

# **The Standardisation of the Ndebele Language Through Dictionary-making**

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(Isinciphiso)  
Indinganiso Yolimi Lwesindebele Edalwe  
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Iyunivesithi Ye Oslo/  
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Umbhalo wokucubungula lo wethulelwe ukugcwalisa ingxenye yendingeko zesiqu sobudokotela kwezemibhalo eHlangothini Lwezifundo Zemibhalo eYunivesithi yeZimbabwe ihlanganyelana loHlangothi Lwezifundo Zemibhalo lwe Yunivesithi yeOslo

Umsebenzi lo uqhutshelwe emayunivesithi amabili eyeZimbabwe lapho okuqoqwe khona ulwazi leye Oslo lapho umsebenzi lo olotshelwe khona njalo ngaqhuba lezifundo khona. Indleko zemali yokufunda zahlawulwa ngoncedo lwemali eyavela kwabe Norwegian Education Loan Fund, ethiwa yiQuota Programme. Olunye njalo usekelo lwemali lavela kuNUFU yona eyayisipha imali kuALLEX Project, egoqela abeUZ leUiO.

Abaqeqetshi : uSkhwicamfundo Lars S. Vikør (UiO)  
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## ISINGENISO

Umsebenzi owasungulwa yiALLEX Project wokwakha ikhophasi yesiNdebele lokulotshwa kwezichazamazwi waguqula kakhulu isimo sokucubungula mayelana ngolimi lwesiNdebele. Njengomunye walabo abasungula umsebenzi wokwakha ikhophasi lo-kuqoqa amabala okuloba isichazamazwi sakuqala sesiNdebele esigxile esiNdebeleni kuphela, kwaba lezinto ezithile ezananzelelekayo ngolimi ezazingananzelwe mandulo.

Ekulobeni isichazamazwi sakuqala, kwavela imibuzo lengxaki ezafanela ukuxakululwa andubana umsebenzi wokulotshwa kwesichazamazwi uqhubeke. Eminye yale imibuzo yayiphathelene lokukhulunywa lokulotshwa kwesiNdebele. Ngenxa yembali yabantu lolimi, bakhona abathi isiNdebele yisiZulu kumbe lulimi olusasiZulu kanti bakhona abathi isiNdebele sizimele sodwa. Banengi abakhuluma isiNdebele abakholwa ukuthi yisiZulu njalo isifiso sabo yikuthi isiNdebele sincike esiZulwini singehluki kangako. Inkinga ke yikubana ikhophasi yesiNdebele iveza ukuthi isiNdebele sikhulunywa ngendlela engafani lesiZulu loba nje umehluko phakathi kwalezizindimi umncane kakhulu. Futhi nxa isichazamazwi sigxile kukhophasi kutsho ukubana ulimi lwesiNdebele alusekuncika esiZulwini. Pho azakuvuma na amaNdebele ukuthi ulimi lwabo lungasondezwa esiZulwini?

Manengi amagama amatsha angena esiNdebeleni nsukuzonke njengakuzonke indimi nje. Inkinga isuka ibe sekuthini yiwaphi amabala asemukelekile ukuthi aseyisiNdebele ngakho asengangena esichazamazwini sesiNdebele? Ngubani olawula ukuthi ibala selingavunyelwa esiNdebeleni? Abalobi besichazamazwi bangazifakela amabala abasuthisayo bona kodwa nxa engasuthisi abanini bolimi kulengozi yokuthi basiphike isichazamazwi bathi asivezi ulimi lwabo qho. Besekuthi amanye ala amabala sekusobala ukuthi awasavikeki asengenile olimini, kodwa akulandlela eqondileyo yokuwapela. Abalobi besichazamazwi bawafaka bawathini amabala angelazipele eziqondileyo. Vele udubo lwezipele luvamile esiNdebeleni ngoba phela labo okumele baqondise ngezipele sekukade balibala ngomlandu wabo. Kulamabala ikakhulu amabizongxube alotshwa kwesinye isikhathi ehluke ngokwanele kanti kwesinye isikhathi ahlanganiswe. Isichazamazwi njengogwalo oluqondisa ngezipele, lulotshwa luthiweni kulamabala angelandlela eyodwa yokulotshwa?

Ukuchaza amabala esiNdebele ngaso isiNdebele kuphela kwakungumthwalo onzima ngoba kungazange kwenziwe mandulo. Kwadingeka ukubana kubunjwe amathemu okuchaza ezinye ingatsha zokucutshungulwa kolimi. Konke lokhu akulula ngoba akusimsebenzi womlobi kodwa owabaphathi bezemfundo abayibo abalawula ukuthi ulimi kalusetshenziswe ngale indlela njalo lulotshwe ngale indlela.

Abalobi besichazamazwi sakuqala sesiNdebele bazithola belengxaki ezithile ezingumgoqo ekulotshweni kwesichazamazwi. Njengokuba umlandu wabo wawuyikuloba isichazamazwi, laba balobi babumba amacebo okumelana lalezi izingxaki lemibuzo. Ekwenzeni lokho abakwenzayo, abalobi besichazamazwi baphathisa eku-

bumbeni indinganiso yolimi lwesiNdebele. Ngiyagcizelela ukubana abalobi besichazamazwi abakwenzanga ngentando yabo kumbe ngenjongo yabo, kodwa ekuphuthsheni isichazamazwi sabo, esadindwa ngesihloko esithi Isichazamazwi SesiNdebele (2001) – ngamafitshane ISN, kwasekubunjwe indinganiso yolimi lwesiNdebele kwezizepele, amabala amatsha, ukwehlukaniwa kwamabala, amathemu, njalo njalo. Umbhalo lo wokucubungula ugxile kugwalo ISN, njalo lokhu kucubungula bekungeze kwaqhutshwa ngendlela okwaqhutshwa ngayo alubana lolugwalo lungadindwanga. Kodwa indinganiso yolimi lwesiNdebele ayilani lalokhu, ibingaqhubeka ngezinye indlela loba isichazamazwi lesi besingalotshwanga. Kodwa njengoba sesilotshiwe akusenzeki ukuthi kungaxoxwa kwelizayo ngendinganiso yolimi lwesiNdebele kutshiywe i-ISN.

## INJONGO

Njengokuba sekuchaziwe mandulo, abahleli beISN baloba belenjongo zabo ezingelani lendinganiso yolimi. Futhi abahleli bayakuchaza ekwethuleni isichazamazwi sabo ukuthi kwakuyinjongo yabo ukuchaza ulimi njengoba lunjalo hatshi njengalokhu okumele lube yikho. Kulo umsebenzi wokucubungula ngifumanise ukuthi akwenzeki ukuthi isichazamazwi sichaze nje ulimi njengoba lunjalo kungekho kunquma ukuthi lufanele lume ngaloluhlobo.

Zikhona-ke izinto ezithile olimini lwesiNdebele ezaguquka ngenxa yokulotshwa kwesichazamazwi sakuqala esingolimi lwesiNdebele kuphela. Inguquko le isekulotshweni kolimi, izipele lokwehlukaniwa kwamabala. Enye inguquko ikuwo amabala olimi lwesiNdebele jikelele kanye lamathemu abunjwayo olimini. Injongo yalo umsebenzi kwakuyikuveza ukuthi nguquko bani kuzipele, ekwahlukaniseni amabala, uluhlu lwamabala olimini lamathemu eyadalwa yikulotshwa kwesichazamazwi. Kubuye njalo kuhlolwe le inguquko iphathisa kanganani kundinganiso yolimi lwesiNdebele. Njengoba isiNdebele sifundiswa kanye lesiZulu kodwa akekho okhuluma isiZulu qho, enye injongo idinga umahluko phakathi kwesiZulu lesiNdebele ongabe udalwe yikwethulwa kwamabala kuISN.

## UKULONDA ULWAZI

Mibili imithombo yolwazi ebemqoka kulo umsebenzi. Owakuqala yikhophasi yesiNdebele eyiyona eyaqoqwa kuqala kungakalotshwa izichazamazwi. Owesibili yiso Isichazamazwi SesiNdebele.

Ikhophasi yesiNdebele yaqoqwa ukuze isetshenziswe njengesisekelo esiqotho sesimo solimi njengokusetshenziswa kwalo ngabalukhulumayo. Ngalokho, ikhophasi iveza izinto ezinengi ngolimi lwesiNdebele kodwa okuqakathekileyo yikuthi ulimi lwesiNdebele lukhulunywa ngendlela ezechukileyo kusiya ngendawo langesikhulumi. Lokhu kuqakathekile ngoba bakhona abanengi ababesithi isiNdebele sikhulunywa ngokufanayo yonke indawo.

Lokhu kwehluka kwendlela yokukhuluma isiNdebele kusiya ngendawo okuvezwa yikhophasi kudala inkinga ekulotshweni kwezichazamazwi. Lapha sisitsho izichazamazwi ezincike olimini njengokusetshenziswa kwalo ngabantu. Inkinga iba sekuthini isichazamazwi kumele sigoqele kuphela indlela yinye yokukhuluma ulimi. Umbuzo omkhulu yikubana leyo ndlela yiphi njalo ikhethwa njani futhi ngubani.



Ekukhangeleni i-ISBN injongo yikuhlola ukubana amabala aqoqiweyo lengcazelo lokupelwa kwawo kuyaveza na ukwehlukana kwendlela isiNdebele esikhulunywa ngayo. Kuvele kuyinjayelo ukubana izichazamazwi zipha iziqondiso mayelana lendlela amabala okumele ethulwe ngayo kanye lengcazelo yamabala. Kungalokhu abacubunguli sebakunanzelela ukuthi abantu abanengi nxa besebenzisa izichazamazwi bayabe bedinga izipele eziqondileyo kuthi inani elilandela leli ngelidinga ingcazelo yamabala. Lezizinto zombili yizo eziqakathekiswa ngabasebenzisa izichazamazwi loba nje kulezinto ezinengi ezilusizo kusichazamazwi ngasinye.

Ngokuhlola amabala akusichazamazwi eqathaniswa lokukukhophasi kuyeneliseka ukubana kuchazwe indlela yokukhuluma isiNdebele emqoka kulesosichazamazwi. Leyondlela yokukhuluma eyiyo egoqelwe yisichazamazwi isingathathwa njengendlela ekhuthazwayo ukuba bonke abafunda ulimi bafunde yona laba bhalayo balobe ngayo leyo ndlela. Ngalokho kukhomba ukubana lezozindlela zokukhuluma ulimi ezingekho kusichazamazwi azisamelanga zisetshenziswe ekulobeni. Nxa singapha umzekeliso ngamabala okweboleka athi 'iyembe' lelithi 'isheti'. Womabili la amabala ayasetshenziswa ngabantu kodwa bakhona abangafuniyo ukubana elinye ibala lisetshenziswe. Ngakho isichazamazwi singakhetha ukusebenzisa ibala elithi 'iyembe' kodwa kulahlwe elithi 'isheti' kutsho ukuthi abasebenzisa ulimi bakhuthazwa ukulahlwa ibala elithi 'isheti' kanti labalobi kuya kube sekumele bangalisebenzisi lelobala ekulobeni kwabo.

Kuyafana ke lekupelweni kwamabala lokwehlukaniwa kwawo ekulobeni. Zinengi indlela ibala elilodwa elingapelwa ngazo kanti futhi lingalotshwa ngendlela ezitshiyeneyo. Kodwa izichazamazwi azivamanga ukugoqela zonke indlela zokupela ibala, zimane zithathe ibe nye. Leyo esikhethwe ukusetshenziswa kusichazamazwi sekuyiyona ndlela ekhuthazwayo. Kunjalo lakungcazelo zamabala.

Ulwazi lonke lolu seluqoqiwe kwasekudingeka injulalwazi ezachaza indinganiso yolimi lwesiNdebele. Akulula ke ukuthola injulalwazi egoqela zonke inhlangothi zalokhu kucubungula ngoba phela lapha kuhloliswa ngezokulotshwa kolimi, ukubunjwa kwamathemu lokuma kolimi. Konke lokhu kuhluza ngaphansi kwezolwazi ngezichazamazwi lendinganiso zendimi. Ngalokho ke akukho indlela eyodwa esingathi isetshenzisiwe kodwa kucatshunwe lapha lalapho ukuze kwakhiwe into ebonakalayo. Kucatshunwe emibhalweni yezingcwethi ezilandlelayo: uHaugen (1972), Jernudd lo Das Gupta (1971), Rubin loJernudd (1971b), Vikør (1993), Hartmann (2001), Fishman (1975), Béjoint (2000), Sinclair (1987), Spolsky (1998) kanye lo Bamgbose (1991).

## INDIKIMBA

Umsebenzi lo wakhiwe waba yizahluko eziyisifika. Esakuqala yisingeniso lapho okuchazwe khona izinjongo zalokhu kulonda ulwazi kanye lenjulalwazi ezasekela lokhu kuchwayisisa. Esesibili sibalisa ngembali yolimi isiNdebele kanye lembali yawo amaNdebele kuzekuthi esesithathu sichaza indlela zokulonda ulwazi. Isahluko sesine sihluza uhlelo lwesiNdebele kusahluko sesihlanu kuhluza i-ISBN besekuhlolwa indinganiso yamabala esiNdebele kusahluko sesithupha. Isahluko sesikhombisa sichaza ngokubunjwa kwamathemu esiNdebele kuzekuthi esesitshiyagalombili sihluza umbhalomagama wesiNdebele besekugqiba isahluko seficamunwemunye.

Isahluko esichaza imbali sigoqela imbali yawo amaNdebele lapho adabuka khona lokuthi bavele bangobani. Imbali yamaNdebele ivele yimbali yolimi lwawo isiNdebele. Kuchaziwe ngokulonda imbali yokulotshwa kwesiNdebele lokubunjwa kombhaloma-

gama wolimi. Lokhu kubeyisendlalelo sesahluko setshiyagalombili ngoba yiso esiqukethe ezokupelitsha lokwehlukana amabala ekulotshweni kwesiNdebele. Imbali yokulotshwa kwezichazamazwi esiNdebeleni ilandisiwe layo kwachazwa langokulotshwa kwezingwalo zezindaba zokuzibumbela elimini. Isahluko sigqiba ngokuhlaziya imithetho ephathelene lokusetshenziswa kwezindimi eZimbabwe kanye lomumo wezindimi jikelele elizweni. Lokhu kuqakathekile ukuze kuphendlwe umkhandlo ucece ukuze izizatho zendinganiso yesiNdebele zivele obala.

Indlela zokucubungula lokudinga ulwazi zichazwe esahlukweni sesithathu. Zinengana zona indlela ezasetshenziswayo kodwa njengokuba sesike sakuthinta lokhu, asizukuphinda njalo. Kwasetshenziswa ikhophasi yesiNdebele kwasetshenziswa lezinye ingwalo kanti umcubunguli labalondi ababephathisa basebenzisa lemibuzo ebhalwe phansi. Okunengi umlobi njengoba enguye njalo umakhi wekhophasi yesiNdebele lomhleli omkhulu weISN, wasebenzisa ulwazi aluthola ngokuphathisa kwakhe kuwowonke lo umsebenzi.

Ukwakhiwa kwamabala esiNdebele kuchazwe kancane nje njengesendlalelo sokuhlaziya kokulotshwa kolimi lendinganiso yamagama alo lokwakhiwa kwamathemu. Ngalesosizathu kuchazwe ngokudephileyo ibizo lezenzo, ezinye incezu zenkulumo azisahlolwanga okujulileyo. Lokhu kungenxa yesizatho sokuthi amabizo lezenzo kuvele kuyizo incezu zenkulumo ezande kusichazamazwi. Isahluko sesihlanu sihlaziya isimo seISN. Kuhluzwa ukukhethwa kwamabala, ukuhlelwa kwawo, ukwethulwa kwawo lokuchazwa kwawo. Kuhle kuchazwe njalo lemibono yalabo abasebeke basi-sebenzisa isichazamazwi.

Indinganiso yamabala olimi lwesiNdebele ichazwe kusahluko 6. Kuchazwe indlela zokuhluzwa esingakuthi yinsika yamabala esiNdebele. Kwachazwa njalo lenguquko yamabala ikakhulu inguquko emagameni eyabangelwa yimpi yenkululeko. Kuhluzwe lamabala okweboleka kumbe amatsha kanye lokuqathanisa amagama esiNdebele lawesiZulu. Kusahluko 7, kuchazwe indlela zokubunjwa kwamathemu jikelele andubana kuhluzwe ukubunjwa kwamathemu okufundisa uhlelo lezifundo zamano-veli. Kuhluzwe njalo ngokubunjwa kwamagama asetshenziswa kwezemithetho ikakhulu emithethwandaba kwazaphethwa ngokubunjwa kwamathemu esayensi. Lapha kuhluzwe imizamo yokubumba amathemu acandwa nguThemba Dlodlo. Kwezokulotshwa kwesiNdebele kuhluzwe inhlupho zezipele lenhlupho zokwehlukana amabala, ikakhulu olungalinye.

## IMPUMELA

Isahluko sefica sigoqela impumela yalokhu kucubungula lokulonda ulwazi mayelana lokuphathisa kokubunjwa kwezichazamazwi kundinganiso yolimi lwesiNdebele. Okwakuqala singavele sichaze ukubana ikhophasi yesiNdebele yakuveza obala ukuthi isiNdebele sehlukene kusiya ngesiqinti lapho esikhulunywa khona. Okwesibili kwavela obala ukuthi isiNdebele asikhulunywa njengesizulu. Loba kunjalo, kwatholakala ukuthi amaNdebele amanengi afisa ukubana isiZulu kube yisona esilawula uhlonzi lwesiNdebele. Kungalesosizathu bakhona abafisa ukubana isiNdebele sincike kakhulu esiZulwini. Lokhu kugoqela ukupelitshwa kolimi, ukukhulunywa lokulotshwa kwalo.

Kuvelile njalo ekucubunguleni ukuthi akhona amagama avame ukusetshenziswa ekukhulumeni kodwa angathandekiyo nxa sekulotshwa. Kuvele kuyimvama endimini ezinengi ukuthi bakhona abafuna ulimi lwabo lube yindlela ethile loba eqinisweni lun-

ganjalo. Lapha kugoqela amabala: *ibhola le bhora* kumbe *umkhongi ledombo*. Kucacile njalo ukuthi isiNdebele silawo amathemu loba nje esilela kodwa uhlupho yikubana akulandlela elandelwayo yokuwabumba lokuwaqoqa ndawonye. Amathemu okufundisa isiNdebele akhanya ekhona futhi kusobala ayasetshenziswa kodwa asingeze satho okufanayo ngesayensi. Banengi abangeke bakubona kungenzeka ukufunda isamu ngesiNdebele. Loba amathemu kaDlodlo engumzamo omuhle indaba isekugququleni imibono yabantu. Amathemu olimi lomthetho akasimathemu ngeqiniso kodwa yikuhumutsha inkulumo ngesiNdebele. Ulimi lwemithethwandaba luhlupha ngoba vele akusetshenziswa isiNgisi sodwa kodwa kugabhe amagama avela kulimi lwesiLathini. Lokhu kwenza ukubunjwa kwamathemu kubenzima ngoba vele lesiNgisini awamanengi.

Ukucubungula lokhu kuveze obala inkinga eyabhekana labahleli besichazamazwi ezipeleni zesiNdebele. Njengoba kungelandlela ebekwe phansi okumele ilandelwe, lowo lalowo ubhala ngendlela ayifisayo. Ukulonda lokhu kuvezile izipele ezinengi ezicandwe ngenxa yokulotshwa kwesichazamazwi.

## ISIPHETHO

Ukucubungula lokhu kuveze kamhlophe indinganiso yolimi lwesiNdebele eyadaleka ngenxa yokulotshwa kwesichazamazwi sesiNdebele. Lokhu kukubungula bekungeze kwakhangela ulimi lonke jikelele kodwa lezompawu ezihluziweyo ziveze ukubana inkulu inguquko edalwe esiNdebeleni ngenxa yemisebenzi yokuqoqwa kwezichazamazwi. Indinganiso le ivezwe obala emagameni, engcazelweni yamabala, ezipeleni zamabala lokwehlukani kwawo ekulotshweni kanye lekubunjweni kwamathemu. Umsebenzi lo uphetha ngokuthi indinganiso emqoka engabe idaleke olimini lwesiNdebele ayizikubonakala masinya kangaka kodwa eminyakeni ezayo, mhlawumbe izizukulwana yizo ezizakunanzelela lokhu ngeqiniso. Kungoba inguquko olimini ayilula ukunanzeleleka njalo ithatha isikhathi eside kakhulu.



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## ABSTRACT

The thesis assesses the contribution of dictionary-making in Ndebele on the standardisation of the language. The production of the monolingual Ndebele dictionary, **Isichazamazwi SesiNdebele** (ISN), raised a number of issues that have implications on the standardisation of Ndebele. There was the question of whether to keep Ndebele close to Zulu as the former has always depended on the latter for grammar books, dictionaries, and even creative literature. Actually, Ndebele in Zimbabwe is taught alongside Zulu confirming the belief held by many that Ndebele is a dialect of Zulu. Previously only Zulu was offered at secondary school in the place of Ndebele. Basing the ISN entirely on the Ndebele language corpus meant the exclusion of Zulu. The possibility of abandoning Zulu poses two problems: first, Zulu is prestigious among the Ndebele and abandoning it might lead to the rejection of the ISN; and second, if Zulu is no longer setting the standard, then a new norm should be found. The corpus showed that Ndebele has regional varieties, contrary to often-held views, making the choice of a norm for a standard a difficult one.

Language standardisation as part of language planning is usually sanctioned by government departments or similarly authorised language boards, but other agents of standardisation like lexicographers are equally important. That is why the thesis focuses on the role of the ISN on the standardisation of Ndebele. Although editors of the ISN claimed to be descriptive in their dictionary, no dictionary can be entirely descriptive. Editors had to make decisions on vocabulary selection, on senses, pronunciation, spelling and terminology, as well as which loanwords to include and how to spell them. In that way, the standardising role of the ISN on Ndebele is a by-product of the dictionary-making process rather than the purpose of making the dictionary. Areas of standardisation investigated include vocabulary, terminology and orthography in chapters 6, 7 and 8 respectively.

On Ndebele vocabulary, loanwords pose some challenges. Partial language purism has been observed on loanwords in Ndebele. Words from Zulu and other Nguni languages are accepted in Ndebele while those from other African languages tend to be resisted. There is also resistance to loanwords from European languages like English and from Afrikaans although many words from these languages have become part of the Ndebele lexicon. The language situation in Zimbabwe where African languages are confined to the unofficial domain has led to an underdevelopment of terminology in almost all the fields. The focus has been on term development in linguistics, literature, law, and in the natural sciences. The various possible ways of term-development in Ndebele were discussed. The lack of updated rules on Ndebele orthography poses problems to writers and the same problems were faced in the compilation of the ISN. Word division of compounds poses serious problems and the editors of the ISN did not resolve the inconsistency. The spelling of loanwords is problematic too. The ISN lemmatised words with <r>, a symbol representing a sound that some Ndebele

speakers believe should not be part of the Ndebele phonology. I have shown in this research some loanwords that have come into the language and the challenges they posed in spelling and word division.

The thesis covers and combines aspects of language planning, lexicography and corpus linguistics. Approaches from these seemingly distinct disciplines were harmonised and exploited in answering language standardisation problems in Ndebele. Sociolinguistics has no unifying theory, neither have language planning and lexicography. In this research, I did not attempt to confine myself to any particular theory or approach, but I used relevant aspects from a number of theoretical approaches. The Ndebele language corpus is the main source of linguistic evidence in the form of concordances. Those aspects of the Ndebele language that have undergone or need to undergo standardisation as a result of the influence of the ISN are shown in the thesis. Problem areas in Ndebele lexicography are highlighted, problems that lexicographers have to address in future works. Finally, I have shown that Zulu has not been dropped entirely as the norm for Ndebele, even if the ISN claims to be corpus-based. This illustrates the editors' concern for sociolinguistic factors over purely linguistic factors in their decisions. Therefore, decisions made in the ISN as well as on Ndebele language standardisation were influenced more by sociolinguistic reality as perceived by editors than purely academic and linguistic factors.



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# ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

## ABBREVIATIONS

ALLEX Project – African Languages Lexical Project  
ALRI – African Languages Research Institute  
APPL – Applied Extension  
AUG – Augmentative Suffix  
CAUS – Causative Extension  
CL – (noun) class  
COBUILD – Collins Birmingham University International Language Database  
DIM – Diminutive Suffix  
FEM – Feminine Suffix  
FV – final vowel  
IV –initial vowel  
INT – Intensive Extension  
ISN – Isichazamazwi SesiNdebele (the general Ndebele dictionary)  
NEU – Neuter Extension  
NNLC – Ndebele National Language Committee  
OM – Object Marker  
PASS – Passive Extension  
REC – Reciprocal Extension  
SGML – Standard Generalized Markup Language  
SRA – Student Research Assistant(s)  
SM– Subject Marker  
TEI – Text Encoding Initiative  
TM – Tense Marker  
VR – Verb Root

## SYMBOLS

< > orthographic symbol  
/ / phonological symbol  
[ ] phonetic symbol



# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. BACKGROUND

The thesis is on the standardisation of the Ndebele language of Zimbabwe. The main focus is on how the first monolingual Ndebele dictionary and other on-going lexicographic work in Ndebele can influence its standardisation. Until the publication of *Isichazamazwi SesiNdebele* (2001), henceforth ISN, the Ndebele language had little documentation as evidenced by the absence of a comprehensive grammar book or any reference book of academic significance. Since Ndebele has barely been studied (see Hachipola, 1998:3, Chimhundu 1997:129), any comprehensive documentation of the language shall inevitably have to address questions on grammar, terminology and orthography, for example. The teaching of Ndebele language has relied mainly on Zulu texts be it poetry, literature, culture, linguistics or lexicography. Consequently, Ndebele has to some extent adopted aspects of Zulu orthography and terminology, for example. Ndebele and Zulu are sister languages that are very close linguistically and culturally (see 2.2). Some people even believe that Ndebele is a dialect of Zulu and some speakers of Ndebele are keen to keep Ndebele as close as possible to Zulu.

Ndebele is a Southern Bantu language belonging to the Nguni group of languages. It is classified in Zone 40, Group S according to Guthrie's grouping of Bantu languages<sup>1</sup>. Other languages that belong to the Nguni family include Zulu, Xhosa and Transvaal Ndebele or South African Ndebele, all spoken in South Africa, and Swazi, spoken in Swaziland and South Africa. In this thesis, the name 'Ndebele' is used in reference to Zimbabwean Ndebele. Whenever the other Ndebele is referred to, it shall always be qualified as South African Ndebele. There are no studies known to this writer that compare Zimbabwean and South African Ndebele. According to Doke's classification of Bantu languages as shown in Table 2 below, both Zimbabwean Ndebele and South African Ndebele are dialects of Zulu. Guthrie's classification (Table 1) makes Zimbabwean Ndebele a separate language from Zulu but has nothing on South African Ndebele. According to Cope, 'Guthrie regards Zimbabwean Ndebele as a separate language, and Doke, as a Zulu dialect. At present it is a dialect rather than a language, but as it develops its own literature, history and tradition, it will become a language rather than a dialect' (Cope 1993:163).

---

1 ZONES are large aggregations of languages having uniformity or similarity of linguistic phenomena, but which are not necessarily mutually intelligible. The division into Zones is largely a geographical one. Zones are subdivided into GROUPS, within which the languages have the salient phonetic and grammatical features in common, and are so similar as to be mutually intelligible to a considerable extent (Cole 1993:123).

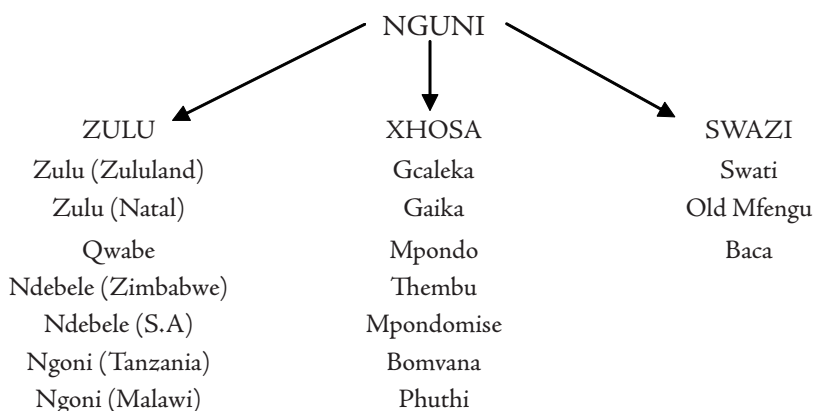
**Table 1: Nguni languages according to Guthrie’s classification**

S 41	Xhosa
S 42	Zulu
S 43	Swazi
S44	Ndebele

(From Hachipola 1998)

As already mentioned previously, Table 1 shows that Zulu and Ndebele are regarded as Nguni languages and there is no mention of South African/ Transvaal Ndebele. Table 2 shows both Zimbabwean and South African Ndebele as belonging to the Zulu language or dialect cluster.

**Table 2: Nguni languages according to Doke’s classification**



(Adapted from Cope 1993)

The controversy on whether the two Ndebele varieties are dialects of Zulu or separate languages had not been settled by the time of writing this research (2002). The controversy, which has linguistic, cultural and political implications, features constantly in the discussion on the standardisation of the Ndebele language. An elaborate description of the historical, cultural and linguistic affinity of Ndebele and Zulu is given in Chapter 2.

The dictionary project at the African Languages Research Institute (ALRI) at the University of Zimbabwe is responsible for the production of the ISN. ALRI bases its dictionaries and other reference books on language corpora. The ISN is partly based on the Ndebele language corpus. The Ndebele language corpus is a sample of spoken and written Ndebele language as used in Zimbabwe. The Ndebele language corpus shows that the Ndebele language is different from the Zulu language in the way it is spoken and written. The corpus also shows that Ndebele is not spoken or written uniformly throughout the Ndebele speech community of Zimbabwe. Producing a monolingual general-purpose dictionary like the ISN, necessitated addressing some standardisation issues, like spelling, word division, capitalisation, meaning, terminology and vocabulary.

It should be noted that while authors of monolingual general-purpose dictionaries for mother tongue speakers can claim that their works are descriptive, still ele-

ments of normativism cannot be entirely avoided. “Total descriptiveness is impossible, because the lexicographer cannot avoid making choices, and total prescriptiveness does not work if it is estranged from the realities of usage,...” (Béjoint 2000:101). General-purpose dictionaries are generally assumed to represent and reflect the lexicon of the language in question and hence the richness of its culture. Therefore, monolingual general-purpose dictionaries are seen not only as linguistic tools but also as a repository of that particular people’s culture. According to Béjoint ‘General-purpose dictionaries occupy a very special position in all the societies that produce them.... The emblematic power of the general-purpose dictionary is so strong, so real in a way, that the dictionary is felt to be necessary to any nation that wants to be recognized as an independent entity. It is one of the rare objects that can materialize the existence of a language, and hence of a nation, acting as a symbol of the unification of a community (Béjoint 2000:137-8). It would be too early now in 2002, one year after the publication of the ISN, to assess and judge its impact on the Ndebele community. However, considering its position as the first monolingual dictionary and being the first research work of its kind, the nation-wide publicity and the public excitement during its launch, we can safely claim that the dictionary will influence the standardisation of the Ndebele language.

The editors of the ISN claim that their dictionary is descriptive, although there is no dictionary that can be entirely descriptive. ‘Dictionaries not only describe a language. Many modern dictionaries are prescriptive works’ (Drame 2001:232). Editors choose which words to define and which not to, they choose how to define and spell them. Even if editors include various pronunciations and spellings of each entry, they still guide as to which usage is preferable, thus being prescriptive. On the other hand, dictionary users usually assume and expect the dictionary to give them the ‘correct’ spelling, pronunciation and usage. The users expect the general-purpose dictionary to give them the ‘standard’ language. Writing on the significance of dictionaries as representing ‘standards’, Fasold states that, “Whenever you look up a word in a dictionary to find a correct spelling, you are referring to an authority’s language-development decision” (Fasold 1984:247). What is noted in this statement is the normative function of dictionaries (Svensén 1993:45). According to Chimhundu ‘a standard dictionary has an important normative influence, as the users accept and apply the lexicographer’s descriptions of word-forms and his statements about their meanings. The dictionary is also the chief instrument in interpreting rules about spelling and pronunciation’ (Chimhundu 1997:140). For a language with little documentation like Ndebele, the production of a monolingual dictionary contributes to a certain extent to the standardisation of spelling, word division and vocabulary, for example. The dictionary tends to be the main reference to verify the “correctness” of spelling or to authenticate usage of some words or expressions. However, as no natural language is static, standardisation is similarly an on-going process. Ndebele is no exception as it is subjected to changes in societal attitudes, expectations and general socio-political factors that influence language planning and policies.

## 1.2. THE PROBLEM AREA

The production of the ISN on the basis of the Ndebele language corpus posed some problems for the editors of the dictionary. Firstly, the corpus shows that Ndebele is

different from Zulu, in some cases. Secondly, the corpus shows Ndebele has varieties, contrary to the often held view that it is spoken uniformly. Decisions had to be made by the editors whether to base their dictionary on the Zulu tradition, as Zulu books are used in schools, or to base it on Ndebele as used by its mother tongue speakers. For a corpus-based Ndebele dictionary, Zulu is out of the question. The problem is how to break from the reliance on Zulu as the reference point while, on the other hand, using linguistic evidence drawn from the corpus. If the corpus were to be relied upon entirely, there is the question of dealing with the varieties of Ndebele, especially on vocabulary items. Whatever decisions and choices the editors of the ISN made, they had to think about the acceptability of their product. There is the problem of balancing tradition with linguistic evidence on one hand and the expectations and aspirations of the dictionary users on the other hand. Whatever decisions they made have a bearing on the standardisation of Ndebele.

Here, we are investigating problems in language as well as in society. It is important for us to address both as they are equally important components of the problem at hand. Being corpus-based the ISN inevitably meant a break from Zulu as the reference point. The ISN had to be based on the language as spoken and written in Zimbabwe. This inevitable break from Zulu as the reference point had its challenges for the editors of the dictionary. Firstly, breaking from Zulu would be breaking from the tradition that has long been established and taken for granted. Secondly, a break from Zulu means establishing a new norm that shall be the basis of the Ndebele standard. The new norm had to be based on Ndebele, but as there are varieties within Ndebele, it is difficult to choose the basis of the norm. Also in word division, spelling and in terminology Ndebele has no agreed standard. The question here is twofold: has the ISN broken the tradition of relying on Zulu as the standard? Secondly, if Zulu is no longer the yardstick for Ndebele, what then is the basis of the norm in the ISN? The research answers these questions by focusing specifically on aspects of vocabulary, terminology and orthography standardisation in Ndebele. In that way the thesis attempts to answer the broad question: *'What contribution can the ISN make towards the standardisation of the Ndebele language?'*

### 1.3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The thesis is in the area of applied sociolinguistics and lexicography, with particular focus on the standardisation of vocabulary, terminology and orthography. The objectives of the study are:

- (a) To identify aspects of vocabulary and terminological standardisation in Ndebele with reference to the monolingual Ndebele dictionary.
- (b) To investigate those aspects of Ndebele orthography which are affected by the production of the ISN.
- (c) To describe and evaluate the monolingual Ndebele dictionary-making process with particular focus on its expected input on Ndebele vocabulary, terminology and orthography.
- (d) To evaluate the contribution of monolingual lexicography in language corpus planning.

## 1.4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Language standardisation entails a wide range of activities. Some of these include the standardisation of spelling, word division, pronunciation, vocabulary, meaning and terminology. The agents of standardisation are many though government ministries or language boards are often the officially recognized agents. Although it is state bodies that sanction the use of languages and its direction, history has shown that some other forces also play very significant roles, e.g. publishing houses, churches, individual writers, and most importantly, lexicographers. In most cases, the standardisation of language results from an interplay of all these forces. In this thesis, it would be impossible to investigate all the possible agents of standardisation or the various aspects of language standardisation. The areas of focus of the thesis are the standardisation of vocabulary, terminology and orthography. These three areas are by no means the most important aspects of language standardisation but, for this thesis, they are adequate within the time and space constraints.

It is important to note that the standardisation of Ndebele is investigated within the limits of the dictionary-making process that produced the ISN. Therefore, the main agent of language standardisation under focus is the dictionary, that is the ISN. It is a common tendency that lexicographic work is independent of language planning although the results have a bearing on it. In a similar manner, language planners rarely utilize the resources and experience from lexicographic research. In this study, lexicography and language planning are both discussed and their common impact on language assessed. In any case, some of the key aspects of standardisation like spelling, pronunciation and terminology are central to dictionary-making in general. In that way, the thesis is in applied sociolinguistics and lexicography, that is, language standardisation.

## 1.5. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

The terms that carry key concepts in this study can be viewed in three categories; namely those that relate to activity on language, those relating to different levels of language and finally those designating language varieties. The activity types include: language planning, language policy, language status planning, language corpus planning and standardisation. Secondly, we have orthography, vocabulary and terminology. Finally, we have language variety, standard language and dialect. The concepts carried by these terms are explained in the way they are used in this thesis.

### 1.5.1. LANGUAGE PLANNING

Although language planning (standardisation included) is studied under sociolinguistics, it has to be noted that language planning activities preceded the discipline of sociolinguistics. The growth of the field of sociolinguistics has not led to any consensus among scholars on the definition of language planning. According to Pauwels, "The lack of consensus among scholars on a definition is reflected in the great variety of terms that exist to describe language planning. These include the terms *linguistic reform*, *language reform*, *deliberate language change*, *planned language change* and *language treatment* as well as terms such as *language engineering* (Pauwels 1998:2).

A number of definitions have been given for language planning. Language planning has been defined as ‘an explicit choice among [language] varieties’ (Fasold 1984), or as ‘a deliberate language change, ...characterized by the formulation and evaluation of alternatives for solving language problems to find the best [or optimal, most efficient] decision’ (Rubin and Jernudd, 1971b). Jernudd and Das Gupta defined it as “an orderly decision-making about language on a national level” (1971:211). From these views on language planning we may draw some of the key concerns of language planning. Firstly, we may note the issue of language diversity and hence the choice among many alternatives. Second, we may note that language planning is not accidental but intentional, hence the terms ‘explicit choice’, ‘orderly decision-making’ and ‘deliberate’. It then brings the question of who does language planning and why. Language planning is always directed towards a certain goal in order to solve perceived language problems. Those who plan language are ‘the wielders of political – economic power in a state, nation, or nationalising entity’ (Herbert 1992). According to Jernudd and Das Gupta “The broadest authorization of planning is obtained from politicians. A body of experts is then specifically delegated the task of preparing a plan” (1971:196).

The view that language authorization comes from a central authority has been challenged by some scholars like Bamgbose (1991) and Alexander (1992) as there are numerous players in language planning. Some of these are non-governmental, such as publishers, the media, churches and individuals. We should also note that language planning is a very broad activity involving both political decisions and linguistic ones. The more political aspects of language planning seem to be those relating to status planning while the linguistic ones are corpus-planning activities. For that reason, we can say that language planning includes all the activities ranging from selection and delegation of functions to each variety to codification, fixing grammar and pronunciation rules as well as elaborating the various features of a language and the implementation of these plans.

### 1.5.2. STATUS PLANNING

Status planning refers to the selection of “a language code for a specific purpose [or] allocating functions to specific language(s) and on regulating the use of languages in a community” (Pauwels 1998:2). Status planning (Kloss 1969) is also referred to as the policy approach (Neustupný 1968) or language determination (Jernudd 1971). In that way, status planning is that part of language planning that specifically focuses on policy issues. It is the power dimension aspect of language planning, a ‘language-status policy is by its very nature a political activity’ (Spolsky 1998:69). This brings another problematic term, that is, **language policy**. Bamgbose states that, “**language policy** is used ... to refer largely to any planning on language status” (Bamgbose 1991:111). Therefore, status planning and language policy may refer to the same activities.

Activities associated with status planning and language policy include **language allocation**. **Language allocation** of functions refers to the designation of functions to a language or languages, for instance granting one language the status of medium of instruction and the other that of a school subject. Language status planning may involve language standardisation, language revival, or even introduction of an artificial language (Bamgbose 1991:109). An example of language status planning in Zimbabwe is the designation of specific functions to languages. The decision in Zimbabwe to



designate English as the official language (medium of instruction) while Ndebele and Shona are designated as national languages (school subjects) and the rest minority languages (can be taught up to fourth grade).

### 1.5.3. CORPUS PLANNING

Corpus planning relates to the various activities done on the body of language in order to enable it to perform certain functions in a certain desired way. In other words, corpus planning is language cultivation (Neustupný 1968) and language development (Jernudd 1971), which involves “the regulation of aspects of an existing language or language variety” (Pauwels 1998). Some of the activities related to corpus planning include orthographic work, terminology development, lexicographic work and the production of grammar or language manuals.

Corpus planning is carried out on a language or language variety in order to ensure that the body of the language itself – the corpus – conforms to the “demands made on it by its functions” (Bamgbose 1991:110). Unlike status planning, corpus planning is usually an on-going process, which can be done in anticipation of the possible functions the language might have in future or may be done in order for the language to cope with functions it is already serving. A number of corpus planning related activities may be done simultaneously while some can be done independently of others and at different periods. For example, the production of a dictionary can be done simultaneously with the regulation of pronunciation whereas vocabulary expansion can be done independently and at a later period.

With various activities all under corpus planning, there is obviously no one model of how corpus planning is done. Similarly, it is not easy to specify who should do what in corpus planning as maybe one can do with status planning. Government departments, academies, publishing houses, missionaries, individuals and professional linguists have been involved in one way or the other in the various activities related to corpus planning. Therefore, lay and professional people have all been involved in corpus planning.

