singing and the women of both parties yelling at the top of their voices, the noise is so great that it may be heard within a radius of several miles.

(Krige, 1960:140)

They are yelling because the traditional knot has been tied. His agreement to marry the bride in front of the bride and the grooms party, in front of the ancestors, that calls for the loudest yell ever. To Krige it was a yell whereas that was a shriek sound. The best type of ululation ever. The utopia of ululation is not common to every woman. The combination of ululators from both parties shows unity among women when it comes to welcome a new bride into the world sharing, and oneness. They welcome her into the world where she is expected to reproduce, failing which she would have let down her husband, her family as well as her ancestors.

Further, the combination of ululation sounds depict the unification of ancestors and the power their marriage has against all possible threats. On the same vein this combination puts the bride in a precarious position in the sense that she is claimed by both ancestors as Sithole, (1997a) puts it thus:

Phela, njengamanje usephakathi kwezandla ezimbili: ezakubo ezisamsingethe, yize esekhishiwe kodwa ziyoze zimbeke ezandleni zalabo aya kubona. Ngakolunye uhlangothi, sekukhona lokho kokuthi nabalapha ekhaya (emzini) sebexhantele ngokuzibika kwakhe engena, nangenkondlo yomkhwenyana. Ngakho okwamanje usengumuntu ontunta nendishi, ongundingasithebeni, kuze kube yisikhathi abikwa ngaso esigcawini, athelwe ngakho uma abalele sebehamba entathakusa bebuyela emifuleni okuthiwa bahlala kuyo, naye ukhukhula nabo aye ayogoba ngenyongo.

Ngakho usengumuntu wabalele amadlangala  
khona ezibukweni lokumwezela kwezinye  
izandla.

(At this stage she belongs to the ancestors.  
That is why she joins them when they return to  
the river where they stay at dawn. She belongs  
to them until she has been annointed with gall  
bladder in her new homestead).

Really at this stage she is held between two hands. She is still in the hands of her family's ancestors although she has been given away, they will leave her in the hands of her grooms people. On the other hand, ancestors from her in-laws have embraced her when she was introduced on her arrival during *ukugqumushela* party and also by the grooms poem. As it is she belongs to nobody until she is officially introduced at the place cleared for dancing and be annointed with gall-bladder, as if it belongs to the ancestors. When the ancestors leave before dawn to their habitat, the river research tells us. She is going to be swept away to the river crossing where she awaits to be handed over to new hands (*emzini*).

That the bride is held between two hands means that she is with ancestors from the groom's side and as well as her ancestors who are annointing and blessing her in preparation for the new position she is about to man, the position of becoming a mother to the nation. She is waiting to be empowered by both ancestors to be strong enough to face the difficult position. The idea that "when ancestors leave before dawn, she will be swept away with them" to the river crossing it intriguing, why the river?

It is believed that, the Greatest Spirit, the Creator, is pictured as the greatest control behind the rivers and water. Vilakazi at one stage paints God as the Greatest River of life. He guards and guides the destinies of nations just as he guards and guides the end of all earthly rivers.

(Mthiyane, 1971:32)

The bride thereafter runs to the river to receive power from the greatest spirit to create people in her new home. She also receives the blessing to be protected and guided by the greatest spirit. The river crossing specifically symbolises the crossing over of the boundary of the child from girlhood to womanhood. The idea of washing very early in the morning before everybody shows that she is cleansed of girlhood where she could fall in love with anybody as she pleases, now she has matured through the power of the ancestors. She will have one man for the rest of her life, other men are out of sight. This is when the woman is empowered and strengthened as a woman in her husband's homestead. It is important to note that there is no ululation when the girl is in the hands of the ancestors. Women respect ancestors and there is no noise until the girl return home in the afternoon. She returns in the afternoon because it is believed that ancestors return home in the afternoon.

After the brother have introduced the bride to her in-laws, mothers follow immediately thereafter displaying unbelievable humility and respect. Even when they speak, respect shines all the way because they respect the ancestors of their daughters in-laws. Bryant, (1949:547) describes the arrival of the mothers to announce the coming of the bride thus:

..... the young wives entered the kraal alone, some passing up the right side, others up the left, all strutting about and uttering the woman shrill jubilant cry of *li li li li!* ... Each of the two parties, crossing each other at the kraal-top, continued its course down to the gateway ... returning to their bush.