In Africa, the European missionaries and to some extent traders, hunters and travellers were the first corpus planners for most African languages in the nineteenth century. “In Africa, the beginnings of language standardisation go back to pre-colonial and early colonial periods when missionaries began to have the Bible, or parts of it, translated into African languages and engaged in developing teaching materials for primary education in mission schools” (Wolff 2000:333). The significant corpus planning activity for most African languages so far has been orthographic work. With many African languages still without a written form, the basic corpus activity for such languages is to develop alphabets for them. For the few that already have writing systems, there are still spelling reforms of one form or the other. In some cases it is the harmonisation of the orthographies like that of Hausa, Fulfulde, Mandingo, and Kanuri or spelling reforms like that of Luganda in Uganda, Igbo, Kanuri, Yoruba in Nigeria and Shona in Zimbabwe (Bamgbose 1991:137). Due to the fact that few if any, African languages are used in science, modern technology, education and administration there is not much done so far on terminology development. By terminology development we refer to both the creation and the use of the terms created. Apart from some isolated cases, for example, Kiswahili and Somali, the few cases on vocabulary expansion and termi-

nology work done so far do not go beyond the terminology glossaries compiled and published but never used. Dictionaries in African languages were designed primarily for second language learning and are therefore bilingual and there is a marked paucity of monolingual dictionaries for African languages. Most of these bilingual dictionaries are no better than mere wordlists with English or French translation.

The rather skewed corpus planning development in African languages in general stems from status planning which has so far relegated these languages to the informal domestic space. It would seem that unless a language is used as a medium of instruction for instance, there is no motivation for some aspects of corpus planning like terminology development. This observation perhaps confirms the claim that “the least developed or least advanced speech-and-writing communities may need to be disproportionately concerned with policy formation planning, whereas the most developed or most advanced communities are able to devote proportionately more attention to cultivation planning” (Fishman 1975:56). An example of language corpus planning in Ndebele was the change from the disjunctive to the conjunctive writing system (refer to 2.3).

#### 1.5.4. LANGUAGE STANDARDISATION

Language standardisation refers to ‘the development of a given dialect or group of dialects as a norm for the language in question’ (Bamgbose 1991:109). Standardisation as an activity goes beyond mere selection or allocation of function to a variety or varieties, but it has to involve the actual fixing of the norm by elaborating and by implication prescribing rules of ‘correct’ usage. Although in some instances language standardisation is treated as a language status planning activity (Bamgbose 1991), standardisation has more of corpus planning activities than those of the former.

In this research, standardisation is treated as a corpus planning activity. Selecting the standard is a status planning activity but the actual process of standardisation is more of a corpus activity, and we will treat it as such. This should not bring any problems as far as argumentation is concerned, in any case the distinction between status and corpus planning is blurred and more of a distinction in theory than in practice (Pauwels 1998:2). As stated already on the scope of the study (1.4), the focus is on the standardisation of vocabulary, terminology and orthography. Phonology is not specifically covered in this study due to space constraints, but in discussing morphology and orthography, aspects of Ndebele phonology are alluded to. For that reason, investigation into possible standardisation of pronunciation has been excluded from this study. Tone marking or guide to pronunciation is not included in the ISN. The advanced Ndebele dictionary being compiled by ALRI will mark tone, that is, if no changes are made to its style manual. Below are the levels of language that are the focus of standardisation, that is, vocabulary, terminology and orthography.

#### 1.5.5. VOCABULARY

Vocabulary refers to the entire stock of words of a given language. We distinguish between general vocabulary and specialised ones. In this study we use ‘vocabulary’ to refer to ‘general vocabulary.’ In some cases, vocabulary is used to refer to the words in a dictionary or to the mental lexicon of an individual. Studying the entire lexicon of a given

language is an impossible mission. Therefore, the notion of core vocabulary was postulated in order to focus on specific common words in a given language. What constitutes the core vocabulary is problematic and the criteria for delineating it are many.

For our study, the focus is mainly on loanwords in Ndebele. Every language accepts and rejects different words for different reasons. Vocabulary planning is an important part of language planning. In dictionary-making the selection of certain words in lemmatisation reflects policy on vocabulary standardisation.

### 1.5.6. TERMINOLOGY

**Terminology** refers to the study of terms in special fields. It is part of vocabulary although it has its specific concerns and focus (refer to 7.1). For that reason, terminology is discussed in this thesis separately from vocabulary. In Ndebele, the focus is on term development. The development of specialised terms could be by adoption, translation or coinage. One of the definitions of language planning is that it is “the organized pursuit of solutions to language problems...” (Fishman 1975). One common problem to languages in general is to cope with new developments and changes in modern society, especially in specialised fields. For most African languages, this problem is even more acute because the languages have not been used in formal situations like industry, commerce, education or law. There is, therefore, an absence of specialised terminology in African languages for the various disciplines one can think of. This is an area of corpus planning where language cultivation should be emphasized.

To develop terminology, there is a need for the elaboration of the various codes of the language. For most languages undergoing terminology development, the common debate has been whether to accept foreign words or coin indigenous ones. The debate is on nationalistic and cultural concerns on the one hand and on the other the considerations for effective and efficient acquisition and dissemination of scientific ideas. Whichever option is taken, corpus-planning activities do take place. For example, if a loan word is opted for, it still has to be adapted to suit the lexical, morphological, phonological and orthographic pattern of the target language. Maybe that can be concluded by the view that, “Work on terminology is a more advanced stage of corpus planning” (Bamgbose 1991:138).

For Ndebele, the only subject area where significant terminology development has occurred is grammar and literature. Perhaps this should be expected of a language whose use is confined mainly to the domestic domain. The formal situations where Ndebele is used are limited making the teaching of its grammar and literature as subjects up to university level a notable one.

### 1.5.7. ORTHOGRAPHY

Orthography refers to a writing system, which includes spelling, word-division and rules on punctuation. The first orthographic activity for a language without an alphabet is known as **graphization**. **Graphization** is the development of writing systems for unwritten languages. This has been the main corpus planning activity in Africa especially by the early European missionaries who translated the scriptures into African languages and established the first schools. After the alphabet has been devised

for a language, it usually faces new problems as the status and function of the language changes or when new findings about the language come in. The need for changes in the writing system to meet the new expectations leads to spelling reforms.

**Spelling reform** refers to all orthographic activities done to a language that already has a written system, from harmonisation of orthography to changing the writing system/script or the addition of new symbols in the alphabet. Although spelling reform is a corpus planning activity, it would seem that it is more of a status planning concern, as it usually requires an authoritative body to sanction it. In Africa, spelling reforms are likely to be dominated by harmonisation of alphabets as the initial work in this area was uncoordinated and resulted in different alphabets for similar languages or the same language. For example, in Ndebele the spelling reforms were influenced largely by prevailing perceptions on the similarity or dissimilarity of Ndebele and Zulu.

It is probably in spelling more than in any other corpus planning activity that **normativism** is pronounced. **Normativism** is the “prescription of the correct version” and the dismissal of all variation as deviant (Spolsky 1998:33). Standard language dictionaries are typical cases of normativism in terms of spelling and pronunciation.

### 1.5.8. LANGUAGE VARIETY

Language variety is a term used to denote any identifiable kind of language (Spolsky 1998: 126). In Ndebele, we may recognize language varieties like the type of Ndebele spoken in the cities, the Ndebele used in the media, the Ndebele varieties of geographical areas like Bulalimangwe, Gokwe or Gwanda districts. The notable differences are in lexical items and in some cases pronunciation. These reflect varieties of the same Ndebele language. I have not found any differences at the level of syntax. At another level, there is a **dialect**, which is ‘a distinctive variety of a language used by speakers in a particular geographical region or in a particular social group’ (Trask 1993:82). I would not classify the variation in Ndebele as dialectal. The reason being that the variation is not caused by geographical or social differences as such but by interference from other languages (see 2.6).

In Zimbabwe, the best-documented dialects are the Shona dialects of Zezuru, Manyika, Karanga, Korekore and Ndau. The term dialect is problematic because it is not easy to delineate between a dialect and a language. The two concepts could be seen as referring to ranges in a continuum, and depending on the context the same variety can be designated as a dialect and in another, as a language. For example, while Ndebele and Zulu are recognised as distinct languages in Zimbabwe and South Africa respectively, the two are linguistically speaking dialects of the same language (see 2.2) in the same sense as say Karanga and Zezuru or Manyika or Korekore are considered to be dialects of the same language.

### 1.5.9. STANDARD LANGUAGE

This refers to the variety of language decreed as the ideal and acceptable norm. It is the product of language planning. The Ndebele taught in schools represents the standard language whereas the regional varieties of Ndebele do not. Hence, language planning in general refers to the standard language or the variety chosen to be a standard lan-

guage. The standard language is marked by rules of grammar and spelling. Therefore it is referred to as the codified language. The non-standard languages, especially in the African situation, are reduced to vernaculars. A **vernacular** is a non-standard local variety spoken by the common people and usually not written.

## 1.6. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ndebele has one bilingual dictionary in the current orthography and the ISN is currently the only monolingual dictionary. There is no comprehensive grammar book except Pelling and Pelling (1987), an elementary book mainly for second language learners. Nonetheless, there are some works in lexicography in general that have relevance to this thesis. Zgusta (1971) has useful information, especially on aspects of dictionary-making which any lexicographer must take cognizance of. Although this text does not draw illustrations from the Ndebele experience, it is valuable for its general information on lexicography. Hartmann (2001) is very helpful and relevant for this research's component on lexicography and dictionary criticism. The book gives updated perspectives on dictionary research. The focus of this book is on European lexicography in general, although some of the ideas and theories discussed are applicable to lexicography in African languages too. Béjoint (2000) gives a description of the general-purpose dictionary and its role in society. Apart from its important role as the authority on language, the general-purpose dictionary has cultural and political functions in society. This socio-cultural value of general-purpose dictionaries to their respective language communities is of great significance to this thesis that studies the standardising role of a general-purpose dictionary on Ndebele. The book has valuable ideas on dictionary criticism that were useful for this research.

Another publication of interest, by LANTAG (1996a), covers relatively recent and relevant issues on lexicography in African languages. It has sections on the lexicographic needs of Zulu, Xhosa and Swazi, which like Ndebele are Nguni languages. This book is very useful to this thesis for its treatment of lexicographic problems in African languages. The information in this publication is complemented by another text from the same publisher, LANTAG (1996b). The book deals with language planning, which to some extent involves language standardisation, which is the focus of this thesis. However, the limitation of these two works is that their focus is on South Africa and the development of lexicography in that country is different from that in Zimbabwe.

A systematic approach to building a corpus is given in Sinclair (1987). Although the book describes the compilation of an English language corpus at Birmingham, it is still relevant for its general descriptions and decision-making guidelines in corpus building. Kennedy (1998) gives a lucid analysis to corpus and computational linguistics. Reference is made to various language corpora and how they have been put into use in various kinds of research. The book has been useful, especially as a guide in the formulation of the methodology of this research as it is mainly corpus-based. The *Progress and Workshop Reports* (1993 & 1994), edited by Chimhundu, have valuable ideas on the various problems that face lexicographers. The reports were written from the experiences derived while compiling a Shona language dictionary and some aspects directly relate to the Shona language. The reports have been useful for this study as the compilation of the Ndebele language corpus and the writing of the ISN followed closely that of the Shona language corpus and the general Shona dictionary respectively.

Mbaabu (1996) describes language planning in focussing on the role of Kiswahili in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda respectively. The thrust of the book is on language status planning although it also addresses language corpus planning activities. It also describes the standardisation of Kiswahili. This aspect on the standardisation of Kiswahili and terminology development in that language is relevant for this thesis. The position and function of Kiswahili in Tanzania gives a good case study of what is possible with an African language in independent African states. Work elsewhere in African languages, Ndebele included, gets inspiration and lessons from the Tanzanian experience with Kiswahili. For that reason, this book gives interesting case studies for comparison with the language situation in Zimbabwe. Hachipola (1998) addresses the language situation in Zimbabwe. Although Ndebele is not focussed on in this book, as it is not designated as a minority language but a national one, the discussion of the languages of Zimbabwe inevitably touches on aspects of Ndebele. Besides, this thesis addresses standardisation problems in Ndebele, some of which derive from Ndebele's contact with the minority languages. In that way, Hachipola's book is valuable for this research, especially its sociolinguistic information on Zimbabwe in general.

The bilingual Ndebele-English dictionary by Pelling (1971) does not have much information in its front matter but it does have enough to infer on some principles followed in compiling the dictionary. This is crucial because, while the present lexicographic work in Ndebele is based on different principles, still the background set by this Ndebele dictionary cannot be ignored, especially in as far as the standardisation of Ndebele is concerned. An M.A. thesis by the present researcher, *'Word Division and Spelling in Ndebele: Approaches and Implications,'* gives an account of some aspects of the standardisation of spelling in Ndebele, which is relevant for this research. That work is limited as it focusses on problematic spellings whereas the present research goes beyond that to include aspects of morphology, vocabulary, terminology and other lexicographic dimensions not covered by the earlier work.

This thesis contributes to the literature on aspects of Ndebele grammar, vocabulary studies, terminology, orthography and language standardisation. It contributes knowledge on monolingual lexicography and corpus linguistics in African languages in general. The standardising role of monolingual dictionaries, especially on African languages in a situation similar to that of Ndebele is one important contribution of this thesis to African lexicography and language planning.

## 1.7. THE RESEARCHER'S ROLE IN THE CORPUS AND ISN

It is imperative to explain my role in compiling the Ndebele language corpus and editing the ISN as both are crucial elements in this study. I was the Team leader (1997-1999) of researchers who compiled the Ndebele language corpus and the ISN. As the team leader, I also had some administrative duties within the team in addition to the general tasks of building the corpus and writing the dictionary. Finally, nine researchers edited the ISN and I was the chief editor. It is important to mention the role of the two Project coordinators who administered the work and the contribution of the cooperating partners from the universities of Oslo and Gothenburg. Student Research Assistants collected oral material from the Ndebele-speaking districts of

Zimbabwe. Data entry operators typed in most of the interviews transferring it from exercise books to computer files. The editors were responsible for proofreading, scanning texts, tagging files and parsing them. Importing files into the corpus database is the responsibility of the Corpus Administrator, Daniel Ridings. At team level there are corpus managers who work with the corpus administrator and for the first two years I was the corpus manager for the Ndebele team. It is important to give this background about the various contributors to both the corpus and the ISN in order to explain my own contribution.

First, the study of language standardisation could have been done without either the corpus or the dictionary. This statement does not in anyway underplay the significance of the corpus and the dictionary in this thesis. Actually, as the deliberate thrust of this thesis shows, these two are indispensable components of the study. The focus on standardisation of Ndebele through dictionary-making became a possible area of study to me after my involvement in both corpus work and lexicography.

Second, the editors of the ISN did not set out to standardise Ndebele but they faced problems which forced them to contribute to the standardisation of the language. The problems that they faced, for example how to spell loanwords, were problems of a lexicographic nature. Some of the problems, especially of an orthographic nature, were known to me, as they are to most Ndebele language teachers. My involvement in corpus work and dictionary-making broadened my awareness of the scope of the language problems. This was partly because the ISN used the Ndebele language corpus in lemmatisation and in deriving senses for definitions and citations. The corpus availed information previously unknown about the nature of Ndebele as spoken at present. These discoveries were both exciting and problematic for the editors of the ISN. The problems required the editors to make decisions as to what to include in the dictionary and how to treat whatever has been included. These were problems whose immediate solutions were lexicographic but whose long-term impact amounts to language standardisation.

The thesis does not intend to document corpus building or dictionary making, which is already documented in the various ALLEX Project Progress and Workshop Reports series edited by Chimhundu. The thesis is applying what has been done of lexicographic work to answer some general language problems. These are problems that were not caused by dictionary making but were highlighted by the activity.

Compiling the corpus and editing the dictionary availed to me opportunities to observe and address some standardisation issues in the language. This thesis investigates language standardisation and draws linguistic evidence from the corpus and from the dictionary-making process. It is not a review of the corpus compiling process or that of dictionary making. It merely draws evidence from these linguistic sources to advance research questions on language standardisation. As already stated before, language standardisation has been studied elsewhere without reference to lexicography. Lexicography has been studied and continues to be studied with no reference to corpus linguistics or to language standardisation.

My own contribution to this interdisciplinary field is in drawing from all these seemingly disparate disciplines and showing the interplay of factors that may influence language standardisation. Therefore, there is no conflict of interests as far as the thrust and objectives of this thesis are concerned. It is however important to acknowledge that it is involvement in corpus work and the compiling of the monolingual Ndebele dictionary that raised not only the interest in this study but also the questions that the

research seeks to investigate. As lexicography is both the production of and research in dictionaries, the study that I have done is a logical development from the lexicographic work that has taken place in Ndebele. Such a focus and selection of items for study would be unimaginable without the Ndebele language corpus and the ISN. In that way, this thesis is an original research on language standardisation in Ndebele and its findings are a contribution to the fields of corpus linguistics, lexicography and language standardisation.

## 1.8. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to *The New International Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus* (2000:1001), a theory is defined as 'A body of the fundamental principles underlying a science or the application of science.' We give this definition of theory because in disciplines like socio-linguistics there is no consensus as to what constitutes a theory. This is partly due to the dual parentage of sociolinguistics, taking from both linguistics and sociology. According to Neuman, 'Researchers use theory differently in various types of research, but some type of theory is present in most social research. It is less evident in applied or descriptive than in basic or explanatory research' (Neuman 2000:40). This view holds true for our area of study too, that is, language planning and lexicography, which we claim here to be applied and descriptive too. Because theoretical fundamentals are salient in these areas, we have to look into the questions addressed by these researches and the methodology in order to come out with the underlying principles. According to Coupland et.al (2001:1), 'theory influences how research questions are formulated and carried through into description, analysis and application.'

### 1.8.1. THEORY IN SOCIOLINGUISTICS

Sociolinguistics is the social study of linguistic diversity and of how linguistic differences reflect social differences (Herbert, 1992). As a discipline, it straddles the study of language and that of society, that is, linguistics and sociology respectively. Although it is now a fully-fledged discipline, sociolinguistics does not yet have a single unifying theory, and from the trends in the discipline, such a theory might never come about. It has no common focus nor does it "reflect fundamental agreement on common problems, sources of data, or methods of analysis" (Gumperz and Hymes 1986:vi). Due to conclusions drawn from comparisons with autonomous linguistics, sociolinguistics has been described as 'theoretically deficient' or 'atheoretical', that is, it has failed to 'produce a theory of its own' (Coulmas 1997:5). According to Spolsky, "They apply a plethora of methods to a multitude of subjects that all have in common one single thread: languages and their use in social contexts" (Spolsky 1998:4).

Writing in 1970, de Camp said, 'at present, sociolinguistics is at worst a poorly-defined interdisciplinary activity, at best an empirical discipline without a theoretical basis' (Figueroa 1994:3). Sociolinguists have since responded to these allegations of deficiency in their field (Figueroa 1994, Coulmas 1997, Coupland et al 2001). Figueroa places the debate on sociolinguistic theory, what she calls 'metatheory', within "a tradition of longstanding discourse on the nature of reality, knowledge, description and explanation" (Figueroa 1994:4). She believes that a sociolinguistic theory of lin-



guistics and language could be brought about in sociolinguistics. On the other hand, Coupland et al (2001) believe that sociolinguistic theory should be part of, and contribute to, social theory.

Assumptions about theory in sociolinguistics are polarised on the basis of either focus on language or on society, the two main strands that constitute sociolinguistics. Those on the language side, represented at the extreme by Romaine (1994), Trudgill (1978) and Labov (1994), believe that 'sociolinguistics proper should be aimed at improving linguistic theory and at developing our understanding of the nature of language...(Coupland et al 2001:4). According to Coulmas (1997:4), 'Linguistic theory is hence a theory about language without human beings.' Theorists, whose bias is on society are represented by Coupland et al (2001) and their views have already been stated above.

Nonetheless, the controversy of whether sociolinguistic theory should be linguistic or social theory has not left the discipline devoid of theories as some critics cited earlier would like to claim. Leading theorists in sociolinguistics include Labov, Hymes, Gumperz, Romaine, Figueroa, Hudson and Fishman. The work of these sociolinguists has influenced and guided further research in sociolinguistics including theorising on sociolinguistics. It is not our intention here to outline each theoretical position taken by the various sociolinguists. It suffices to account for the main problems of theory in the area as this has a bearing on both the methods and theoretical assumptions of this study.

For our study, we shall recognize sociolinguistics as 'the study of language in social life,' therefore, sociolinguistic theory 'has to work explicitly at the language/society interface and orient to both sides' (Coupland et al 2001:5). My background being in linguistics rather than in sociology, naturally my precision on linguistic facts is higher than that on social facts. Nevertheless, attempts are made throughout the study to scrutinize social facts rather than taking them as given. Standardisation, which is part of language planning, is a clear case of the interface of language and society. The choice of a sociolinguistic theory that attempts to balance linguistic and social facts is determined and justified by the nature of this thesis. This study is not confined to any single theory but several relevant theories are applied.

### 1.8.2. THEORY IN LANGUAGE PLANNING

The controversy on sociolinguistic theory is carried to language planning, which is applied sociolinguistics. Those who favour the social theory of sociolinguistics criticise language planning theorists for bias towards structuralism. According to Watts, "Much of the literature on language planning (see Haugen 1966, Fishman 1972, Cooper 1989) is written from a static, structuralist perspective on society, in which social groups, social roles, social institutions, etc., are taken as 'givens' with language mediating between them in some sense" (Coupland et al 2001:297). Watts would rather have a view where neither linguistic factors nor social factors are taken as given. He further advises that for any language planning activity to be successful it should apply post-structuralist theories like the ones propounded by Bourdieu (1991) and Fairclough (1989, 1992). He says to do otherwise would mean that in 'Language planning projects they propose may have little or no effect on the real-life language practices of individuals' (Coupland et al 2001:298).

Most literature on language planning is describing specific situations, although generalisations are thereafter assumed to be applicable elsewhere. One of the early views of language planning comes from Haugen:

By language planning I understand the activity of preparing a normative orthography, grammar, and dictionary for the guidance of writers and speakers in a non-homogenous speech community (Haugen 1972:133).

One may make a claim that Haugen's early definition of language planning is rather restricted to what is now taken to be corpus-planning activities. We may note also that subsequent definitions of language planning became more encompassing as the field became clearer in delimitation. To illustrate the afore-mentioned changes of definitions of 'language planning' extracts are presented below of various definitions since Haugen's, showing how different writers emphasize different things.

Writers seem not to use the term theory much in language planning literature, but from their descriptions and analysis of specific language situations, we can deduce the theoretical framework informing their models. The very notion of language planning means different things to different researchers in the field, reflecting the underlying ideological and theoretical fundamentals informing their conceptualisation of language planning (see also 1.5.1). Let us look at some definitions of language planning in order to support our claim:

1. Language planning is an organized pursuit of solutions to language problems –Jernudd and Das Gupta.
2. 'I think we can define LP as the evaluation of linguistic change' - Haugen 1972:162.
3. Language planning is a deliberate language change characterised by the formulation and evaluation of alternatives for solving language problems – Rubin and Jernudd
4. Language planning is the authoritative allocation of resources to the attainment of language status and language corpus goals, whether in connection with new functions that are aspired to, or in connection with old functions that need to be discharged more adequately –Fishman
5. Language planning aims to 'reduce competition between languages or language varieties and to rationally structure their coexistence within society' – Abou (1987:11).
6. Language planning refers to deliberate efforts to influence the behaviour of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes – Cooper (1989:45)

From the definitions above and the literature on language planning in general, we can infer some underlying concerns on language planning. We can note the common features like: perceived language problems, various alternatives to choose from, deliberate language change, and goal orientation. These have been summarised into three major categories, namely:

- (a) linguistic factors,
- (b) social factors, and
- (c) political factors.

For this thesis, we are interested in the linguistic dimension of language planning. That is where we place standardisation, the focus of the thesis. While the choice of one variety to be the basis of standardisation is part of language status planning, we treat the standardisation process as part of corpus planning. According to Kloss's dual nature of language planning, corpus planning 'refers to all actions aiming at modifying the nature of the language itself, while status planning is concerned with whether the social status of a language should be lowered or raised' (Coulmas 1997:448). This distinction between corpus planning and status planning is useful for discussion; however, in reality such distinctions are blurred and sociolinguists in general have acknowledged that.

Below is a selection of some principles of corpus planning as outlined by Vikør (1993:280), which are applied in this study:

1. Internal linguistic principles
  - a. phonemicity,
  - b. morphophonemicity,
  - c. simplicity,
  - d. etymology,
  - e. invariance,
  - f. stability.
2. Principles related to attitudes towards other languages
  - a. rapprochement or adaptation,
  - b. reaction (purism).
3. Principles concerning the relationships between the language and its users
  - a. majority,
  - b. liberality,
  - c. prestige,
  - d. counter-prestige,
  - e. usage,
  - f. estheticism,
  - g. rationalism.
4. Principles derived from societal ideologies.
  - a. nationalism,
  - b. traditionalism,
  - c. democracy, egalitarianism
  - d. modernity,
  - f. authority.

The principles are universal although they were formulated with particular language situations in focus. Some of the principles are relevant to corpus planning in Zimbabwe in general as well as to the standardisation of Ndebele in particular. These principles are applied, especially in the study of orthographic changes in Ndebele. The first and second group of principles are the ones that seem most relevant to our discussion on orthography in Ndebele (refer 8.3). Explanation of the principles and their applicability to Ndebele are given in the respective sections where the principles are applied.

The choice of a theoretical framework for this study is determined by the methodology and areas of focus, which include vocabulary, terminology, orthography and lexicography. Actually, as the title shows, the thesis is in language planning and lexicography. Therefore, this research also takes into account theories in lexicography.

### 1.8.3. THEORY IN LEXICOGRAPHY

In the introduction to the **Dictionary of Lexicography**, it has been written that: 'Lexicography, often misconceived as a branch of linguistics, is *sui generis*, a field whose endeavours are informed by the theories and practices of information science, literature, publishing, philosophy, and historical, comparative and applied linguistics' (Hartmann and James 1998:vii). Just like in sociolinguistics in general, lexicography also has problems of positioning itself firmly on a theoretical background due to its history as a field of academic study. To some, lexicography is a branch of linguistics. According to Jackson and Amvela (2000:185), 'lexicography is applied lexicology'. However, as the above quotation states, another position opposes that view. Lexicography is believed to be a discipline in its own right (Hartmann 2001:33).

If lexicography is not part of linguistics, then it should have its own theories that are not necessarily linguistic theories. Hartmann laments the lack of lexicography theories when he says:

An accompanying theory has been slow in coming; there is therefore not a strong skeleton to attach disciplinary flesh to. No wonder, then, that practitioners working in a university context still often claim to be part of philology, languages, applied linguistics, media studies, information technology and other subject groups in order to improve their academic respectability (Hartmann 2001:7).

Hartmann is obviously overstating the concern for a theory of lexicography; otherwise, lexicographers have generally been respected for their works regardless of whether it was considered an academic discipline or not. Nonetheless, we do underline the importance of a clear theory on lexicography. This concern of theory; as already stated previously, is complicated by defining what constitutes lexicography. Wiegand described what lexicography is by claiming that it is not "a science, a craft, part of linguistics and applied lexicology" but claimed that it is "a calculable, analysable, checkable, manageable, testable and teachable practical process, or 'cultural practice', aimed at producing dictionaries to satisfy the reference needs of their users" (Hartmann 2001:12).

It might seem to be ironic that it is problematic to delimit what constitute theory in lexicography, when in fact, lexicography is also defined as 'the theory and practice of dictionary-making'. One assumption that can be drawn here is that any dictionary-making process is informed by theory even if it could not be explicitly stated. Secondly, lexicographers usually comment on their work, either in their dictionaries as front matter or later elsewhere. That could also be taken as forming part of the theory. 'When lexicographers reflect on their practice and speculate and generalise about joys and limits of their work, they move into the realm of theory, or metalexigraphy' (Hartmann 2001:27). Metalexigraphy, or dictionary research has models, principles and methodology from which we can infer the underlying theoretical framework. Wiegand (1998) outlined what he believes should be the aim of dictionary research and says it should answer theoretical, methodological, terminological, historical and pedagogical questions that may arise in

- The design and compilation of new dictionaries
- The care and maintenance of older dictionaries

- The critical evaluation of dictionaries
- The assessment of the dictionary user's needs and skills
- The use of computers in dictionary-making and dictionary research
- The elaboration of a history of dictionary-making and dictionary research
- The determination of the cultural-historical importance of dictionaries
- The specification of dictionary formats and structures
- The specification of the information categories contained in dictionaries
- The classification of dictionaries into types
- The teaching of dictionary reference skills
- The systematic documentation of dictionaries and the metalexigraphic literature
- The development of a general theory of lexicography (Hartmann 2001:30).

One can claim that most contemporary dictionary projects would answer these questions in one way or the other. Similarly, experiences from compiling the ISN enables its editors to answer the above concerns. Generally, dictionary research has been in either dictionary history, dictionary criticism, dictionary typology or dictionary use. Hartmann adds dictionary structure. The above points by Wiegand (1998) can also fit into these major categories.

In this thesis, dictionary criticism is the main focus (see chapter 5). By the time of writing this thesis (2002), just a year after publishing the Ndebele dictionary, it is too early to measure the user response to the dictionary. Still, in dictionary criticism questions about perceived user needs and skills are addressed.

#### 1.8.4. A DESCRIPTIVE SOCIOLINGUISTICS APPROACH

The thesis utilizes various theories in sociolinguistics, language planning and lexicography. Overall, the approach is descriptive and sociolinguistic. The descriptive approach presupposes the characterisation of linguistic phenomena as they are observed to exist, not as they 'should be' (Burkhanov 1998:61). On those parts of the thesis relating to lexicography, the dictionary criticism model was followed. We combine views of some of the leading theorists in the field, namely: Zgusta, Svensén, Landau, Sinclair, Hartmann and Béjoint. In language planning, we draw mainly from Haugen, Fishman, Spolsky, Jernudd, Vikør, Kloss, Das Gupta and Bamgbose.

Although it is still controversial in both sociolinguistics and lexicography what constitutes theory, it has been shown that the two disciplines are informed by theoretical underpinnings, albeit with no unifying theory. It has been shown also that although both disciplines are yet to have a firm basis as independent disciplines, they are multidisciplinary and can both jointly help describe the linguistic situation and potential effects of dictionary-making in Ndebele. As noted previously, theories in language planning are grounded on the particular language or country being addressed, and the same can be said of theories in lexicography. Each language has a different history and different dictionary needs. No dictionary is exactly like the other. Whatever is known on metalexigraphy, is based on particular languages at a particular time within a particular culture. The Ndebele language situation is similarly unique in those respects. Therefore, no theories were applied wholesale. They have been adapted and in some cases even redefined concepts in a way that helps explain the case for Ndebele. Although it is not the explicitly stated objective of this thesis, the results of the analy-

sis and the conclusions drawn constitute a theory as well, that is, if one maintains the definition of theory as 'a body of the fundamental principles underlying a science or the application of science.'

## 1.9. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.

The main limitation of this research is the grappling with the notion of standardisation itself. It is as elusive as the notion of language. Language change is characteristically slow and takes place over a long period, at least the realisation of some changes. It has been argued that standardisation of language is an exercise in futility as language is continually changing. One might say that, whatever results a piece of research may establish on the degree of standardisation of language, those results would in reality have been overtaken by constant change in the language and therefore rendered invalid. Standardisation is here defined as a deliberate effort to control the natural language change. Whether such attempts are successful or not, desirable or not, is not the focus of this research. Its focus is on the intentions (plans) and actions that some members of society attempt in regulating how language should be used. Therefore, as long as there are conscious efforts to do anything to a language, the study of language planning remains an important activity. The possible effects of standardisation on language are multiple but for the convenience of this research only terminology, vocabulary, and orthography are covered.

Closely related to the first limitation is the method of studying standardisation. Standardisation presupposes variation. It would mean studying all aspects of variation in Ndebele. As such an endeavour would be impossible to achieve, focus was on aspects of variation that were predetermined early in the research. The variation was studied using the Ndebele language corpus at ALRI. The Ndebele language corpus itself was a limitation too. It is largely composed of creative texts, especially novels, and very little texts in specialised language. This is due to the level of development and functions accorded to Ndebele as a language. The limitation of the corpus was minimised by selecting relevant texts for specialised terms in linguistic, literary and legal disciplines. These were adequate for the purposes of this research.

## 1.10. OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

Chapter 2 gives background information on Ndebele in so far as its standardisation is concerned. The history of Ndebele orthography is outlined as well as the history of lexicographic work in the language. A brief account of the sociolinguistic reality of Zimbabwe is given. The purpose of this background information is to place the thesis within the relevant historical context and show the importance of standardisation at the current phase of language planning in Zimbabwe. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology used in this study and describes the Ndebele language corpus in terms of its design, purpose and composition. The Ndebele language corpus has been the main source of information for the thesis, thus placing the research within corpus linguistics. Other methods used are also explained and these include interviews, observation and the case study approach. In Chapter 4, the morphology of Ndebele is outlined. The description of the morphology of Ndebele gives the necessary background to the

discussion of the standardisation of vocabulary, terminology and orthography, the focus of the thesis.

A description of the ISN is given in Chapter 5. This is dictionary criticism, and the whole lexicographic work at ALRI in the University of Zimbabwe that led to the production of the monolingual Ndebele dictionary is outlined. In Chapter 6 the focus is on the standardisation of vocabulary in Ndebele. The notion of core vocabulary is explored. The treatment of loanwords takes central focus as well as aspects of lexical divergence in Ndebele. The scope of the analysis is delimited by reference to the ISN. The following Chapter 7 is on term-creation in Ndebele. The selected areas of focus are literary, linguistic, and legal terms. Reference is made also to term-creation in the natural sciences. Various factors influencing term development in Ndebele are discussed, too. Term-creation is crucial in African languages in general and should be of immediate focus before standardising terminology. In my view, one needs a body of terms first before one can standardise them. However, there is a possibility of the two processes being done simultaneously. We may also note that once terminology standardisation has taken place, term creation becomes more systematic and can be accelerated. Chapter 8 looks at aspects of Ndebele orthography that are likely to be affected by the publication of the ISN, especially the problem of word division and the spelling of loanwords. Chapter 9 is the conclusion that summarises the findings of the research and makes recommendations for future research.





## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives the historical background of the Ndebele language. Emphasis is put on its literary tradition because there is not enough evidence about the state of the language prior to its adaptation to the written form. A brief outline of the history of the Ndebele people is perhaps the best way so far of giving a background and history of the language. As the twin focus of the thesis is language standardisation and lexicographic work, an outline of these is given here as well as the history of orthography.

There has been little research so far on the language and there is no comprehensive grammar book apart from an elementary one by Pelling and Pelling (1987) written mainly for second language learners of Ndebele. Previous attempts in writing and publishing grammar texts and monolingual dictionaries were unsuccessful. At the time of writing and finalising this thesis (2002), a grammar manuscript by Langa Khumalo had been accepted for publication. Should Khumalo's work be published, it would be the first comprehensive and up-to-date description of aspects of Ndebele grammar. Similarly, before the publication of the ISN in 2001, there was only one dictionary with about 4 500 entries in the current orthography.

Therefore, the history of lexicography in Ndebele is very short. Apart from the work on the early glossaries on the language and the publication of the above-mentioned bilingual dictionary, there has not been any research for the purpose of compiling dictionaries in Ndebele until the current work by the African Languages Lexical Project, now known as the African Languages Research Institute (see 3.4 and 8.1). Other language planning processes, especially on orthography, have been going on since Ndebele was first presented in a written form. As will be shown below and elsewhere in the thesis, it would seem that the history of the standardisation of Ndebele, especially orthography development, is also the history of the Ndebele people's search for identity *vis-a-vis* the linguistic hegemony of Zulu.

### 2.2 A HISTORY OF THE NDEBELE PEOPLE

The Ndebele are a Bantu people found mainly in the western parts of Zimbabwe. Their language belongs to the Nguni sub-group of the Bantu language family. Some other Nguni languages are Zulu, Xhosa, Swati and South African Ndebele also known as Transvaal Ndebele or *Isikhethu*. The history of the Ndebele people and their language

isiNdebele<sup>2</sup> is relatively short. It dates back to 1820, when the people who are today known as the Ndebele, broke away from the then powerful Zulu kingdom (in present day KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa). The original group that left Zululand was initially called the Khumalo as their leader Mzilikazi was from the Khumalo clan.

When and why the group was later renamed Ndebele is a subject that has been debated without convincing conclusions, partly because the subject is full of half-truths and myths. For example, oral tradition claims that Mzilikazi and his people were once guests at Magodonga's kingdom. Magodonga was the king of the South African Ndebele. Tradition claims that Mzilikazi bewitched his host and overpowered him before capturing all his people. The South African Ndebele still exist and Magodonga's dynasty is still there, making it difficult to rely on oral tradition. I prefer to leave out oral histories because they tend to be shrouded in myths that can only be appreciated by the people whose history is described. The issue of the authenticity of oral history is further complicated by the fact that by then the Ndebele people had not developed or adopted any writing system, so there are no written records from which we can verify the various claims made. Documented Ndebele history was written and continues to be written by non-Ndebele historians and anthropologists except for Nyathi (1994, 1996). I shall show below some negative impressions about the Ndebele created by some of these non-Ndebele writers.

Mzilikazi and his Khumalo, as they were known then, moved northwards from Zululand into Sotho territory (the present day Gauteng province of South Africa). Mzilikazi assimilated a number of Sotho<sup>3</sup> people either through persuasion or coercion, or better still, by employing both means. What can be ascertained now is that the Sotho people soon outnumbered the original Khumalos who were of Nguni descent. Consequently, the group ceased to be referred to as the 'Khumalos'. The Sotho referred to all raiding Nguni groups as 'kiMatebele' (meaning warriors with long shields), and hence the name Matebele for the Ndebele, (Hughes and van Velsen 1954:42), which in Nguni became amaNdebele. Nyathi claims that the name 'Matebele' derives from the Sotho verb 'hotebela' "*okutsho ukubhidliza, ukubulala kumbe ukuchitha*" – meaning to destroy, kill or ruin (Nyathi 1994:24). In early missionary writings they are often referred to as Matabele (Moffat 1835, Livingstone 1857). It seems the term 'Matabele' referred to another Nguni group, the Hlubi, long before it was used to refer to the present-day Zimbabwean Ndebele people (Appleyard 1847). What 'Matebele' actually means remain unresolved.

How the name 'Ndebele' was derived from 'Matebele' is still a controversy in historical and linguistic studies on Ndebele, on the presumption that the name derives from it in the first place. It is perhaps important to note that today there is another Nguni group that settled in Sotho land in present day South Africa, that is also called 'Ndebele'. Actually, this group left Zululand much earlier and were given the name long before Mzilikazi's group. According to Rasmussen:

Eventually the name 'Matabele', or 'Ndebele' in its Anglo/Nguni form, came to apply only to Mzilikazi's people and to the 'Transvaal Ndebele'. These

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<sup>2</sup> The name of the language is isiNdebele, but, due to the controversy on whether to include prefixes in designating languages among Bantu scholars, in this thesis we exclude the prefix and hence we simply use Ndebele.

<sup>3</sup> Sotho refers to a group of Southern Bantu languages, namely, Tswana, Sepedi and Northern Sotho.

latter were the descendants of much earlier Nguni immigrants onto the highveld. Mzilikazi had dealings with some of these communities during the 1820s; however, his people and the Transvaal Ndebele are essentially unrelated (Rasmussen 1978:162).

For this study we shall use Ndebele to refer to Zimbabwean Ndebele and the other we refer to as South African Ndebele.

In 1837 Mzilikazi's group, by then referred to as the Ndebele, entered what is today Zimbabwe and settled in the western parts of the country that are today referred to as the Matabeleland provinces (Rasmussen 1978, Omer-Cooper 1966). It should be noted that this was the period of nation-building for the Ndebele and they achieved that through incorporating the various groups they came into contact with and were able to subdue. It is in Zimbabwe that the Ndebele people assimilated by far the largest number. These included mainly the Shona groups, especially the Kalinga and other related groups like the Nyubi Nanzwa, Nambya, and to some extent the Tonga. Most of these people were previously under the Rozwi empire that had been destroyed by Nguni groups under Zwangendaba, Nxaba and a woman leader Nyamazana. "The Rozwi empire which had been established over the Karanga inhabitants of the old Mwene Mutapa (sic) kingdom had been shattered by the invasions of Zwangendaba and Nxaba (Omer-Cooper 1966:148). The Rozwi rulers were known as the *Mambo* (Shona for king) and hence in Ndebele they were referred to either as *AbakaMambo* (Mambo's people) or *AbeLozwi* (the Rozwi). It is the existence of this large component of the Ndebele people that was not of Nguni origin that has been used by colonial and post-colonial historians to perpetuate false myths about Ndebele social organisation. I discuss this too at the end of this section.

The name Ndebele, therefore, did not refer to a single ethnic group but to a multi-ethnic nation. Ranger writes that, 'Before 1893, I have argued, the Ndebele state was manifestly a 'machine for multi-ethnic assimilation of peoples... There were not [any] ethnic "Ndebele" but rather a conglomeration of peoples who were members of the Ndebele state...' (Ranger 1999:100). Within the newly founded Ndebele nation, which was then a kingdom, the Sotho outnumbered the Nguni while AbeLozwi far outnumbered both the Nguni and the Sotho. It seems that the problem of identity within the nation was already felt at that early stage, especially insofar as the distribution of political positions was concerned. The original Nguni group referred to itself as the *AbeZansi*, meaning 'those from the south', while the Sotho group was known as *AbeNbla*, meaning 'those from the north' and lastly the rest of the majority were *AbeLozwi*.

In spite of their numerical superiority, the incorporated groups accepted and learnt the Nguni language that is today called *IsiNdebele* or simply Ndebele.

Whether the language spoken by the original Khumalo clan that rebelled against the Zulu kingdom was Zulu or not, cannot easily be ascertained now. What is possible to demonstrate today is the close affinity between Zulu and Ndebele. The languages are mutually intelligible and share probably over 96% of their lexicon (Hachipola 1998:4). A number of views have been put forward to explain this similarity between the two languages. The most widely held view is that Ndebele is a dialect of Zulu. For example, Fortune writes that, "Ndebele, while still correctly regarded as a dialect of the Zulu cluster, has diverged even further from standard Zulu..." (foreword Pelling 1971:3). One alternative hypothesis, although not popular, is that Ndebele is not

Zulu, but both are closely related sister languages with a common ancestor which is proto-Nguni.

The question of the origins of Ndebele as a language and its relationship with Zulu have a bearing on the policies that have influenced and still influence the standardisation of Ndebele, especially the development of Ndebele orthography. For example, part of the justification for not promoting publishing in Ndebele in comparison with Shona was that the needs of the Ndebele speakers were fulfilled by Zulu publications. Consequently, Ndebele was neglected in the area of research on the grounds that it was just a dialect of Zulu, and no comprehensive grammar book has been worked out for the language as of 2002.

It is an acknowledged fact that the present day Ndebele-speaking people of Zimbabwe and the Zulu-speaking people of South Africa share almost the same language, some common historical experiences and various cultural practices and beliefs. It seems even that sharing the same colonial history under the British has further enhanced the similarity between the political experiences of the two groups. These common ties have been rejuvenated recently especially by the desire in some sections of the Ndebele community to revive the monarchy. For example, since 1994 there have been official contacts between the two groups in the form of cultural exchanges with delegates of traditional leaders visiting each other. One of the most significant visits was the one by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the political and cultural leader of the Zulu people. He received a hero's welcome in Bulawayo, the traditional capital of the Ndebele people.

Whoever the Ndebele people are and however their language evolved is not the issue anymore; the point is that the majority of the Ndebele people themselves today identify with Zulu history, culture and language.

As alluded above, the history of the Ndebele people remains largely distorted because the Ndebele themselves either lack the interest or see no value in re-writing their history. Non-Ndebele historians and anthropologists, especially in colonial times are famous for myths and negative portrayal of the Ndebele history. One over-emphasized myth about the pre-colonial Ndebele society is the alleged existence of a caste system. 'In pre-colonial times, marriage between castes was strictly forbidden, and the marriage of a low-caste man to a high-caste woman was punishable by death. The Zanzi (sic) were aristocrats, who held positions as chiefs; the Lozwi were commoners, who performed the manual labour....Lozwi could not eat together with Zanzi or Enhla, and they was (sic) expected to have a subservient manner towards them' (Lindgren 2002:79).

These claims cannot be substantiated from oral history or praise poetry. If we are to believe that Mzilikazi left Zululand with a few soldiers whose numbers must have diminished rapidly due to the numerous wars he must have fought on his way to Zimbabwe, then, it defies logic for such a group whose very survival was at stake to avoid inter-clan marriage. In any case, the same historians claim that part of Mzilikazi's numerous wars were meant to replenish his group with women to bear more children. The division of labour is not only far-fetched, but also unreasonable, as there was no labour to be divided at all, apart from the military duties, which were compulsory for all able-bodied men. It was unheard of amongst the Ndebele that some men worked in other people's fields while the owners just sat. This was a colonial labour system, which shocked the Ndebele people when they learnt that whites did not want to work but forced them instead to work in their fields and mines. The allegation that the Abe-

Zansi did not eat with the AbeLozwi is difficult to imagine. It gives the impression that these people did not have homes and families but they all lived and ate together like a band of nomadic food gatherers.

All these impressions are deliberate on the part of historians and writers in order to 'invent' the caste system. The term 'caste' continues to be used even if facts on the ground do not show any caste system. Lindgren writes:

The term caste is problematic,.... Nevertheless, I prefer to use "caste" rather than "class"... The former term has been used in the literature on Southern Zimbabwe before. And, in Zimbabwe the latter term is often used in a more Marxist sense, as, for instance in "the working class" and "the peasant class" (Lindgren 2002:79).

Both terms *caste* and *class* are equally inappropriate to describe the ethnic composition of Ndebele society. The above quoted writer continues to use the misleading term although there is evidence he read Cobbing (1976:117) that the terms *abeZansi* and *abeNbla* denote geographical origin. Also Hughes (1956:53) claims that the colonial administrators deliberately used the term 'caste' to stress the differences amongst the ethnic groups within the Ndebele society. Whether these differences were in actual fact so vivid is not clear because the whole issue has been distorted. The possible cultural influence of the numerically superior AbeLozwi on the minority Nguni is rarely mentioned by such writers. Yet, a lot of changes took place in the social system largely due to influence from the newcomers. According to Omer-Cooper:

The process was not entirely one-way. The Ndebele were also influenced by the culture of the conquered peoples. In particular they adopted the Mlimo cult of the Shona which was associated with the Matoppos Mountains. Mzilikazi himself, and Lobengula after him, treated the priests of this cult with the utmost respect and placed a great deal of confidence in their prophecies (Omer-Cooper 1966:151).

This distortion of Ndebele history, which began with some colonial historians, has persisted in independent Zimbabwe. Some history textbooks continue with the colonial stereotyping of the Ndebele. 'The old, colonial image of the Ndebele as cruel warriors is still evident in some of these Zimbabwean schoolbooks, not always in words but often in pictures' (Lindgren 2002:146). Notable cases are Garlake and Proctor (1985:160) and Parsons (1985:81). Therefore, from a Ndebele point of view, not much is known about the Ndebele people's history. According to one historian who has written much on Ndebele, 'The most outstanding feature of contemporary written evidence for early Ndebele history is that none of it was penned by an Ndebele person' (Rasmussen 1978, 163).

### 2.3 A HISTORY OF NDEBELE ORTHOGRAPHY

As the history of the Ndebele people as a distinct nation is very recent, so is that of the Ndebele language as a written medium. The first Ndebele publications came out in 1863 after three years of strenuous work of producing the Ndebele alphabet. The mis-

sionaries Thomas Morgan Thomas, John S. Moffat and William Sykes of the London Missionary Society based at Inyathi Mission did this work. We cannot establish their linguistic training or competence in Ndebele. However, it is known that they already had Zulu texts with them when they got to the Ndebele. According to Mhlabi, "The missionaries soon began to work on Ndebele, both learning to speak it, and planning books to help them in their religious and educational work" (Mhlabi 1992:3).

Maybe it is an overstatement to claim that the missionaries could have simultaneously learnt a language and pioneered writing it. This could only have been possible if these missionaries were already fluent in Zulu. It would seem that the missionaries were conversant in Zulu if the views of Fortune are anything to go by. In the foreword to Pelling's **A Practical Ndebele Dictionary**, Fortune says, "By 1866 there were four books already printed. What is interesting is the decision of the early missionaries, ... to base their educational work even at that early date, on Ndebele and not on Zulu. Ndebele was already felt to have diverged, particularly in its lexicon from the parent language" (Pelling 1971:3). This also is an overstatement because even today, one century later, few people can distinguish between Ndebele and Zulu. If the missionaries could have made that distinction at that early stage, we may infer that they must have had a good command of Zulu.

One notes that a number of phonemes shared by Ndebele and Zulu languages were represented by different symbols. Such factors created the impression that the two varieties were very different, when in fact they are not. These were times when those working on African languages would make decisions they found convenient for their immediate needs regardless of prevailing linguistic or socio-linguistic factors. Commenting on such practices, Fishman says it was:

...tradition that placed the linguist or other outside expert in the position not only of judging which languages were sufficiently related in order to deserve a common writing system, but also of deciding whether similarity in writing system was or was not 'a good thing' and whether it was not desired by the speech communities involved (Fishman 1977:xii).

As already alluded to previously, this creation of a distinct orthography for Ndebele had far-reaching effects later. For example, the same word in both languages would be spelt differently, in order to show the alleged difference between Ndebele and Zulu. This difference was obviously exaggerated.

Because of the assumption that Ndebele was markedly different from Zulu, symbols were brought in for phonemes already represented in the Zulu orthography (Hadebe 1994: 17). One would have thought it might have been easier had the Zulu orthography been adopted and changes made where the two languages (Zulu and Ndebele) differ.

Apart from creating a different orthography for Ndebele, that is, different from that of Zulu, the missionaries could not agree on certain symbols to represent some Ndebele phonemes. "Since there was such a difference of opinion on the choice of symbols to be used, agreement had to be reached on the principle that the majority opinion should be followed, the majority being usually formed by Sykes and Moffat, Thomas being the odd man out" (Mhlabi 1992:1). It is significant to note that some aspects of the original Ndebele alphabet were determined by the majority opinion rather than any clearly defined principle.

The Sykes and Moffat version became the accepted Ndebele writing system and Thomas produced his own version. Table 3 shows the Sykes/Moffat version, the Thomas version and the current version of the Ndebele alphabet. The third column marked current is my representation of the current Ndebele orthography.

**Table 3. Letters and Symbols in the Ndebele Orthography**

LETTERS USED IN THE NDEBELE ORTHOGRAPHY				
PHONEMES REPRESENTED	IPA SYMBOLS	SYKES/MOFFAT	THOMAS	CURRENT
vowels	[a, e, i, o, u]	a, e, i, o, u	a, e, i, o, u	a, e, i, o, u
approximants	[w], [j]	w, y	---	w, y
clicks	[ɿ], [ʎ], [ɬ]	c, q, x	c, q, x	c, q, x
nasals	[m], [n]	m, n	m, n	m, n
bilabial stops	[p], [b]	p, b	p, b	ph, bh
bilabial ejective	[pʰ]	---	---	p
bilabial fricative	[β]	---	---	b
alveolar stops	[t], [d]	t, d	t, d	th, d
alveolar ejected stop	[tʰ]	----	---	t
labiodental fricatives	[f], [v]	f, v	f, v	f, v
labiodental nasal	[m̥]	---	---	mf
velar stops	[k], [g]	k, g	k, g	kh, g
velar fricative	[ɣ]	k	k	k
velar ejective stop	[kʰ]	---	---	k
glottal fricative	[h]	h	h	h
alveolar fricatives	[s], [z]	s, z	s, z	s, z
postalveolar fricatives	[ʃ], [ʒ]	---	---	sh, zh
aspirated palatal affricate	[tʃʰ]	tj	-j	tsh
lateral affricates	[tʃ], [dʒ]	lh, hl	Ī	hl, dl
alveolar lateral approximant	[l]	l	l	l
velar nasal	[ŋ]	~ n	n	ng
palatal nasal	[ɲ]	---	---	ny
alveolar trill	[r]	---	---	r

Adapted from Hadebe (1994:18)

The Sykes/ Moffat alphabet was officially adopted in April 1862. Thomas could not accept some of the symbols proposed by Sykes and Moffat and he therefore produced his own version of the alphabet as shown in the second column of the table. By October 1860, Thomas had even written an elementary school book in his orthography. However, missionaries at Kuruman, in South Africa, refused to print it because it was believed to be too early then for any written material in Ndebele. It was argued that the

missionaries at Inyathi, i.e. Sykes, Moffat and Thomas had had too little time by then to have mastered Ndebele to the extent of being able to write it down.

The other reason for turning down Thomas's manuscript was the disagreement between the three missionaries at Inyathi Mission on the spelling to be used. The printers at Kuruman would only print Ndebele manuscripts that had been written in an agreed (by the three at Inyathi) alphabet in order to avoid unnecessary changes in the near future. This was when the Sykes/ Moffat alphabet was officially adopted.

Controversy and disagreement over the Ndebele alphabet were not confined to the pioneers of the Ndebele writing system, but involved other interested parties as well. As early as 1870, criticism of the alphabet had begun to appear. J. B. Thomas, arriving at Inyathi Mission in 1870, expressed dissatisfaction with the alphabet. According to Mhlabi, "His first impression was that the alphabet and the orthography which the missionaries were using was not correct or complete, and that there were several sounds in the language which it completely failed to express (Mhlabi 1992:3). Due to criticism and perhaps the desire to have an acceptable Ndebele alphabet, changes were made. There are no exact dates for the spelling reforms or written memos stating these changes. However, we realize that Ndebele material written as early as 1900 had some modifications and differed from that produced in 1863.

One of the noticeable changes was the representation of the voiced lateral fricative[ɬ]. It had originally been represented by <lh> and was now represented by <dl>. I could not establish the reasons for the change but one can note that Zulu had already been using the digraph <dl> for the voiced lateral fricative. Around 1930s there were further changes made (probably by the Missionary Conference) in the Ndebele spelling, culminating in the orthographic reforms of 1953-6 (Mhlabi 1992) which set out that <h> should represent aspiration. There was a notable change in the marking of the aspirated sounds like /p, b, t / by digraphs <ph>, <bh> and <th> respectively. Earlier on there was no distinction to mark these phonemes in Ndebele, for example **bala** [b̥] (to write) was spelt like **bala** [b] (to read). With the marking of aspiration, the two words are spelt **bhala** (to write) and **bala** (to read).

The marking of aspiration was not without its problems. Having made amendments in the orthography by recognising and representing aspiration with the <h> symbol, there was the problem of removing the symbol in some words where it was felt to be of no value. The symbol of aspiration <h> had been wrongly extended to /d /, and some words were spelt with <dh> as in **indhlovu** (elephant) for **indlovu** (elephant). Ndebele does not distinguish the soft and the heavy /d / as is the case with other Bantu languages like Shona. In this instance <h> is not necessary but its removal met some resistance.

Interestingly enough, some people refused to incorporate the <h> symbol in their names, like **Themba**, **Bhekuzulu** or **Siphiwe** would remain **Temba**, **Bekuzulu** or **Sipiwe** respectively. The problem has been more acute in family or clan names where the use of the <h> is perceived as compromising their ethnic identity. The **Khumalo** clan name is a case in point. Some still spell their surnames in the old orthography as **Kumalo** without the <h> and they emphasize that even in speech they would declare that they are the **Khumalos** without the aspiration symbol. Yet they pronounce the sound with an aspiration.

Although the <h> was dropped it still remains in some Ndebele surnames like *Dhlamini*, *Ndhlovu* and *Ndhlela*. In the current orthography, these are spelt as *Dlamini*, *Ndlovu* and *Ndlela* respectively.



It is worth noting that most of those resisting the changes in spelling of their names actually admit the limitations of the Ndebele orthography. However, spelling to most Ndebele people, as in many other societies, is perceived more than just a mere system of letters representing speech sounds of a language. Instead, it seems that the orthography, like the language itself, is associated with group identity, so that any change in orthography is seen as if it were a change in the language itself.

Therefore, it seems that amongst the Ndebele people, as probably elsewhere, alphabetic symbols are not only seen as signs representing sounds but also as belonging to the language. The attitude towards the preservation of orthography, no matter how inconsistent it might be, seems to be almost the same as the attitude towards preserving one's language from perceived threats of assimilation. This observation is also confirmed by Fishman in these words, "Spelling conservation is a very natural thing; its adherents fight for the maintenance of 'their' spelling, i.e. a spelling which they have learned, which they 'master', of which they 'have a perfect command'..." (Fishman 1977:231).

One other significant change in spelling that was effected in the 1950s was the use of <k> instead of <g> to represent the voiceless velar stop [k]. The other notable change was the use of <tsh> instead of <tj> to represent the palatal affricate [tʃ]. However, the old spellings are still found in place names in the Ndebele-speaking area.

The changes in the spelling system have actually changed the names of these places. Starting with the latter symbols <tj> and <tsh>, especially in the name of a district in Matabeleland known as **Tsholotsho**. The old spelling was **Tjolutjo**. This was one of the districts where the Ndebele people were settled after the Land Husbandry Act of 1953. Most of the then new settlers did not know the name of the district and so they pronounced the name as was written in that old orthography. Instead of pronouncing it as [cho-lo-cho], they said [tee-jo-lo-tee-jo]. The use of <k> instead of <g> for the voiceless velar stop [k] has changed a number of place names too. A place that in the current orthography should be **Kwathemba** is now **Gwatemala**, while **Thekwane** is **Tegwani** and **Kwanda** is **Gwanda**. Now these names are almost meaningless except to a few who understand the changes in the orthography that left these places with rather un-Ndebele sounding names.

The problems were compounded by the white administrators, some of whom could not pronounce Ndebele names properly. These administrators had place names spelt the way they pronounced them rather than the way they should be. For instance, we have a town in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe, which is situated in a place the Ndebele referred to as *eQweqweni lomhlaba* (the place with hard dry soil). The town was named **Qweqwe**, however, the English people could not pronounce the click sound [!] represented by <q>, instead they pronounced it as if it was the English phoneme /k/. Then the town's name was written **QueQue** but pronounced **Kwekwe**. At independence, the new government of Zimbabwe, in a bid to correct this mistake, changed the spelling to **Kwekwe**. Instead of correcting the pronunciation, the changes in spelling have actually changed the name to a meaningless word.

I have so far discussed spelling, that is, alphabetic symbols without mentioning word division, which also has undergone major changes in the period after Ndebele was reduced to writing. The changes in Ndebele spelling were done simultaneously with changes in word division. The early missionaries imposed a disjunctive writing system, which was then fashionable throughout the Bantu orthographies developed at the time. The disjunctive writing system separated formatives such as agreement markers, tense and aspect morphemes and those expressing certain logical relations such

as possessive, and gave them autonomy (Hadebe 1994:24). As the early writers were Europeans and influenced by the linguistic background of European languages, and particularly of English and Latin, by spelling prefixes disjunctively and suffixes conjunctively, the writers assumed that the disjunctive writing system was appropriate. According to Guthrie:

Nearly all the writers on Bantu languages used the system of word division which appeared to them to be most natural, consequently few of them thought it necessary even to explain the reasons that had influenced them in developing such a system. Before long, however, it became clear that quite different types of word division were being practised, sometimes for one and the same language (Guthrie 1970:5).

After the reforms of the 1950s, the Ndebele writing system adopted a more conjunctive approach to word division. This transition has left some parts of speech written as independent units that can be treated orthographically as words, while others were treated orthographically as non-words. It is those speech forms that in writing are conjoined to words that are problematic in Ndebele word division, and some of these problems affect Ndebele dictionary-making.

So far I have been describing the various reforms of the Ndebele orthography but I have not mentioned the agents of reform. Up to the 1930s, the white missionaries under the auspices of the Southern Rhodesia Missionary Conference dealt with issues of orthography. From 1938, Africans began to be involved in orthographic issues. According to Fortune, in *'75 Years of Writing in Shona'*

In 1938 and 1942 we have motions on Ndebele and Shona passed by a body called Native Missionary Conference, composed of Africans, ... The Africans show an increased desire to be consulted in the orthographies and publications in their own languages (Fortune, no date, page 9).

More Africans were involved in orthographic issues after the formation of the Ndebele National Language Committee (NNLC) in the 1950s, as a successor to the Southern Rhodesia Missionary Conferences. The NNLC consisted of two members from each interest group, namely: Zimbabwe Teachers Association, Education Officers, publishers, Curriculum Development Unit, writers and the University of Zimbabwe's Department of African Languages and Literature. The NNLC is responsible for all issues related to the Ndebele language, and advises the Secretary of Education, who can effect its recommendations. There are proposals to set up a Language Commission for the country's languages that would have more authority than the language committees.

## 2.4 A HISTORY OF LEXICOGRAPHIC WORK IN NDEBELE

As mentioned before, until the publication of *Isichazamazwi SesiNdebele* by Hadebe et al (2001), there was no monolingual Ndebele dictionary. There was only one bilingual English-Ndebele dictionary, *A Practical Ndebele Dictionary* by Pelling (1971) with about 4 500 entries. The paucity of reference materials in Ndebele, be it grammar

texts, literary texts or even dictionaries, is very unusual for a mother tongue for above three million speakers and for a national language that is taught up to university level. Various reasons may be put forward to account for this anomaly. Hachipola notes that: "The problem with African languages other than Shona is that they are spoken by the majority of people only outside the Zimbabwean borders. This goes for Ndebele too which both colonists and even missionaries felt it could be catered for by Zulu" (Hachipola 1998:74).

The teaching of Ndebele in Zimbabwe has relied on Zulu grammar texts, novels, poetry anthologies, drama texts and dictionaries. Up to the 1970s, Zulu was being taught in place of Ndebele. Currently, the Ndebele syllabus from secondary to tertiary education explicitly states that it caters for Ndebele / Zulu.

One of the early works on Ndebele lexicography was the work by a missionary of the London Missionary Society, W. A. Eliot, published in 1897, with the title **Dictionary of the Tebele and Shona Languages**. Later he published what can be considered the first bilingual Ndebele – English dictionary. This was in the old orthography, before the changes that took place in the 1930s. Another early work of that period was a wordlist compiled by a British South Africa Police trooper published in Cape Town in 1903 entitled, **Matebele and Makalaka Vocabulary: Intended for the use of Prospectors and Farmers in Mashonaland** (Chimhundu 1992:18).

Pelling (1971) has been the only dictionary in the current orthography of Ndebele until the publication of ISN in 2001. There is not much information either in the front or the back matter of the dictionary to indicate the principles followed in the compilation of this bilingual dictionary. My assessment is that it updates the orthography; in content it is mainly a revision of Eliot's dictionary.

The absence of publications does not mean the absence of lexical work of one kind or another. Some dictionary projects were never finished and some were, but for various reasons, were never published. Two cases in point are the dictionary project by Stephen Mhlabi, then Senior Language Assistant in the African Languages and Literature Department of the University of Zimbabwe, and Galen Sibanda from the same university. Mhlabi's is a bilingual Ndebele-English dictionary and is complete in manuscript, with its cards catalogued and filling up all shelves of a cabinet. This project was supervised by the then Professor of African Languages George Fortune, who retired without sending the manuscript for publication. Galen Sibanda's work was a project initiated by the Ndebele Language Committee and donor-funded. The completed work was sent to publishers and, after receiving some comments for further editing, the manuscript disappeared and was never published<sup>4</sup>.

The current lexicographic work on Ndebele by the African Languages Research Institute, previously the ALLEX Project, at the University of Zimbabwe, is being documented through annual reports. For that reason, it is easier to gather information on this lexicographic work on Ndebele than it is for other previous attempts. The ALLEX Project is the brainchild of Professor Herbert Chimhundu and is funded handsomely by NUFU (Norwegian Universities' Committee for Development Research and Education) through the development for North/South cooperation. The ALLEX Project aims at producing monolingual dictionaries and glossaries in African languages of Zimbabwe. This is a massive collaborative research project involving

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4 My personal assessment of part of the manuscript revealed that the work was far from being ready for publication and, besides, it shows that its editor lacked basic training in dictionary-making.

more than thirty academics, students, technical staff and other support staff at the University of Zimbabwe and computer and lexicography specialists from the University of Oslo in Norway and the University of Gothenburg in Sweden.

The research that led to the publication of the ISN led to the questioning of a number of tenets that had been taken for granted about Ndebele. For instance, it has been generally believed that Ndebele did not have varieties (Chimhundu 1993:59) or that the variation was insignificant (Fortune 1972:15). Yet, the corpus of oral material has revealed some variations in speech behaviour according to the geographical source of the oral material.

The current lexicographic research is of special interest and the focus of this thesis for two main reasons. Firstly, the creation of the Ndebele language corpus and its use in compiling the dictionary has revealed some linguistic and sociolinguistic issues such as the existence of varieties within Ndebele. This has a bearing on the standardisation of the language, as choosing a 'standard' implies promoting some varieties and excluding others. Secondly, the dictionary that has been produced is the case study of this thesis.

## 2.5. A HISTORY OF CREATIVE WRITING IN NDEBELE

It has been stated previously that the first works in Ndebele were the translations of hymn books and the Bible. When the Ndebele people began to write, they produced creative works, especially novels. The first novels were not primarily works of fiction for entertainment. They were works of historical and political nature woven in fiction, and they celebrated the Ndebele way of life before the British conquest of Zimbabwe. Naturally, such literature was perceived as subversive by the colonial government. The first Ndebele novel, which happens to be the first novel in an African language by a black Zimbabwean, was banned in Rhodesia, and was only reprinted after Zimbabwe's independence in 1980. The novel, written by Ndabaningi Sithole, was published in 1956. He was one of the foremost African nationalists and the founding president of the Zimbabwe African National Union. The title is **Umvukela WamaNdebele** (The Ndebele Uprising) and it narrates the bloody uprising by the Ndebele people against the colonial government in 1896.

Other Ndebele works by Ndebele writers during that period include the second Ndebele novel to be published entitled, **Umthwakazi** (The Ndebele Nation) by P.S. Mahlangu. As the title of the book shows, the contents of the book describe the pre-colonial Ndebele way of life. The first novel by a black female writer in Zimbabwe, published in 1971, was a Ndebele novel entitled **Qaphela Ingane** (Take Care of the Child) by Lassie Ndonga. Although the story of the novel is about the hazards of giving children a poor upbringing, the novel explores the life of poverty suffered by Africans under white rule. It also comments on the infamous Land Husbandry Act and the policy of de-stocking that forced Africans to keep their herds below nine beasts for each household.

The first Ndebele poetry anthology, **Imbongi Zalamhla Layizolo** (Poets of Today and Yesterday), published in 1959 by Shuter and Shooter in Pietermaritzburg in association with the Southern Rhodesia African Literature Bureau, is a mixture of poems that celebrate both the pre-colonial and colonial life of the Ndebele people.

There are poems praising a number of colonial administrators and at the same time some poems that praise Ndebele warriors and kings. For example, the very first poem is entitled *Bongani Amakhiwa* (Let us Thank the Whites) by N. Sigogo who today is considered by many to be one of the leading Ndebele novelists.

The Literature Bureau was formed to specifically promote and control creative writing by Africans; hence its full name, the Southern Rhodesia African Literature Bureau. It is important that for a long time the Literature Bureau was run by whites, although it aimed to promote African writers. The themes to be written about were prescribed by the Literature Bureau, which also performed censorship duties. As the political tensions were mounting in the then Rhodesia, and Africans became more and more restive, the control on creative works also tightened. The first drama text in Ndebele, *Indlalifa Ngubani?* (Who is the heir?) by N.S Sigogo, was published in 1978, after a writing competition sponsored by the Literature Bureau itself, showing also how creative writing was controlled. Other publishing houses also established themselves and published in African languages. Notable among these are Mambo Publishers, Longman Publishers, College Press and Matopo Book Centre. Today, there are several Ndebele publications, and the novel is by far the most published genre. This dominance of the novel is discussed in Chapter 3 in connection with the composition of the Ndebele language corpus. There is paucity of publications of critical or factual works or other texts in Ndebele. Writing in Ndebele is mainly targeted for the primary and secondary schools' market. Therefore, novels dominate together with some school textbooks. School textbooks are normally written on commission from publishers. Outside this scope, there are no other publications in the language and that explains partly the lack of Ndebele texts in specialised fields like, for example; law, history, commerce and sports.

## 6.6 THE LANGUAGE SITUATION IN ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe recognises Ndebele, Shona and English as the three main languages to be used in education, administration and the media. However, the three languages do not enjoy equal status, either in the constitution or in practice. English dominates over the two African languages in education, administration, industry, commerce and the media. The dominance of English over African languages in Zimbabwe is not based on the number of speakers, but on historical, political and economic privileges presently monopolised by the English language.

English is the official medium of instruction in Zimbabwean schools from the fourth grade upwards. Ndebele is only taught as a subject in the two Matabeleland provinces and in some schools in the Midlands province. Shona is taught in the rest of the country.

Zimbabwe has also a number of indigenous African languages that have been designated as "minority" languages. Some of these "minority" languages, namely Tonga, Venda, Nambya, Kalanga and Shangani, can be taught only up to grade four.<sup>5</sup> Thereafter either Ndebele or Shona takes over, depending on whether the area surrounding is Ndebele or Shona-speaking. It is important to note that there are small pockets of Ndebele-speaking communities in the Shona-speaking provinces. This was brought

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5 There is no evidence that these languages are taught at all.

about by the notorious Land Husbandry Act and Land Tenure Act, which scattered African families from their ancestral lands in the fifties. A case in point is the Ndebele community under Chief Gwebu in Buhera district of Manicaland.

The language situation in Zimbabwe can be seen in a hierarchical structure with English at the top as an official language, followed below by Ndebele and Shona, while the “minority” languages are lowest both in prestige and in official recognition. Currently, the Zimbabwean government is working on a new language policy, which might change the status of a number of languages. Naturally, Ndebele and Shona are aspiring for the same status as English, while the “minority” languages similarly claim recognition as national languages, like Ndebele and Shona.

The Ndebele language is in a precarious position when language status is being debated. Unlike Shona, which enjoys numerical superiority and political prestige, Ndebele is strictly speaking a minority language in Zimbabwe, spoken by about three million people. It is a relative newcomer in the history of the country when compared to Shona, Tonga, Venda or Kalanga. Almost all the minority languages are in Matabeleland where Ndebele is currently dominant. Therefore, a promotion in the status of minority languages might be viewed, and previously it has been perceived, as an attempt by a Shona-dominated government to undermine the Ndebele people politically. Writing on the relationship of Ndebele and minority languages, Hachipola says, “As the majority of minority languages are in Matabeleland (i.e. in Ndebele-speaking areas) there is a feeling that the activities of the Vetoka<sup>6</sup> Languages and Cultural Promotion Society is a threat to the hegemony that Ndebele enjoys in Matabeleland provinces” (Hachipola 1998:xx).

Probably the only strengths of the language are that it serves as the lingua franca for the speakers of minority languages and its relative advantage in being taught in schools. Although the status of Ndebele might seem precarious in the country, regionally the language enjoys higher status among African languages, as it is one of the Nguni languages (together with Zulu, Xhosa, Swati and S.A. Ndebele) which are spoken by more than 40 million people in South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. It is yet to be seen what the impact will be in Zimbabwean Ndebele as all other Nguni languages have been promoted into official status in South Africa and Swaziland respectively.

The close links between Zulu and Ndebele seem to be bound to continue for some time. As mentioned previously, Zulu has been and continues to be studied as part of the Ndebele curriculum for secondary education as well as at university level. The courses on Ndebele poetry cover half Zulu and half Ndebele poems, and the same applies for courses on the novels. So far Zulu grammar texts and Zulu dictionaries are used as reference works in the teaching of Ndebele. Some churches prefer Zulu hymn books and bibles to Ndebele ones. For example, in the Methodist Church of Luveve in Bulawayo (where I normally attend church), half the congregation use the Zulu hymn books and the others Ndebele ones. Therefore, Zulu influence on Ndebele is felt not only in orthographic issues but also in other domains of language like books, dictionaries and poetry anthologies.

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<sup>6</sup> Vetoka is an acronym for Venda, Tonga, Kalanga, which are the main minority languages of Zimbabwe and this refers to their lobbying association.

## 6.7 CONCLUSION

The above brief outline of the Ndebele people's history and the history of writing and literary activities in Ndebele suffices for our research. As we shall see, especially in Chapters 6 and 8 on vocabulary and orthography respectively, this historical background has an effect on language attitudes, and hence it affects language planning in Ndebele. The brief sociolinguistic background on the language situation in Zimbabwe is equally important for the same reason.





## METHODOLOGY

### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

The methodology chosen for the research was, to an extent, influenced by the nature of the data and the main objectives of the research. The Ndebele language corpus was the main source of data for the thesis. Other sources complemented the corpus. Therefore, the methods used in the thesis are typical of general practice in corpus linguistics. The socio-linguistic theoretical approach used in this study, suits the methodology chosen. Thus, the nature of data, methodology and theory are intricately interrelated (Penalosa 1981:9). First, we describe the Ndebele language corpus; that is, how it was compiled, its composition, and how it is used in the thesis. After that, we discuss the case study approach, and then the participant-observer method and the use of interviews.

As stated above, the methods used are different but complementary. The use of the corpus biases the approach to a quantitative method while the case study is qualitative. Thus, both approaches are used and there are no contradictions in that.

### 3.2. THE NDEBELE LANGUAGE CORPUS

#### 3.2.1 DEFINING THE CORPUS

According to Kennedy, the corpus refers to “a body of written text or transcribed speech which can serve as a basis for linguistic analysis and description” (Kennedy 1998:1). From this definition, a corpus is not necessarily compiled for language study as such, but language study incidentally becomes one of the uses of this body of text. We may also note that according to this definition a corpus is not necessarily electronically stored and processed. This is a very broad and all-inclusive definition of a language corpus. It is a definition designed to incorporate all the texts that have been used for linguistic description that were not primarily collected for that purpose and texts not in electronic form. However, the Ndebele language corpus is more than just a body of written text or transcribed speech. It is a systematic, well-designed and selective collection of written texts and transcribed speech specifically for lexicographic work. It is not only stored in computers but has been systematically tagged and transformed to machine-readable text. Therefore, the Ndebele language corpus is “a collection of texts in an electronic database” (Kennedy 1998:3). In this research, we use the term corpus to refer to the computer-stored and machine-readable text designed specifically for linguistic analysis. For that reason, a corpus is ‘an object designed for the purpose of linguistic analysis, rather than an object defined by accidents of authorship or history’ (Aston and Burnard 1998:4).

### 3.2.2 OBJECTIVES FOR BUILDING THE NDEBELE LANGUAGE CORPUS

The Ndebele language corpus was built mainly to provide material for the study of Ndebele with a special focus on dictionary-making and other related lexical research. Like most corpora, the Ndebele language corpus could be used in future for other purposes not thought of at the time of its inception. The corpus meets generally acceptable standards so that it can be adaptable to various possible uses for different types of research.

When the ALLEX Project of the University of Zimbabwe began to compile monolingual dictionaries in indigenous languages, it was necessary to use contemporary language; that is, language as spoken currently by mother-tongue speakers. One way of establishing such language was to collect samples of spoken language (taped speech) as well as samples of written language (published texts) and thus create a corpus of the language. According to Ridings, "... all dictionaries are basically corpus-based, but, whereas the traditional dictionaries often reflected a corpus of arbitrarily selected quotations from texts, the corpus used for developing some of the newer dictionaries are made up of the texts themselves" (Chimhundu 1992:21). The attempt to base the Ndebele language dictionary on the language as currently spoken by its mother-tongue speakers was the major impetus for compiling the corpus.

Apart from the primary objective of providing lexical evidence for dictionary-making, there were other secondary objectives that the compilers of the Ndebele language corpus had in their minds. These were the sociolinguistic factors that would correlate language with age, gender, social class and geography. The corpus would also yield vital information on registers, code-switching and other speech styles that would interest scholars from as broad a field as dialectology to pragmatics. The type of language to be collected had to ensure that various groups in society are represented in terms of age, gender, level of education, occupation and even place of residence whether in the countryside or in cities.

### 3.2.3 COLLECTION OF ORAL MATERIAL

Twenty-six student research assistants (SRA) were hired to collect oral material throughout the Ndebele-speaking districts of Zimbabwe. That fieldwork marked the beginning of an extensive research on Ndebele as a language. The scale of the research in terms of scope, geographical area covered and number of researchers involved, as well as material and financial costs, was unprecedented for the Ndebele language.

Such extensive and time-consuming work had to be planned in advance. Part of the planning had included a pilot survey by six researchers, who were to become editors of the ISN, and they had gone to selected institutions like colleges, the Parliament of Zimbabwe, schools, churches, archives and publishing houses to assess what information could be obtained. When the SRA were deployed throughout the Ndebele-speaking districts, it was already planned for and the desired results prepared for.

Ideally, oral material had to be collected in all the areas where there were mother-tongue speakers of Ndebele. This would have given the desired representative sample of spoken Ndebele from all the geographical areas. However, not all areas were covered the way researchers would have wanted. Firstly, such an endeavour was impracticable

financially considering what it could have cost. Actually, the University of Zimbabwe Research Board refused to fund this research as had been expected. The whole research was funded by NUFU. Secondly, mother tongue speakers of Ndebele are not confined to Ndebele-speaking districts and towns only but some pockets are scattered in other non-Ndebele-speaking districts. Locating all these communities would not only have been time-consuming and costly but it was also felt to be unnecessary. The areas of focus were therefore the Ndebele-speaking districts, which are mainly in the provinces of Matabeleland North, Matabeleland South and parts of the Midlands. These three provinces constitute almost half the size of the country geographically although accounting for probably one fifth of the country's population. This implies that human settlements are far apart and very spread, resulting in high cost in travelling throughout districts. That also became a factor in trimming down potential areas for oral material collection.

There are some Ndebele-speaking districts of Matabeleland North where SRAs were initially deployed but had to be withdrawn before they had done much work. This was due to an outbreak of malaria and some of the SRAs were hospitalised. As a result, those areas had to be avoided, although they have what could be considered the core of Ndebele speakers. Apart from malaria, floods blocked access to the Binga district, also of Matabeleland North, and one female SRA who had been deployed there could not do much. Actually, efforts were made to rescue her from the flooded district and research was therefore out of question in that area.

The research was also a sociolinguistic survey of the language map in the country. No comprehensive survey of the language situation was available yet until the publication of Hachipola (1998). The districts which are commonly described as Ndebele-speaking areas are also populated by speakers of so-called minority languages; Kalanga, Venda, Tonga, Nambya, Sotho and, in the Midlands province districts, consist of both Ndebele and Shona speakers. There were debates as to whether it was worth collecting data from areas where other languages were also spoken. There were concerns that the type of Ndebele spoken by these people who also spoke other languages was likely to be heavily influenced by these other languages and therefore not appropriate for the dictionary being envisaged. That argument posed another problem of how to distinguish between acceptable Ndebele and unacceptable varieties. There were fears that it would be politically wrong to exclude other people deliberately because they were speakers of other languages. In any case, all children in these districts learnt Ndebele at school. So there were arguments that all varieties of Ndebele should be gathered as that would reflect the linguistic reality on the ground. Although the researchers eventually agreed that oral material should be collected from mother-tongue speakers of Ndebele only, in practice that was impossible.

To minimise the influence of other language groups the majority of SRAs were deployed only in those areas where Ndebele was the sole community language. For example, Beitbridge district was not covered because it is predominantly Venda, and only one research assistant was deployed in Binga, which is a Tonga territory. Table 4 shows the composition of language communities within Beitbridge. As shown in Table 4, Ndebele barely has mother tongue speakers there. It would have been a very costly venture to collect oral material in Beitbridge having noted the paucity of mother-tongue speakers of Ndebele there. Ndebele is the language taught in schools and used in the public domain in such areas as Beitbridge but the users are not first-

language speakers of Ndebele and their type of Ndebele was considered not suitable for a monolingual dictionary for learners.

**Table 4: Areas of Language Mixture in Beitbridge District**

AREA	DOMINANT COMMUNITY	OTHER COMMUNITIES
1. Tshipise	<u>Venda</u>	Shangani
2. Tshitulipasi	<u>Venda</u>	Shangani
3. Tshikwalakwala	<u>Venda</u>	Shangani
4. Dendele	<u>Venda</u>	Sotho
5. Maramane	<u>Venda</u>	Sotho
6. Shashe	<u>Sotho</u>	Venda
7. Malibeng	<u>Venda</u>	Sotho
8. Makombe	<u>Venda</u>	Pfumbi
9. <u>Siyoka 2</u>	<u>Venda</u>	<u>Ndebele</u>

(Extract from Hachipola 1998:32).

There are few mother tongue speakers of Ndebele in Beitbridge, although it is officially a Ndebele-speaking district and Ndebele is the language taught at school from the fourth grade.

Table 4 also shows the complex nature of the language situation in Zimbabwe, especially on the relationship between Ndebele and minority languages like Venda. Even if there are few first language speakers of Ndebele in some districts of Matabeleland, Ndebele is the national language taught in schools and used in public meetings. But the Ndebele spoken in such areas reflects the interference of the speakers' first language, of which in Beitbridge is mainly Venda.

The other limiting factor in the choice of areas to be covered was the availability of SRAs who came from certain areas. In the University of Zimbabwe regulations on remuneration for SRAs, there is no allowance for transport and accommodation. Therefore, SRAs should come from the areas where research was to be conducted. In that way, some areas could not be covered by researchers because no student came from those areas. Having students researching in their home areas had its own advantages in that it was easier to conduct interviews among communities they were familiar to. It would also have been desirable to collect oral material over a longer time than the ten weeks or even to have intervals such that part of the interviews could be done, let us say, in winter and some in summer; that is, coinciding with the agricultural seasons in Zimbabwe. The timing of the research had to coincide with the University of Zimbabwe vacation. This is the busiest time for communal farmers in the countryside and it is the rainy season, which makes travelling very difficult. All those factors have a bearing one way or the other on the collection of oral material and hence the nature of the resultant corpus. For example, it is taboo among the Ndebele people during that time of the year to narrate *inganekwane* (folk stories). It meant that the *inganekwane* genre could not be recorded by the SRAs, although that is one of the most important sources of rich language and cultural wisdom of predominantly oral societies like the Ndebele.

### 3.2.4 STUDENT RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

The SRAs were largely undergraduates who had done the Translation and Lexicography course. Some had just taken Ndebele language courses in their first year at college. Two were postgraduate students doing the masters degree in African Languages and Literature, and there was one undergraduate student from the social sciences. None had prior experience of research at that level but their performance in the field was considered satisfactory by the corpus compilers and most of them fulfilled the targets that had been set. They had undergone a crash course on the basics of fieldwork that included training in the use of audio-recorders and transcribing recorded material.

All the SRAs were fluent mother-tongue speakers of Ndebele. Of the twenty-six SRAs, eleven were female and the rest male. Their age ranged from twenty years to twenty-four years. We can say that, in terms of academic ability, the group was competent enough to take on the task and the same could be said for their proficiency in Ndebele. These are some of the key issues that have a bearing on the quality and reliability of the results. The fact that the SRAs were working in their home districts had an added advantage in that they knew most of the people as well as their potentialities to provide certain information. Similarly, it was easier for SRAs to approach potential informants as they already knew them. However, because these interviewers were almost of the same age-group, there are topics that they seemed to handle very well but in some cases their young age was a limitation considering the cultural orientation of the Ndebele society. On topics related to everyday events, which actually dominated the interviews, the SRAs did well but specialised topics like aspects of Ndebele religion or topics dealing with sexuality were not satisfactorily handled.

The reason for this is that, in Ndebele society, it is considered improper for certain topics to be discussed with young people. In the same manner, sexuality cannot be discussed by opposite sexes, which meant that male interviewers could not ask certain questions to female informants and vice versa. The other limitation was the SRA's own lack of knowledge about certain topics where they could not pose clever questions to elicit more information from the informants. The researchers and compilers of the Ndebele language corpus had foreseen some of these inadequacies in the SRAs. For that reason, the students had been given note-books that were to be used as diaries throughout the whole fieldwork period. SRAs had to give detailed descriptions of their daily contacts and work within the community as well as their own evaluation of informants they met. Also, they had to note down potential informants they could not interview or people that they felt had more information but who could not release it to them because of age or sex. One other way in which these limitations were noted was when the researchers read the transcribed texts and listened to the tapes. In some instances, one realised that more information could have been obtained had the interviewer been knowledgeable enough to lead the discussion fruitfully.