Msimang describes the arrival of the mothers thus:

Bakhuluma kancane bekikizela; belanda umlando wozalo ngokuwazi kwabo nangobugagu. Bethi "Yithina abasekuthini, sithi sikhanyisa ubhaqa singene." Babuye bathi: "Nakho phela! Kanti wawuthi kuyobanjani? Khanyisa ubhaqa singene!" Basho njalo bezungeza umuzi baze bayongena esibayeni bese bephuma beya kwabakubo.

(Msimang, 1975:283)

(They speak softly ululating relating the history of their generation as they know it and according to their expertise saying: "We from whatever surname say we kindle a light to enter." Again they ululate and say: "There you are! How did you expect it to go. Kindle the light and let us in". They say so repeatedly surrounding the house, they enter the cattle kraal and they go out to their people).

The ideas of both authors are the same in the sense that their women ululate when they announce the arrival of their bride in the afternoon. They differ when Bryant separate his wives to the left and right side of the kraal while Msimang keeps his women together until they leave the groom's kraal. Bryant says women return to the bush whereas Msimang says they return to their people. Bryant does not understand the significance of the bridal party (*umthimba*) waiting under the tree. Msimang knows that the bridal party is not alone under the trees but there are ancestors who are guarding and guiding the girl under the tree.

Women ululate because they are sent by the ancestors to announce the arrival of the bride. Ululation is spontaneous. This ululation is the expression by ancestors that the bride is coming, ancestors in the groom's homestead must get ready to welcome the bride. The differences in inferences is due to the fact that one author belongs to the Zulu culture whereas the other author is a stranger doing research. In some places mothers do not go to the cattle kraal because the main duty of mothers is to announce the bride to the grandmothers in the homestead and return to their people. In urban areas where there are no rivers, the bridal party waits outside. They do not get out of the means of transport they used to get to the groom's homestead. They operate from cars or buses until the custom is through. They usually sing the following song:

Oqalayo: (Solo)      Baba nomama nangishiya okhalweni.  
(My dear parents why do you leave on the uphill.)

Abavumayo:      (Chorus)      Wo! Ngagana ngagana kabi  
Ngagana ngiseyingane



Ngiyinto yokwenzani?  
Wo ! Ngahlupheka 2x.

Oh ! I am getting married so young  
Who am I, Oh ! I am in trouble. 2x.

Oqalayo: (Solo)      Wo! Ngazilaya mina ngazithela embangweni  
(How did I put myself in this love contest.)

Abavumayo:          (Chorus) Wo ngagana  
Wo ! ngagana kabi  
Ngagana ngiseyingane  
Ngiyinto yokwenzani  
Wo ! ngahlupheka.

Oh ! I am getting married so young  
What value do I have.  
Oh! I am in trouble).

The arrival of the bridal party with the bride in the cleared space for dancing (*isigcawu*) is characterised by the wonderful spirit of welcoming each other by both bridal parties. Each party displays its prowess in dancing, singing and ululating. The bridal party is boisterous because they are bringing their beautiful bride (virgin) and the in-laws are happy.

We are happy at home.  
Here comes the beautiful bride.  
Li li li! li li li!  
I am burning I am on fire  
Women hold me  
I am burning  
What did I say? What did you say?  
Li li li! li li li!  
There you are  
Here comes the sand dunes  
The regeneration of my fathers homestead  
Our generation has arisen).

According to Zulu culture there is no better way of expressing joy than ululation. Even our great grandfathers had and know this kind of expression of joy. This is the only sound they know which is used to announce to them that they are very happy at home.