All these limitations were foreseen and ways of overcoming them prepared. The original plan was that the researchers would make follow-up interviews in those areas where needed. An inventory of potential informants was compiled, but unfortunately this has so far not been done. There was too much oral material to be processed already to think of the follow-ups and there was no money with which to pursue the plan. Though the potential informants are known and recorded, no follow-up was done to fill the gaps left by the SRAs. Maybe such follow-ups will be done as part of

the research for the Advanced Ndebele Dictionary that is being compiled at ALRI at the time of this write-up (2002).

### 3.2.5 METHODS OF COLLECTING ORAL MATERIAL

Most of the oral material was collected by means of structured and unstructured interviews. Each SRA was responsible for the decision on whether to use a structured or an unstructured interview. Some began as structured but flowed into more-or-less unstructured discussions. Guidelines had been given for typical structured interviews on specific topics that they were required to gather material on: for example, topics related to Ndebele marriage customs, child care or cattle farming. Students had the discretion to choose between structured and unstructured interviews depending on what they thought best in the prevailing circumstances. It should be noted that apart from aiming at creating a word-bank for the Ndebele language, it was also envisaged that the material would be useful for oral history and cultural studies, as well as for various language studies other than lexicography. Although the primary aim was an oral corpus for dictionary-making, the other possible uses it could be put to were not forgotten. It should be noted that the SRAs themselves had no prior knowledge of a corpus or dictionary-making based on a corpus, and this led them to assume that detailed oral material was required to get the meanings of words. Although such assumptions were not entirely correct, they led to the collection of a rich variety of oral material.

While the interviews were the most prevalent in oral data collection, there were a few cases where recordings of dialogues or other discussions were done. For example, there were recordings of songs either in social functions like weddings, in churches or in schools. Church services were also recorded, as well as classroom sessions in both primary and secondary schools. All this was done only after permission had been sought from the authorities concerned. In some classroom recordings, the teachers involved did the recordings by themselves so as to avoid the presence of a stranger, the student research assistant, in class. One SRA managed to record a traditional court session while some recorded normal conversations in workplaces. While these types of recordings are valuable for giving real life situations, they have some limitations, the most conspicuous one being the problem of identifying the particular speaker in terms of name, age, occupation and gender. The rest of the oral interviews have been marked with these details.

As stated elsewhere within this chapter, the SRAs were given note-books that had to be used like diaries to record in detail all research experiences. These notebooks are also a rich collection of oral material especially for names of birds, animals, trees and the like. Audio-recording informants could not obtain easily such kind of valuable information for the dictionary projects. The SRAs would write down the names of such things as trees, grass, birds, plants that they found in their areas of research. Family praise names were sometimes similarly obtained. Although the bulk of the oral material obtained by the SRAs was through audio-recordings, the notes they scribbled in their notebooks have proved very useful as additional information.

### 3.2.6 WRITTEN TEXTS

According to Renouf, “When constructing a text corpus, one seeks to make a selection of data which is in some sense representative, providing an authoritative body of linguistic evidence which can support generalisations and against which hypothesis can be tested” (Renouf 1987: 2). This observation holds true for any language corpus as it describes an ideal situation. However, for languages with a relatively short and recent literary history like Ndebele, it is not always practical to have a representative selection. A selection is possible where there is a range or variety from which a representative sample can be drawn. As Renouf further states, “The first step towards achieving this aim is to define the whole of which the corpus is to be a sample” (Renouf 1987:2). For Ndebele, with a very small number of published books, whether it is fiction or non-fiction, the whole implies all publications in the language.

The long-term objective is to include in the Ndebele language corpus all published texts. The little that has been published represents a neat selection of material usually used for educational purposes. Actually, apart from religious texts, most publications in Ndebele, both fiction and non-fiction, are made for the schools. A number of factors account for this bias but one reason is that the cost of producing and publishing books is relatively high in Zimbabwe and, in order to offset these costs, there is a need for a ready market for the books. In a country where reading for leisure is not yet a culture, only schools offer that ready market and publishers would publish only that which could be consumed by schools. Still, the Ndebele language corpus in its current state does not reflect the long-term ideal nor is it likely to do so in the near future. It is a sample of what has so far been published in Ndebele and this sample cannot be described as adequately representative.

We shall begin by giving an explanation on why certain texts were excluded from the Ndebele language corpus. The early written works in Ndebele may be categorized as falling between 1852 and 1950. The first date marks the first publications in Ndebele by the London Missionary Society, while the latter date marks significant departures from the early Ndebele orthography. Publications spanning this period, few as they may be, are very important in the history of Ndebele but had to be excluded. These are in the old Ndebele orthography, which few people can read today, and unless they are re-written in the current orthography (which is very unlikely), they cannot be included in the corpus. Some of the symbols used would even pose some problems for the scanner to detect. Therefore, all texts in the old orthography, which includes scripture texts and Ndebele language newspapers and leaflets have been deliberately excluded owing to the orthography they are in.

A number of novels that were originally planned to be included in the text corpus were later excluded. Most of the books published in the sixties and seventies used cheap-quality paper. It is difficult and time-consuming to scan works in cheap-quality paper, which is worsened by the small font in most of these works. If one had to scan such a text, the time taken in proofreading the scanned texts would be almost the same as typing the text. The compilers of the Ndebele corpus had a time frame and targets to meet and apart from corpus building they were also compiling a dictionary, which had to be completed within a given time frame. Under those time constraints, the compilers preferred to scan and proofread those texts that consumed minimum time to those that seemed to take much time.

We can say that the majority of books included in the corpus were published within the last twenty years, that is, between 1979 and 1999. As already mentioned, the bulk of them are creative works, especially narratives. No poetry anthology has been included and there are no immediate plans to do so. Poetic language is not popular in general corpus work and for lexicographic purposes it would be less useful. Frequency counts, instances of collocations and collocational range are some of the main uses of corpora in lexicography. Poetic language, by its nature, would obviously give misleading collocational information, for example. One drama text has been included and so far one textbook has been included. More of the latter category would be included as the corpus keeps growing. Scanning, proofreading and tagging textbooks is more demanding than doing the same with a novel, for example. For that particular reason, it seems compilers have postponed the inclusion of textbooks, which they have to do eventually, if the compilers abide by their original plan.

As the Ndebele language corpus consists of novels mostly, let us discuss the selection criteria within this category. Firstly, there were efforts to balance between male and female writers. There are more published male than female writers among the Ndebele, so an effort to include a representative sample of novels by women was made. The other selection criterion was the popularity of the works and a writer who was considered popular had his/her works included. Usually writers become popular when their works are either prescribed in schools or are broadcast on the radio. Two leading such writers among the Ndebele are one male, Ndabezinhle Sigogo and one female, Barbara Makhalisa. All their works other than drama and poetry have been included. Some works were included on the basis of the richness of language used and corpus compilers who are also competent literary critics made these judgements. Novels were also chosen according to themes they reflect, for example, attempts were made to have a representative sample of war novels, love and marriage themes, witchcraft themes, or historical novels. It should be noted that some themes dominate partly because of the colonial policy that did not allow certain issues to be written on. For example, writers could not write and depict racial inequality or police brutality.

### 3.2.7 COMPOSITION OF THE NDEBELE LANGUAGE CORPUS

The Ndebele language corpus consists of both oral and written texts, all transcribed and converted into machine-readable texts. The oral materials can be subdivided into oral interviews, oral recordings (of classroom lessons, church sermons, court sessions, etc) and radio and television recordings. The written texts include publications and manuscripts. Within the category of manuscripts are unpublished dissertations and some selected documents and manuscripts. The published texts are divided into novels, drama texts and textbooks.



**Table 5: Texts in the Ndebele Corpus**

Type of Texts	Number of tokens
Publications	
Novels	362 272
Drama	40 704
Textbooks	26 936
Manuscripts	
Unpublished dissertations	11 028
Unpublished documents	13 419
Oral materials	166 548
Oral interviews	70 361
Radio/Television recordings	
TOTAL	691 268

(NB. These figures are based on the estimate of the Ndebele corpus in January 2001. The corpus keeps growing and by January 2002 it was 1,2 million tokens).

The composition of the Ndebele language corpus reflects the history of publishing in Zimbabwe, especially that of indigenous languages. The case for Ndebele is further complicated by the reliance on Zulu literature for the teaching of Ndebele. As the majority of publications are biased towards school textbooks and novels, this type of text dominates the Ndebele corpus. Some efforts were made to include other types of text than school textbooks and novels. One way of offsetting this imbalance was to include what has been categorised as manuscripts. These are mostly unpublished dissertations and other documents and reports. The dissertations were collected from Ndebele departments in the various teacher-training colleges. These have some form of formal academic language as they are research papers. For example, some dissertations are on Ndebele grammar while others are on teaching methods. Dissertations on literary criticism of Ndebele were also sampled. These papers have the potential of yielding language that cannot ordinarily be found in novels. However, the major limitations of these manuscripts is that, as unpublished works, they remain private and personal, and the language used may not be standard.

Similarly, about the oral material, it was felt that more was needed than data collected through interviews throughout the Ndebele-speaking districts. Oral interviews were complemented by recordings of programmes from radio and television stations. The advantage of these is that compilers would have seen or listened to the programme and so could choose whether to include it or not. Also the choice of such material could be systematically done to come up with desired types of material. The disadvantage, however, was that compilers could not obtain any previous recordings of a year or so ago as the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation stations destroy all tapes about two weeks after broadcasting. Therefore, material was to be limited to that broadcast during the collection of corpus material. One other disadvantage of radio and television material is that it lacks adequate biographical details of informants in terms of age, gender, occupation and educational background. Such information is very essential for various purposes in research and for that reason all oral interviews have such details marked.

Table 5 reflects the state of the corpus at a time when I began to draw concordances from it, that is, January 2001. It has since expanded and apart from increasing the volume of text types already shown in Table 5, additional materials have been

included. The additional materials include various types of language, the one that can be found in advertisements, posters or letters. One other notable piece of material in this category is the unfinished Ndebele dictionary that was supposed to be published by Longmans Zimbabwe. The background of this unfinished dictionary is given in chapter 2, on the history of Ndebele lexicography.

### 3.2.8 CONVERSION OF TEXTS

The introduction of computers into language study has helped to address the question of corpus accessibility to other researchers. Before the corpus can be shared by many researchers it must be made machine-readable. The ALLEX Project corpora (both Ndebele and Shona) use the Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML). This is in line with the choice and preference of this method internationally. "Because of its power, flexibility and independence of particular software systems, the Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML) has become increasingly accepted outside the publishing industry as the standard way of encoding texts..." (Kennedy 1998:82). Due to the flexibility of this tool, the compilers of the Ndebele language corpus were able, for example, to mark age, gender, occupation and location of the informants they interviewed. The texts are marked as to whether they are published books, manuscripts, poetry and the like, such that a corpus user can tell the context and source of a particular expression in the corpus.

In addition to the SGML, the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) guidelines were also followed. Although these are not standard, the guidelines are flexible and adaptable to the compilers' need. According to Kennedy, "The TEI Guidelines were designed to apply to any texts regardless of the language, the date of production or the genre" (Kennedy 1998:83). The use of these internationally used mark-up techniques makes the Ndebele corpus accessible to most international users and could be rated as user-friendly and up to date.

As already alluded to, the compilers tagged the texts to suit their immediate needs, which were lexicographic. There is room for additional tags depending on the needs of the researcher as, "...the corpus compiler has flexibility as to how much detail is marked-up for any particular corpus" (Kennedy 1998:84). For example, most Ndebele oral corpus has tags marking biographical details of informants such as age, sex, education and occupation. There are details on the header for the district where the material was gathered. The Ndebele corpus does not yet have syntactic tags and, for our purpose here, we do not need that, but plans are underway to add syntactic tags.

The Ndebele Language corpus compiled by the ALLEX Project, now ALRI, is the property of the University of Zimbabwe and is also available in the cooperating universities of Oslo and Gothenburg. The designer and administrator of the Ndebele corpus and of all ALLEX Project corpora is Dr Daniel Ridings from the University of Gothenburg. By January 2002, the size of the Ndebele language corpus was about one million and two hundred thousand running words. The encoding process is continuing; therefore, the corpus is expanding too. Currently, the corpus material is in audio-tapes, in transcribed texts and some is in the computer. These three types of storage shall be maintained and archived for various types of research. The indexing of texts and cataloguing of audio-tapes and the link with the computer files is on-going. The goal is that one should be able to search for an interview in the audio-tapes and

in the transcribed form as well in its computer text file form. The corpora are available also on the internet.<sup>7</sup>

### 3.2.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE NDEBELE LANGUAGE CORPUS

What we may view as the limitations of the Ndebele language corpus are actually limitations of corpus linguistics in general. These concern the representativeness of the corpus and how balanced it is, as well as the fact that certain words and expressions are rarely found in the corpus. Let us discuss these in turn, beginning with the representativeness of the corpus.

Representativeness may be defined as referring to 'the extent to which a sample [text] includes the full range of variability in a population' (Ooi 1998:53). That implies that a corpus should have a fair range of texts and reflect the various registers in that language as well as contain what could be said to be the core vocabulary. We have already alluded to some problems that would make it difficult for the Ndebele language corpus to be as representative as its compilers would have desired. A related notion to a representative corpus is a balanced corpus defined as 'a corpus so finely tuned that it offers a manageably small-scale model of the linguistic material which the corpus builders wish to study' (Ooi 1998:53). However, up to now, there are no models of creating a balanced corpus.

Lastly, it is a feature of every known corpus that some expressions and words are missing in the corpus, no matter how big. What we could say about this is that, since it is a common feature in corpus studies, whoever uses a corpus should know that such gaps may be filled by introspection. It also shows that some words and expressions in any language are so rarely used that they could not be found in a general-purpose corpus. Words considered to be taboo among the Ndebele would not be in the corpus no matter how that corpus is compiled. As for the demand for a representative and balanced corpus, we can claim that the current Ndebele language corpus is the best effort in balancing and making a representative corpus. The lack of technical terms in Ndebele is a problem that compilers of the corpus could not have solved. However, the Ndebele language corpus is a good source for linguistic studies notwithstanding some of the above-mentioned weaknesses.

## 3.3. USING THE CORPUS

Writing on the importance of the corpus for research purposes, Leech et al (1995) said, "The use of a corpus as a common resource, ... serves the purposes of scientific endeavour in a further way. While the data on which research is based remains private, there is no way in which the analysis of that data, and the conclusion drawn from that analysis, can be verified by another person, who may or may not agree with the original researcher's findings. Thus the corpus of spoken discourse can become a testing ground, against which people's research claims can be evaluated" (Leech 1995:3). The importance of having data that other researchers can have access to is also noted by Aarts & Aarts (1982), "Through his corpus a corpus linguist has easy and ample access

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7 [www.lexilogik.se](http://www.lexilogik.se)

to data that others find difficult or impossible to obtain” (Kyoto et al. 1988:4). We are therefore going to show how the corpus has been used in this research and how any other researcher can access the Ndebele language corpus to verify the claims made in the study. The major method used to derive evidence from the corpus is using the concordances, a keyword-in-context concordance (KWIC).

According to the **Dictionary of Lexicography**, the keyword-in-context concordances can display the words preceding (left of) or following (right of) the keyword in either frequency or alphabetical order, producing evidence on such aspects of usage as collocation, compounding and lemmatisation (Hartmann and James 1998:27). The ISN also used the corpus for citations and in headword selection. Therefore, in the thesis, we attempt to establish how faithful the compilers of the monolingual Ndebele dictionary were to the evidence of the corpus. Even if they were faithful to it, we will also establish the choices they made in situations of language variation where choice among alternatives had to be made. The concordances enable researchers to establish the frequency of a given word or phrase in language. For cases where the language has two or more words meaning one thing, through the frequency counts from concordances, one can tell whether the dictionary compilers chose their headwords or senses according to their frequency or not. The concordances help in defining words in their contexts and in giving citations from real language usage.

The extraction of concordances is possible because the corpus is computerised and machine-readable; thus, we are already in the field of corpus linguistics and computational linguistics. According to the **Dictionary of Lexicography**, corpus linguistics is defined as ‘A branch of linguistics concerned with the application of computational corpus techniques to the solution of problems of large-scale description’ (Hartmann & James 1998:31). Corpus linguistics may also be defined as ‘the study of language on the basis of text corpora’ (Aijemer and Altenberg, 1991:1). Ooi (1998) amends the definition of corpus linguistics to ‘a field of study that involves the study of language on the basis of textual or acoustic corpora, almost always involving the computer in some phase of storage, processing, and analysis of this data’. For that reason, Leech (1992) points out that computer corpus linguistics would be the more appropriate term.

According to the **Dictionary of Lexicography**, computational linguistics is defined as ‘A branch of linguistics concerned with the application of computers to language research’ (Hartmann & James 1998:26). From these definitions, then, we can claim that our study employs methods of computer corpus linguistics. It is important to note that there is no particular aspect of language, like for example phonology or syntax, that corpus linguistics focuses on. It can be applied to any aspect of language study depending on what the researcher thinks can be possibly studied using the corpus. For that reason, corpus linguistics is not a theory or a separate branch of linguistics but a possible ally to any theory. “The use of a corpus as a source of evidence however is not necessarily incompatible with any linguistic theory, and progress in the language sciences as a whole is likely to benefit from a judicious use of evidence from various sources: texts, introspection, elicitation or other types of experimentation as appropriate” (Kennedy 1998:8). The above views on corpus linguistics can be summed up by the observation that, ‘Corpus linguistics is not a branch of linguistics in the same sense as syntax, semantics, sociolinguistics and so on. ....Corpus linguistics is a methodology that may be used in almost any area of linguistics, but it does not truly delimit an area of linguistics itself’ (McEnery & Wilson 2001:2).

The use of the corpus in the thesis, especially the frequency counts and concordances is part of the quantitative approach, which is one of the approaches that are used here. The emphasis of the quantitative approach is measurement and hence the reference to 'empirical'. It therefore calls for a systematic collection of information as well as a systematic structuring and interpretation of it in order to yield results supported by empirical evidence. What we explained above on how we used the corpus qualifies the approach as quantitative research. The availability of a sizeable corpus for Ndebele was one reason for using an approach that could utilise this material. However, it is not the presence of the corpus that triggered this research but its presence made the possibility of the research even more exciting as it afforded material that could help explain the question under consideration. Some aspects of the research would not have been looked into without the presence of a corpus. The quantitative method is best suited for handling this corpus-based research.

### 3.4 THE CASE STUDY

We stated that the choice of methodology was determined by the nature of the research questions investigated. Some issues are best handled by the qualitative research approach, especially the case study method. The point about the qualitative approach that we might find to be constantly coming is its "recognition that social research, like other things people do, is a human construction...conducted in a social context with certain sorts of social arrangements..." (Punch 1998:140). Language planning is probably one discipline that is interacting with various political, economic and cultural factors, and such a situation cannot be adequately addressed by quantitative means alone.

The focus of the thesis on the Ndebele dictionary calls for a case study of the entire dictionary-making process. Questions could be raised on the limitations of case studies, especially in this particular case where the focus is on one case. Case studies have been criticised for the fact that they are only on one generalization and are not objective. However, there are situations where case studies need not lead to generalizations. These are situations where "the case may be so important, interesting, or misunderstood that it deserves study in its own right. Or it may be unique in some very important respects, and therefore worthy of study" (Punch 1998:154). The first monolingual Ndebele dictionary is very important and an interesting development to the language that is likely to affect language standardisation. For that reason, it deserves a case study approach where results need not be generalized as such.

The description of ISN and how it treats some problematic issues in vocabulary and orthography, is covered in detail in Chapter 5. That is part of metalexigraphy or dictionary criticism, which constitutes part of the thesis. The evidence for this case study is the Ndebele dictionary itself as well as progress reports compiled during the whole dictionary-making process. The researcher also recorded notes on the dictionary-making process, especially decisions that were taken on particular issues. This case study approach is complemented by the participant-observer method, as the researcher was part of the editors of ISN (see 1.7).

### 3.5 THE PARTICIPANT-OBSERVER METHOD

The researcher is a mother-tongue speaker of Ndebele. Secondly, he is the chief editor of the ISN (see 1.7). He led the team that compiled the ISN from its inception, that is, built the Ndebele language corpus to the completion of the dictionary and its publication. It is important to acknowledge that this involvement in corpus work and the compiling of the monolingual Ndebele dictionary raised not only the interest in this study but also the questions that it addresses. As lexicography includes both dictionary study and dictionary research, the thesis is a logical development for the researcher whose experience in lexicographic work motivated him to engage in meta-lexicography. The leading role of the current researcher in both building the Ndebele language corpus and co-editing the Ndebele dictionary gives him intimate knowledge of some details on the language that would have otherwise escaped his attention.

The experience as a participant in the building of the Ndebele language corpus and as an editor of the Ndebele dictionary enables the researcher to use first hand experience on the dictionary-making process. As a mother-tongue speaker of Ndebele, it helps to fill the gaps and limitations observed in the Ndebele language corpus as some aspects of the language can only be accessed by introspection.

### 3.6 INTERVIEWS

Pre-structured interviews were conducted to collect oral material on specific topics and to specifically selected informants. The oral material thus collected, which was recorded by means of audiotape recorders, was transcribed and tagged and stored as sub-corpora. The researcher had initially identified linguistic variation between speakers in Mtshabezi and Nswazi. The essence of interviews was to collect information that could be used to confirm or dispute the already observed variations. The present corpus covered as much as possible most of the Ndebele-speaking areas with informants spread uniformly in terms of age, sex, social status and level of formal education. But the sub-corpora from these selected interviews consist of recorded speech of specific types of informants in specific areas and on specific topics, as the aim had been to establish diversity in the language and to try to isolate some factors influencing it.

Interviews were conducted by an SRA, Dion Nkomo, with court interpreters and some people in the legal field. The aim of the interviews was to obtain words and terms in Ndebele on legal matters. The research assistant jotted down notes from his interviews and noted the use of words. He followed a guideline for the interview, which had been drafted in advance.

### 3.7 OBSERVING COURT PROCEEDINGS

In addition to interviewing workers in the law courts, the research assistant also listened to court proceedings and took notes. He could not tape-record the court sessions as this would not be granted by law. However, listening and taking notes in court sessions is allowed. The material obtained in the courts was useful for the study of legal terminology in Ndebele as there are no legal texts in Ndebele and the Ndebele

language corpus is lacking in this respect. Guidelines were given to the SRA as to what to take note of.

### **3.8 SECONDARY SOURCES OF MATERIAL**

A number of texts have been used especially for the study of the history of Ndebele orthography. These include old Ndebele newspapers, Bibles, hymn books and other texts that could not be scanned and put in the corpus due to some of the letters that are no longer in the orthography and would be difficult to key into the computer. These were helpful in the study of the various spellings used so far for Ndebele, for example the disjunctive writing system.

### **3.9 CONCLUSION**

There is no single method that has been found to cover the various strands of the thesis. Each aspect of the research required specific methodology. The methods used include the use of the corpus, the quantitative approach, the qualitative approach, that is the case study, participant observation and interviews.

There are a number of ways in which the Ndebele language corpus has been used in the thesis, but the most significant has been drawing concordances. Relevant illustrations and examples are cited in the relevant chapters. From our experience here, we observed that one can manipulate the corpus to yield what one thinks is useful for the research. The question is "How can we best exploit the opportunities which arise from having texts stored in machine-retrievable form?" (Kennedy 1998:3). In this thesis, the corpus was used to answer questions on the standardisation of Ndebele.





## ASPECTS OF NDEBELE MORPHOLOGY

### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

The description of some aspects of Ndebele morphology gives the necessary background to the discussion of the standardisation of vocabulary, terminology and orthography, the focus of the thesis (refer 1.10). The description is very basic (albeit adequate for our purposes) and we do not discuss the various trends within morphology. Notwithstanding some of its obvious limitations, the Dokean approach is used in the description of word categories in Ndebele, the main reason is that word categorisation and noun classes in the ISN are based on Doke's approach. This was unavoidable for the editors as they could not introduce different approaches that potential users are not accustomed to. As mentioned before (see 1.1), the teaching of Ndebele grammar still relies on Doke's *Textbook of Zulu Grammar*. Secondly, the description of the ISN (refer Chapter 5), especially lemmatisation necessitates this brief outline of Ndebele morphology. Although our aim is not to evaluate the Dokean approach, where necessary we do highlight some of its shortcomings (refer 4.3).

Here it is important to mention that the terms used in the description of Ndebele morphology are the terms largely inherited from traditional Bantu scholarship, which was fraught with fluctuations in terms, disagreements on and lack of standard terms. It is crucial for non-Bantu linguists to take note of some of the limitations imposed on describing Bantu languages due to the issue of terms. The problem in Bantu terminology is not only the difficulty of delimiting concepts in the discipline but also the fact that different writers use different terms for the same thing. For example, the ideophone has variously been referred to as: Radical (Doke in Zulu), Descriptive Adverb (Junod in Ronga), Descriptive Complement (Bishop in Ronga), Indeclinable Verbal Particle (McLaren in Xhosa), Interjectional Adverb (Jacottet in Sotho), Mimic Noun (Wanger in Zulu) (Doke 1935: 119). This situation in Bantu linguistics makes it difficult sometimes to study the languages and this is felt too in Ndebele.

### 4.2. MORPHEMES

Morphology is the branch of linguistics that studies 'the internal structure of words' (Matthews 1991:9). The notion of the morpheme is central in studying morphology. According to *A Dictionary of Grammatical Terms in Linguistics*, a morpheme is defined as 'The minimal grammatical unit; the smallest unit which plays any part in morphology and which cannot be further decomposed except in phonological or semantic terms' (Trask 1993:175). It is sufficient for this study to note in simple terms

that words have an internal structure and that morphemes are the minimal units that make up words. Examples of morphemes that constitute words in Ndebele are:

khatshana (further)	nke (very white)
zwi (extreme silence)	nxa (if)

The above examples are free morphemes. Free morphemes may constitute words by themselves. Then there are bound morphemes that must be attached to other morphemes. The bound morphemes are attached to a root or lexical morpheme. The examples below illustrate this:

umfazi (a woman)  
u-m-fazi

```

graph TD
    A[umfazi (a woman)] --> B[u-m-fazi]
    B --> C[IV]
    B --> D[CL.1]
    B --> E[STEM]
    
```

-thathela (take for)  
-thath-el-a

```

graph TD
    A[-thathela (take for)] --> B[-thath-el-a]
    B --> C[take]
    B --> D[APPL]
    B --> E[FV]
    
```

In the word *umfazi* (woman) the bound morphemes are **u-** and **-m-**, while in *-thathela* (take for) they are **-el-** and **-a**. From bound morphemes we can distinguish inflectional and derivational morphemes or affixes. An inflectional affix produces a new word-form of a lexeme from a base and a derivational affix produces a new lexeme from a base (Bauer 1988:12). Examples of inflectional affixes in Ndebele:

-hamb-ile (went : immediate past) [VR-TM]  
y-a-hamb-a (it went : remote past) [SM-TM-VR-FV]  
i-za-hamb-a (it will go: future) [SM-TM-VR-FV]

From the above example we note that tense markers: **-ile**, **-a** and **-za-** are inflectional affixes as they have only produced new word-forms from the root *-hamb-* (go). The derivational affixes usually change the word class of the base from verb to noun as shown below from the same root *-hamb-* (go):

i-si-hamb-i (traveller) [IV-CL7-stem-FV]  
u-hamb-o (a journey) [IV-stem-FV]

Therefore, affixes **-si-**, **-i**, **u-** and **-o** are derivational. Some do not change the class. For example verbal extensions do not change the verb. In the extended verb *-hamb-el-a* (go for) [VR-APPL-FV], the applied extension **-el-** has not changed the word class of the verb but has given it a different meaning.

### 4.3. WORD CATEGORIES IN NDEBELE

Ndebele follows Doke's word categorisation for Zulu. Doke identified word categories starting on their function in the sentence and then considering their morphological shape. He states that, 'the first main classification is according to the work they do in the sentence' (Doke 1954:49). His main criterion was that a word is a single-stress unit. This has implication on monosyllables which have been denied word status following the single stress unit criterion (see Chapter 8)

Doke came up with syntactic classes (functional) which are realised by a number of morphological classes as shown in Table 6 below taken from Doke (1927:34):

**Table 6: Word Categories in Ndebele**

SYNTACTIC CLASSES	MORPHOLOGICAL CLASSES	
i. Substantive:	(a) Noun	1.
	(b) Pronoun	2.
ii. Qualificative:	(c) Adjective	3.
	(d) Relative	4.
	(e) Enumerative	5.
	(f) Possessive	6.
iii. Predicative:	(g) Verb	7.
	(h) Copulative	8.
iv. Descriptive:	(i) Adverb	9.
	(j) Ideophone	10.
v. Conjunctive	(k) Conjunction	11.
vi. Interjective	(l) Interjection	12.

We have already noted that the Dokean approach has limitations (refer 4.1). Some of the shortcomings include, for example, the qualificatives that have pronominal functions like pronouns. According to Lestrade, 'it is all the more remarkable that Professor Doke does not seem to have seen a similar phenomenon in other equally patent cases, and has not merely not provided a dual classification and nomenclature for such cases, but has even, in his zeal to reform, wrenched words violently out of the grammatical classes into which they have been hitherto put, only to put them into an equally one-sided but new class of his own' (1993:182).

The other concern comes from the fact that word categories by Doke are mainly based on the function of words in a sentence. This basing of classification on the function of words in a sentence has also been seen by other linguists like Van Wyk (1967) to be an inadequate basis for classification. '[Wyk] emphasizes the fact that all linguistic features of words must be taken into account when words are to be classified into word categories. Consequently, he distinguishes four principles according to which words of a language should be classified, namely syntactic, morphological, phonological and semantic principles' (Taljard and Gauton 2001:194). To classify words on the

basis of one principle (syntactic function) as Doke did creates the problems that we are noting. For our purposes in this thesis, it suffices to acknowledge the limitations of the word categories that are used in Ndebele and consequently in this work. We are not delving into the various arguments for different word categorisations as this would need a separate chapter on its own and in any case it would not assist us much in the description of the ISN and its standardising role. Nonetheless, we have highlighted some of the problems associated with word categorisation in the language.

We are not going to discuss the details of the morphological structure of all the word categories. The focus is on the noun, the verb and the ideophone. Incidentally these are described by Fortune for Shona as the three hierarchies 'each based on a root morpheme of a distinctive kind' (Fortune 1980:iii). There are a number of reasons for this choice. Firstly, a comprehensive in-depth study of Ndebele morphology would be impossible within the time and space constraints of this thesis. Limiting the discussion to the morphology of the noun, verb and the ideophone is influenced by lexicographic factors too. About three quarters of the ISN entries are nouns, followed by verbs, while the third largest are ideophones. Studying the morphology of the noun, the verb and the ideophone is relevant for this particular thesis whose focus is mainly on the Ndebele dictionary entries. As the study covers vocabulary expansion and standardisation, the main parts of speech that are highly affected are nouns and to a lesser extent verbs. It seems that languages borrow more words in these categories than in others like, for example, adverbs. As the nouns and the verbs also dominate the entries in the ISN, it is important to note that loanwords and coinages are in these categories. It would also seem that languages are generally more conservative in other parts of speech than in nouns for example. Parts of Chapters 6 and 7, on vocabulary and terminology respectively, discuss how foreign words are assimilated into the Ndebele lexicon.

#### 4.4. THE MORPHOLOGY OF THE NOUN

The classification of Bantu nouns was first proposed by W.H.I. Bleek<sup>8</sup>(1862) and then the famous Bantu noun classification by Carl Meinhof<sup>9</sup> (1899, 1932). For the Nguni languages, to which Ndebele belongs, the noun classes were noted by William B. Boyce in *Grammar of the Kafir Language* (1834). Also notable in the history of noun classification is the contribution by Bleek (1827-75) who arranged nouns into eighteen classes.

The morphology of Ndebele is basically the same as that of Bantu languages in general. Depending upon the language, the structure of the Bantu noun may be as follows:

Prefix + stem

Augment + prefix + stem

Secondary prefix + prefix + stem (Mutaka 2000:150).

Ndebele has the augment, prefix and stem.

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<sup>8</sup> Bleek was the first to use the term Bantu, earning himself the title 'Father Of Bantu Philology'

<sup>9</sup> Meinhof's system of noun classification is still the basis of study of nouns with some minor adjustments.

#### 4.4.1. THE AUGMENT

The augment is also referred to as the **pre-prefix** or the **initial vowel**. In this study we prefer initial vowel (IV) For example, in the nouns **umuntu** (person) and **abantu** (people) we have:

u-mu- ntu (person)	a-ba-ntu (people)
[IV-CL1-stem]	[IV - CL2 - stem]

We may note that the augment or initial vowel is the same as the vowel in the prefix proper, that is, u-mu- and a-ba- respectively. The initial vowel is discarded when the noun is used in the evocative sense, for example, in a direct address as in; 'bantu!' (people!). The status of the initial vowel is rather controversial, as there is no consensus on whether it is a syntactic feature or a morphological one. The initial vowel is, however, one of the distinguishing features of Ndebele.

#### 4.4.2. THE NOUN PREFIX

The classification of nouns is based on prefixes. The prefix distinguishes the class to which the noun belongs, and there are 18 classes for Ndebele. The following Table 7 shows the noun classes and the agreement markers:

Table 7: Noun Class and Agreement Prefixes in Ndebele

NOUN CLASS	SUBJECT MARKERS	OBJECT MARKERS
1. umu-, um-	u-	-m-, -mu-
1a. u-	u-	-m-, -mu-
2. aba-	ba-	-ba-
2a. o-	ba-	-ba-
3. umu-, um-	u-	-wu-
4. imi-	i-	-yi-
5. i-, ili-,	li-	-li-
6. ama-	a-	-wa-
7. isi-, is-	si-	-si-
8. izi-, iz-	zi-	-zi-
9. iN-	i-	-yi-
10. iziN-, iz-	zi-	-zi-
11. ulu-, ulw-	lu-	-lu-
12.	--	--
13.	--	--
14. ubu-, u-, ub-	bu-	-bu-
15. uku-, uk-, ukw-	ku-	-ku-
16. pha-	ku-	-ku-
17. ku-	ku-	-ku-
18. mu-	ku-	-ku-

The subject and object markers agree with the noun class prefix. Note that Ndebele does not have nouns in classes 12 and 13 while classes 16, 17 and 18 are locatives. We may note that Carl Meinhof classified nouns for the Bantu languages in general and so it happens that Ndebele does not have any nouns falling in the category that Meinhof designated as classes 12 and 13.

Apart from distinguishing class, the prefix also denotes whether the noun is singular, plural or neuter. For example, the following are singular, plural and neuter nouns:

Singular	Plural	Neuter
u-mu-ntu (person)	a-ba-ntu (people)	u-lu-ntu (humankind)
[IV-CL1-stem]	[IV-CL2-stem]	[IV-CL11-stem]
i-li-zwe (country)	a-ma-zwe (countries)	u-bu-zwe (nationhood)
[IV-CL5-stem]	[IV-CL6-stem]	[IV-CL14-stem]

We may also point out that while some noun classes have one prefix each and others have more than one. Those noun class prefixes that are two or more per class are allomorphs. For example, class 7 prefix is realised through the allomorphs *isi-* and *is-*. The conditioning phonological environment in these prefixes is the initial sound in the noun stem, that is, whether it is a consonant or a vowel. **Consonant-commencing** noun stems take the prefix whose structure is vowel-consonant-vowel (VCV). **Vowel-**

**commencing** noun stems take prefixes with a vowel-consonant structure (VC). The following examples illustrate the point:

i-si-**hlahla** (tree) [IV-CL7-stem] : Consonant commencing stem

i-s-**andla** (a hand) [IV-CL7-stem]: Vowel commencing stem

The noun prefix is the central prefix that derives other substantival prefixes, that is, substantive prefixes have to agree with the noun class prefix. For example:

izinja (the dogs) **zami** (mine) **zona** (those) **ezinhle** (that are nice)  
**ezimnyama** (that are black) **zonke** (all of them) **ziyadla** (they are eating).  
(The dogs, mine, those, that are nice, that are black, all of them, are eating).

Here we note that the noun class 10 prefix **izi-** sets agreement with the possessive prefix **zami** (mine), pronoun prefix **zona** (those), relative adjective prefix **ezinhle** (nice), relative descriptive prefix **ezimnyama** (that are black) and with the quantitative prefix **zonke** (all of them). The same can be said of any noun class prefix. For example we can take noun class 5 prefix as in **ithole** (calf) **lami** (mine) **lona** (it) **elihle** (the nice one) **elimnyama** (the black one) **lodwa** (alone) **liyadla** (is grazing). (The calf, mine, it, the nice one, the black one, alone, is grazing).

#### 4.4.3. THE NOUN STEM

The noun stems, unlike the prefixes, do not show the class to which the noun belongs. Nor do they distinguish number in terms of singular, plural and neuter. The noun stem needs a prefix to be able to distinguish these. For example, the noun stem **-ntu** has a semantic sense of 'human' but will not give any specific meaning until prefixes are attached to it in the following manner:

umu-**ntu** (person) [IV-CL1-stem]  
aba-**ntu** (people) [IV-CL2-stem]  
isi-**ntu** (culture) [IV-CL7-stem]  
ulu-**ntu** (humankind) [IV-CL11-stem]

Therefore, the noun stem needs a prefix to enable the noun to distinguish class, number and person.

Noun stems are either consonant commencing or vowel commencing. Examples of consonant commencing noun stems are: **-ntwana**, **-zi**, **-hlahla**, while the vowel commencing stems include **-andla**, **-anga**, and **-osa**. It is important to note that lemmatisation in Ndebele and sister Nguni languages has been traditionally on the basis of noun stems (refer 5.2).

#### 4.4.4 THE SUFFIXES -ANA, -ANYANA, -KAZI.

The noun stems can take suffixes to denote diminutive, feminine and augmentative forms. The diminutive suffix is **-ana** or **-anyana**. For example:

ilitsh-**ana** (small stone)[IV-CL5-stem-DIM]  
umfanyana (little boy)[IV-CL1-stem-DIM]

When the noun stem ends in **-na**, the diminutive becomes **-anyana**. There is either elision of the final vowel in the stem or there is coalescence of vowels. In some cases there is assimilation.

-tshe + -ana > -tshe-ana: elision of **-e** then resulting in **-tshana**

-fana + -ana > -fana-ana: there is palatalisation as the alveolar /n/ is articulated in the palatal as /ny/ resulting in **-fanyana**.

ikhanda + -ana > **ikhanjana** (small head) : there is palatalisation as /nd/ changed to /nj/ and final vowel **-a** is elided.

ilembu + -ana > **ilenjana** (small piece of cloth): there is palatalisation as /mb/ changed to /nj/ and final vowel **-u** is elided.

The feminine suffix is **-kazi**, as shown in these nouns:

inkomo-**kazi** (cow)[IV-CL9-stem-FEM]  
indlovu-**kazi** (she-elephant/queen)[IV-CL9-stem-FEM]  
indoda-**kazi** (daughter)[IV-CL9-stem-FEM]

The augmentative suffix is **-kazi**. It is phonetically like the feminine suffix, but it is a different morpheme. Examples are:

ikhanda-**kazi** (big head) [IV-CL5-stem-AUG]  
idwala-**kazi** (big rock) [IV-CL5-stem-AUG]  
unyawo-**kazi** (big foot) [IV-CL11-stem-AUG].

The use of each **-kazi** has its context that enables native speakers to differentiate between the feminine from the augmentative suffix.

#### 5.5.5 THE COMPOUND NOUNS

The lemmatisation and word division of compounds is of interest to lexicography in general and the description of the ISN is no exception (see 5.7). It is for that reason that we give a brief morphological description of compound nouns here. The compound nouns can be derived from various parts of speech. Here we are highlighting only samples of compound nouns in the ISN. We have **umatshayinyoka**



(loafer), derived from the verb **-tshaya** (to hit) and the noun **inyoka** (a snake). The meaning of the compound noun in this case is metaphorical, as it does not derive literally from the constituents that compose the word **umatshayinyoka**. Below are examples of compound nouns derived from various parts of speech:

NOUN + NOUN

*umnini* (owner) + *umuzi* (home) > *umninimuzi* (home owner)

*umnini* (owner) + *amandla* (strength) > *umninimandla* (master of strength)

NOUN + ADJECTIVE

*ubaba* (father) + *omdala* (old) > *ubabomdala* (uncle)

*umzimba* (body) *omuhle* (nice) > *umzimbamuhle* (nice body).

VERB + NOUN

*-lahla* (cast away) + *abantu* (people) > *umlahlabantu* (that which casts away people – a type of wild tree planted in graveyards)

*-chitha* (destroy/scatter) + *izulu* (rain) > *umchithazulu* (destroyer of rain - type of wild plant).

The lemmatisation of compound nouns has a number of problems, the most common one being their length. Ndebele has compound nouns where one part derives from Ndebele and the other from loanwords. Some compound nouns in the source language have been adopted as simple nouns in Ndebele while some simple nouns have become compound in Ndebele. All these aspects are discussed in detail in the relevant sections of this thesis (see Chapter 5).

The above brief description of the morphology of the noun in Ndebele is adequate for the background necessary for this study. More could be discussed about the noun in Ndebele. The description of the augment, prefix, stem and suffixes is primary in the study of the noun and the description given above is adequate for our purposes in this study. Substantives other than the noun will be mentioned in chapter 5 but there is no need to describe their morphology as they all have the same structure as the noun with the exception of the demonstrative.

## 4.5. THE MORPHOLOGY OF THE VERB

The central feature of the Ndebele verb is the verb root that can be conjugated by affixes marking tense, aspect, subject, object and the various extensions that a verb can possibly take. The **verb root** (VR) is the nucleus of the verb in Ndebele. As a central part of the verb, the verb root does not change in structure. What changes, are the various affixes that can be attached to it. Examples of verb roots include: **-thand-** (like/love), **-bal-** (read), **-os-** (roast) and **-ephul-** (break).

As we noted in the introduction above (refer 4.1) the differences in terminology used by different writers describing the same phenomenon makes the description of the Ndebele verb seem incomprehensible to some people. For example, the verb root and extension and final vowel gives us a verb stem (Taljard and Bosch 1988 and Mutaka 2000). To some, the stem is only associated with nouns and not verbs. Similarly,

Taljaard and Bosch use the terms subject and object ‘concord’ where other writers prefer ‘marker.’ Here we do not discuss the merits or demerits of terms but we are interested in the analysis that best describes the given concepts.

#### 4.5.1. THE CONJUGATION OF THE VERB

According to Taljaard and Bosch (1988:35), ‘Conjugation means the representation of the verb in the moods, tenses and other verbal forms in which the verb stem may be used to appear as a complete word.’ The verb root can be conjugated with suffixes as well as prefixes. The common suffixes are the verbal extensions. The conjugating prefixes are the agreement markers and the tense markers. Some tense markers are suffixes also. For example, a typical Ndebele verb could look like this:

ba-be-m-**thand**-ile (they had liked her/him)  
**ba-** subject marker (SM)  
**-be-** tense marker (TM)  
**-m-** object marker (OM)  
**-ile** tense marker (TM)

The subject marker is derived from the noun prefix and has to agree with it. For example:

a-**ba**-ntu      **ba**-thand-a      u-ku-dla (people like food)  
 [IV-CL2-stem SM-VR-FV    IV-CL15-stem]

i-**zi**-nja              **zi**-thand-a      u-ku-dla (dogs like food).  
 [IV-CL10-stem SM-VR-FV    IV-CL15-stem]

‘The subject concord[marker] always bear a close resemblance to the class prefix of the noun which is the subject of a clause’ (Taljaard and Bosch 1988:30). The noun class 2 prefix proper is **ba-** and the subject marker is **ba-**, while for noun class 10 the prefix proper is **zi-** and the subject marker is **zi-**. However, nasal classes, that is, 1, 3, 4 and 9 behave differently in that the subject marker is a vowel. For example, noun class 1 prefix **u-mu-** and subject marker **u-**, noun class 4 prefix **i-mi-** and subject marker **i-**. For nasal classes the subject marker is the same as the vowel of the prefix proper, while for the rest of the classes the subject marker is the same as the prefix proper. It is important also to note that the subject marker is always a prefix.

The **Object Marker** also derives from and has to agree with the noun class prefix of the object. For example:

a-ba-ntu	ba-ya- <b>ku</b> -thand-a	u- <b>ku</b> -dla (people like [it] food).
[IV-CL2-stem	SM-TM-OM-VR-FV	IV-CL15-stem]
i-zi-nja	zi-ya- <b>ku</b> -thand-a	u- <b>ku</b> -dla (dogs like [it] food).
[IV-CL10-stem	SM-TM-OM-VR-FV	IV-CL15-stem]

Therefore, the object marker **-ku-** agrees with the prefix proper **-ku-**. ‘Like the subject concord [marker], the object concord [marker] bears a close resemblance to the class prefix from which it derives. In the non-nasal classes, the object concords are the same

as the corresponding subject concords. The object concords of the nasal classes are preceded by semivowels: *y-* before *i-* and *w-* before *u-*. The exceptions are **ku-** for the second person singular, and **mu-** for class 1' (Taljaard and Bosch 1988:37).

The object marker must be placed immediately before the verb root. Whenever the object marker is used, no other affix can come between it and the verb root. Therefore, the object marker comes usually after other affixes, especially the subject marker and tense markers.

From examples already given above we may note that **tense markers** (TM) usually come after the subject marker but before the object marker. The following are some of the tense markers in Ndebele:

ng-a-dl-a (I ate) : remote past tense  
[SM-TM-VR-FV]

ngi-dl-ile (I have eaten) : past perfect tense  
[SM-VR-TM]

ngi-dl-e khathesi (I ate just now) : immediate past tense  
[SM-VR-TM now]

ba-∅-dl-a iyambazi (they eat porridge) : the present tense has no marker  
[SM-∅-VR-FV porridge]

ngi-ya-dl-a (I am eating) : present continuous tense  
[SM-TM-VR-FV]

ba-za-hamb-a (they will go) : future tense morpheme is *-za-* ~ *-ya-*  
ba-ya-hamb-a  
[SM-TM-VR-FV].

Ndebele has the reflexive realized through the affix *-zi-*, which comes immediately before the verb root. For example, *u-ya-zi-buz-a* (is asking oneself) [SM-TM-REFLEXIVE-VR-FV]. The reflexive could be described as an object marker where the object is also the subject. Some of the affixes that are important in describing the Ndebele verb are extensions, which we describe below.

#### 4.5.2. VERBAL EXTENSIONS

Verbal extensions are defined as 'suffixes which occur immediately after the verb root – often with complex morphophonemic alternations involving the final consonant of the root and the extension itself – before the final suffix /-a / or other vowel' (Welmers 1973:337). There are six verbal extensions that are common in Ndebele and a few additional ones that have not been fully described. For our discussion, it would suffice to focus on the common ones and then just mention in brief those that are yet to be studied. The common verbal extensions are the applied (APPL), causative (CAUS), reciprocal (REC), neuter (NEU), passive (PASS) and intensive (INT) extensions.

The applied extension, which is known also as the applicative, is 'formed by means of the extension **-el-** which is inserted between the root of the verb and the ending. It indicates an action carried out for, on behalf of or in the direction of someone or something' (Taljaard and Bosch 1988:69). For example:

-bon-**el**-a (to see for)  
[VR-APPL-FV]

-thath**ela** (to take for)  
[VR-APPL-FV]

According to Mutaka, 'the causative has the meaning "to cause or to make somebody do something" or "to cause something to become something different." Mutaka 2000: 177). The suffix for this extension is normally **-is-** as shown in the following examples:

-bon-**is**-a (to cause to see)  
[VR-CAUS-FV]

-thath-**is**-a (to help in taking)  
[VR-CAUS-FV]

The reciprocal extension is derived by 'inserting the element **-an-** between the root and the final vowel. The reciprocal idea means that the action is performed reciprocally – by someone or something upon another and vice versa' (Fortune 1967:159). The examples are:

-bon-**an**-a (to see each other)  
[VR-REC-FV]

-thath-**an**-a (to take one another)  
[VR-REC-FV]

The intensive extension is derived by inserting **-isis-** between the verb root and the final vowel /-a /. 'By the intensive, a heightened, more vigorous and intense action, is expressed' (Fortune 1967:169). For example:

-bon-**isis**-a (to see carefully)  
[VR-INT-FV]  
-thath-**isis**-a (to take as much as possible)  
[VR-INT-FV]

According to Doke the passive extension 'indicates that the subject is acted upon by an agent' (1927:135). Examples of the passive extension are: -bon-**w**-a (be seen) [VR-PASS-FV] and -thath-**w**-a (be taken) [VR-PASS-FV]. The neuter is derived by inserting **-ek-** between the verb root and the final vowel /-a/. The neuter indicates 'an intransitive state or condition without any special reference to an agent determining

that condition' (Doke 1927:139). The examples of the neuter extension are: **-bon-ek-a** (be visible) [VR-NEU-FV] and **-thath-ek-a** (be easy to take) [VR-NEU-FV].

Those verbal extensions we said are not yet fully described include what Doke terms the dispersive, stative, reversive, perfective, persistive and extensive (Doke 1927:151-154). The meaning of these extensions on their own is not clear, unlike those discussed earlier like the reciprocal or the intensive, for example. The suffix for the dispersive is **-alal-** as in **-nyamalala** (disappear) and **-bhazalala** (lie stretched out). The stative uses **-al-** as in **-khudumala** (be warm) and **-khukhumala** (swell up). The reversive suffixes are **-ul-**, **-uk-**, **ulul-** and **-uluk-** and these 'reverse the action of the verb in many Bantu languages' (Doke 1927:153). The perfective uses **-elel-** as in **-jikelela** (go right round) and **-nanzelela** (be cautious). The persistive suffix is **-ezel-** as in **-bandezela** (press hard) and **-vimbezela** (besiege) while the extensive uses **-bul-** as in **-khasabula** (walk long distance) and **-daxabula** (flog with whip).

From the above description of verbs and their verbal extension, we may note that the meaning of verbal extensions is predictable. Not all verbs would carry the predictable meaning. In some cases, Ndebele has verbs in the verbal extension form without the base verbs from which these extensions were derived. These are referred to as 'stylized extended verb stems'. Welmers writes that, 'There are some verbs in Swahili [and other Bantu languages] which in form and meaning appear to consist of a root and an extension, but for which the root alone does not appear in the language at present' (Welmers 1973:339). In Ndebele, there is **-yethekela** (to visit) but the language does not have **\*yetheka**. There is **-bingelela** (to greet) but there is no **\*binga**, there is **-phaphatheka** (to flee) and there is no **\*phaphatha**.

As already stated in the introduction to this chapter, the description of the morphology of the Ndebele verb cannot be exhaustive in this type of presentation. For example, adding extensions to a verb root may change the verb valency. According to Mutaka, 'the addition of an extension to a verb root can change verb valency by necessitating either the addition of a complement such as object (direct/indirect), instrument, locative, benefactive, etc. or the reduction of one or more complements' (Mutaka 2000:177). This particular function of verbal extensions was excluded as it was felt to be of no immediate relevance for lexicographic purposes.

## 4.6. THE MORPHOLOGY OF THE IDEOPHONE IN NDEBELE

The ideophone in Ndebele is a word category that so far seems to have been stable in retaining a core vocabulary free from loanwords. There is no equivalent word category for the ideophone in the English language, except perhaps for some onomatopoeic sounds like 'tit-tit' as the sound of clock. In his outline of the main morphological characteristics of the Bantu family of languages, Doke (1954) noted that these languages have the ideophone as a distinct part of speech. This was after the Bantu languages were classified differently from the European classification initiated by Doke in **Text Book of Zulu Grammar** 1927, and subsequently followed by the third edition of McLaren's **Xhosa Grammar**, edited by G.H. Welsh (1936) and D. Ziervogel (1952). The changes in describing Bantu languages led to a number of changes in terms and a revision of categories, resulting in 'the classification of the Ideophone and the Copulative as separate parts of speech' (Doke 1927:17). Since then, the ideophone has been

recognised as a distinct category in Bantu linguistics as shown even in recent publications. For example, Mutaka (2000) says that: 'Ideophones constitute a class of words very similar, in terms of meaning and function, to the onomatopoeia. In African languages, ideophones are considered an independent grammatical category on the same level as nouns, adjectives, etc. The ideophone is defined as a vivid representation of an idea in sound. It is a word which is created and used to clarify, to modify or to qualify' (Mutaka 2000:289). We can say that an ideophone expresses vividness and intensity on what the verb or adjective expresses.

According to Mutaka:

Ideophones constitute a special class of words with very interesting characteristics, especially in some African languages. They usually contain phonologically anomalous characteristics such as strange sounds, unique sequences of segments, and peculiar tone patterns (Mutaka 2000:203).

In Ndebele, the ideophone can be realized in two categories; the primitive ideophone and the derived ideophone. The primitive ideophone is the one of immediate interest to us as it is included in the ISN but derived ones are not. We shall briefly describe the derived ideophone. Ideophones can be derived from nouns and verbs in the same manner that ideophones can also derive these word classes. The following are ideophones derived from nouns and verbs or vice versa:

umbane<sub>[NOUN]</sub> (lightning) ↔ bane<sub>[IDEOPHONE]</sub> (sudden flash)  
 imbobo<sub>[NOUN]</sub> (hole) ↔ bhobo<sub>[IDEOPHONE]</sub> (making a hole)  
 -vumbuluka<sub>[VERB]</sub> (to come out) ↔ vumbu<sub>[IDEOPHONE]</sub> (sudden appearance)  
 -qephuka<sub>[VERB]</sub> (to break up) ↔ qephu<sub>[IDEOPHONE]</sub> (sudden break up)

The most common ideophone formatives are the suffixes *-i* and *-iyane*, that can derive ideophones from virtually any verb, as exemplified by: -dobha<sub>[VERB]</sub> (to pick) ↔ dobhi<sub>[IDEOPHONE]</sub> (sudden picking) or dobhiyane<sub>[IDEOPHONE]</sub> (sudden picking)

Let us return to the primitive ideophones, that is, the ideophones that are not derived from other word categories. It is the primitive ideophones that were lemmatised in the ISN and they constitute the third largest word class. There are some ideophones that distinguish or vivify colour terms, some express intensity in adjectives or in what verbs express as in the following:

kuluhlaza **tshoko** (very green)  
 kome **qha** (very dry)  
 weqa **tshompo** (jumped suddenly)

Some ideophones in Ndebele are onomatopoeic for example: *umbhobho uthi du* (the gun says *du*) and *imota iduma ithi vum* (the car makes the sound *vum*). Onomatopoeic ideophones were generally avoided in the ISN except for a few commonly used ones. There could be four or five or even more ideophones referring to the same thing in

the onomatopoeic field. For example, if we take our first example of the gun, we note that **du**, **bhamu**, **bhu**, **bho**, **didi** or **tha** can all be applied as ideophones expressing the sound made by a gun.

From the above illustrations we have noted how the ideophone is used in Ndebele. We have also noted how the derived ideophone is created in Ndebele. Also notable is that ideophones in Ndebele could be monosyllabic or multisyllabic. It is important to note that ideophones can function well as monosyllables unlike other word categories (see Chapter 2). The tendency to avoid monosyllabic words in Ndebele has led to some of the problems in word division which are discussed in Chapter 2.

## 4.7. OTHER GRAMMATICAL CATEGORIES IN NDEBELE

As stated in the introduction, the ISN entries are predominantly nouns followed by verbs and thirdly ideophones. The other word categories and affixes that were lemmatised are less than a thousand in a dictionary of 20 000 lemmas. This does not mean that the other word categories are insignificant to us here. However, for lemmatisation, in the ISN the other word categories were explained in the comprehensive front matter. It is the morphological structure of these word categories that made it possible for us to summarise them in the front matter and not lemmatise them. For example, some word categories like the copulative are derived mainly from the noun. Once the copulative affixes are given, then any noun can be used as a base to derive a copulative. Some word classes are closed sets with a limited number of stems. Here are some cases for illustration:

### 4.7.1. THE MORPHOLOGY OF THE ABSOLUTE PRONOUN

Ndebele has one stem for the absolute pronoun which is **-na**. The pronoun stem can take pronominal prefixes from all the noun classes in Ndebele. Here is an example:

**mina** (I - first person singular)  
**thina** (we - first person plural)  
**bona** (they - Class 2. plural)  
**wona** (it - Class 3. singular)

It is interesting to note that when the pronoun is inflected into a copulative, the pronoun stem is dropped. Using the copulative affix **yi-** we get:

**yi-** + **mina** > **yimi** (it's me)  
**yi-** + **bona** > **yibo** (it's them).

### 4.7.2. THE MORPHOLOGY OF THE COPULATIVE

The copulative in Ndebele can be derived by means of copulative affixes from nouns, pronouns and from other copulatives. Here are some examples:

ng- + umuntu (a person) → **ngumuntu** (it's a person)  
yi- + mina (me) → **yimina** (it's me)  
u- + lisela (it's a thief) → **ulisela** (s/he is a thief).

The copulative is not lemmatised in the ISN as the potential number of copulatives is infinite in Ndebele. The copulative can be divided into the identificative, descriptive and demonstrative. However, for our purposes we need not delve into those details as they do not relate to our description of the ISN.

### 4.7.3. THE MORPHOLOGY OF THE ADVERB

The adverb in Ndebele can be categorised into the adverb of place or the locative, the adverb of manner and the adverb of time.

The affixes of the adverb of place are: **e-...ni**, **ko-**, **ku-**, **o-**, as in the following examples below:

**endlini** (in the house)  
**koHadebe** (at Hadebe's place)  
**kubaba** (where my father is)  
**olwandle** (at sea).

The affixes of the adverb of time are: **e-...ni**, **ku-**, **ngo-**, as in the following examples below:

**ekuseni** (in the morning)  
**kuthangi** (a day before yesterday)  
**ngoMvulo** (on Monday).

It is important to note that there are some primitive adverbs of time that are not derived by these affixes, like **ntambama** (in the evening) and **izolo** (yesterday).

The affixes of the adverb of manner include: **ng-**, **njenga-**, **nganga-**, **la-**, as in:

**ngemota** (by a car)  
**njengabo** (like them)  
**ngangenja** (as big as a dog)  
**laye** (with him/her).

Like the copulative, the adverbs are excluded from the ISN.

### 4.7.4. THE CONJUNCTIVES

The conjunctives or joining words are primitive stems in Ndebele and they are a finite set. They are all monomorphemic and we cannot explain how they are formed. Examples of conjunctives are:



<b>kodwa</b> (but)	<b>kumbe</b> (or)
<b>loba</b> (or)	<b>njalo</b> (and).

All the known conjunctives were included in the ISN.

## 4.8 CONCLUSION

The description of the morphology of the Ndebele noun has significance for the lemmatisation of the noun in the ISN (see Chapter 5). As is discussed in chapter 5, ISN has nouns lemmatised according to the pre-prefix or initial vowel. This is a departure from traditional practice in Nguni lexicography of lemmatising nouns according to their stems. The focus on the noun here helps to explain some practices in Ndebele dictionary-making like the exclusion of plurals, diminutives and some complex nouns. It also helps one understand word formation processes in Ndebele and the adoption and adaptation of loanwords. The classification of nouns that are loanwords in Ndebele is still a problem. Therefore, study of the morphology of the noun gives an adequate background from which one can appreciate these practices in Ndebele lexicography.

In the study of the morphology of the Ndebele verb, we also noted some morphological features that influence the lemmatisation of verbs. For example, verbs are lemmatised according to their stems. Verbal extensions are generally not lemmatised except when their meaning is different from the predictable one. The verb in Ndebele takes various affixes and the resultant forms are generally not lemmatised. These various forms are usually explained in the front matter or in some cases ignored as they are assumed to be common sense for mother tongue speakers. Similarly, the outline of the morphology of other word categories illuminates the arguments for inclusion and exclusion of certain word categories in the ISN.

Finally, the study of some aspects of Ndebele morphology is significant for the understanding of how Ndebele assimilates loanwords and which word categories are more susceptible to foreign words. New words have to fit into the morphological structure of Ndebele, especially nouns which must belong to certain noun classes. That implies that such new nouns must acquire the typical Ndebele morphology of prefix and stem. Similarly, an account of term development in Ndebele (see chapter 6) is only relevant with a background on the morphology of the language. The problems in the Ndebele writing system could be partly explained by the conceptualisation of the 'word' and the word division system adopted. Therefore, the description of Ndebele morphology is useful for our description of vocabulary, terminology and orthography in Ndebele in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 respectively.



## A DESCRIPTION OF THE ISN

### 5.1. INTRODUCTION

The description of ISN focuses on the macrostructure, mediostructure and microstructure of the dictionary. According to Hartmann and James (1998:91), the macrostructure refers to 'The overall list structure which allows the compiler and the user to locate information in a reference work'. The mediostructure refers to the cross-reference structure while the microstructure is the internal design of a reference unit (Hartmann and James 1998:94).

This chapter gives background information on the purpose and conditions of the production of the very first monolingual Ndebele dictionary, the ISN<sup>10</sup>. This information is relevant for this thesis, which is based on aspects of the dictionary. The production of the ISN was part of the master plan of the ALLEX Project. Matters like size of the dictionary and type of dictionary were not decided by the editors of the ISN, but were parts of the already outlined master plan. These are some factors that have a bearing on the overall structure of the dictionary. Some of the aspects of the ISN discussed below are lemmatisation, grammatical information, definitions, examples, cross-referencing, compounds, front and back matter.

### 5.2. HEADWORD SELECTION

As a general language dictionary, the ISN contains commonly used words in the contemporary Ndebele society. The headwords were selected from Ndebele publications, mainly novels, and from the Ndebele language corpus. All the headwords from the small bilingual Ndebele dictionary, *A Practical Ndebele Dictionary*, were entered into the ISN database. Some loanwords that have been accepted or commonly used in mainstream Ndebele were also included. The ISN has 20 000 entries of which around 13

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<sup>10</sup> The Ndebele dictionary *Isichazamazwi SesiNdebele* published in May 2001 was compiled over a period of four years beginning with the collection of corpus material in 1997. The ALLEX Project, now under the African Languages Research Institute was responsible for the production of the Ndebele dictionary and of two Shona language dictionaries, 2001. The ALLEX Project was funded by NUFU as a programme of cooperation between the University of Zimbabwe on one hand and the Universities of Oslo and Gothenburg on the other. Apart from financing the Project, the Norwegian and the Swedish governments provided technical and professional expertise as well as training of lexicographers. The ALLEX Project turned out to be the biggest and most funded research in the humanities at the University of Zimbabwe. For that reason, it had the structures that would facilitate and ensure the completion of all research tasks set out.

000 are nouns, 6 000 are verbs and the rest of the word classes constitute roughly the remaining 1 000 or so entries.

Nouns denoting singular were entered except in cases where nouns denoting plural were commonly used or where only the plural forms currently exist. The base forms for nouns were entered unless otherwise stated. This is explained in the front matter of the dictionary. The verbs are entered according to the initial letter of the verb stem. All possible affixes were entered as separate headwords. All primitive adverbs and connectives were entered. Only base ideophones were entered and not derived ones. In Ndebele derived ideophones use either

–*iyane* or –*i* (see 4.4). Adverbial forms, copulatives and derived adjectival forms were not lemmatised. Each headword has some grammatical information.

### 5.3. GRAMMATICAL INFORMATION

Writing on the role of grammar in the dictionary, Jackson says: 'Arguably, Grammar and Dictionary are complementary parts of the overall description of a language' (Jackson 1985: 53). The dictionary relies on grammatical information and grammar terms as well as theoretical premises. Yet, the links between Dictionary and Grammar are rarely made explicit in lexicographic practice (Jackson 1985:53). According to Wachal, 'Although modern monolingual dictionaries for native-speaking adults are not intended to be major sources of grammatical information, they do provide a part-of-speech label for each entry, and they list, in the prefatory material, the set of labels used' (Wachal 1994:159). This is also true for the ISN. The significance of grammar in a dictionary cannot be underestimated for languages like Ndebele that lack comprehensive documentation. Without a description of the linguistic structure of the language, a monolingual Ndebele dictionary, like the ISN, would be difficult to use. The front matter of the Ndebele dictionary consists largely of a mini-grammar that takes thirteen pages. This is a brief summary of the Ndebele grammar, especially the word class categories like noun, verb or adverb.

The noun is defined and the basic morphological components of the Ndebele noun are outlined, that is, the noun prefix and the noun stem. The importance of the noun prefix is explained and the table of noun classes as propounded by Carl Meinhof is given in the front matter. This classification by Meinhof applies to all Bantu languages. It is the noun class prefix in Ndebele, which denotes number in terms of singular, plural or neuter. As the Ndebele dictionary lemmatises the noun in its singular form, the reader is left to deduce the plural form on his own, guided by the table of noun classification provided in the front matter. Some dictionaries in sister Nguni languages like Zulu that lemmatised their noun entries using the stem would include both the singular and plural prefixes after the headword. However, for the ISN which lemmatised nouns using their pre-prefixes, such information is not readily available next to the headword.

The Ndebele noun stem is explained in terms of its role as the core of the meaning carried by the noun. Some common suffixes that usually go with noun stems are explained briefly and these include the diminutive suffix, the augmentative suffix, and the feminine suffix. Explained also is the manner of deriving nouns from other parts of speech. A brief explanation of the compound noun is also given. This is important,

especially as far as word division is concerned, because in Ndebele different writers write compound nouns either conjoined by a hyphen or with a space between or as single words (refer to 5.7 below).

The other important word category explained in the mini-grammar is the Ndebele verb. First it is defined what a verb is and how it functions then, the basic morphological structure of the verb is given. The verb root is the core of the verb in Ndebele. The common affixes that conjugate around the verb root are discussed and exemplified. Some of the affixes include the subject concord, object concord, tense morphemes, aspect, and more importantly the verbal derivatives or extensions. The ISN lemmatises verbs according to their stems, that is, without prefixes. The verbs entered in most cases are base forms and are assumed to be in the present tense and in the imperative mood. Although the base form of the verbs are the basis of lemmatisation, there are some cases where the verbal extensions do not give the predictable meaning and in such cases the verbal extensions are lemmatised.

As already mentioned above, all the word categories in Ndebele grammar are explained in brief. It is also important that some word class categories like the copulative, the adjective, the locative, the possessive and manner adverbs have no base forms or primitive stems. They are derived from other word class categories by meaning of affixing. For that reason, these word class categories are not lemmatised but the various affixes deriving them are lemmatised. The explanation given in the mini-grammar is all there is about these categories. This background information on the grammar of Ndebele is very essential for the dictionary user to refer to, otherwise some of the information that goes with the headword would not make sense or the reader would fail to use the dictionary to maximum benefit. Let us give some extracts from the dictionary to help explain the grammatical information that goes with headwords.

## NOUN

**umcebisi** bz 1. *Umcebisi* ngumuntu onikeza amacebo.  
(*Umcebisi* is a person who gives advice).

As in the extract above, all headwords have their word category specified immediately after the headword. To save space, the word class categories are abbreviated and the noun in Ndebele is *ibizo*, abbreviated as **bz**. Similarly, the verb in Ndebele is *isenzo*, abbreviated as **sz**, the adjective is *isichasiso* abbreviated as **isich.**, the ideophone is *isenzokuthi* abbreviated as **szk**, the adverb is *isandiso* abbreviated as **sd**, the interjective is *isibabazo* abbreviated as **sbbz** and the connective is *isihlanganiso* with **isihl.** as the abbreviation. We may note that these grammatical terms in Ndebele are not standardised as there is no comprehensive grammar book in the language. Most of them are derived from Zulu but some were coined by the dictionary editors. The abbreviations were all coined by the editors and that was part of the material they used as a guide in their style manual.

The information on word class is given for all the entries and that is unfortunately the only information accompanying the headword for all entries save for the noun and the verb. Some reviewers felt that at least etymology and pronunciation should have been provided in the ISN no matter how elementary it can claim to be<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> The tone markings were suppressed before the dictionary manuscript was ready for printing as the editors felt the work needed thorough review but time was not permitting.

'If a Dictionary gives no other information of a grammatical nature, it is expected to indicate which part-of-speech or word-class a lexical item belongs to, i.e. whether it is classed as a noun or a verb or an adjective, etc' (Jackson 1985:55). Based on this view by Jackson, we may be persuaded to accept the grammatical information given as adequate for the user at least for the size and level of the ISN. For example, giving information on the word class of the entry 'provides basic information about the syntactic operation of a lexical item' (Jackson 1985:53). For the noun, it implies that singular and plural forms should be taken note of, while with verbs factors such as their transitivity or intransitivity are to be noted.

Referring to our extract on the NOUN above, we note that after the word class we are given the noun class number based on Meinhof. In our example above, the noun belongs to class 1. All class 1 nouns in Ndebele grammar are singular nouns and their plurals are class 2 nouns (see Chapter 4). Therefore, all nouns in the ISN have their classes specified and this helps the learner to determine the affixes that are in concordial agreement with that particular noun in terms of singular, plural or neuter. The classification of loanwords is still problematic in Ndebele, as some loanwords seem to take different concordial morphemes from those expected in their class.

#### VERB

**-hlomulela** sz mwa. *Ukuhlomulela* yikuncedisa omunye ophakathi kokulwisana lesitha kumbe lodubo.

(To *hlomulela* is to assist someone who is fighting an enemy or is in trouble)

In addition to the word class category that is given for all headwords in the ISN, verbs also carry information on their transitivity abbreviated as *mwa.*, or intransitivity, which is abbreviated as *gmwa.* The rest of the class categories only have word class information, as shown in the extracts below on the ADJECTIVE and the IDEOPHONE.

#### ADJECTIVE

**mabalabala** isich. Nxa into *imabalabala* iyabe ilembala eminenginengi etshiyeneyo. (If something is *mabalabala* it will be having multiple colours).

#### IDEOPHONE

**du** szk. Lesi yisenzukuthi esikhomba ukuthi ulutho luphelile sibusibili. *Imbuzi zidle zaqeda du amabele emasimini.* (This is an ideophone that expresses that something has finished completely. *The goats grazed and finished all the crops in the fields*).

## 5.4. PRESENTATION OF DEFINITIONS

The presentation of definitions is probably the most central thing in a dictionary and users refer to a dictionary more for definitions than for any other information. Those who will judge the ISN will do so mainly basing their views on definitions. That is to be expected from both professional and lay reviewers. The editors of the dictionary were conscious of this as they formulated defining formats. Nevertheless, constraints like time, space and length of definitions created some problems, making it impossible to adhere strictly to the defining formats as specified in the style manual. Being

the first monolingual Ndebele dictionary, there were no precedents to be copied, yet definitions for twenty thousand entries had to fit in the prescribed five hundred and forty-four pages.

### 5.4.1. COBUILD DEFINING FORMAT

One of the notable features of the ISN that distinguishes it from other dictionaries in Nguni like Zulu is the use of the COBUILD defining format. The distinguishing feature of this defining style is the use of the lemma in the definition. Although this style of defining was used throughout the dictionary, it is important to note that its advantages were not initially apparent to the editors. Defining formats were hotly debated during the planning stages of the dictionary. The COBUILD defining format was eventually agreed upon and adopted after the editors had been convinced of its advantages. The COBUILD format was perceived by the editors to be the most appropriate format and the currently fashionable one for a general language dictionary like the ISN. The COBUILD defining style has a number of advantages, some of which are precision, brevity, detail, length and appropriateness of the definitions. The following samples are extracted from the ISN:

#### NOUN

**impukuvane** bz 9. *Impukuvane* lohlobo lwempukane olutholakala ezindaweni ezitshisa kakhulu oluthi uma lulume umuntu abe lesifo sokulala. (*Impukuvane* is a type of fly common in very hot and humid areas which, if it bites a person, causes sleeping sickness).

#### VERBS

**-nhlanhlazela** sz gmwa. *Ukunhlanhlazela* yikupha umuntu inhlanhla kumbe ukumbusisa. (To *nhlanhlazela* is to give a person good luck or blessings).

**-nqoba** sz mwa. *Nxa unqoba uyabe usedlula abanye emncintiswaneni.* (If you *nqoba* you would have beaten everyone in a competition).

#### IDEOPHONES

**gqunsu** szk. *Nxa intambo isithi gqunsu iyabe iqamuka ngomfutho omkhulu.* (When a rope goes *gqunsu* it would be breaking/snapping with much force).

**hitshe** szk. *Lesi yisenzukuthi esichaza ukukhanywa kolutho entanyeni ngentambo ngesiphangiphangi.* (This is an ideophone that explains how someone or something suffocates when tied around the neck).

We have extracted for our discussion a noun, two verbs and two ideophones. These three word categories suffice for our arguments on the defining style in the ISN, especially the effectiveness or lack of it in the COBUILD style. One feature of COBUILD as shown in the examples above is the use of the headword in the definition. The advantage of this definition style is to keep the headword within the context. It makes easy reading and perhaps it aids comprehension especially to inexperienced users. Still, one of its limitations is the space taken unnecessarily by the headword in the defini-

tion. A number of words in Ndebele are very long, often with more than four syllables, and had the pronoun been used, much space would be saved as pronouns in Ndebele have two syllables. The definition becomes long not because of elaborate explanations but because of using the headword in the definition.

The use of the headword in the definition has resulted in the ISN definitions being almost similar or predictable in structure. The majority of noun definitions are structured in the manner:

A (HEADWORD) is a ---

The verb headwords are in this manner:

To (HEADWORD) is to ---

Or

If you (HEADWORD) you would be ---

The similarity in the structure of definitions becomes rather monotonous. It restricts the definer to a particular choice of words by the very structuring of the sentence. Notwithstanding this limitation, the use of the headword in the definition makes definitions for some word class categories more lucid and clearer than when other styles are used. This can be illustrated in the ISN from the ideophones as our examples above show. The ideophone in Ndebele expresses intensity and in most cases suddenness too. The definition becomes simpler and more comprehensible if the ideophone is used in the definition. As noted in the examples above on ideophones, there are basically two ways in which ideophone definitions were presented. In one example the ideophone is used in the definition and in the other it is not.

The aspects of definitions that are consistent throughout the ISN are the semantic sets, like for example, days of the week or letters of the alphabet, where one structural pattern was followed throughout. Here are some examples from the letters of the alphabet:

A bz 1a. Ibala uA ngunkamisa oluhlamvu lwakuqala  
oluhlwini lwezinhlamvu zamabala olimi lwesiNdebele.  
(The letter A is a vowel which is the first letter in the Ndebele alphabet).

B bz 1a. Ibala uB ngungwaqa oluhlamvu lwesibili  
oluhlwini lwezinhlamvu zamabala olimi lwesiNdebele.  
(The letter B is a consonant which is the second letter in the Ndebele alphabet).

C bz 1a. Ibala uC ngungwaqa oluhlamvu lwesithathu  
oluhlwini lwezinhlamvu zamabala olimi lwesiNdebele.  
(The letter C is a consonant which is the third letter in the Ndebele alphabet).

Generally, the language of the definitions is simple and straightforward. There are instances where the editors had to select specific words for definitions and this was not easy for a language that had no prior monolingual dictionary or any comprehensive grammar text in the language. From the researcher's first-hand experience in compiling the ISN, the difficulty was to get generic terms in the language; for example, what to



say of plants or reptiles. It was not easy to define the Ndebele words for 'water,' 'tree' or 'a fly' for example. These are words that speakers use everyday in Ndebele but it is not easy to define them and so the editors had to adhere to the defining vocabulary as stated in the style manual. In some cases this resulted in very unnatural definitions at the trial stage and most had to be revised. According to Kirkpatrick, 'the worst feature of the defining vocabulary system is the constraints that it places on the definer. A restricted vocabulary system definitely runs the risk of producing definitions phrased in language which sounds most unnatural...' (Ilson 1995:10).

On average, the length of each definition is roughly three lines. The lemmas are in two columns in an A5 page size. This may be interpreted to mean that the definitions are of more-or-less the same length. It should be noted that in some dictionaries the first letters tend to have longer and more detailed definitions than the final letters of the alphabet because the editors would be exhausted and perhaps also rushing to meet publication deadlines. The editors of the ISN planned for that in advance and the defining was done simultaneously from the first and the last letters. So the first two letters to be defined were A and Z. The general depth and precision of definitions in the two letters is the same. Actually a count of headwords in the first and last page of the dictionary would give one almost the same number. That is one way of establishing the size and length of entries.

#### 5.4.2. WORDS IN THEIR CONTEXT – THE ISN DEFINITIONS

It has been generally argued that 'the perspectives that dictionaries give of the vocabulary tends to be atomistic, treating each word as if it exists and has developed as an item isolated from all other words' (Jackson & Amvela 2000:184). Yet in reality each word is related semantically to words that it collocates with as well as its synonyms. Alphabetic ordering of words in the dictionary is responsible for this atomistic treatment of words out of their contexts. To minimize this negative feature of alphabetic ordering of dictionary entries definitions should attempt as much as possible to contextualize the words that are defined. This style of definition is associated with the COBUILD. The defining guidelines for the ISN are derived from the COBUILD system. Moon (1987) and Hanks (1987) have outlined the following COBUILD tenets:

- (a) The headword should appear in the definition.
- (b) The headword should be shown in a typical context of common usage.
- (c) The definitions should consist of full sentences.

A number of reasons were advanced for the choice of the COBUILD format for the ISN. However, we are not going to go into all those details apart from noting that it was preferred for the belief that it enabled simple, straightforward definitions with the defined word in context. All these are qualities of a user-friendly dictionary, that is, if these are achievable. It is the strengths and possible weaknesses of the COBUILD format that we are interested in here. While the editors of the ISN were convinced that the advantages of the COBUILD defining system far outweighed the possible limitations, the potential users are not familiar with this innovation. Of the few monolingual Zulu dictionaries that Ndebele speakers could have used and quite a number of

English dictionaries, the headword is usually avoided in the definition. It is too early to assess the attitude of the users to the inclusion of the defined word in the definition.

The implications for Ndebele vocabulary are on the principle that the word must be in its typical context. This brings in the issue of collocations. Apart from collocations, there is also the principle that all words that appear in the definitions should themselves be defined, too. That might mean for a number of words that if in defining a word like *rose*, that collocates with *red*, it would imply that *red* would appear in the definition of a *rose* while in defining the colour *red* a *rose* also appears. Here are examples from the ISN:

DEFINITION A1

**-ganu** isich. Uthi ulutho lulombala oliganu nxa lubomvu okufana lamaganu (Yellow. Adj. You say something has a yellow colour if it is brownish like amaganu fruits).

DEFINITION A2

**iganu** bz. 5 Iganu yisithelo sesihlahla somganu esiyimbumbuza esivuthwa sibe lombala ongathi ulithanga. (Iganu Noun. Class 5. Iganu is a fruit from the mganu tree which (the fruit) is round and when ripe turns into a yellowish colour

DEFINITION B1

**mhlophe**. Isich. Nxa ulutho lumhlophe luyabe lulombala okhanyayo kakhulu njengochago. (White. Adjective. If something is white it would be having a very bright colour like milk).

DEFINITION B2

**Uchago** bz 11. uchago ngamanzi amhlophe ayikudla kwethole aphuma embeleni, njalo labafazi abamunyisayo balochago emabeleni. (Milk noun class 11. Milk is the white liquid that is food of calves and comes from the udder, also breast feeding women have milk in their breasts).

In definition A1, the yellow colour is defined with reference to the *iganu* fruit, from which the Ndebele word for yellow, *iganu* is derived. In definition A2, for the *iganu* fruit is defined in terms of its colour when ripe which is yellowish. However, the definition does not use *-ganu* (yellow) but its synonym *-lithanga* (yellow). Although in both definitions there is reference to the *iganu* fruit and the colour *yellow*, there is no circularity. The situation is different for definitions B1 and B2 where the definition of *white* is in reference to *milk* while that of *milk* is in reference to the colour *white*. It would seem as if there is circularity in these definitions, yet in terms of collocation and in terms of what is perceived as typically white amongst the Ndebele is *milk*.

The possibility of circularity in some definitions is definitely there. Finex Ndhlovu warned the editors of the ISN for possible limitations in the COBUILD formats for Ndebele language:

The COBUILD model may apply well to monolingual English dictionaries which are aimed at second language learners, but it may or may not do so for a monolingual Ndebele dictionary aimed at first language users (Ndhlovu 1998:18).

Users might see the repetition of the headword in the definition as redundancy. However, on the other hand, as mentioned above not all potential users of the ISN are mother tongue speakers of Ndebele. What Finex Ndhlovu thinks is only relevant to second language learners of English might equally apply to Ndebele.

Although it is too early to assess the impact of the COBUILD defining style on Ndebele and Nguni lexicography in general, it is important to note the significance of collocations. With the growth of corpus-based lexicography and the concordance system, it is a matter of time before the issue of collocations becomes part of dictionary-making principles in Nguni lexicography. With this view in mind, then the ISN may be seen as pioneering among its sister Nguni languages in incorporating collocations in definitions and citations.

## 5.5. EXAMPLES AND CITATIONS IN THE DICTIONARY

According to Kirkpatrick, 'it is difficult to think up examples of usage especially when under the stress of a deadline and when one has just survived the trauma of actually defining the word' (Kirkpatrick 1985:12). This observation is valid also for the editors of the ISN, who were racing against deadlines and at the same time trying as much as possible to draw examples of usage from the Ndebele language corpus. However, the Ndebele dictionary has relatively many examples of usage, numbering around 5635 examples and citations for a 20 000 entry dictionary. We can actually say that there is an example of usage for every one out of four entries. It would seem that it is unusual of native-speaker dictionaries to have such a concentration of examples of usage (see Kirkpatrick 1985:11).

Examples were put during the defining stage rather than as a follow-up after defining was complete. It had been laid out in the style manual that as much as it was possible, examples should be used where it was felt that the definition needed further elaboration to clarify the concept or in cases where the use of the word in context would make its meaning distinct from others. As the dictionary was targeted mainly at high school to tertiary education students, the examples are meant to assist them. As mentioned earlier, citations were to be drawn from the corpus in order to reflect, as much as possible, the actual usage of the language. That was in accordance with the COBUILD defining style. Here are some examples that were drawn from the corpus:

**-bhudla** sz mwa. Ukubhudla yikunatha utshwala obunengi abantu bezikhohlisela. (To [BHUDLA] is to drink much beer as people enjoy themselves).

### EXAMPLE

Yayiyinto yabo abohlobo lukaJenny. Babesiyabubhudla benjalo loba betshaywe ngayizolo ngamanye amanina (It was typical of the likes of

Jenny. They would go and [BHUDLA] beer in spite of the fact that they would have been beaten by other women the previous day).

**bayethe** sbbz. Ukuthi bayethe yikukhuleka enkosini yabeNguni. (To say [BAYETHE] is to salute a Nguni king).

#### EXAMPLE

Amabutho athi ebona uLobhengula amemeza esithi 'Bayethe Ndabezitha! Wena weSilo!' (When the warriors saw Lobhengula, they shouted saying '[BAYETHE] your Highness! You the Lion!').

From the extracts above, we may note some common features in the citations drawn from the corpus. Firstly, we note that the examples tend to be much longer than the definitions. Examples take much more space compromising the desire for brevity and saving space. Although the citation puts the entry into context, it still takes additional background information to introduce the context of the entry being exemplified. For example, the first example above consists of two sentences. The citations were taken from concordances drawn from the Ndebele language corpus. The problem with concordances is that they are usually incomplete sentences. It is then up to the editor to re-construct a complete sentence out of the concordance.

Although the objective of the editors was to draw citations from the corpus as much as was possible, it was not feasible to always do so because of the size of the Ndebele language corpus. The Ndebele language corpus has a million and half items and that is very little for a twenty thousand-entry dictionary. That implies that the bulk of the citations were created by the editors of the dictionary, contrary to the stated objectives in the style manual. The examples created by editors are shorter than those drawn from the corpus, as the editors were conscious of space constraints. Also it seems it took less time to construct an example than to refer to the corpus where one could get about fifteen instances of the concordance after which one has to choose the one example that was felt to be most appropriate.