At the open space that has been cleared for the dancing of both parties, the bridal party starts with *isigubhu* followed by *umgqigqo*. *Isigekle* takes place when the party is warm. After *isigekle* follows *isisuso* and lastly *isifekezeli*. After all this excitement 'Inkondlo yomntwana' will follow because they are receiving their beautiful bride who is going to be a source of joy and comfort for their son. Shabangu, (1997) noted these words during this session:

Kuhle kwethu!  
 Yangena intombi emhlophe!  
 li li li! li li li!  
 Ngasha! Ngasha! Ngasha umlilo!  
 Ngibambeni bafazi  
 Nakhu ngisha!  
 Ngathini wathini?  
 li li li! li li li!  
 Nakho phela!  
 Zangen' izihlabathi zolwandle!  
 Wavuk' umuzi kababa!  
 Yavuk' indlu yakwethu!

that is the climax of the day because the bride sings and dances for the last time as a girl. She leaves her virginity, her friends, her family by singing this song. Through this song she accepts a new life as a woman in a new family. She accepts womanhood and all its demands until she dies. She will never dance in the open space as a girl. This song is a turning point in her life, that is why she displays the best skills and prowess in singing and dancing. This point arouses skin eruptions in everybody when the bride starts her song. Some women cry when they look back to the day when they were in the same position. Some show tender emotion with the eyes filled with tears. At this stage the bride is appealing to the in-laws as well as ancestors to be accepted as the member of the family. In response to her appeal, men show an outburst of intense excitement as a sign of acceptance and welcome of their bride in the homestead. Msimang puts it thus:

Wo suka ngiyakutshela wena kovuka  
 amadlingozi ngisho kongenawo. Angazange  
 avuke selokhu azalwa uyise nonina.

(Msimang, 1975:282)

(Oh! gosh this will arouse an ardent zeal of excitement even to those who have never shown it before they were born).

This arouses the man in every man and wishes the woman was singing to him. Even those who have not experienced this type of excitement become frenzy. Even those who have never experienced an outburst of intense excitement ever since they were born it does come over him. Women are known to be emotionally strong and cannot control themselves during such an occasion. Bryant noted them during this event and goes thus:

... the matrons of the family rushed also into the arena, carrying shaftless spears – blades (with maize-cobs on their point to prevent any accident) uplifted in their hands, and strutted everywhere about, uttering their joy cry, li! li! li!

(Bryant, 1949:549)

Some of those happenings or phenomena are beyond human comprehension. What gets into people and make them frenzy cannot be explained. A resemblance is noted between ululation and men becoming frenzy. Research has taught us that the presence of ancestors is responsible for actions that cannot be accounted for. The understanding of those actions needs knowledge and understanding of the underworld which is not possible until one die. Some people believe that diviners have knowledge of the underworld that they acquire after getting into the river and getting out with a spear from the ancestors.

When women finish to warn the groom to treat the bride well as a wife, one old woman dances and ululates in and out among the ranks of singing and dancing girls carrying a mealie cob in an assegai. This is when the *yi yi yi!* type of ululation comes into play as explained in chapter 2. In some regions she carries a broom which they brandish in a showy gesture. As I stated earlier on, a broom is usually used to remove demons on the way of the bride and groom. The mealie cob, according to research findings is used to invite luck and prosperity for the bride and groom. The old lady runs up and down

between the singing parties swearing at the bride-groom. She tells him all the things he is going to do when they are married. In fact she is warning the groom that whatever kind of behaviour she enumerates does not go down the throat well to a bride. Meanwhile the bride disregards all the warnings and concentrate on the song she is singing on her day. Msimang, (1975: 285) says:

Asho umntwana kusike komame bakikizele  
baze bashe amazwi, elokhu eshilo umntwana  
engashi yena izwi.

(The girl sings her melancholy song until the mothers are reminded of the after pains of child birth. They ululate until their voices are hoarse. She goes on singing but her voice does not run hoarse.)

This is the song that is sung by the bride when she bids farewell to her peers and friends.

Bayavungazela ngegama lami, bayavungazela (2x)  
Bonk' abantu bayavungazela ngegama lami  
Bayavungazela.

(They are conversing about my name they are conversing (2x)  
Everybody is conversing about my name everybody is  
conversing).