## 5.6. CROSS-REFERENCING IN THE DICTIONARY

Cross-referencing is an important aspect of the dictionary structure. In the ISN cross-referencing has been used in dealing with variants and synonyms or near-synonyms. The extensive use of cross-referencing enabled the lemmatisation of up to twenty thousand entries in a six hundred-page dictionary. It also saves space and avoids the repetition of definitions. Besides, it helps the dictionary user with information relating to variants and synonyms in Ndebele. Here are some extracts from the ISN for illustration:

**umbane** [umbani] bz 3. Umbane yikuphazima emkhathini okubangelwa yikuhamba kwegetsi phakathi kwamayezi, kumbe nxa igetsi isuka emayezini isiza phansi. FAN inkosazana, unyazi. (UMBANE is the flash of light in the sky caused by electricity in the clouds or the movement of electricity from the clouds down to earth. COMPARE inkosazana, unyazi).

**umbani** bz 3. BONA umbane. (SEE umbane).

The above examples are variants and only one of them carries the definition. As shown in the first headword above, the variant is included immediately after the headword and is encased in square brackets. The variant is lemmatised separately but instead of carrying the definition, it is cross-referenced to the one that carries the definition. The two variants in our example above differ in their final vowel, *umbane* (lightning) and *umbani* (lightning). This is a common feature for a number of nouns in Ndebele where some speakers say **-ni** while others say **-ne**. Follow-up research by this researcher to determine whether the use of each variant correlated to either age, geography or level of education showed that there is no pattern at all but it seems optional for speakers. Among these nouns are the following:

isibane	and	isibani (lamp)
isibholane	and	isibholani (bore-hole)
isizukulwane	and	isizukulwani (descendants)

Apart from nouns that are variants because of the final vowel, some are variants due to vowels in initial position while others are in the middle of the word like the following cases:

umephelo	and	umophelo (bleeding)
isiga	and	isaga (mystery)
umchamo	and	umchemo (urine)

The variants are not only determined by vowels but also syllables in words regardless of whether it is in nouns, verbs or adverbs. Here are some examples:

-hlephuna (to break off)	-dukluza (to elbow)
-hlephula	-gukluza
umhlavane (a maggot)	ilambazi (porridge)
inhlavane	iyambazi
unansinga (so and so)	umaqandaphokolo (type of lizard)
unansika	umaqandaphobole

In some cases variants are created by clipping the final syllable or just any syllable as in the following cases:

utitshala (teacher)	kahleni (may)
utitsha [ ]	kahle [ ]
umahluleli (judge)	umanisipalathi (municipal)
umahluli	umanisipala [ ]

Most loanwords in Ndebele have more than one spelling, thus creating variants as in the following cases:

ibhola (ball)	isitalada (straat in Afrikaans: street)
ibhora	isitilidi
isikwelede (debt)	isiwidzi (sweets)
isikwilidi	isiwiji

All the above illustrations attempt to demonstrate the prevalence of variants in Ndebele both in its written and its spoken forms. Most of the above cases are free variation but some are cases linked to the history of contact between cultures. For example, the Ndebele language has got what is commonly referred to as the *yeyesa* register where a speaker substitutes all /l/ sounds with /y/ sounds. That could perhaps explain the free variation between *iyambazi* and *ilambazi* both meaning porridge.

Cross-referencing was also used for synonyms or near synonyms, as in the following extract:

**udubo** bz 11. Nxa usithi umuntu ulodubo, kuyabe kulolutho olumhluphayo olumenza athwale nzima njalo lowomumo kudingeka ukuthi uqondiswe. FAN uhlupho.

(If you say someone has [UDUBO], there would be something troubling that person and that condition needs to be corrected. COMPARE uhlupho.

**uhlupho** bz 11. BONA udubo. (SEE udubo).

Ndebele, like any other language, has several synonyms. Although synonyms were cross-referenced, it is important to note that each word that is synonymous with the other in some cases is more appropriate than the other. Due to the influence of English on Ndebele, the present language has synonyms, which are in fact adopted words and indigenous words. In such situations, the indigenous words carry the definitions. This was done deliberately by the editors in order to protect the Ndebele language from excessive use of loanwords. Examples of such synonyms include the following:

umlola (soap)	umongikazi (nurse)
isepa (Afrikaans seep: soap)	unesi.

Still on the loanwords, we have a situation where loanwords came into Ndebele from both English and Afrikaans and such words became synonyms in the language. For such cases, where possible, the editors of the dictionary referred to the corpus to check the frequently used word which then carried the definition. Some of these words include the following:

ithebuli (from English table)  
 itafula (from Afrikaans tafel)  
 iwindi (from English window)  
 ifasitela (from Afrikaans fastel).

## 5.7. TREATMENT OF COMPOUNDS

A compound is a word formed by compounding (Trask 1993:53). According to Muraka, 'derivation by compounding involves bringing together lexical items that exist independently in the lexicon (2000:287). Although we have described some compound nouns in chapter 4, compounding is not necessarily restricted to nouns. For example, there are compound verbs 'formed from two elements, one being a simple lexical verb and the other being another lexical item such as a noun or a preposition' (Trask 1993:53). Our concern here is not the morphology of compounds but their lemmatisation.

The word division of compound words is the most interesting to describe in the ISN. It is interesting in the sense that different writers have represented compound words differently – hyphenated, with space in between or just written as one word. This is one clear area where the decision of the editors of the dictionary could be assessed and their decisions evaluated against their implications on standardisation of word division, especially of compound words. The problem of compounds is not confined to Ndebele lexicography but other languages as well. Commenting on compounds in English dictionaries, Stein writes that, 'With respect to spelling, compounds pose certain lexicographical problems. ... Since the spelling of many compound words in English is not fixed, lexicographers have to decide which spelling of a particular compound their dictionary is to record' (Stein 1985: 41).

From the samples that we have looked at for the purpose of this discussion, it is difficult to see any systematic treatment of compounds. It would seem that compounds made up of NOUN + POSSESSIVE are written with a space between the noun and the possessive. Here are some illustrations extracted from the ISN:

abahuquluzi benotho (literal: grabbers of wealth)  
 idale eliphezulu lephalamende (Upper house of parliament)  
 unobhala wedolobho (town clerk)  
 uphawu lokubuza (question mark)  
 uthingo lwenkosazana (rainbow).

This treatment does not apply to all compounds that consist of noun and possessive. For example, the following cases are written conjoined as a single entity:

uthambolenyoka not uthambo lenyoka (literal: bone of a snake – meaning hatred)  
 utshwalabenyoni not utshwala benyoni (literal: beer of birds – species of a wild fruit)  
 idololenkonyane not idolo lenkonyane (literal: knee of a calf – species of a wild fruit).

We cannot account for this inconsistent treatment of compounds of similar construction except that this reflects the way writers treat them in their works and the editors followed what they saw as common practice regardless of its obvious inconsistencies. It is also interesting to note how loanwords are treated as compounds in the dictionary. There are loanwords derived from English that are written in Ndebele as one word whereas in English they are written as separate entities.

ifoninamba (phone number)  
ibhasisitophu (bus stop)

It should be noted that Ndebele has **ifoni** (phone) and **inamba** (number) as separate words, and **ibhasi** (bus) and **isitophu** (stop) respectively.

We must note the fact that all the above examples are direct adaptations from English. Yet, when the concept is derived from English and the word coined from the African language, the result is different. Let us consider the Ndebele word for 'airport'.

**igceke lendizamtshina** (lit. an open space for aeroplanes).

What is of interest here is that in English, 'airport' is written as a single unit while its Ndebele equivalent has two.

As already noted earlier on above, compounds are not confined to nouns only but they do occur in other word categories, especially the verb. Just like in the noun compounds, there is no clear pattern or rule that guides whether they should be written as separate units or as one.

-bamba inkunzi (to rape)  
-bamba owangaphansi (to be surprised)  
-hamba uhawule (to go away forever)  
-hlaba umxhwele (to please).

We cannot conclude that verb compounds are written with a space just by considering the above examples as we have many more written as one word like for example **-bambazonke** (to hold everything). Apart from nouns and verbs we have other word categories with compounds like the following:

ngcingci kandoyi! (what a nice thing!-Interjective)  
nini lanini (forever and ever –adverbial)  
nininini (long long time ago –adverb).

We have one instance where a hyphen was used in a loanword; **uphatroli-ofisa** (patrol officer). Here it is unlikely that the hyphenation was meant to mark word boundary, although it does, but it is very likely that it was used to avoid vowel sequencing, which is prohibited in Ndebele.

It is therefore difficult to tell whether the editors had any specific principle on representing the compound words or they just followed the practice established by tradition. The important concern for our discussion here is not so much on whatever reason was behind the decision or lack of decisions by editors of the dictionary on the spelling of compounds. Our interest is on the implications on spelling in general as the first monolingual Ndebele dictionary to a large extent is a guide to future writers, teachers and students and could probably influence future spelling reforms.

Evidence drawn from the corpus on word division in Ndebele shows that the area is problematic. It would seem that writers are either ignorant of the existing (albeit old) guidelines or they do not take word division issues seriously. When one looks at books, word division is apparently haphazard, making one conclude that it is the area least taken seriously by writers, proof-readers and publishers of Ndebele works. For



example, **amazinyo enja** (dog's teeth) meaning 'canine teeth' and **amazinyomvundla** (hare's teeth) meaning 'incisors', one is written with a space while the other is conjoined. There is no clear explanation for this difference other than that it is common practice. Dictionaries adopt already familiar word division styles for compound words. In fact, this difference in word division is not confined to Ndebele, but has been observed in other languages, including English. Examples are *banknote* and *bank statement* or *eyeshadow* and *eye mask*, where one is written as one unit and the other as two.

## 5.8. THE FRONT MATTER OF ISN

One notable difference between the ISN and other dictionaries in the Nguni languages is the front matter and the back matter. The front matter of ISN is 47 seven pages while the back matter takes eighteen pages. This is by far the largest front and back matter in any Nguni dictionary so far. The bilingual Ndebele dictionary, *A Practical Ndebele Dictionary* has six pages front matter and no back matter, *Isichazamazwi Samagama Amqondo Ofanayo* has one page front matter and no back matter, *Isichazamazwi 2* has seven (7) pages for front matter and no back matter while *Isichazamazwi Sanamuhla Nangomuso* has twelve (12) pages front matter and no back matter. In this way, the ISN has introduced to Nguni lexicography more material and information to the dictionary user, information that not only guides the user to access information easily but also teaches the user more about the language. One reason why the editors deliberately made a comparatively large front matter was the consideration that Ndebele had no comprehensive grammar book or monolingual dictionary prior to the ISN. There was, therefore, a need to give a comprehensive but concise outline of the linguistic structure of the language.

Apart from the mini-grammar that constitutes the bulk of the front matter, there is also a brief history of the Ndebele nation and people. The editors justify the inclusion of this historical background on the ground that one can only appreciate fully a certain language if one is appreciative of the history and culture of the speakers of that language. The brief history explains who the Ndebele people are and how they came to be where they are. In that short historical account it is demonstrated how the history of the Ndebele people is intertwined with the history of the Ndebele language, not least when it comes to the history of the orthography. The background to the history of Ndebele orthography is very important to lexicography as it has implications on spelling and word division problems that persists up to the current age and have implications on the spelling in the very ISN under review here.

There is a brief outline of the Ndebele language corpus created by the ALLEX Project at the University of Zimbabwe. The purpose of the corpus is explained and so is the method of its compilation as well as its composition. It is also outlined how the corpus was used in the ISN, especially during lemmatisation and for extracting usage examples during defining. The other potential uses of the corpus are described as well as its possible future use for other lexicographic projects.

The Ndebele version of the Roman alphabet is given as well as the pronunciation of sounds in Ndebele. Equally important is the information on the Ndebele spelling system. The dictionary user is given information in advance as to what to expect and the problems of spelling of loanwords are explained. Also the issue of using the letter <r> is discussed. Some people in the Ndebele community still feel that the phoneme

represented by <r> is not Ndebele, and therefore no words with this letter is to be accepted in the language. The editors explained that the sound represented by <r> could originally have been unacceptable in Ndebele but at present it is inevitable due to influence from other languages.

A comprehensive guide for the user is given in the front matter. That explains how the lemmas are written, that is, in bold but lower case. For those with variants, the variants are entered immediately after the headword and in square brackets. All headwords have word class categorisation as either verbs or nouns or adverbs. For verbs, additional information is given as to whether the verb is transitive or intransitive. Similarly, all nouns are further categorised into noun classes and the table of Ndebele noun classes is also given in the front matter. Nouns are entered in their singular form unless otherwise specifically stated. It is therefore very important to follow the user guide and study the table of noun classes, otherwise it would be difficult to access desired information about nouns. The numbering of definitions is given where there is more than one sense. Citations are in italics. This information to assist the user is given together with a table showing the symbols used in the dictionary. These symbols are given in both Ndebele and English and some of them are symbols for full stop, question mark and the various types of brackets. Immediately after the table of symbols is the metalanguage list.

## 5.9. THE METALANGUAGE LIST

The metalanguage list was compiled during the planning stage of the dictionary and for the four years the dictionary was being written it was also undergoing continuous changes. The metalanguage list contains terms that are used in the dictionary to define and explain technical concepts, especially linguistic concepts. Included also are basic terms already common in the teaching of Ndebele grammar and literature. However, most of the terms would be less familiar to many readers as they are specialised to language studies and lexicography. The original list was longer than the one appearing in the front matter but the editors had to include only those terms that were used in the dictionary.

Another importance of the metalanguage list is its relevance to terminology growth in Ndebele. The list functions as a standardising guide to linguistic terms in Ndebele as well as a source of newly created terms to capture the current concepts in the study of language and literature. Details on the metalanguage are discussed in Chapter 7 together with aspects of terminology.

## 5.10. THE BACK MATTER OF THE ISN

The back matter of the ISN is a mixed bag in terms of its contents. It aims to give varied information that could be needed by the different users of the dictionary. Appendix 1 has terms of measurement both in Ndebele and in English. Appendix 2 has the actual measurements; for example, giving information like the number of millimetres that make up a metre or the number of grams that make up a decagram. Appendix 3 consists of administrative terms both in Ndebele and in English. Some of the terms include *Usomlomo* – Speaker of Parliament, *Umeli Welizwe* – Ambassador and *Indunankulu Yabomahluli* – Chief Justice. These terms would be useful especially for

newsreaders and those administrators willing to use Ndebele in their interaction with the Ndebele community. For instance, parliamentarians are free to use Ndebele in the House of Assembly. Therefore, those who wish to exercise that right might find most of these terms useful. Appendix 4 consists of colours in Ndebele and in English. The English equivalents are given here although this is a monolingual Ndebele dictionary, in order to assist learners to learn the relevant colour terms in Ndebele. Originally, it was planned that the specific colour would be given and then its Ndebele label. It proved too expensive to insert colours and hence the resort to the familiar English version of colour terms.

Cattle play a significant role in Ndebele economic life as well as in the history and culture of the Ndebele nation. The editors thought it was useful to include the cattle colour terms. The colour of cattle is given in Appendix 5. Of equal importance to the Ndebele people is cattle meat. Appendix 6 gives all the terms of meat cuts from tail to head. It is considered important for any Ndebele child, especially boys, to know meat cuts by name. Appendix 7 is a list of some typical Ndebele traditional dishes. Appendix 8 has kitchen utensils in a traditional Ndebele home. In Appendix 9 there is a list of some common wild fruits found in Matabeleland while Appendix 10 gives a table of time in Ndebele. Appendix 11 lists common diseases while Appendix 12 lists human body parts. Appendices 13 and 14 have types of birds and insects respectively. Common male names and common female names are in Appendices 15 and 16 respectively. Finally, Appendix 17 lists all the countries of Africa and their nationalities.

## 5.11. IMPLICATIONS ON THE STANDARDISATION OF NDEBELE

The above description of the ISN sought to exploit as much as possible the theory and practice of dictionary-making. As no two dictionaries are the same, it follows that their purpose cannot exactly be the same and hence approaches to their criticism cannot be the same. In the same way, the impact each dictionary has on its target population cannot be the same as for any other. In the introduction to the **Dictionary of Lexicography**, Hartmann and James write: 'Dictionary compilation is a cultural activity, and a sympathetic appreciation not only of the cultural environment but also of the impact a dictionary will have, as well as the information it seeks to impart, is a sine qua non in editorial qualification' (Hartmann and James 1998:xiii). The potential impact of the ISN on Ndebele cannot be objectively measured. Some of the effects might be felt some years to come; as the ISN is pioneering in monolingual lexicography in Ndebele, the works to come in future will in one way or the other be influenced by trends set by this work. The editors of the ISN were very conscious of the symbolic nature of their task. The decisions made in the dictionary that have a bearing on the standardisation of Ndebele were made solely to solve immediate lexicographic impediments. These decisions were influenced by the linguistic training and orientation of the editors at that time, although it is likely that some of the decisions may have an impact on the language, which the editors never foresaw.

Although we cannot quantify the whole range of potential effects the ISN would have on Ndebele, at least there are some aspects, in which we can identify the likely impact. The demands and expectations of dictionary-making made the editors use Ndebele in a particular manner demanding precision, brevity and consistency in mea-

ning. The dictionary is one serious work where Ndebele is used in a very formal and academic manner. When it came to defining, the editors had to get generic terms for a number of categories that previously nobody had any need to look for. Some of the generic terms used by the editors of the ISN include *uketshezi* (for liquid), *isimila* (for plants), *isidalwa* (for creature). These are words in the language that are not frequently used or they did not have this collective meaning. The word *uketshezi* is almost archaic as even few editors knew it before. The Ndebele word *amanzi* (water) has always been used especially as an adjective to describe liquids. The dilemma came when water itself had to be defined; that is when the need for a term for 'liquid' became imperative. The use of an archaic word to derive a generic term is a form of language cultivation and elaboration of code. These terms have been rejuvenated into contemporary language and this would have a significant impact on the formal or academic language.

The dictionary is traditionally assumed to be the legitimate authority on language and that view is still holding sway in the Ndebele community and in Zimbabwe in general. Although the editors claimed to be merely describing language as used by the speakers, the speakers on the other hand are looking forward to the dictionary to be the arbiter of usage. As explained above, Ndebele has a number of variants like *isibane* and *isibani* (lamp), *umchamo* and *umchemo* (urine), *iyambazi* and *ilambazi* (porridge). In speech, some use either of these variants and in the dictionary for reasons of space only one variant carries the definition and the other is cross-referenced. That is, in effect, to say that the entry with the definition is the main form while the cross-referenced one is an option. So, one form is promoted while the other is indirectly demoted in status.

In speech, variation among speakers of a given community is inevitable, actually it is the characteristic feature of every natural language. But it is unacceptable in writing. 'A diversification in pronunciation is an indicator of coefficient of individuals' identities; standardisation in spelling is what unites the language across the different communities of its speakers' (Hartmann and James 1998:xi). In any case, 'Spelling is not a gift of nature but something we all have to learn early in our lives' (Wadsworth 1989:84). The fixing of spelling is one area where the standardising role of the ISN is explicit. This need for a common spelling norm in Ndebele was mostly felt in loanwords. Different writers spelt loanwords differently but the ISN had to use one spelling for each word and hence fix that spelling.

Still on orthography, the issue of compounds has an impact also on the standardisation of word division and spelling in Ndebele. As shown in the discussion on compounds above (see 5.7), there is no rule that prescribes how compounds should be written. Some are written with space in between while some are written as one unit. Each spelling of a particular compound is in itself a codification of that spelling. For that reason, some compounds will be spelt with spaces in between, others as single units. What is significant here is that the same compound word will never have two or three spellings.

Another important impact of the ISN on Ndebele is the acceptance of certain words and sounds into the language that have been resisted by most speakers in the community. One such phoneme is the trill represented by the letter <r>. Previously, writers would avoid the letter <r> and instead substitute it with <l>. However, the ISN has used the letter <r> and explained that in the front matter. A number of words were lemmatised in the ISN, which were being avoided by writers as not appropriate enough but were still dominant in the Ndebele language corpus. As shown below (5.10), some dictionary users are against the inclusion of loanwords in the ISN.

## 5.12. COMMENTS FROM ISN USERS

At the time of the thesis write-up, i.e. in October 2002, there was no review of the ISN published in any journal. Maybe there never will be. So far, the views on the dictionary have been made known to the editors either through general comments in the newspapers or through comments sent to the ALRI or from the outreach seminars conducted by ALRI staff members specifically to solicit users' views. Apart from the comments from Jerry Zondo, formerly Ndebele lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe, the rest of the views are mainly from dictionary users who either have little or no background in lexicography. Nevertheless, the views from ordinary language speakers are quite interesting to us, as they reflect the general attitude towards aspects of language change. For a general-purpose dictionary like the ISN, which is a popular reference book, the views of every user are important, though usually not based on linguistic facts.

Immediately after the publication of the ISN, a comment on a weekly newspaper, *The Mirror*, by P. Nyathi said that it was a bold and positive decision by the editors of the ISN to accept <r> as part of contemporary Ndebele language. This was a bold decision indeed knowing the possible backlash it might bring from the more conservative members of the Ndebele community. For example, a comment from the *University of Zimbabwe Media and Communication Graduate Studies* newspaper reads:

Some critics have argued that the editors should have been conservative to prevent 'pollution' of the language. The way that the editors have treated the loan words, that is words adopted from other languages, has been criticised. These are words like, *uwindi* [taxi tout], *irilaksa* [a hair conditioner], *irivesi tshaji* [reverse charge] and *amathongizi* [a hairstyle]... (*Varsity Times*, June 2002 p16).

Here, it is important to note the reference to 'pollution' of the Ndebele language, which we might interpret to mean that loanwords are bad for the language. An even stronger reaction to loanwords was observed by the ALRI members on their outreach programme (Appendix VI) to get users' view on the dictionary. In the ALRI Outreach Report it is observed that:

The inclusion of loan words in the dictionary is a bone of contention among the users of Isichazamazwi sesiNdebele. There was a general feeling by some people that too much borrowing could corrupt the language. The inclusion of words carrying the sound 'r' was widely criticised by people. Some people felt that the editors should not have included loan words in the dictionary, especially where Ndebele has equivalent terms. The following examples were noted:

### NDEBELE

isijeza (water melon porridge)  
 insingo (shaving tool)  
 umbangazwe (politics)  
 ubabhemi (donkey)  
 iwule (whore)

### LOANWORD

inopi  
 ireza (razor)  
 ipolitiki  
 idonki  
 ishamari (secret lover)  
 irula (ruler)  
 irobhothi (robot).

If one were to consider more closely the above cases of words that are said to be ‘corrupting’ the language one notes that these are words used in everyday talk. Even without reference to the Ndebele language corpus for example, the word **isijeza** is rarely used but **inopi** has taken over. The same could be said about **ubabhemi** and **idonki**. In the ISN, **ubabhemi** carry the definition and **idonki** is cross-referenced. This is in line with the Style Manual (see Appendix XIII).

The word **insingo** has been used for razor in an attempt to avoid **ireza**. **Insingo** is not the same as the razor, although the two implements can be used for similar purposes. The word **iwule** (whore) in Ndebele denotes a woman who offers sex for monetary gain. This is different from the Ndebele word **isifebe**, which originally referred to a married woman who engages in an adulterous relationship. Such a relationship may or may not be motivated by monetary gains. The meaning of this word has been extended in some cases to encompass that of **iwule**. This does not mean that the specific meaning of **iwule** is entirely swallowed.

What I find interesting about the objections of the users is that only selected words are felt to be undesirable to the language, yet thousands other loanwords are not mentioned. Even the /r/ that is controversial in Ndebele is not rejected wholesale. The ALRI Outreach Report makes the same observation as it notes that:

The irony of the criticism is that some people are comfortable to accept the sound ‘r’ in words such as ‘irula’ and ‘irobhothi’ but are not comfortable when the same sound appears in words such as ‘ishamari’. It was apparent from the discussion that some words were being denied place in the dictionary on the basis of attitude towards the source language at the expense of the principles of the science of lexicography. Thus words such as ‘inopi’ and ‘ishamari’ were criticised because they are borrowed words from Kalanga and Shona respectively (ALRI Outreach Report 2002).

On the other hand, Zondo feels that some words with /r/, which should have been in the dictionary were left out. He cites the following:

- didirika (be busy)
- ekhurusini (eaves)
- esipampurekini (bar)
- iviri (wheel)
- ibhiriji (bridge).

The variants of these words with /l/ instead of /r/ were entered in the ISN. Part of the reason could be that in writing most people are conscious of replacing the <r> with the <l> such that the corpus reflects those variants with <l>. The other obvious reason is that editors of the ISN kept words with <r> to a bare minimum, in order to avoid the same controversies that have arisen. Although Zondo suggests adding more words with <r>, he also raises his own objections on the spelling of some loanwords. His discomfort is on sequences that are unacceptable in Ndebele orthography:

- iklabhu (club) should be ikilabhu
- iklasi (class) “ “ ikilasi
- iklashi (clutch) “ “ ikilashi

ifleza (influenza) “ “ ifuleza  
 -rejesta (to register) “ “ -rejesita  
 isitraki (strike) “ “ isitiraki.

These are the problematic areas in the Ndebele orthography and the editors noted in the front matter of the ISN that with no updated guide on spelling, loanwords pose problems. For example, there is no logic in resisting the above sequences in spelling when in speech such sequences are now part of everyday language.

On some loanwords from Shona, Zondo suggests that where Shona has /nd/ Ndebele should replace with /nt/. He cites these examples:

-fondoka (work hard) should be -fontoka  
 uwindi (tout) “ “ uwinti  
 idindindi (musical show) “ “ idintinti.

Zondo even says that ‘...but surely the Shona –nd- is rendered –nt- in Ndebele’ to support his claim. There is no convincing evidence to substantiate these claims besides the examples Zondo gives do not reflect Ndebele as used currently. For example, there is no evidence that speakers say **uwinti** for **uwindi**. Nor are there other examples of loanwords from Shona where /nd/ has been replaced by /nt/. One word that is fast coming into Ndebele vocabulary from Shona is **mindamurefu** (long fields) for ‘resettlements’. The word is used as it is, maybe it will be changed in future to suit the Ndebele phonological structure but as for now it is pronounced just like in Shona.

As noted elsewhere in this thesis, it is still too early, just one year after the publication of the ISN, to get all the possible reviews and comments about the dictionary. The examples highlighted above suffice for our purpose in this work. The evaluation of the ISN by the users is deliberately not part of the objectives of this thesis. These users’ comments are, therefore, to be taken as part of the description of the ISN.

### 5.13. CONCLUSION

The editors of the ISN set out to produce a general language dictionary for the Ndebele community of Zimbabwe. In the process of executing their main objective, they had to make decisions on the Ndebele language itself, decisions that are likely to have long-lasting impact on the language, at least the written form. These were decisions on aspects of standardising orthography, terminology and vocabulary, a need long felt in the community but with nobody willing to take the initiative. It is, therefore, probably appropriate that ‘Lexicographers, whatever their wishes, have been burdened with as many as possible of the case decisions no one else wishes to make and record: in spelling, in the written forms of compound words, and in the division of words into syllables’ (Wadsworth 1989:83). The standardising role of the ISN on the Ndebele language is a by-product of the dictionary-making process rather than the purpose of making the dictionary. This description of the ISN gave the outline of the dictionary-making process as well as the possible impact of some aspects of the dictionary on the standardisation of the Ndebele.





# THE STANDARDISATION OF NDEBELE VOCABULARY

## 6.1. INTRODUCTION

Dictionaries contain information about words (Jackson & Amvela, 2000:161). It is the words that constitute the general vocabulary of any given language. Dictionaries therefore contain the general vocabulary of a given language, albeit a very small fraction of it. According to the **Dictionary of Lexicography**, vocabulary refers to: 'The sum total of the words used in a language, by a speaker, or for dictionary-making' (Hartmann & James 1998:154).

In this chapter we discuss the various factors affecting the standardisation of Ndebele vocabulary with reference to the ISN. Aspects of vocabulary growth, lexical divergence, lexical engineering and loanwords in Ndebele are discussed briefly. We also discuss the notion of core vocabulary with reference to Ndebele. The question of vocabulary is rather problematic because of the interplay of various factors as already mentioned above coupled with the lack of research on Ndebele. The principles followed by the editors of the ISN in the selection of vocabulary are discussed and so are the implications on the standardisation of Ndebele vocabulary.

## 6.2. THE NOTION OF CORE VOCABULARY

While the vocabulary of a language refers to 'all the words in a language' (Kuiper 1996:181), core vocabulary on the other hand refers to the 'most basic and central words in the lexicon of a language...' (Carter 1998:238). Some of the features of the core vocabulary cited by Carter (1998:36-44) include: antonymy, collocability, extension, summary, associationism, culture-freeness, superordinateness, syntactic substitution, neutral field of discourse and neutral tenor of discourse. We should also bear in mind that all these features are relative and are expressed in degrees while they also vary from speaker to speaker and might not apply to all languages in the same manner as for the English language, which Carter was referring to. For our purpose we are going to select a few features from Carter's list and apply these in explaining 'core vocabulary' in Ndebele.

On antonymy, Carter (1998:38) writes that 'the less core a word is, the more difficult it is to find an antonym for it.' Carter further exemplifies that while *fat* and *thin* are antonyms it would be difficult to locate precise antonyms for *emaciated*, *corpulent* or *obese*. In the ISN, antonyms were generally avoided in the definitions, but in some

cases, especially in adjectives, the reference to antonyms was unavoidable. Here are some definitions from the ISN:

**-fitshane** isich. Nxa kuthiwa ulutho lufitshane luyabe lungalude.  
(short. Adjective. When one says something is short it will not be long).

**-de** isich. Lesi yisiqu sesibaluli esichaza ukweluleka kolutho.  
(long. adjective. This is an adjectival stem describing the length of something).

We note that the adjective **-fitshane** (short) is defined in terms of its antonym. The definition says **-fitshane** is something that is not long whereas **-de** (long) is defined without reference to *short*. Let us consider another pair of antonyms *sharp* (**-bukhali**) versus *blunt*

(**-buthundu**).

**-bukhali** isich. Nxa into ibukhali iyabe isika kuhle ngoba iloleke kuhle.  
(sharp. Adjective. If an object is sharp it would be cutting well because it would have been properly sharpened).

**-buthundu** isich. Into ebuthundu ngengabukhali, engasiki kuhle.  
(blunt. Adjective. A blunt object is not sharp and does not cut well).

As in the previous example, **-bukhali** (sharp) is not defined in terms of blunt, yet **-buthundu** (blunt) is defined by contrasting it with sharpness. Another use of antonymy that is of interest is the definition of **-buthukuthuku** (lukewarm, especially of water).

**-buthukuthuku** isich. Nxa amanzi ebuthukuthuku ayabe engatshisi engaqandi, ephume inkantsho nje kuphela.  
(lukewarm: adjective. If water is lukewarm it would be neither hot nor cold but slightly warm).

In the above definition of **-buthukuthuku** (lukewarm) we have both antonyms used in the definition because the concept describes a state or condition that falls halfway between hot and cold. We should note also that antonymy seems more relevant for adjectives than for nouns.

Stubbs (1986a) says on the property of *extension* possessed by core or what he terms nuclear words, that they extend into compounds, idioms, multi-word verbs and phrasal verbs. He notes that the **Collins English Dictionary** lists about 150 combinations starting with *well*. There are quite a number of core words that have a number of extensions. For example, the verb **-bamba** (hold) can have the following extensions:

- bamba isandla (hold a hand) - meaning to shake hands
- bamba isikhathi (hold time) - meaning to keep time
- bamba inkunzi (hold a bull) - meaning to rape a woman
- bamba iganyavu (hold tight) - meaning to rape a woman
- bamba imbhida (hold vegetables) - meaning to rape a woman
- bamba owangaphansi (hold the lower lip) - meaning to express surprise

- bamba iqolo (hold the waist) - meaning to be boast
- bamba ngengqondo (hold by brains) - meaning to deceive
- bamba iziboya (hold fur) - meaning to remain empty-handed.
- bamba inhlizyo (hold the heart) - meaning to be brave.

Another property of core words, *summary*, has been researched and it has been established that 'informants use a high proportion of core words when summarising events, plots, etc' (Carter 1998:42). It therefore follows that summaries are perceived to be in simple, basic and straight-forward language that is without stylistic, rhetorical or evaluative overlay. Although one would not talk of summaries in lexicography, still precision, simplicity and economy of words are paramount in constructing definitions. To achieve these qualities, editors in the ISN had to master the skill of *summary* in order to keep definitions reasonably short and precise but meaningful.

On *neutral field of discourse*, Carter (1998: 43) says: 'Core words do not normally allow us to identify from which field of discourse they have been taken.' Core vocabulary is therefore general and neutral in terms of field. Closely related to the *neutral field of tenor* is the *neutral tenor of discourse* where 'core words are those that emerge most neutral in formality tests in respect of tenor of discourse.' According to Quirk (1982), core words are 'unliterary, unaesthetic and unemotional' (Carter 1998:44).

In concluding the description of properties of the core vocabulary, we may note that the above-mentioned properties would vary per word and according to language. Some general assumptions about the qualities of core words include *frequency*, as Dixon (1971: 441) says that: 'nuclear words tend to have greater frequency than non-nuclear items.' Core words tend to be words of high frequency. They will also need to have an evenness of range and coverage of text in the broadest sense of the term: that is, they will have to be measured as being evenly distributed over a range of different spoken and written texts (Carter 1998:46). Stubbs (1986a) suggests that core words will not normally include loanwords, words with unstable pronunciations and spellings. For languages like Ndebele, where a foreign language is the official language of administration, education, commerce, etc, it is difficult to imagine a core vocabulary that totally excludes loanwords.

### 6.3. LEXICAL VARIATION IN NDEBELE

Lexical variation can follow the speakers' geographical, social, ethnic and gender profiles, to mention but a few of the common features of language variation in general. Here, we are interested more in the variation according to geography, although other variables cannot be totally eliminated. It is important to note that the researcher found it difficult to delineate with precision the observed lexical variation according to geography in the Ndebele-speaking community. It seems that variation in vocabulary among the Ndebele does not follow a neat geographical pattern. This is perhaps partly due to the history of land politics and settlement in Zimbabwe. Since the colonization of Zimbabwe in 1890, the African population has been moved from one area to another, paving way to white commercial farming or wildlife sanctuaries or construction of dams or mining. This policy culminated in the Land Husbandry Act of 1953 that saw massive movements of people in Matabeleland and elsewhere in Zimbabwe being resettled in a manner that ignored their previous village structures. The attainment of

independence in 1980 has seen further resettlement of people further mixing them disregarding their ethnicity and districts of origin. This situation in the Ndebele-speaking provinces is further complicated by the fact that a number of so-called minority languages are spoken in the same Ndebele-speaking areas (see 2.8).

This sociolinguistic state of affairs in Ndebele-speaking provinces of Zimbabwe makes it relatively difficult to pinpoint with any exactness the different varieties according to geography. What we can do in such situations is to note tendencies in certain areas where there is a prevalence or preference to use certain lexical items as opposed to others. For our discussion we shall cite the case of Mtshabezi and Swazi communal areas, both in the Matabeleland South province of Zimbabwe. The interesting features are displayed by the vocabulary drawn from Mtshabezi and we are referring to Swazi in order to give a comparison. The variety from Swazi is assumed to reflect more-or-less the common variety in Ndebele (at least the variety the researcher considers as common). This variety was noted in the material collected for the Ndebele language corpus, and the researcher made further conversations with selected informants in order to verify their choice of vocabulary items.

**Table 8: Lexical variation according to geography**

MTSHABEZI AREA		SWAZI AREA
amanedza	(type of mushroom)	amaneja
ukutshotshola	(pounding maize)	ukugiga
izitatangwa	(swampy area)	amaxhaphozi
idombo	(marriage-go-between)	idombo/ umkhongi
ubushabeshabe	(type of mushroom)	ubutshabitshabi
petsha	(to sieve)	sesetha
ukukwaya	(to dig)	ukuphanda
amazambani	(groundnuts)	amazambane
ubutindindi	(type of mushroom)	(no equivalent word)

#### *Evidence from the corpus*

The variety from Mtshabezi is not reflected in what could be referred to as standard Ndebele, that is, in the written domain. It is interesting to note that the word *idombo* (marriage go-between) that is fast replacing the original *umkhongi* (marriage go-between) is reflected in the corpus. There are twelve (12) instances of the word *umkhongi* in the Ndebele language corpus as opposed to 26 instances of the word *idombo* (see 6.5.1). In the ISN, the word *umkhongi* carries the definition and *idombo* is cross-referenced, although it is the more common word.

## 6.4. VOCABULARY CHANGE IN NDEBELE

‘The vocabulary of a language is in constant flux; old items drop out, new terms come in, and as the new replace and augment the old, so the internal relations of the whole set alter’ (Carter & McCarthy 1988:19). Any dictionary compiler is caught in this dilemma where words are coming into the language while others are falling out. The big question to the dictionary maker is the timing when a new word should be included in the dictionary and when an obsolete one should be excluded. The ISN claims to

consist of contemporary Ndebele, but how contemporary words could be is relative and a subjective evaluation. In this section we shall look at some aspects of vocabulary growth in Ndebele that we can describe and verify with certainty. For a language like Ndebele that has no long tradition of writing and lexicography, there is not much that can be said about language change and vocabulary growth in a true historical and comparative manner. There are, however, certain periods and significant events in the Ndebele language that could have led to new vocabulary. By new vocabulary we mean coinages, loanwords and cases of semantic shift. One period of significance for the Ndebele people, and Zimbabweans in general, was the war of liberation (1972-1979) and the subsequent civil war (1982-1987) in the Ndebele-speaking provinces of Zimbabwe.

#### 6.4.1. WORDS FROM THE WAR PERIOD

The word *umthengisi* before the war meant a shopkeeper or any salesperson. However, it has undergone pejorative changes and it now refers to a traitor. Similarly, the word *umjibha* referred to Zimbabwean migrant workers in Johannesburg. These workers had a relatively higher status upon returning to Zimbabwe as they would have amassed a little wealth. Staying in crime-ridden Johannesburg and surviving there bestowed these returnees with admiration and perceived valour and brilliance. During and after the war, the word *umjibha* switched meaning to refer to a male assistant to guerrillas who helped in passing information to and from guerrillas and villagers.

Another new word that came into Ndebele during the liberation war is *ukhijane* (small child) but I could not trace its origins. The white Rhodesian government referred to the guerrillas as terrorists. A Ndebele version *itororo* was borrowed. In the news broadcasting on radio or television the English version would refer to guerrillas as terrorists, while the Shona version would say *magandanga*<sup>12</sup> and the Ndebele version would be *amalwecatsha*. The guerrillas themselves would naturally not want to hear anyone using these terms. It is, however, interesting to note that the Ndebele version, *amalwecatsha* (those who fight while hiding) was not negative as such as it approximates the equivalence of the word 'guerrilla' (meaning little war in the original Spanish). The people had to coin terms acceptable to the guerrillas (or the guerrillas coined the terms themselves) like *ogwa* (a shortened and Ndebele transliteration of the word *guerrilla*), *othebula* (those who thrash – possibly a shortened and Ndebele transliteration of *terrors*). To avoid being detected by Rhodesian informers, whenever villagers referred to the guerrillas they called them *abafana* (the boys). This was shortening of *abafana beganga* (the boys in the bush). At independence when the guerrillas returned home together with untrained refugees and politicians, they were collectively referred to as *abalweli benkululeko* (freedom fighters).

The guerrillas were trained and armed largely by the then socialist countries and independence was equated with a socialist revolution. Some terms that were brought into the Ndebele language by the guerrillas related to the socialist ideology. The word *bourgeois* was transliterated to *ubhuzhwa* (the one who grabs wealth). The civilian population came to be called *opovo* – a word taken from Portuguese (meaning 'the people'). Some Zimbabwean guerrillas were trained in the Portuguese-speaking co-

<sup>12</sup> According to the Shona dictionary, Duramazwi ReChishona by H. Chimhundu - a GANDANGA is a person who goes around killing other people.

untries of Angola and Mozambique. With them they brought Portuguese slogans and words that eventually found their way into Ndebele and Shona vocabulary. From military ‘base’ came the word *ibhesi*. However, these were not military bases as such but overnight meeting places where villagers were being indoctrinated and politicised by the guerrillas. Because these meetings lasted overnight, they were referred to as *ip-hungwe* (nightlong activity). Other words that came into Ndebele were names of guns like: *ikatutsha* from *katucha*, *ibhazuka* from *bazooka*, *u-akha* from the AK 47 rifle. The last two were the common guns used by the guerrillas.

The Rhodesian military manufactured an anti-landmine truck that came to be known in Ndebele as *umagumede*. The researcher could not establish why this military truck got this name, but *umaGumede* is a common female family name in Ndebele. In some parts of Zimbabwe where the war was concentrated, the Rhodesian government created security camps where villagers were kept away from contacts with the guerrillas. The official justification for these camps was to protect villagers from harassment by guerrillas while the villagers themselves did not like the uprooting from their homes to the crowded conditions in the camps. The Ndebele name for these camps was *ikhiphu* – meaning a cage where animals are kept.

#### 6.4.2. ASPECTS OF LEXICAL ENGINEERING IN NDEBELE

Lexical engineering ‘involves not only the coining of new expressions but also the modification or in some cases the suppression – or attempted suppression – of existing expressions’ (Singleton 2000:152). In Ndebele we have a number of cases where some words have been coined while some have been suppressed especially due to the influence of the Christian faith. Lexical engineering involves more than simply lexical borrowing or semantic expansion but it is an ideological act that motivates language change. Borrowing is usually done unconsciously and most speakers in the language would not even know that the ‘borrowed’ word is not indigenous. Lexical engineering is deliberate and hence it is a form of language planning. The Christian beliefs give the ideological basis for most of the cases discussed below on lexical engineering in Ndebele. Purism too, is another factor that leads to some instances of lexical engineering. A word that came into the Ndebele vocabulary due to the advent of Christianity is:

**umfundisi** (reverend or/and teacher)

Education was introduced to the Ndebele by the missionaries who preached as well as taught in their newly-established schools. The preacher was seen as a school teacher as well. **Umfundisi** is derived from the verb **-fundisa** (to teach). When the colonial government in Rhodesia began to build schools for Africans in the 1960s, teachers were hired who were not necessarily preachers. Today, there is no more obvious link between education and the Church in Zimbabwe and teachers are seen as independent of the clergy. The word **umfundisi** has now narrowed its meaning referring to a preacher. A teacher is no longer called **umfundisi** but **umbalisi** derived from **-balisa** (to help to read).

Another word for preacher is **umtshumayeli**. As Ndebele traditional religion did not have a preacher, one would expect the coining of a new word to denote the Christian preacher. The verb **-tshumayela** (to preach), however, seems to have been

in the language but referring to narrating but now –**tshumayela** has shifted meaning to refer exclusively to preaching.

**umvangeli** (evangelist)  
**ivangeli** (evangelism)  
**-vangela** (to evangelise)

The influence of the Christian faith has led to the transliteration of ‘evangelism’ to **ivangeli** in Ndebele as well as **umvangeli** (evangelist) and the verb **-vangela** (to evangelise). These words are now felt as indigenous to Ndebele and are very common words. Another word that now seems as if it is indigenous to Ndebele is **isono** (sin). It is now difficult to tell whether the word **isono** is a transliteration from the English ‘sin’ or whether it is from the Ndebele verb **-ona** (to err). The noun derived from this verb **-ona** is **isono** (literal - a wrong/crime) or sin. The word **isono** has a religious connotation of a very bad act that is tabooed. The other probable source could be Afrikaans **sonde** (sin) (Reader’s Digest 2000:120). Both Zulu and Xhosa have the word **isono** (sin), which makes it likely that they got it from Afrikaans and then Ndebele could have got it from Zulu. Actually, the Dutch first settled among the Xhosa at the Cape and opened mission stations. Some Xhosa people themselves became teachers and preachers amongst the Zulu. If the word **isono** is from Afrikaans **sonde**, then Zulu could either have got it directly from Afrikaans or indirectly from Xhosa. Then, it is likely that Ndebele could have got it from Zulu as we mentioned that Zulu hymn books and bibles were used amongst the Ndebele until very recent. Let us also consider the following set of words that have also become part of Ndebele vocabulary:

**umbhabhathizo** (baptism)  
**umbhabhathizi** (a Baptist)  
**-bhabhathiza** (baptise)

The above words are now an indisputable part of the Ndebele vocabulary although it is known that they are transliterations from English. Some words have shifted in meaning from what they originally meant and took a certain religious connotation. One interesting observation is on the Ndebele word for worship.

**-khonza** (to worship)

Outside the Christian talk, the word **-khonza** refers to *be loyal* or *to like*. If a subject is loyal to his master the Ndebele would say **uyamkhonza** (is very loyal). If one is very fond of someone or something, the same word is used. For example, the Ndebele may say **uyikhonzile intombi yakhe** (he is very fond of his girlfriend). This sense of the word **-khonza** is now rarely used; it is even excluded in the ISN, where the sense of ‘worship’ is the only one given. Another interesting point about this word is that the Christians do not confine it to their own worship but extend it to traditional Ndebele religion. Christianity in Zimbabwe opposes and denigrates African religions. The traditional Ndebele belief system says there is an almighty Creator of the Earth **uNkulunkulu** (the Great One). However, the Ndebele did not pray or communicate to **Nkulunkulu** directly but instead they appeased their ancestral spirits in the event of misfortunes. The Christians are very much opposed to any rites or ceremonies re-

lated to the Ndebele religion. The Christians refer to these rites as ancestor worship – **ukukhonza amadlozi** (to worship spirits). Those who practice Ndebele religion do not consider their acts as **ukukhonza** (worship) but as atonement of angry spirits. The Christians have stigmatised the Ndebele religion and they deliberately extend the term –**khonza** to include ceremonies and rituals that are not worshipping at all.

**-khuleka** (to pray)

This word has also shifted in meaning, so that it now refers to praying. In Ndebele society, when one visits a home, one has to announce one's presence by the gate. One has to shout and say **E Kuhle!** (All is well). The head of the homestead will shout in response and grant you permission to enter his home. That act is called **ukukhuleka** (announcing your presence). Christians believe that in praying they are asking God to listen to their requests and the Ndebele church-goers equate this act to announcing one's arrival at a homestead – **ukukhuleka**. Nowadays, the Ndebele people have adopted the Western way of knocking at somebody's door. The practice of the traditional **ukukhuleka** has vanished and now the word refers to praying.

**isiphambano** (a cross)

**isidlo** (holy communion)

The words **isiphambano** (cross) and **isidlo** (holy communion) are some of the very important words among the Ndebele Christians. The word **isiphambano** is derived from the verb –**phambana** (to cross things), while **isidlo** is derived from the verb –**dla** (to eat). These two are now part of the Ndebele vocabulary and are some of the many words that most speakers take for granted as indigenous Ndebele words. They seem very natural in the language such that their source or appropriateness are hardly ever made an issue.

It is interesting to note that even oaths have changed in Ndebele. In traditional Ndebele practice men swear by their sisters while in turn women swear by their brothers. The common swear used by all was to swear by **Batayi**. **Batayi** was the sister of the last Ndebele king, Lobhengula. Nobody would use this oath unless they were really serious. The other oath word is **ijoyi**. However, now most people use either the Bible (**ibhayibhili**) or the Lord either referring to Jesus or to God. Here is an example from the Ndebele language corpus:

“Uzangazi. Mngci, **inkosi** phezulu!”

(S/he will know me. Truly, the **Lord** in heaven!)

Some of these Christian terms have also not been standardised, for example **ameni**, **hemeni** and **emeni** for amen.

The change to the Christian religion had an impact on language in general as some words were considered vulgar. We have an instance where a wild tree named **igololenkonyane** (literal: the vagina of a calf) was renamed **idololenkonyane** (literal: the knee of a calf). We also note that the Ndebele bilingual dictionary, **A Practical Ndebele Dictionary** by Reverend Pelling, has absolutely no terms relating to Ndebele traditional religion. This Christian awareness of language use might have also



influenced the suppression of terms relating to sexual intercourse or copulation. Ndebele speakers like most speakers of other languages in general avoid sexual terms, but when referring to animals the Ndebele people do not avoid these terms. One word that is now almost considered as taboo is **-zeka** (to mount). Ndebele elders have no problem with the expression:

Bafana yiphi inkomokazi ezekwayo? (Boys, which of the cows is copulating?)

Although a few elders still use this expression, the common word that seems to be replacing **-zeka** is **-khwela** (literally: to climb). Similarly, related terms like **ukumitha** (pregnant) is being avoided for **ilebele** (it has udder) which is a metaphorical expression for *pregnant*. This avoidance of the term **-zeka** has been extended to other senses of the term that have nothing to do with copulation. To narrate a story can be referred to as **ukuzeka indaba** (to tell a story). This sense of the word has similarly been suppressed. The dragonfly in Ndebele is called **inezkamanzi** (literal: sexual intercourse with water) and is now commonly referred to as **ijekamanzi** (that which touches water). In the ISN the definition is carried by the former word. The present researcher could not establish whether these two words have always been synonyms. However, now we note that **inezkamanzi** is avoided and **ijekamanzi** preferred. All this suppression of words seems to have stemmed from the church too.

The suppression of certain words is not confined to those that have sexual connotations but to most taboo words or words referring to disheartening events. One word we can cite as an example is **ibhokisi lesidumbu** (a box for a corpse), that is, a coffin. The word **isidumbu** (corpse) is avoided and so the coffin is simply referred to as **ibhokisi** (a box).

Before we discuss loanwords in general, we shall discuss cases of lexical engineering with reference to Ndebele loanwords. There was a period in the 1970s where loanwords from English were being avoided in Ndebele. This period of purism saw the substitution of loanwords from English and substituted by words believed to be indigenous as they were taken from Zulu. Most Ndebele speakers regard Zulu as the source of indigenous vocabulary. It is ironic that this purism did not purge Ndebele of European loanwords as intended but substituted English by Afrikaans as the source language. That does not mean that the Ndebele speakers preferred Afrikaans to English, but they adopted Afrikaans words via Zulu believing they were indigenous Zulu words.

The Ndebele word for window, **iwindi** was discouraged for its origins in English and the word **ifasiteli** promoted. The word **ifasiteli** is from Afrikaans **fastel** (window). On similar reasoning, **ithebuli** (table) was avoided and **itafula** (table) promoted, yet **itafula** is from Afrikaans **tafel** (table). The other case is that of **ifamu** (farm) in preference for **ipulazi** (farm) from the Afrikaans **plaas** (farm). There are many words that are assumed to be derived from Zulu yet actually Zulu adopted them from Afrikaans and they have become part of Ndebele vocabulary. Some of the words include: **isitulo** (chair) from Afrikaans **stoel** (chair), **ibhatshi** (jacket) from Afrikaans **baadjie** (jacket), **ijazi** (coat) from Afrikaans **jas** (coat), **umfolo** (furrow) from Afrikaans **voor** (furrow) and **umjaho** (competition) from Afrikaans **jag** (competition).

Although this purism did not achieve its goal as it was based on a false premise, that is, the assumption that words were from Zulu when they were Afrikaans, it is important to note that Ndebele has not been permissive to foreign influence all the

time. This is a case of deliberate suppression of vocabulary items. In the process, some words of Afrikaans origins became more acceptable to the speakers than those adopted from English, largely because ordinary speakers are not aware of the false basis of this purism. In this quest to use indigenous words as opposed to loanwords, a number of words were coined in Ndebele to replace the loanwords. Some of these are *untshelelezane* (bicycle) as opposed to the loanword *ibhayisikili* (bicycle), *inkolo yomlilo* (motor car) as opposed to *imota* (motor car) and *umbalisi* (teacher) as opposed to *utitshala* (teacher), to mention but a few. All these words are lemmatised in the ISN, although the Ndebele language corpus shows the prevalent use of the loanwords. This lexical engineering in Ndebele is a phenomenon not exclusive to this language but common in languages in general. It is part of the attempt by society or sections of society to control vocabulary change. In that way it is an important aspect of language planning.

### 6.5.1 PRESENTATION OF DATA ON VOCABULARY

The assumption for our research on vocabulary is that Ndebele has varieties and one way of establishing the nature of these varieties is by studying vocabulary variation amongst speakers. Only when the variation has been established, can the standardisation of vocabulary be analysed. The Ndebele language corpus has been the main source of material for this study of vocabulary. Through searches and concordances, we extracted words that reflected the various varieties in Ndebele. The researcher listened to the tape-recordings of the interviewees that were done during the corpus collection period (see Chapter 3). Through listening to the tapes, the researcher verified that what was observed in the corpus was not typographical or spelling error but the reflection of actual utterances and usage.

A list of words drawn from the corpus was used as reference points to study the language variation amongst the Ndebele. It was established from the corpus that some interesting variation was from the Mtshabezi area of Matabeleland South province. Further interviews were done in the area to collect additional material in order to establish whether the variety spoken there was peculiar to the area. For comparison, similar interviews were done in another area, Swazi, which is also in Matabeleland South. The material collected was added as part of the sub-corpora that was added to the main Ndebele corpus. The following examples are taken from Table 3 and they show some of the vocabulary variation between two Ndebele-speaking areas:

ukutshotshola vs ukugiga (pounding grain)  
 izitatangwa vs amaxhaphozi (swampy area)  
 idombo vs umkhongi (marriage go-between).

The above pairs are each checked from the Ndebele language corpus and concordances drawn out. Firstly, these concordances help us to note the frequency of each word in a pair. Then, we looked into the ISN to establish whether the evidence from the corpus was followed at lemmatisation as well as at defining and in deriving examples of usage. The Ndebele language corpus enabled us to determine whether the word was obtained from a book, an unpublished manuscript, a radio interview or from oral interviews conducted during the collection of material for the corpus. We could also establish

from the corpus the place, age, sex and profession of the person who is the source of a word if it is from an oral interview (see Chapter 3).

For our discussion, we will use one pair of words for illustration, that is **idombo** and **umkhongi**, both meaning 'marriage-go-between negotiator'. The following are the examples of concordances from the Ndebele language corpus.

*Concordance for idombo with 24 hits*

Ukuthi kulungile angathuma **idombo** awusoze wathola ithuba lokwazi ukuba Ngoba uyise engathandi **idombo**. Ingehlulwa yilo umendo wokuqala UHlatshwayo uzafike abike . Phela **idombo** alenzi zinqumo . Lithatha izinkulumo ezi AbakoTuro bathi kulungile **idombo** aliyebika . Ngezinsuku umtshado Ngoba kukhiyiwe, "kuphendula **idombo** elikhulu ngokuzithoba . "Kanti idombo Idombo elikhulu ngokuzithoba. "Kanti **idombo** kuyini ? 'kubuza uMaMgomezulu khona loZodwa. UDlomo uthi **idombo** lakhe ngumtshumayeli weWisili uMaMgomezulu. 'Uyibone kahle pho **idombo** lalikhangelelani isikhathi liphindaphind ahamba izikhathi . Lithe liyabuza njalo **idombo** latshelwa ukuthi basenza 'Isibhadelwe yavunywa imali leyo **idombo** latshelwa ukuthi kuhle litshengise bonke sekukloloda undodakuqina . Laphuma **idombo** layathenga konke okwaqanjwayo njani lotho kungezanga **idombo** lazangibikela ukuba umntanami umkakho , bekunani ukuthi thume **idombo** lenu liyebabona abakwenzala libike konk Sengilungise loNkonkoni **idombo** lethu . Uyeza kusasa emini ukuzakulanda Esiyatshela uThoko ukuthi **idombo** lifika ngoMvulo , ngakho kuhle avukele Labantwana bazakuya koHlatshwayo **idombo** likaVulindlela . Lakanye ekufikeni sebefike bonke ngakho sekufanele **idombo** lithambise imiphimbo lithele amafutha kantombazana . Ngemva kwalokho **idombo** liyeza selizecela umtshado . Uyabona uku kwemali eyayi cutshwe nguRudo mhla **idombo** lizecela . Bavusa imihlonga abakoKunaka 'Esintwini , kuqhubeka uDuze , 'sithi **idombo** lokha umlilo . Utshonjalo uMaMgomezulu futhi enxusa ukuba uthunyelwe **idombo** lokuzacela uThoko . Wayekhuluma zicathulo lamasokisi azo aqonqoselwa **idombo** ukuthi konke lokhu kufanele kutshebane l yeqe amatshumi amane . Latshelwa **idombo** ukuthi kufuneka ijazi lezulu , ijazi Kwaqanjwa intengo yalo. Latshelwa **idombo** ukuthi kufuneka ikhwilithi ukuze inkosik Bebengeke baxoxe ngokuzatshiwo **lidombo**, futhi uTshabalala ubengeke ayebika kon loMaCele . 'Pho , uNdimande lowo **olidombo** uzafikela ngaphi , Thoko ? 'kubuza

*Concordance for umkhongi with 12 hits*

kuyini ? 'kubuza uMaMgomezulu 'Ngumkhongi', kuphendula uMaMgombane 'Hlatshwayo , uMgomezulu eseqondise **kumkhongi**. 'Incwadi ngizakupha kusasa . Phela abakoDliwayo bamkhethe ukuba **ngumkhongi**. Wacabanga ngenani lemali kuthi uzahlala enjalo . 'uDlomo evikela **umkhongi**. 'Ngambona kanye , yebo . Khumbula Themba . Khumbula ukuthinguye **umkhongi**. Kuyamyangisa ukuba namuhla uMgomezulu wayengababuthanisanga **umkhongi** engakafiki . UManhla waphanga Dukuduku , yafika incwadi ibika ukuthi **umkhongi** kaZanele , uNdukukayivikwa AmaNdebele wona adinga **umkhongi** kube nguye oyacela intombi ngakwayo abakoTuro kodwa abamcindezelanga **umkhongi** ukuba engezelele . Undodakuqina ngokulobola . Abakojaha babethuma **umkhongi** ukuyacela umlilo . Abakontombi Leyabo imikhuba engasiyo yokuthuma **umkhongi** ukuyocela intombi . Khonokhu ke bona okubabhajileyo . 'Vuyelwa , thatha **umkhongi** uyemenzela itiye . ' Esephumile uNduku

*Evidence from the concordances*

As the above cases illustrate, the word **idombo** is more frequent in the Ndebele language corpus than the word **umkhongi**. When we check the two words in the ISN, we realise that although both are lemmatised, it is the less frequent word **umkhongi** that carries the definition while the more frequent one **idombo** is cross-referenced. The former is considered original to Ndebele and the latter was adopted from indigenous Shona dialects, most probably Kalanga. Such decisions by the editors of the ISN of defining less frequent words as opposed to common but non-indigenous words reflect a lot about their policies as far as Ndebele vocabulary is concerned. This has implications on the standardisation of Ndebele vocabulary. Actually, some of the words that are in Table 3 were excluded from the dictionary altogether, for example **ubutindindi** (type of mushroom), **izitatangwa** (swamps) and **ukukwaya** (to dig). This is the main way in which variation in Ndebele vocabulary was established and how the ISN treated the vocabulary items. Attempts were made as would be shown below to establish where possible the factors behind some of the decisions and choices made by the editors of the ISN.

Although the standardisation of usage is not being explicitly investigated in this thesis, it nevertheless was considered in the analysis to establish the usage or meaning or senses preferred for certain words. Therefore, the corpus and the ISN were the main sources for evidence. From the corpus, we could establish the sense or meaning a word has by using the concordances and the collocations. The following concordance for **ugwalo** (book) shows the various senses and meanings that the word has in Ndebele. The ISN only has one meaning giving only one sense, yet if we draw from each line in the concordance we can see the various senses.

*Concordance for ugwalo (book)*

- (1)yethu ababalisi njalo ufunda **ugwalo** luphi?“ welekanisa imibuzo
- (1)...ours teachers and what grade is s/he? S/he poured questions...
- (2)ebahlala abanye waze waqeda **ugwalo** lwesikhombisa . Eseluqedile
- (2)...s/he stayed until s/he finished grade seven. After completing...
- (3)baphumelela ngoba waqeda **ugwalo** lwesine lwangaphezulu
- (3)...they succeeded because they completed form four..
- (4)uNhlawulo owayebafundisa **ugwalo** lwesithupha . Kwathi ntambama
- (4)...Nhlawulo who taught them grade six. In the evening...
- (5)eNyathi lapho aqalisa khona **ugwalo** lukaForm 1. Waqhubeka efunda
- (5)...at Nyathi where s/he began form 1. s/he continued with education...
- (6)amankazana sasibane sifunda **ugwalo** lunye lwesikhombisa . Abathathu
- (6)...we were four girls all doing the same seventh grade. Three were...
- (7)imvumo yokuba uthole **ugwalo** lomntwana .“ Lawo mazwi aphuma
- (7) ..the permission to obtain the child’s documents. ‘those words came...
- (8)ubona kufanele ukuthi abhale **ugwalo** lokumisa ubhudi Khembo emsebenzini
- (8)..do you think it is proper that s/he write a letter to stop brother Khembo at work..
- (9)Wathatha-ke **ugwalo** lolo wabelokhu eluvula ebuka imifanekiso
- (9)S/he took that book and kept on opening it seeing pictures...
- (10)yokuphumula ebala **ugwalo** loluyana oluthi Umkhokheli ophumelelayo
- (10)..resting place and read the book entitled A Successful leader...
- (11)Khathesi wayethwebuza **ugwalo** lomntwana owayebhale kuhle
- (11)Now s/he was marking the book of a pupil who had written well...

- (12)Uhlezi nje ubala **ugwalo** lomunye umlobi odumileyo kakhulu  
(12)While sitting s/he was reading a book from one renowned author...

Let us first consider the definition of **ugwalo** (book) in the ISN in order to analyse the evidence we get from the concordances:

**Ugwalo** bz 11. Ugwalo yincwadi elotshiweyo. FAN ibhuku.  
(**Ugwalo** is a written document. Synonym: A book).

It is apparent from the ISN definition that many senses are not encompassed by the definition, for example, concordance lines 1-6, referring to school grades. Although the sense is derived from the concept of **ugwalo** (book), it extended its meaning to refer to levels of primary and secondary education. The sense in concordance line 8 differs from the rest in that it may mean a letter or any official document sacking someone from work. Concordance line 11 refers to an exercise book while the rest of the lines refer to books of various types. What we note are the polysemuous senses of **ugwalo** (book) that are revealed by the corpus but not captured by the ISN. The corpus therefore gives good evidence and source examples of language usage. Such information obtained from the corpus could easily be missed by a linguist who relies on his intuition and does not use the corpus.

The following concordance for **-fuza** (to resemble) is one instance where the Ndebele language corpus revealed changes in language usage. More and more young people seem to be using this word in a different sense, a sense that language purists and some teachers find irritating. The new sense is 'must do'. Let us view the following concordances for **-fuza**:

*Concordance for -fuza (to resemble someone)*

- (1) webhola oyingqaba lapha . Uyabe **efuze** mina . Ngangiyifulubheki  
(1) soccer star here. He resembles me. I was the fullback  
(2) yokulahlekelwa kwakho. Njengoba **efuze** wena futhi ehlala ebona ukuthi uyathathe  
(2) of your loss. As s/he is like you and is always noticing that  
(3) likhikhitha lomntakaMsilawenja **elifuze** abazali balo ubusubhixa bonke abantu  
(3) she is a prostitute this child of Msilawenja like her parents and she smears  
(4) laselimzalele izigaqa zezingane **ezifuze** lona njalo ezintwintwiza ulimi  
(4) and she bore him healthy nice children who resemble him and who speak the  
(5) umntanakho Mgomezulu. Uthi pho **kafuze** wena ?“Wena Dlomo uvele uqophe  
(5) your child Mgomezulu. Isn't he like you? 'You Dlomo you just want to provoke umdlalo wakhe uzwa uyise esethi” **Kufuze** unina lokhu“ .Abantwana basuke badlali babeyiziqoqodo . Kuthiwa udiwo **lufuze** imbiza kuphinde kuthiwe ukhuni luzala  
“Uqinisile Mntungwa . Udiwo **lufuze** imbiza. Umntwana kufanele azi ngubani umntwana wabo lo **ofuze** unina kanje . Kulapho ayesuka azame uMaNgwenya athi “ Manj' uth **ufuze** ba?”“ Ngithe ungathi ufuze mina! Kawulakhanda wena. **Ufuze** bani? ufuze yen' uyihlo lo Uth' ufuze ba ?““ Ngithe ungathi **ufuze** mina!” etsho ejama inqindi sekunje 'Wayikhipha ingqondo mkami. **Ufuze** mina Batayi 'eMgomezulu isithabe “Yikho phela ungabokuth' **ufuze** mina .“Ngelinjalo uMaNgwenya athi “ ngomzamo wokuqala. UNjabulo **ufuze** wena . Nxa engabanga ngumdikitiva “Umntanami yinja angithi **ufuze** wena enye inja ?“ UMadoda wathi

ngathi uselengise induku ezimbili.”**Ufuze** wena kanye !“ etsho ngeliphezulu Kawulakhandanda wena. Ufuze bani? **ufuze** yen’ uyihlo lo ngyu’ okutshela ngumgunyathi MaMgombane? **Usufuze** uThandi umntanakho . ‘Uzakhuluma ngencukuthu. Imbuzi **wayeyifuze** ngentshebe waze wayifuza langelizwi Izigcuma kwakungamaklwintikazi **zifuze** ezikayise sibili. Umzimba wakhe wonke

The above are instances of **-fuza** with its original meaning ‘to resemble.’ Yet, below the concordance lines show that **-fuza** now also means ‘must do’. We have given literal translations to only a few concordance hits above in order to enable comparison.

*Concordance for -fuza (must do)*

- (1) Ngiyawuyesaba kodwa yikuthi nje **kuyafuze** lawe ubone ukuthi lapha kungcono.
- (1) I was afraid but then you have to realise that this is better
- (2) ngakho ke bekuyinzuzo yakhe obe **kufuze** ayithole . Ngakho yena bekungafuze
- (2) Therefore it was a benefit s/he was entitled to get. So s/he was not supposed
- (3) liyipheke ivuthwe inyama yedobi. **Kufuze** ivuthwe sibili . Ingavuthwa ke
- (3) You have to cook the meat for mixing with peanut butter well. It must be well cooked. The if it is cooked
- (4) Uyabona angani usumhluphile. So **kufuze** ukuthi uhlale ukhuphe ilihlo ukuthi
- (4) It would seem as if you have wronged him/her. So you must keep an eye
- (5) kaysisuye walapha ekhaya . Uyabe **ufuze** ubhadale uyazi abafazi balapha
- (5) S/he doesn’t blong in this home. You must pay as you know women here
- (6) ngaphandle kuhle ngakho **uyabesefuze** ukuthi umnanzelele ikakhulu
- (6) outside it’s fine therefore s/he must be watched

We also need to get evidence from the corpus to show that our claim that the word **fuza** now also means ‘must do’ is valid. The common Ndebele word for ‘must do’ is **kufanele**. We have drawn from the corpus the concordances for **kufanele**. Then we substitute **fuza** with **kufanele**, in order to see whether there is a change of meaning:

*Concordance for kufanele (must do)*

Ngingafa so **kufanele** abakoDlodlo bangibuyise yayisentshenziswe ngokufanele **kufanele** abakoTsuru bayibhadale. ukuze kube ledili lomkhungo **kufanele** abantu batshadele esontweni. zingezakhe loDume ubona **kufanele** abazise abazali . Kulokhu uThoko oyabe evele kwenye indawo **kufanele** abelgwalo oluvela kukhansila abantu besemsebenzini onzima **kufanele** abongwe ‘ watsho uDuze nxa buchukuluza abanye abantu **kufanele** abaqobotshe .“Hawu Dlomo waseziduduza ngokuthi **kufanele** acabange ngokuvula isitolo noma eHarare athole umbiko wokuthi **kufanele** afike elokitshini ngokuphangisa. ukuze umuntu azivikele kahle **kufanele** agalele kuqala isitha singakalungisisi. kuphumelela. Umuntu **kufanele** aginqe tshitshi lapha emhlabeni. Lungukazi olomusa wathi ye **kufanele** ahambe LoMnu. Salimani laye

*Substitution for -fuza by kufanele*

- (1a) liyipheke ivuthwe inyama yedobi. **Kufuze** ivuthwe sibili . Ingavuthwa ke
- (1a)...you should cook the meat for peanut butter. It should be cooked thoroughly. Then...

(2a)Uyabona angani usumhluphile. So **kufuze** ukuthi uhlale ukhuphe ilihlo ukuthi  
(2a) It would seem as if you have troubled him/her. So you should always keep an eye  
so as..

(1b)liyipheke ivuthwe inyama yedobi. **Kufanele** ivuthwe sibili . Ingavuthwa ke  
(1b)...you should cook the meat for peanut butter. It should be cooked thoroughly.  
Then...

(2b)Uyabona angani usumhluphile. So **kufanele** ukuthi uhlale ukhuphe ilihlo ukuthi  
(2b) It would seem as if you have troubled him/her. So you should always keep an eye  
so as...

Concordance lines 1a and 2a originally have the word **kufuze** and the concordance lines 1b and 2b have substituted **kufuze** with **kufanele**. The meaning of concordance line 1a is the same as that of 1b, while that of 2a is the same as that of 2b. Thus, the meaning of **kufanele** and **kufuze** are now the same, they have become synonyms. This evidence could only be obtained by exploiting the corpus as we have illustrated. That way the Ndebele language corpus was used in establishing language variation, usage and meaning shifts.

## 6.5.2. INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

In the analysis the focus was on the nature of variation in Ndebele, and on the principles and decisions on vocabulary selection and exclusion in the ISN. It should be noted that the general view in Zimbabwe is that Ndebele has no variations. According to Chimhundu (1993), 'Unlike Shona, Ndebele has no dialects or regional varieties as such. However, there are certain forms and usages that are peculiar to people of particular areas as the result of influences of other languages spoken in those areas, notably Kalanga in Plumtree, Lilima (Tswana?) in Gwanda. Lozi in Hwange, Shangwe in Gokwe-Nkai and Shona in Gweru –Midlands' (SAPEM October 1993:58). This observation is valid in the sense that variation in Ndebele is not the same as that of Shona and its distinct geographical dialects. In any case, no language can be exactly like another. We have however established that there is considerable variation in Ndebele although it was not easy for this researcher to delineate this variation according to geography. The reasons for this seemingly mixed up state of affairs are attributed to the sociolinguistic situation in Matabeleland and the history of land distribution and settlement of people in different districts.

After studying the material collected from Mtshabezi and Swazi, both areas in Matabeleland South province where Ndebele is the mother tongue for almost all speakers, we found some considerable variation. It could be argued that, although variation in Ndebele is largely attributed to the influence of other indigenous languages and seen as confined to speakers of Ndebele as their second language, there is variation in Ndebele among mother tongue speakers, too. Having acknowledged this reality, it is imperative to acknowledge the influence of the so-called minority languages on Ndebele, bearing in mind that most of these languages are spoken in Matabeleland. The Shona language, being the dominant indigenous language in Zimbabwe as the language of the majority, has considerable influence, too. Vocabulary items can come from all these potential sources and it is now the task of the lexicographer

to decide whether certain words have been accepted or not into Ndebele. In some situations as illustrated above by **kufuze** (must do), a word is used in speech by almost everybody but is resisted in writing as a non-Ndebele word. Various factors could account for this behaviour by some speakers of Ndebele.

One important feature throughout the study is the Zulu factor. Although few present-day Ndebele people can trace their ancestry to Zululand, nevertheless almost everyone believes that Ndebele originated from the Zulu language. In that case, the reasoning is that Ndebele must be kept as close as possible, if not similar to Zulu. The situation is compounded by the fact mentioned a number of times previously that Ndebele in Zimbabwe is taught alongside Zulu in high school up to university. The teaching of Ndebele, be it grammar, literature, poetry or culture, relies on Zulu books. For that reason, the vocabulary used in formal education and in books is either Zulu or akin to Zulu. Any changes that cannot be accounted for in the Zulu language are likely to be resisted by a large section of Ndebele speakers. Most people from Matabeleland provinces, be they Venda, Kalanga or Sotho, work in South Africa. The language they immediately identify with in South Africa is Zulu and on returning home they just speak Zulu as an identity marker. Living and working in South Africa is still considered very prestigious in Zimbabwe; therefore, speaking in Zulu is seen in that positive light. This is one issue that partly keeps the Zulu factor very much alive in Ndebele language planning.

The other reason could be the history of Ndebele in Matabeleland. Until the advent of colonialism that brought English as the language of the conquerors, Ndebele had enjoyed the status of being the language of the then rulers. Naturally, the subjected clans would have found it rewarding to learn the language of the new masters and speed up their assimilation into the new kingdom. The colonial administration further entrenched Ndebele as the lingua franca in the whole of Matabeleland, giving the language more prestige than the so-called minority languages. Geographically, Ndebele was cut off from its sister Nguni languages like Zulu, Xhosa or Swazi. As a language, Ndebele found itself surrounded by languages very different from and yet co-existing with it. That may partly explain the high degree of purism as a form of protection from the pervasive influence of the languages in the region. Where the speakers felt threatened by new words from languages in the regions, they would instead adopt Zulu words rather than use words from their neighbouring languages. This purism extends even to words from English, which is perceived as superior to Ndebele.

We now look at the principles followed by the ISN editors in their vocabulary selection and exclusion. The concerns already stated above seem to have been very much considered by the ISN lexicographers. Otherwise, failure to take into cognisance these sociolinguistic issues affecting the Ndebele language would be disastrous to the acceptability of the dictionary and hence its market would collapse.

Drawing from the illustration given previously on *umkhongi* and *idombo* (marriage-go-between), it should be noted that although the latter is more common than the former, it is the former that carries the definition. The ISN editors had outlined in their style manual that a more common word as reflected from the corpus would be given prominence. They also stated that in the case of loanwords and indigenous words, priority would be given to indigenous words as much as possible. Therefore, here is a case where a common word was considered non-indigenous. Would the editors apply the principle of higher frequency in the corpus or would they merely



give priority to less used words just because they sound more original to the language? The answer is known: the ISN gave priority to what was considered a more indigenous word even if corpus evidence showed overwhelmingly that the word was less used. It is not stated in the style manual that one rule would override the other, that is, that frequency in the corpus is overruled by the priority of indigenous words over those considered not indigenous. These are decisions that the ISN editors made and followed for reasons stated above as well as for their personal likes and dislikes of certain forms.

We have instances of words like *ubutindindi* (type of mushroom), *izitatangwa* (swamps), *-tshotshola* (pounding maize), *-petsba* (to sieve) and *-kwaya* (to dig) that were excluded from the headword selection in the ISN. The word *-fuza* (must do) was excluded in spite of corpus evidence. We note that the editors excluded those words that they feared could be rejected by the speakers of the language, although some of the words excluded seem to be commonly used, for example *-fuza*, going by evidence from the corpus. The corpus, therefore, could be a good yardstick with which to measure actual language use. However, dictionaries are expected to be guides to appropriate usage, meaning, spelling and pronunciation. That way, lexicographers have a duty to society that goes beyond mere recording and describing language, to include selecting the variety considered most appropriate at the time.

The preference for indigenous words was not pursued to the absolute exclusion of loanwords. Ndebele has borrowed extensively from English, especially words relating to modern fields ranging from agriculture, industry, commerce to sports and religion. Goods that are either manufactured in factories or imported come to the Ndebele community with English labels. Although there are attempts to coin indigenous Ndebele words, the process cannot cope with, let alone rival, the loanwords from English. The ISN has many loanwords from English but, where there is an indigenous Ndebele word equivalent, the Ndebele word carries the definition while the former is cross-referenced. That way, the ISN is a dictionary that aims to cater for contemporary language users and has contemporary vocabulary. That does not undermine the principle of its editors of promoting, as much as was possible, indigenous Ndebele vocabulary and, where possible, to minimize foreign influence on the vocabulary stock of the language.

We also have to note the inclusion of Zulu senses in the definition of words in the ISN. There are cases where Zulu words mean different things to similar words in Ndebele. We shall not be concerned with that but instances where Zulu has other additional senses for a Ndebele word. Some words that might seem more Zulu than Ndebele were included in the dictionary because they are shared by all the Nguni languages: Ndebele, Zulu, Xhosa and Swazi. What we can say on the principles behind vocabulary selection in ISN is that these principles were guided by practical concerns while at the same time retaining as much as possible of indigenous words.

## 6.6 LOANWORDS IN THE ISN

The issue of loanwords was alluded to previously on the discussion of properties of the core vocabulary as well as in aspects of lexical engineering (6.4.2). This section focuses on the treatment of loanwords in the ISN. The problems or challenges posed by loanwords are not peculiar to Ndebele but must be equally felt by most languages

that are vernacularised and dominated by the world languages like English. In societies like the Ndebele community of Zimbabwe, the mixing of English and Ndebele, coupled with heavy borrowing by Ndebele from English, has made most loanwords parts of the core vocabulary. One of the guiding principles in compiling the ISN was to compile as much as possible of what was perceived to be common everyday language.

As already discussed in detail in Chapter 3, on the Ndebele language corpus, the creation of the corpus preceded the compilation of the ISN. Although the bulk of the corpus is composed of written material, there is not much difference in the type of language from books and from oral interviews as far as loanwords are concerned. One may note of course the frequency of code mixing and switching in the general speech of Ndebele speakers. However, when it comes to loanwords, it would seem that there are quite a number of them, whether in written or spoken language.

The ISN style manual stated that entries should be selected partly because of their frequency of use as reflected in the corpus. It also stated that, in the event of synonymous entries, the entry that should carry the definition is the one with the highest frequency as that suggests that the word is commonly used. There is evidence from the corpus that shows that loanwords tend to have a higher frequency when compared to other words in the language that are synonymous. If the editors followed this principle without modifications, then more loanwords were going to be lemmatised at the expense of entries that are basic to the language. There was also another guiding principle in the style manual that explicitly said that in the event of a loanword being synonymous with an indigenous word, then the indigenous word in the language carries the definition. In spite of this, a number of loanwords carry the definitions at the expense of indigenous words. As this is in violation of the style manual, I suppose the reason is a lapse on the part of the editors rather than a change of their agreed and written principle.

Some loanwords were entered just because there are currently no indigenous terms to name or describe those items, events or activities. With English dominating the official domain it implies that few terms if any are coined for law, business, education and administration for instance. In some cases, speakers no longer know or care that a certain word so common in their everyday speech is not original to the language. Some of these words have been assumed to be part of the core vocabulary.

One problem that deserves attention concerning some loanwords is the issue of spelling (see Chapter 8). The problem of spelling loanwords was a big challenge to the editors and as there could be no consensus on spelling, the chief editor used his discretion. Loanwords bring into Ndebele sounds that previously were not in the language, making it difficult to represent them in writing. The second problem is that loanwords violate the sequences of phonemes acceptable to Ndebele.

The discussion so far has deliberately focused on English as it is the main source language from which Ndebele is borrowing a lot of words. This does not necessarily exclude the influence of other African languages in contact with Ndebele, especially Shona, Kalanga, Sotho, Venda, Nambya and Tonga. As already mentioned in the introductory chapters (see pages 43-44, 49-50), a significant percentage of Ndebele speakers are in fact mother tongue speakers of the so-called minority languages. A number of words that are currently taken to be Ndebele originally came from Shona or Kalanga or Sotho.

It is interesting to note that there are some words in everyday spoken Ndebele that are resisted in writing and are considered not Ndebele. One hotly debated word is the verb **-kwanisa** (be able). Language purists and teachers would insist that the word **-enelisa** (be able) should be used instead as that is considered good and appropriate language. The ISN did not lemmatise **-kwanisa** even if it is more common than **-enelisa** for fear of being labelled as 'bad language.' There are also words with sounds that are resisted by some sections of the Ndebele-speaking community especially the elderly and those of Nguni origins. Although the affricate /dz/ is not original to Ndebele, currently there are a number of words with this sound. Instead of articulating the sound /dz/ some speakers replace it with /j/. Most words with these sounds have become variants like in the following examples:

**udzidziyane** – **ujjiyane** (blue waxbill)  
**ubudzugwe** – **ubujugwe** (type of mushroom)  
**-dzimila** – **jimila** (to be lost and have memory lapses)

These are just examples to illustrate the problems encountered by editors in headword selection and in defining. Decisions had to be made whether to recognise an already popular but officially unacceptable word or promote the indigenous Ndebele word that is no longer used in everyday talk. The ISN was compiled to meet educational needs and it has to promote the standards already established for Ndebele, while at the same time not compromising its other stated objectives of representing current common language.

## 6.7. LEXICAL DIVERGENCE – NDEBELE AND ZULU COMPARED

The question of the standardisation of Ndebele vocabulary is not confined to the choice between varieties within the Ndebele language but also between Ndebele and Zulu. The role of Zulu in the standardisation of Ndebele, be it orthography, terminology or vocabulary, is always a significant factor that cannot be ignored. As explained elsewhere in this thesis, the difference between Ndebele and Zulu is not big, such that given a Zulu and a Ndebele text, it is even difficult for Ndebele-speakers to differentiate which is which. On the other hand, in speech it is easy for speakers to distinguish Ndebele from Zulu. Our discussion here does not concern the differences in speech but the written language. Although the two languages may share 96% of their lexicon (Hachipola 1998:4), there are notable vocabulary differences that mark the two languages. This lexical divergence could more-or-less be equated to that between British English and American English. Here are some of the notable cases for Ndebele and Zulu:

**Table 9: Different words in Ndebele and Zulu**

NDEBELE	English glosses	ZULU
umumbu	maize	umbila
isitshwala	thick porridge	ipalishi
umzukulu	nephew	umshana
ingqamu	knife	umese
ilembu	piece of cloth	indwangu
isigqoko	clothes	isambatho
ingwane	hat	isigqoko
inyamazana	animal	isilwane
isilwane	lion	ibhubesi
umbhobho	gun	isibhamu

We have cited cases from nouns as these seem to illustrate our claims of lexical divergence better than other word categories. If we take note of the examples above in Table 9, we note that in some cases Ndebele has a different meaning of a word from that of Zulu. A case in point is the Ndebele word **isilwane** for lion where Zulu has **isilwane** for animal. Zulu has **isigqoko** to mean a hat while for Ndebele **isigqoko** refers to clothes. The other area of lexical divergence between Ndebele and Zulu is in loanwords. Most Ndebele loanwords are from English while Zulu gets its loanwords mostly from Afrikaans.

## 6.8. GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN VOCABULARY SELECTION

After a careful study of the ISN Style Manual and the dictionary itself, we may mention the following factors as having been the guiding principles in vocabulary selection for the ISN. They are what we will refer to as *pragmatism*, *revivalism*, and *historical concerns*. By pragmatism, we mean the decision and practice by the editors of the ISN to base the dictionary on everyday language and to define the words in the manner they are commonly understood to mean currently. Revivalism in this case refers to the decision by the editors to give prominence to indigenous words over loanwords, even if the latter is more common in everyday speech. On the historical concerns, the editors kept the link with Zulu as much as possible continuing to give Zulu the status of being the reference point. This is partly because Zulu continues to be taught side by side with Ndebele in schools and partly to gain approval of the Ndebele purists who look upon Zulu as the standard. We should bear in mind that 'Dictionaries are products of their age, and the vocabulary selection policy inevitably reflects the interests, concerns and culture of the time' (Jackson and Amvela, 2000:163).

The pragmatism in vocabulary selection was inevitable considering that western culture is to some extent dominating the Ndebele way of life. Formal education comes in English; trade and commerce are conducted mainly in English; media, that is, newspapers and television, and to a large extent, radio broadcasts are almost 95% English. New products and technology all come to the Ndebele people via the English language. The level of transliteration and translation in Ndebele is very high. There

are cases where there are no options but the loanwords. Therefore, it was only pragmatic that the dictionary includes these loanwords.