We know that ululation is an expression of joy. It is very strange to see mothers ululating when the bride is chanting her melancholy strain. This could be one of the reasons indicating the presence of ancestors who accept her as their bride. This stage of the ceremony changes to a revival of the old and new marriages. There is no function in African culture that can provide a revival for a wedding ceremony in the same fashion as the time when the bride sings her final song in the open space. The situation reminds them of their hey days when they entered the open space as young girls and when they danced in the open space as brides. Further it reminds them of the days when they swore in front of everybody that they abandon or forsake (*ntombiland* for *faziland*) girlhood for motherhood. When they look at the bride dancing with her spear

which is a symbol of purity, they wish that all the girls in their area can follow suite and dance in the open space without fear. This situation ends up or leaves the girls with a challenge of who is going to be next in line. The mothers end the singing of the bride by unbelievable ululation. It could be an evil omen when mothers do not ululate when the bride is on the stage. On the contrary white people look at the strutting of women during ululation as a strange happening which needs immediate attention. They look at ululation as unbelievable chaos without direction. Jafta, (1978:157) supports this idea when she says:

To somebody who is strange to the culture of the group, this participation can be interpreted as a mobs reaction.

### 6.3 Findings and conclusions

Ululation is a reality to be reckoned with. It has unbelievable depth. Nobody ever thought that ululation is something other than the loud noise by ululators. Ululation drew its attention largely from the hard hitting impact it has on the communities. Among white people ululation is disturbing and scary because their ceremonies are organised with a programme. Any deviation from the programme is announced and explained. To them ululation is like one of those practices during exorcisation. Long ago, out of ignorance and spite for what is African they clamped it down in churches and public places. In Austria blacks from Basutholand were arrested for ululating in church during a wedding ceremony of their daughter. (Sunday Times, 1999, June 11). Despite it being mugged there were too many unprecedented eruptions that made white people acknowledge the presence of this wild noise. Among observant whites ululation arouses their enquiring minds and want to know the significance of this noise. They also want to know why the noise maker is not reprimanded.

Among Africans ululation is music to their ears where and when it is needed. In some of the ceremonies and customs, ululation is demanded because failing which the execution of the custom fails.

Ululation has opened our minds to realise the disparities among the eurocentric and afrocentric nature of things. After the factual description of ululation has been made known to women of other races it became clear that their face to face contact with ululation is very shallow. However the experiences of other educated blacks especially, is akin to the experiences of women in other races. In black women's writings and in writings generally the most important undertaking must be to challenge the mythical norms which perpetuate disregard for ululation and other feminine customs in literature.

Despite developments that have taken place to displace ululation in sophisticated arenas, the power and might of ululation is evident in every African ceremony, ritual or custom in Africa and abroad. Traces of African women who are anti African is evident though in terms of ululation their behaviour is regarded as docility. Other customs and ceremonies need African renaissance for their survival, ululation survived the wrath of missionaries and the power of the apartheid regime without any assistance to show its might and engravement among Africans. The potential for ululation as a draw card in holiday resorts is realised. A qualitative shift in the mindset of people in realising that traditional activities can also be used in advertising, the possibilities of unlocking the vast potential for socio-economic development that lies in women of this country will not be realised.

African women are respected especially in Zululand. As South Africa is busy entangling the knots of oppression against blacks especially for women of all races. Women have a fundamental responsibility to continue the enquiry and research to promote the existing traditions that made the lives of women comfortable and bearable to prevent divorce. Divorce is disrupting the social fabric of the Africans resulting in all the evils that prevail. The fact that women are discussing, debating, work shopping, and attending symposiums is hardly enough to implement new ideas. The fundamental ideas of African traditions must be given full exposure before they are weighed against the present situations. This will encourage women to get actively involved and do

something in order to leave a more just and equal society for generations to come.

Ululation is known to be a custom. Some people look at the spontaneity in ululation as a habit because they believe that a habit is action or way of doing things that has become established by a person or group as a result of being repeated over a long period but the problem lies in that a custom is static and dynamic. Customs either change or adjust with time or they die out. It has been noted that ululation does not change. It is the same old sound that occurred during the pre Shakan period which differ according to the woman's vocal chords. For purposes of explanation customs change like the custom of giving birth (*ukubelethisa*).

In antiquity the custom of giving birth was done mainly by women. It was done in a hut in the homestead. Women made fire. They prepared the sharp blades of the river reed called *ubengu* (Msimang, 1975:497) which was used to cut the umbilical chord. When the woman was ready to give birth she was grabbed firmly in an effort to assist her through delivery. Once it was noted that she has difficulty in giving birth, the head of the family was notified and it was believed that when it was her due date but she cannot deliver, then, the reason was attributed to ancestors. The headman will summon a young boy in the absence of a grandmother to heat the roof top, telling the ancestors to do their job and help the mother who is giving birth a quick delivery. It happened immediately thereafter.

Doctors who cannot propitiate ancestors resort to caesarian section. After delivery a child was separated from the human placenta, washed and smeared with red ochre (*ibomvu*) (Msimang, 1975:29) or species of a fragrant creeper used by women as perfume (*insindwane*) (Doke & Vilakazi, 1972:599). This custom can be followed even today but no woman wants to associate herself with delivery at home. Today only the poorest of the poor deliver their babies at home. When they are not poor there is always a very serious reason which has something to do with the safety of the child.

The custom on the procedure which takes place during childbirth has changed tremendously from what used to happen long ago. Today we get doctors in the form of males and females. People who help during delivery are total strangers as compared to the pre and post Shakan periods. People who help during delivery were women in the homestead or neighbours. Nothing was sterilised then, leaves of reed were taken from the stem to the mother's placenta. Chances of children getting infected were high hence many children died at infancy. What is interesting is that both instances had options when they encountered a problem. Long ago, when delivery was unsuccessful the headman will summon the youngest son or the oldest grandmother to beat the roof and walls of the hut where delivery was taking place and within the wink of an eye the child will be born. Msimang, (1985:49) confirms this when he says:

Umnumzane usezothuma umfana wasekhaya  
amnike induku athi akashaye indlu. Lona  
kanye ixhiba okunothetayo kulo kuthiwa  
bekungadluli mzuzu kuzwakale umntwana  
esekhala.

Today when a woman encounters a problem in the delivery ward, she has an option of a caesarian section. The modern ways of delivery are cost effective and they demand a hospital or clinic nearby. The modern means of delivery are impossible in rural areas because of the proximity between homes and the clinics if there are any. When delivery went through smoothly or with a problem the mere fact that the child is born alive brought great joy to women and they ululated celebrating their success.

From my observation ululation can be referred to as a religion. Religion means a belief in God (Edison, 1991:28). Ululators believe in God. When they ululate, they express joy that abounds in that homestead but more so they entreat God through their ancestors to take care of the family and protect them from wrong doers. Ululation is also a prayer. They ululate when men go to war in this sense ululation is used as a prayer to God to protect those who are going to fulfil a national duty and fight for the protection of their people.



Ululation just like religion is multifaceted in its application. We find ululation as an expression of joy in pleasurable days as well as a prayer in times of war. A religion does not change with time. For example, some people are baptised, confirmed and married in the Anglican church at Umlazi. Today the church and its religion is still on the same lot. It has many branches that upholds the same religion, the Anglican doctrine. The creed and eucharist are still the same.

Ululation likewise does not change. From childhood mothers ululated quoting the familiar and popular ululation tag thus *ki ki ki! kuhle kwethu!*. The rest of ululation tags may change with the environment and innovations like: "*ki ki ki! Wangena umakoti uzosithengela amaselula!*. (*Ki ki ki!* Here comes the bride she is going to buy cellular phones for us). Ululation like religion withstood being stamped out of social gatherings as a disgrace but today women ululate in the dignified national gatherings.

Ululation per se is the product of a nation whose social fabric is intact in the sense of traditional observance of the ethical codes. On the contrary ululation can withstand any form of disruption in the social fabric of the nation. It keeps on showing its head in a flood of confusion until order is restored and it emerges like an unformidable giant of all times.

The flexibility of ululation allows it to fit in all linguistic genres like essays, short stories, novels, drama and poetry.

War! War!  
 War!War!  
 Warriors have entered the household.  
 Stop them from invading home  
 Stop the wizards! Stop the strangers!

## 6.4 Conclusion

By way of concluding this speculation about ululation one may safely say that observation and experience with ululation, has lead one to think that it is a loud shriek sound which is accompanied by the strutting of feet by women carrying objects. The most parametic or constant object in ululation is a broom. Other varieties of objects depend on the individual ululator. As far back as the pre-Shakan period women ululated. What sustains ululation before and now is a mystery to be solved by research. At this point the custodians of this custom, that is women, academics, priests are curious to know more about ululation because they only know the shriek sound which heightens the mood of cultural activities.

Our research findings, as stated in the foregoing chapters, indicate that ever since the Mkhwanazi tribe came into contact with Western culture towards the end of the nineteenth century, their traditional practices, values and notions which underlie them have undergone and are still undergoing transformation. It appears that the most outstanding and potent factors that have been instrumental in bringing about these changes are Christianity, school education and western socio-economic concepts and practices. The influence of these, however, has not been equally felt by ululation. As a result of this, different categories of women have emerged whose patterns of thought, value systems and modes of behaviour manifest variable deviations from what is regarded as traditional or orthodox.

One category of women includes those conservative women who in the face of the compelling influence of western culture, still endeavour to adhere to and sustain traditional forms of life and ululation. The other category comprises those women who because of their exposure to western-oriented patterns of thought and behaviour disregard ululation. Well educated and well groomed women love ululation, they ululate because they know that ululation belongs to their culture and without a culture they are dead alive. Despite all these issues confronting the Zulu women one finds ululation soaring high above all these problems untouched. Long live ululation!

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## T.V. PROGRAMMES

Presenters	Topics	Dates	Time
M Thwala	Issues of Faith	9 <sup>th</sup> August 2001	6 p.m.
M Thwala	Issues of Faith	21 October 2001	6 p.m.
Udi Wa Amhanga	War in America	11 September 2001	4p.m.
T Mansfield	Greed	17 June 2001	11 a.m.

**NEWS PAPERS**

Sunday Times	11 June 1999
Sunday Times	18 February 1999
City Press	09 July 2000

**INTERNET**

Dept of linguistics & Southern African Languages. UCT @  
([www.Pansalb.Org.za/English/mission.htm](http://www.Pansalb.Org.za/English/mission.htm))

AUGUST 2000

## QUESTIONNAIRE

- 1.1 Ululation is abstract. It has an audible surface and a complex depth. through observation it is noted that below the arbitrary appearance of the surface lies a deeper strutchure which determines the reality of the appearances. This strutchure is something like the unconscious or invisible part of a phenomenon. In order to conscientise ,make visible ,awaken and unearth this strutchure, men and women have to tap background information about this strutchure. The only instrument for extracting and observing data beyond appearances is a questionnaire.

- 2 1 From your observation of ululation , how would you define ululation.?

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2. Who ululates and why ?

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3. What dramatical props do ululators employ ,and why?

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4. What is the meaning of the core cliché “ ki ki ki” ?.

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5. Why do ululators use ululation tags after the core cliché ?

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6. What is the significance of the (1) broom during ululation ?

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(2) plant of gourd or calabash.

(3) branches of trees.

7. What do they get after ululation ?

8. Do all mothers ululate ,if not, why ?

9. Give all the settings for ululation you know ?

10. How do you feel when women ululate ?

11. What specific attire do they wear when they ululate ?

12. What arouses the ululator to ululate since they do not  
ululate for one reason ?

13. Are ululators chosen or invited before the event ?

14. Is it possible for a woman to improve her ululation skills  
through practise.?

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15. Do men appreciate women when they ululate ?

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16. How many types of ululation do you know ?

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17. If you were unemployed would you join ululators to welcome tourists to a tourist resort.?

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18. Would you register for a certificate or diploma to become an ululator.?

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19. How did ululation originate ?  
Where ?

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When ?

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20. What is responsible for the strutting of feet by women during ululation ?

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21. Are there any hidden secrets about ululation especially the shriek sound ?

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22. Do you believe in God ?

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23. How many Gods do you know or believe in ?

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24. What happens to human beings after death ?

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25. Can ululation evoke ancestors ?

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26. Is there any relationship between ululation and incense ?

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27. If ululation is capable of evoking ancestors, how can we account for the presence of ancestors in sophisticated gatherings like the graduation ceremony, inaugural address and in a wedding ceremony in church. ?

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