The dictionary-making process was also exploited to revive some Ndebele words that were almost obsolete. We have the case of superordinate term for liquid *uketshezi* for instance. Such terms were almost unknown, especially by the younger generation, but their popularisation in the dictionary intended to revive these terms. Where there is an indigenous word and a loanword as synonyms like in the cases of **ubabhemi** versus **idonki** (donkey) or **umongikazi** versus **unesi** (nurse), the indigenous word carries the meaning and the loanword is cross-referenced. This was deliberately done by the editors as stated in their Style Manual that indigenous words where possible should be given prominence. This was done even if it contradicted their other principle stating that in the case of two or more synonymous words, the most common as reflected by instances of concordance from the corpus would carry the definition. We gave earlier on in this chapter the example of **umkhongi** and **idombo**, where the latter is more common than the former. Still the definition is carried by the former, which is perceived to be more indigenous.

The Zulu element has a number of factors to explain it. Some of the vocabulary that is perceived as Zulu, is actually not more Zulu than it is Ndebele. These are words shared by not only Zulu and Ndebele but by Xhosa and Swazi, the other Nguni languages. However, because Zulu was the first to reproduce them in publications, they have been appropriated as Zulu words when in fact they are common Nguni words. The compilation of the ISN relied on Zulu dictionaries, as Ndebele previously had no monolingual dictionaries. In that way, Zulu is given as the source of the vocabulary. The other reason, as already cited, is that Zulu vocabulary is unavoidable in Ndebele because the teaching of Ndebele is heavily dependent on Zulu textbooks. Thirdly, where there is a loanword from Zulu and another from any other language, English included, the Zulu choice is opted for.

## 6.9. IMPLICATIONS ON THE STANDARDISATION OF VOCABULARY

The ISN with about 20 000 headwords is too small to represent the entire lexicon of Ndebele. Nonetheless, it is adequate to give a fair reflection of the everyday vocabulary of the language. A study of the dictionary in terms of headword selection, defining principles and cross-referencing gives one a reasonable picture about the state of the Ndebele language as far as vocabulary is concerned.

The entries in the Ndebele dictionary would serve largely as core vocabulary. Being the first monolingual dictionary, its impact on the Ndebele vocabulary is likely to be far-reaching especially on the choice of words, spelling of loanwords as well as meanings of words. One cannot at present predict the likely impact of the dictionary on the standardisation of Ndebele vocabulary but it would suffice to acknowledge that a number of aspects of Ndebele vocabulary would not be the same after the completion and publication of the dictionary.

Some words that were almost in the periphery of everyday language were brought to the centre by inclusion in the dictionary. There are Ndebele words that were marginalised by the use of loanwords while some coinages were also being neglected. Their

use in the dictionary might popularise them, at least in writing, and thus influence the standardisation of Ndebele vocabulary.

## **6.10. CONCLUSION**

From the above discussion, we have noted that vocabulary is a very expansive field and lexicography can only address aspects of it. Dictionaries therefore select the vocabulary. 'While they are selective, dictionaries are also comprehensive, in the sense that they aim to include words from across the range of different types of vocabulary' (Jackson and Amvela 2000:174). The ISN is similarly selective but comprehensive and its vocabulary selection includes words from a wide range. Some aspects that relate to vocabulary standardisation are spelling and word division, which have not been included in this discussion as they are the focus in Chapter 8.

## TERM CREATION IN NDEBELE

### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 6, the vocabulary of a language was defined as its entire lexicon. In this chapter we focus on terminology, that is, the special vocabulary of a particular field. Terminology is 'the study of and the field of activity concerned with the collection, description, processing and presentation of terms, i.e. lexical items belonging to specialised areas of usage of one or more languages' (Sager 1990:2). Terminology is a vast field with various areas of focus and it would not be possible or even desirable for our purposes to discuss terminology in Ndebele in general. Instead we focus on aspects of term creation in Ndebele and the prospects of standardising the terms.

In this chapter, we discuss aspects of term creation in linguistic, literary, legal and natural sciences. The choice of linguistic and literary terms is done mainly for two reasons. Firstly, these are the terms that have deliberately been included in the ISN and have been systematically defined. Therefore, studying these terms is essential for standardisation. Secondly, these terms are relevant to the Ndebele situation as only Ndebele grammar and literature are taught in Ndebele in schools and in some teachers' colleges. It is in the teaching of Ndebele grammar and literature that Ndebele terms are used, since other subjects like history, geography, mathematics, commercial subjects and the sciences are taught through the medium of English. Therefore, Ndebele linguistic and literary terminology becomes perhaps the only area where term development has been significant.

The choice of legal terminology was made for comparisons. It is important to make a comparative study of term creation in Ndebele by looking at more than one discipline or subject area. Although law is taught in English in Zimbabwe and official legal documents are in English, there are some instances where Ndebele is used. For example, court interpreters can translate into Ndebele for those who are not comfortable with English. The legislators in Zimbabwe are free to use Ndebele and Shona if they so wish. It is also important to note that the aborted constitution of Zimbabwe had promoted Ndebele together with Shona to the same status as English. This came about due to public demand for the promotion of indigenous languages. The study of legal terms is therefore also partly futuristic in the sense that we can foresee the use of Ndebele in more areas of which law is one. Some scientists have argued that the teaching of science in indigenous languages in Zimbabwe would greatly enhance understanding on the part of the students. These scientists have even coined terms for their respective disciplines and we study these efforts in order to establish general patterns or lack of such patterns and recommend what could be done in the future.

Term creation in Ndebele will be discussed within the framework of term creation in general. Background theories and aspects of terminology are given. The histo-

ry of terminology in Ndebele is also outlined in order to put our discussion in context. Common features and principles of term creation and evaluation are discussed and applied in the discussion of terminology in Ndebele. Finally, we discuss the implications of term creation in Ndebele on the standardisation of the language in general.

## 7.2. THE NATURE /THEORY OF TERMINOLOGY

Eugen Wüster is credited for elaborating the general theory of terminology. According to Felber, 'the general theory of terminology deals with concepts and their characteristics, with terms, assigning terms to concepts, with symbols, presentation of technical terminology (terminological lexicography), etc. A manuscript is available of Wüster's lecture on this subject' (Felber 1980a:11). Although there is talk of a general theory of terminology we should bear in mind that there are a number of theories, principles and practices in terminology. The underlying fact is that they are all specific to particular languages that they are describing although generalizations could be applicable to other languages and situations. Similarly, the situation of the Ndebele language as far as terminology is concerned is largely peculiar to the history of the language. We shall come back to this issue.

De Cluver says, 'as far as I can establish, very few English-speaking linguists have taken interest in terminological activities' (De Cluver 1980:53). He further says that because linguistics has emphasized structure and description while neglecting communication and prescription, terminology was excluded from its domain. On the other hand, studies in terminology and of the language of science was central to the Prague School of Functional Linguistics (Drozd & Roudny 1980:32). Writing on terminology in the USA, Strehlow and Wright state that, 'in the absence of the linguistic pressures exerted by bilingualism in Canada and multilingualism in Europe, Americans remain far less committed to terminology activities than their counterparts in other countries' (Strehlow and Wright 1993:2). We can infer from the above views that terminology as a discipline developed differently in different countries and in different subject fields. This would help explain the situation in African languages in general and Ndebele in particular.

According to Sager (1990:21):

A theory of terminology is usually considered as having three basic tasks: it has to account for sets of concepts as discrete entities of the knowledge structure; it has to account for sets of interrelated linguistic entities which are somehow associated with concepts grouped and structured according to cognitive principles; it has, lastly, to establish a link between concepts and terms, which is traditionally done by definitions.

Let us start by explaining the last feature, that is the link between concepts and terms. The term is a naming unit for the technical or scientific concept (Drozd & Roudny 1980:33). On the other hand 'concepts represent elements of thinking. They are mental representations of material or immaterial individual objects, qualities, relations, etc' (Felber 1980b:69). Therefore, in the theory of terminology 'the realm of concepts is independent of the realm of terms' (Felber 1980b:69). In simpler language, we can say that terms refer or name material or immaterial objects. Concepts do not in rea-



lity exist but are abstractions. This leads us to the definition. According to Felber, a 'definition is a verbal description of a concept in terms of known concepts' (Felber 1980b:73). Through the activity of definition we fix the precise reference of a term to a concept, albeit by linguistic means only (Sager 1990:21).

### 7.3. FACTORS AFFECTING TERM CREATION IN NDEBELE

Maybe we should mention here that in the initial draft of this chapter the focus was on terminology standardisation in Ndebele. However, it was realized later that there was scarcity of terminology to be standardised and hence the investigation of factors affecting term creation in African languages in general and Ndebele in particular. The significance of focusing on term creation in African languages is explained by Cluver in the following manner:

The gradual change from homecraft to industry that took place in England and Europe is replaced in Africa by instant importation of technical know-how. As long as the national industry and level of national scientific research is underdeveloped, technical terms have to be created by translators, terminologists... Terms that have to be created in languages at this stage are just that: created terms (Cluver 1980:59).

Cluver believes that with time scientists and specialists in Africa would eventually start using their own indigenous terms while working in a supposedly English language environment. We do not believe that such a situation can be reached for African countries if the present trend continues. The Ndebele-speaking community, like most other African communities, has produced several reputable scientists and specialists in almost all the main specialist fields. This has not led to term creation in Ndebele, as Cluver seems to suggest. This is partly due to the colonial legacy still holding African languages in its grip and partly to language policies and attitudes by independent African governments. Also, these African scientists are trained, work and write in the colonial languages and they often publish in journals abroad rather than at home. For that reason, we can claim that 'The issue of terminology is part of the overall cultural and economic domination of the West over the Third World' (Hadebe 2000:225).

Writing on the relationship between terminology and national development, Dzhincharadze et. al say, 'it is in terminology that the link between language development, the lexical system of the language, and the history of the material and intellectual culture of a language community is clearly seen' (Dzhincharadze et. al 1993:40). The African languages in general, Ndebele included, are still regarded by their own people as incapable tools for effective communication in any formal sphere. This reflects the underlying relations between the African countries represented by their educated elites and their former colonial powers whose culture the African elites still uphold with esteem.

'African languages have for a long time been used in a narrow sense in the official arena, while specialised fields like education, law, science and technology have been reserved for the European languages' (Hadebe 2000: 226). Writing on the similar subject on African languages in South Africa, Mtintsilana & Morris (1988:109) state

that, 'terminology development in the African languages has been retarded by a number of ideological, historical, and educational factors, the most fundamental of which are the language policies adopted in the Republic of South Africa.' Similarly, the same factors that hindered terminology development in South African languages are largely responsible for lack of term development in Ndebele.

Maybe the notable exception was the policy of restricting African languages to the Christian religion where terms were created to support the evangelizing mission. Writing on term creation by missionaries, the present researcher observed that, 'there is a notable growth in terminology related to Christian liturgy and a suppression of that which is related to indigenous spirituality' (Hadebe 2000:226). It was considered important to convert Africans to Christianity. Therefore, great effort was made by early European settlers to create relevant terminology in the area of religion. Actually, most African languages have Bibles, but no other literature unrelated to Christianity. Also the creation and promotion of a hybrid known as *Isilaphalapha* or *Fanakalo* or *Kitchen Kaffir* further compounded the situation for Ndebele. This variety was neither English nor Ndebele and was used in the mines, factories and farms. Had proper Ndebele been used in these areas, maybe relevant terminology would have been created.

One may describe the Ndebele language situation as linguistic attrition (Sounkalo 1995). Linguistic attrition refers to the inadequacy in a language to be used in certain domains. Citing Ngugi, Sounkalo says:

Colonization has created a situation in Africa in which the European language and the African language perform varying functions. Usually the European language is used as the language of conceptualization, thinking, formal education, and mental development, whereas the African language is limited to daily interactions within the family and the community (Sounkalo 1995:404).

Because educated Africans can only express their acquired modern knowledge in foreign European languages, the African languages are not afforded the opportunity to handle modern scientific knowledge. Relevant terminology has therefore been lacking in African languages like Ndebele because they are not media of instruction and are not used in any formal situations outside the community apart from the church. Sounkalo (1995) further claims that code-switching by educated Africans should not only be seen as a common characteristic of bilinguals in general but partly due to the existence of deficiencies and loss in the lexical repertoire of such people as a result of their limited use of African languages. It is against this general background and history of African languages and Ndebele in particular, that we shall discuss term development in Ndebele.

Notwithstanding the above factors that seem to have hindered the development of terminology in Ndebele, the need for terms in Ndebele has always been there. Firstly, in education there is a problem especially in the teaching of Ndebele at tertiary level. Throughout their primary and secondary schooling, Ndebele children are taught and learn their mother tongue through the medium of Ndebele. At tertiary education, Ndebele has been taught and continues in some institutions to be taught in English. This shift in the medium of instruction has had negative effects on the learners as well as on the field of Ndebele literature, culture and grammar. The students have found it difficult to switch from one medium to another and some even claim that the subject is no longer interesting and enriching as they had expected before taking the course.

After graduation, most Ndebele language students join the teaching profession and are expected to teach in Ndebele. They have found it difficult to impart in Ndebele their knowledge acquired in English. Therefore, skills and education gained at colleges become irrelevant to the situation in the schools.

Because Ndebele is taught as a subject in the medium of English at tertiary institutions, this has not led to improvements in the quality of creative work in the language. One would expect that the Ndebele language proficiency both in speaking and writing would be developed at the university level. It is at the university level that the best form of Ndebele should be taught. However, the use of English means that Ndebele as a language is denied normal growth in vocabulary, terminology, and other features expected of a language taught at higher levels of education. The same applies to critics and language researchers. Research papers on the Ndebele culture and literature are written in English and published in English-language journals and periodicals. One thing is that few Ndebele people get access to such information about their language and culture, another problem is that Ndebele is denied capacity to be the medium to express itself. Therefore, the growth of terms in Ndebele is negatively affected. Actually, since Ndebele is taught only as a school subject, while English is also the medium of instruction, Ndebele is allocated less time in the school timetable than English.

In the legal and administrative fields, necessity makes Ndebele terms essential. The judiciary has always felt the need for translators to and from Ndebele in the courts of law. This need has been served by the use of court interpreters during proceedings. To fulfil their role and ensure that justice is done and seen to be done, the court interpreters had to create in Ndebele legal terms that would embody the concepts in the English legal terms (see Appendix III). Apart from the courts, there is a law in Zimbabwe stating that company codes of conducts for employees should be in the three languages, Ndebele, Shona and English. The codes of conducts are legal documents couched in typical legal jargon. That would mean that whoever translates the code of conduct has to create terms in Ndebele to capture what the legal terms mean in English.

Constitutionally, legislators in Zimbabwe can use Ndebele, Shona or English in Parliament. Such speeches in parliament are bound to need appropriate legal and administrative terms that would be translated into Shona and English. Although the practice of translating parliamentary debates into the three languages was discontinued a few years ago, all parliamentary proceedings had to be translated into the three languages (Ndebele, Shona and English) in the parliamentary journal **The Hansard**. That meant that all the legal and administrative terms for bills and acts and the debates had to have equivalents in Ndebele. Actually, although the practice has been discontinued and no legislators at present use Ndebele or Shona in parliament, the pressure for reform is mounting.

In the unsuccessful constitutional reform of 2000, the commissioners claimed that Zimbabweans had demanded that Ndebele and Shona be upgraded to the same status as English. If that demand and wish by the people of Zimbabwe were to be met, then all spheres of public life would have had to respect that language policy. All official documents would have had to be in the three languages and an enormous task of term creation would have been experienced in almost all public domains: commerce, industry, education, law, military, aviation, engineering, medicine, to mention a few. We do not believe that the Zimbabwean public will abandon that demand for upgrading of Ndebele and Shona. That may mean that in the foreseeable future, there would

be a demand for terminology in almost all disciplines. That need could not easily be fulfilled unless plans and concrete steps are taken to prepare for that eventuality.

All the above factors combined make the study of term creation in Ndebele relevant and interesting. While these factors might be found applicable in other African languages in general, however, their combination and effect can only be unique to Ndebele. It becomes interesting to study the nature in which various factors political, economic, linguistic and sociolinguistic combine and interact in the efforts towards terminology development in Ndebele.

## 7.4 PRINCIPLES IN TERM CREATION

There are a number of basic elements of terminology in general that might be applicable universally and which are of interest to our study. We have chosen to use the onometric battery proposed by Gilreath for term evaluation criteria. He proposes seventeen (17) features or principles that he groups under semantics, vocality, efficiency, morphology, uniformity, diction and phonetics. Although not all the seventeen points could be applicable in any given one time, his schemata are comprehensive and include most of the common features or principles some of which are used by the International Standards Organization (ISO). In this study, we refer to Gilreath's onometric battery as simply the seventeen principles of term evaluation.

Table 10: Term Evaluating Criteria

1. Accuracy –	
2. Precision –	SEMANTICS
3. Descriptiveness –	
-----	
4. Unequivocalness –	
5. Mononymy -	
6. Appropriate register –	VOCALITY
-----	
7. Precedent –	
8. Conciseness –	EFFICIENCY
9. Appropriate Simplicity –	
-----	
10. Form Correctness -	MORPHOLOGY
11. Etymological Purity –	
-----	
12. Derivability -	
13. Inflectability -	UNIFORMITY
14. Series Uniformity –	
-----	
15. Acceptability –	DICTION
-----	
16. Euphony -	PHONETICS
17. Pronounceability –	
The onometric battery (Gilreath 1993:81)	

Here are the definitions and explanations of the terms in Gilreath's onometric battery: Accuracy **is the term quality determined by the absence or presence of incorrect elements** (Gilreath 1993:82). Accuracy has also been defined as 'freedom from mistake or error: CORRECTNESS. Accuracy is a binary criterion, meaning that a name is either accurate or not. Although we cannot talk of degrees of accuracy, 'we can speak of degrees of inaccuracy, ranging from slightly to grossly inaccurate (Gilreath 1993:82). **Precision** refers to 'the degree to which a term clearly delineates its concept' (Gilreath 1993:83).

**Descriptiveness** of a term refers to 'the degree to which a term's literal meaning matches its intended meaning' (Gilreath 1993:83).

**Unequivocalness** is the quality of a term which has only one meaning within a particular field of knowledge or within a particular nomenclature' (Gilreath 1993:85).

**Mononymy** refers to the quality of a term 'which is the one and only (mono) formal name (nym) for a given concept' (Gilreath 1993:87). It should be noted that a term is either a mononym or a synonym.

**Appropriate register** means that a term's style (register) is consistent or compatible with the context of usage' (Gilreath 1993:87).

**Precedence** refers to 'the extent to which a proposed designation is in harmony with established designations' (Gilreath 1993:87).

**Conciseness** refers to 'the orthographic length of a term' (Gilreath 1993:88). In other words it is brevity or shortness.

**Appropriate simplicity** means that 'the number of words in a term is appropriate for the level of importance of the designated concept. As a rule: the more important the concept, the simpler the term should be' (Gilreath 1993:89).

**Form correctness**, also called linguistic or grammatical correctness, refers to the 'extent to which a term has no grammatical errors, such as misspellings, wrong hyphenation, wrong (inverted order), inadmissible variant, wrong number and wrong part of speech.

**Etymological purity** is defined as 'A word constructed from elements derived from a single language is usually preferable to a hybrid word, which combines elements derived from more than one language. Constructive elements derived from a single language ordinarily combine more easily and euphoniously than elements taken from different languages' (Gilreath 1993:90).

**Derivability** is the quality of terms whose elements can be used in naming a variety of related concepts (Gilreath 1993:91). It should be easy to derive formatives from the term.

**Inflectability** refers to 'the quality of the terms which inflect well in forms such as comparatives, superlatives, and negatives (antonyms)' (Gilreath 1993:91).

**Series uniformity** is the quality of a group of terms which use common elements in naming related concepts (Gilreath 1993:91).

**Acceptability** refers to 'the quality of terms which are not emotionally charged, obscene, morbid, gender-biased, informal, strange, awkward, corny, silly, etc' (Gilreath 1993:91).

Acceptability does not mean that a term has been or will be accepted but that it has no limitations that might affect its acceptability.

**Euphony** is the phonetic quality that gives a term a pleasant sound (Gilreath 1993:92).

**Pronounceability** is the ease of pronunciation of a term (Gilreath 1993:92).

As mentioned above these principles are used as guiding principles in discussing term creation in Ndebele. Some of them do not relate to our discussion here but we gave the definitions nonetheless so as to give a detailed explanation of Gilreath's evaluation principles. Those that are relevant to our discussion are: accuracy, precision, precedence, conciseness, derivability and unequivocalness.

## 7.5. LINGUISTIC AND LITERARY TERMS IN NDEBELE

As the corpus was not helpful in giving information on terms, research was carried out in the field. The objective was to establish literary and linguistic terms used in the teaching of Ndebele. Three tertiary colleges were chosen where there are Ndebele departments. The two teacher training colleges are Hillside Teachers' College and United College of Education. The former trains secondary school teachers while the latter primary school teachers. The Curriculum and Arts Department in the Faculty of Education at the University of Zimbabwe is also responsible of training teachers at degree level. The respective Ndebele departments in these institutions use Ndebele as the medium of instruction. The terms used in these institutions are likely to be used in the schools as trainee teachers join schools after completion of their studies. For that reason, I felt it was easier to handle material from the three colleges than to make a survey in the hundreds of secondary and primary schools. For additional terms refer to appendices I and II.

In the research, as reflected in Table 11, some of the terms included, like adjective – **isiphawulo**, concord – **isivumelwano**, verb - **isenzo** and tense – **inkathi**, have long been established in the language. These terms were included in the list in order to test whether they were used by the different institutions in the same manner or whether other terms had replaced them. Such possibilities are always there in a language where there is no official glossary for writers, teachers and students to follow. The other reason for their inclusion was to ascertain whether some users have changed these terms in line with the changes that are currently taking place in Zulu.

The three Ndebele departments as reflected in Table 11, use the same terms, especially linguistic terms. Most of the terms shown in the table are Zulu terms. It is important to note that the basic grammar book used in Ndebele is the Zulu text Uhlelo LwesiZulu by Nyembezi. Nyembezi coined most of these terms that are still used in the teaching of Ndebele grammar. The other important point to note is that almost all the lecturers in the Ndebele departments of teacher training colleges were themselves trained at the University of Zimbabwe in the Department of Curriculum Education. The same terms that are used in this Department are being transferred to teacher training colleges.

**Table 11: Terms used in teacher training**

TERMS IN ENGLISH	TERMS IN NDEBELE		
	University of Zimbabwe	Hillside Teachers' College	United College of Education
absolute pronoun	isabizwana soqobo	isabizwana soqobo	isabizwana soqobo
adjective	isiphawulo	isiphawulo	isiphawulo
adjective concords	izivumelwano zesiphawulo	izivumelwano zesiphawulo	izivumelwano zesiphawulo
adjectival stems	iziqu zesiphawulo	iziqu zesiphawulo	iziqu zesiphawulo
alliteration	imvumelwano yabongwaqa	imvumelwano yabongwaqa	imvumelwano yabongwaqa
alveolarisation	ukunsininiza	---	---
assonance	imvumelwano yabonkamisa	imvumelwano yabonkamisa	imvumelwano yabonkamisa
concord	isivumelwano	isivumelwano	isivumelwano
copulative	isibanjalo	isibanjalo	isibanjalo
excerpt	isiqendu	isicaphuno	isicaphuno
figure of speech	isifinjo	isifenjo	isifenjo
labialisation	ukundebezisa	---	---
morphology	ukwakhiwa kwamagama	---	---
noun stem	isiqu	isiqu	isiqu
possessive	isabizwana soqobo	isabizwana soqobo	isabizwana soqobo
possessive concords	izivumelwano zobumnini	izivumelwano zobumnini	izivumelwano zobumnini
pronoun	isabizwana	isabizwana	isabizwana
quantitative pronoun	isabizwana senani	inani	inani
suffix	isijobelelo	isiphongozo	isijobelelo
tense	isikhathi	inkathi	inkathi
verb	isenzo	isenzo	isenzo
verbal derivatives	impambosi zesenzo	impambosi zesenzo	impambosi zesenzo
verb stem	umsuka	umsuka	umsuka

The three colleges use more-or-less the same terms and most of the terms are taken from Zulu.

The linguistic terms are described first, then the literary terms. It has been noted that different ways of acquiring terms were used for the two sub-disciplines.

### 7.5.1. LINGUISTIC TERMS IN NDEBELE

Linguistic terms in Ndebele are derived mainly by transliteration from English. As we shall show below, terms in Ndebele are translated from English as most new ideas and products come via the English language. Before we can discuss the merits or demerits

of this practice as a way of deriving terms, we shall outline how the English language derives most of its terms.

The English language, like the majority of European languages, use Greek and Latin roots as the basis of deriving terms for a number of disciplines like medicine, chemistry and biology. According to Sager:

The formulation of principles of naming technical concepts and similar work was furthermore only oriented towards the industrially advanced countries during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and their languages and assumed a target group of engineers and scientists who accepted Greek and Latin word elements as the most suitable means of developing systematic patterns of terminology (Sager 1990:8).

One may note that the use of Greek and Latin as bases for term creation has partly assisted in giving a common source for terms for most European languages. This common base for terminology enhances terminological standardisation and can easily be done internationally. Also, English seems to be the leading language in higher education and in advanced technological fields. Therefore, English terms are most likely to be accepted by other languages that seek to keep up with new developments in the natural sciences for instance. According to Vikør, 'it seems inevitable that English becomes the sole global language at specialist level in more and more fields, since only this language is able to cope with the rapid development of science taking place mostly in the United States' (Vikør 1999).

The terms that are developed for Ndebele are largely made through transliteration from English. "In most cases foreign loanwords are Africanized by transliteration, i.e. by changing their phonological and morphological structure to accord with African language structures" (Mtintsilana & Morris 1988:111). This has been done in Ndebele disregarding how the terms originated in English in the first place. We shall discuss some of the linguistic terms that have been derived by transliteration:

**imofoloji** from morphology  
**imofimu** from morpheme  
**ifonethiki** from phonetics  
**isintaksi** from syntax  
**isemantiki** from semantics.

These terms are spelt in Ndebele, but there is nothing else in them that makes them typically Ndebele words. A learner or any speaker of the language cannot deduce their meanings from their structure. These terms can only be taught or read for someone to know or get an idea of what they mean. Because they are transliterations, these terms cannot easily be inflected or derive other related terms for related concepts. Even in terms of pronunciation, the terms retain their foreign element.

We also have terms that were translated literally into Ndebele, for example:

alveolar is **unsinini** (at the alveolar)  
bilabial is **undebembili** (two lips)  
labiodental is **undebezinyo** (lip and teeth)  
subject concord is **isivumelwano senhloko** (agreement to subject)



object concord is **isivumelwano sikamenziwa** (agreement to object)  
possessive is **ubumnini** (relationship of belonging)  
labialisation is **ukundebezisa** (making labials)

This latter method seems to be supported by Matsela & Mochaba who are cited by Mtintsilana & Morris saying that:

Lexical items coined from the internal resources of a language are preferable because they are transparent. Even when the term itself is unfamiliar ... a native speaker can often deduce its meaning (Mtintsilana & Morris 1988:111).

The Zulu factor is still an issue in terminology as has been noted on other aspects of Ndebele like orthography and word division. As already explained in Chapter 2, the study of Ndebele grammar has heavily relied on Zulu texts. The linguistic and literary terminology that is used in Ndebele is largely imported from Zulu. Although Ndebele and Zulu share almost 96 % of their lexicon, the terms chosen for Zulu tend to be less common in Ndebele, rendering them almost foreign to a common user. Here are some of the terms that were coined in Zulu and have been adopted by Ndebele:

**isenzo** - verb  
**impambosi yesenzo** - verbal extensions  
**ungwaqa** - consonant sound  
**isingasenzo** - deficient verb  
**isijobelelo** - suffix  
**ukulumbana kwabonkamisa** - vowel coalescence  
**umsuka wesenzo** - verb root  
**isibaluli** - relative descriptive  
**usinga-nkamisa** - semi-vowel  
**umankankana** - nasal sound  
**ingcwengazinhlamvu** - phonology  
**inkathi** - tense  
**isenzukuthi** - ideophone.

All these are now part of the key terms in the teaching of Ndebele grammar yet they were coined for Zulu. Although the accuracy and precision of some of these terms is questionable, it is not easy to change them because there is a tradition of wanting to keep links with Zulu. In any case the same terms could be used by other sister languages like Xhosa and Swazi which partly have their lexicon from Zulu. The problem arises in cases where Zulu changes the term and that change does not get to Ndebele, so that the old terms remain in Ndebele while Zulu coins new ones.

There are Ndebele linguistic terms that were coined by some users of the language especially in teacher training colleges. The following terms are among those coined:

**inguquko** (change) - inflection  
**isenzo esilomenziwa** (verb with object) - transitive verb  
**isenzo esingelamenziwa** (verb without object) - intransitive verb

**uphutshu** - ejective  
**inguquko yesenzo** - conjugation  
**ifuzamsindo** - onomatopoeia  
**amagama ahambelanayo** (similar words) - variants  
**ubhamu** - stops or plosives  
**uhlamvu** - phoneme  
**ukuthekelana kwabonkamisa okungaphelelanga** - assimilation  
**ukuthekelana kwabonkamisa okupheleleyo** - complete assimilation

It is important to note that although the above terms were coined from Ndebele words and roots, those who coined the terms took into consideration terms already accepted in Zulu.

### 7.5.2 LITERARY TERMS IN NDEBELE

Ndebele literary terms were created differently from linguistic ones. Let us give some examples before we discuss the differences in term creation between literary and linguistic disciplines.

Table 12: Literary Terms

Ndebele	English
umbhalo olomqondo opheleleyo	text
ulukuluku/ingwabungwabu	suspense
umdladla	motivation
isasasa	enthusiasm
invumelwano yabongwaqa	alliteration
invumelwano yabonkamisa	assonance
isigqi	rhythm
invumelwano	rhyme
umhlahlandlela	theory of literature
isakhiwo	plot
abalingiswa	characters
indikimba	theme
imbangalusizi	tragedy
inhlekisa	comedy
umbhinqo	satire
ukungathekisa	metaphor
ukubhuqa	irony
isifaniso	simile
ihaba	hyperbole
ukubhinqa	sarcasm
ukuqhathanisa	antithesis
ukwenzasamuntu	personification
inhlonipho	euphemism

The above literary terms in Table 12 are derived from Ndebele by semantic expansion mainly. The Ndebele terms carry the same concepts as their English equivalents. There is no literal translation or cases of transliteration. Some words are from the general vocabulary but now as terms they have acquired specific and restricted meaning. Here are interesting cases for noting:

**umdladla** (motivation)  
**isasasa** (enthusiasm)

These two lexical items in ordinary usage can be treated as synonyms, but as terms each denotes a specific meaning in literature and literary criticism. The same argument could be extended to the words:

**umbhinqo** (satire)  
**ukubhuqa** (irony)  
**ukubhinqa** (sarcasm)

In ordinary Ndebele talk the distinction between satire, irony and sarcasm is not fundamental. One could use any of the three words to mean either satire, irony or sarcasm. But as terms, these words have each acquired a separate and distinct meaning. 'Terminology demands that linguistic expressions be unambiguous, i.e. a single term should be assigned to one concept only and vice versa' (Felber 1980b:74).

**indikimba** (theme)  
**imbangalusizi** (tragedy)  
**ukwenzasamuntu** (personification)

Let us discuss the above three terms and analyze the way they were coined. **Indikimba** (theme) means the 'nucleus, essence or central part' of something. The term can be said to be appropriate for the concept of 'theme' in literary criticism. **Imbangalusizi** (tragedy) derives from the verb **-banga** (to cause) and the noun **usizi** (pity/sorrow). The word literally means 'that which causes pity/sorrow', and we feel it captures well the notion carried by tragedy in English. **Ukwenzasamuntu** (personification) derives from the verb **ukwenza** (to do), formative **-sa-** (like) and the noun **-muntu** (person). Therefore, it literally means 'doing like a person.'

### 7.5.3. IMPLICATIONS FOR NDEBELE LINGUISTIC AND LITERARY TERMINOLOGY

If we were to compare linguistic terms and literary terms in the manner they were coined we realize that literary terms were generally coined from Ndebele or existing Ndebele words have been turned into terms. However, as to linguistic terms, some terms were created from Ndebele, some were transliterated from English mainly, and a good number are literal translations. Terms derived from Zulu are also dominant in linguistic terms as the teaching of Ndebele grammar in the schools still relies on the Zulu textbook by Nyembezi, **Uhlelo LwesiZulu**.

While Ndebele relies on terms from Zulu, there are problems within Zulu. Zulu has different terms for the same concept from different institutions. Table 13 from Msimang (2000:230) shows how the universities of Zululand and South Africa use different Zulu terms for the same concepts:

Table 13: A Comparison of Zulu terms from two universities

English Term	University of Zululand Zulu Term	University of South Africa Zulu Term
suspense	uheho	ilukuluku
anticlimax	ibohlo	upholavuthondaba
plot	uhlaka	isakhiwo

When Ndebele writers are urged to adopt Zulu terms in grammar and literature, little thought is ever put on the possibility that Zulu itself does not have standardised terms. Not only does Zulu lack standardised terms, it even lacks several linguistic terms. For example, Msimang lists a number of linguistic concepts like *lexical phonology*, *pragmatics*, *suppletion*, *verbaliser*, *cognitive meaning* and *grammaticalisation*, to mention but a few, as some of the terms in English that are yet to have equivalents in any African language. Zulu scholars, like Msimang and M.B. Khumalo are even questioning the appropriateness of some Zulu terms. According to Msimang:

In grammar, however, there is quite a number of problematic terms. Take **indlela**, for instance. This word glosses as path, way or road, but in Zulu grammar it is used to denote mood. No stretch of the imagination can show compatibility between these two concepts. One needs to know the significance of mood in English first before one could accept **indlela** as its Zulu equivalent (Msimang 2000:231).

The terms from the table above from the three colleges are very similar. In an attempt to stick to already familiar terminology, the ISN used the terms of which the majority were coined for Zulu. The standardisation of linguistic and literary terminology is therefore not a major problem now in Ndebele. The main problem is the lack of terms for several concepts in the field. There is a need to coin more terms to cater for the ever-growing branches of linguistics and literature.

Reference to Zulu is very important as the teaching of Ndebele still relies on Zulu, but it is important for Ndebele to coin its own terms, too, according to their understanding of the concepts in these disciplines. In most instances, Ndebele takes wholesale what was coined in Zulu without even considering the appropriateness of some of the terms. The result of this policy for Ndebele is that Ndebele students find difficult in conceptualising Zulu terms like *impambosi* (verbal extension), *indlela yesenzo* (mood) or *udweshu* (conflict), the choice of which even teachers sometimes cannot explain.

The teaching of Ndebele grammar has not been made any easier by teaching it in Ndebele as the terms are from Zulu. It is as good as adopting the terms from any language as most of them have little or no connection to what students already know. Second, this policy of wholesale acceptance of terms from Zulu has led to stultification of term creation in Ndebele. As we stated above, Zulu continually revises its

terms and the same does not happen for Ndebele as these terms are in any case not indigenous to Ndebele.

Testing the linguistic and literary terms against Gilreath's seventeen principles of term evaluation, we note that the literary terms fulfil the principles of accuracy and precision better than the linguistic terms. This can be explained by the different methods that have been used to derive linguistic terms. In most cases, a Ndebele person cannot immediately identify a number of linguistic terms as Ndebele. Linguistic terms in Ndebele lack the principle of precedent, that is, the extent to which a proposed name agrees with established designations. It is difficult for Ndebele linguistic terms to follow any established order as there is none so far. For example, **ifonethiki** (phonetics) is transliterated from 'phonetics', **undebembili** (bilabial) is translated from 'bilabial', **inkathi** (tense) is from Zulu, as the Ndebele would be **isikhathi** (time) and **uphutshu** (plosive) is coined in Ndebele.

From the literary terminology, we learn that terms can be coined that are appropriate without translations. Terms need not be transliterated where an appropriate term could be found which is indigenous to the language. We also note, especially from studying linguistic terminology that historical factors and common practice can have deep influence in term creation. Ndebele grammar has a background of different sources of terms and such terms need not be ignored but the procedures should be made systematic.

## 7.6. LEGAL TERMS IN NDEBELE

### 7.6.1. THE NATURE OF LEGAL LANGUAGE

The legal language we are referring to here is English. The claims we are making on legal language are observed from the English legal language and we do not generalise these observations as we do not know the nature of legalese in other languages. It should be noted also that these observations and views on legal language are from a linguistic point of view and the legal practitioners are likely to view these differently. It is an acknowledged fact that to appreciate terminology of a specialised field one must be familiar with concepts within that field. The same could be said about legal language although with some reservations. While the language of the civil engineers, for instance, might not be of concern to the general public, the same could not be said of legal language. The law is for the public interest, at least in theory; therefore, it is important that members of the public access the law that governs their daily lives. For that reason, we feel that legal language cannot be excluded from public scrutiny, and hence our justification to look at the legal language in Ndebele.

As we have already alluded to the importance of understanding the subject matter of the field whose terminology one is studying, it is relevant for us to understand the English legal system. However, for our case, we are not studying the English legal language per se, but the translations into the Ndebele language. For our purposes, a brief background of English legal language is adequate as that history seems to have major implications on the development of legal terms in Ndebele. The English legal terminology reflects the history of legal language in England. The current English legal language is not only full of English derivations from Latin but also full words and expressions direct from Latin are still part of the English legal lexicon. One reason

why Latin was used instead of English is given by Tiersma as follows, 'yet a problem with using English was that it had many dialects, often very different from each other. Latin, in contrast, was a standardised language, with a set grammar and spelling' (Tiersma 1999:25). This is a very important point for language planners because of the emphasis on standardisation. A non-standardised language has less chances of being used in legal documents especially if there exists within that society a standardised language. This observation is important for Ndebele language that is still undergoing standardisation.

However, the Latin expressions and words have long outlived the use of Latin as the legal language in England. A number of reasons can be put forward to explain that phenomenon but one interesting reason to note is that 'Latin was also extensively employed for legal canons or maxims, which are sayings about the law' (Tiersma 1999:27). These sayings have functioned as long-standing truths and accepted wisdom in the legal world and have been preserved in their original Latin. The use of Latin and tireless repetition by judges have endowed these legal maxims with a sense of timelessness and dignity, often undeserved by the content (Tiersma 1999:27). It is, therefore, partly historical and partly traditional that Latin has survived in English legal terminology. The same influence we noted about Latin on English is observed also of the French influence. As French was for a considerable period the language of the royal courts in England, a number of French derived words and actual French words and expressions are still part of the English legal language lexicon.

Even if Latin words and French words were to be avoided in English legalese, still it would leave the language incomprehensible to people without legal training. This is because the English legal language employs archaic terms, unusual syntactic constructions, antiquated morphology, repetition of nouns where pronouns would do, very long sentences and vague words. The general public would find English legalese incomprehensible. For instance, common expressions in law like *indecent exposure*, *obscene language*, *beyond reasonable doubt*, mean other things to ordinary users than to lawyers.

Legal terminology, like terminology in other disciplines, must aim for efficient communication and precision. 'Much of the linguistic behaviour of the legal profession is geared towards speaking and writing as clearly and precisely as possible' (Tiersma 1999:71). Maybe, for the purpose of in-group communication the legal language could be said to be attempting to be clear and precise. Tiersma also acknowledges that imprecision is characteristic of legal terminology. 'Despite claims about the precision of legal language, some of its attributes are deliberately imprecise' (Tiersma 1999:74). The imprecision of legal terminology is deliberate.

Despite its limitations, vague or flexible language therefore has several useful functions. It allows a legislature to use a general term without having to articulate in advance exactly what is included within it, something the legislators might not be able to agree on or even if they had the time to try. It permits the law to adapt to differing circumstances and communities within a jurisdiction. And it enables the law to deal with novel situations that are certain to arise in the future, as well as changing norms and standards (Tiersma 1999:80).

The element of flexibility within legal terminology is incompatible with general features or principles of terminology; that is, accuracy, precision, descriptiveness and unequivocalness.

This goes to illustrate that terminology is determined by various factors some of which are peculiar practices and traditions within a particular field. We have seen that legal language is not only vague but is deliberately so. 'At the same time, legal language is described as full of words and expressions with general, vague, or flexible meanings. Lawyers sometimes deliberately employ terminology exactly because of its pliability' (Tiersma 1999:79).

Having noted the above-mentioned deliberate vagueness of legal language, it is still argued that even if legal language was simplified it would be difficult for ordinary speakers to comprehend legal issues.

Part of the problem may be that the average person, untrained in the law, will probably never be able to fully understand most statutes, no matter how plain the language. Truly comprehending a statute or similar legal document involves much more than having some familiarity with the words that are written on paper. At a minimum, it demands a great deal of background knowledge, including a basic understanding of the legal system and the general subject matter of the text (Tiersma 1999:212).

Notwithstanding the above quoted claim, the demand to simplify legal language into comprehensible English has gained momentum both in Britain and in the US. Reformist organisations like the Plain English Campaign in Britain and the Plain English Movement in the US are some of the agents for change. Closer to Zimbabwe, the democratic constitution of post-Apartheid South Africa is written in plain English. This has impacted heavily on the use of plain legal language in the Southern African region. The aborted draft constitution of Zimbabwe that was rejected in a referendum in 2000 was in plain English too.

## 7.6.2. NDEBELE LEGAL TERMS

### *Research on legal and administrative terms*

Collecting material on legal language in Ndebele posed a number of difficulties. The major setback was that, as Ndebele is not an official language in Zimbabwe, it is not the medium used in administrative and legal domains. This results in paucity of written legal language in Ndebele. Two types of material were collected for this study. First, I collected those materials written in Ndebele that were of a legal and administrative nature. Most of these materials turned out to be company rules on the conduct of their employees. It is a requirement for those companies with the rules of conduct of employees to make it available in the three languages Ndebele, Shona and English. The rules of conduct are drafted in English and then translated to Ndebele. For that reason, almost all the material collected constituted translations.

Some material was obtained from proceedings from the constitution-making process that culminated in a referendum in Zimbabwe in 2000. The re-writing of the constitution was one of the most momentous events in the legal and political history

of the country. For the first time ever, constitutional issues were debated publicly and all the evidence gathered by the Constitutional Commission was translated into the indigenous languages of Zimbabwe.

Second, I sent an SRA to interview court interpreters and to observe court sessions. The SRA recorded the English legal terms used in the court and their translations in Ndebele by the court interpreters. It is important to note that the information from documents and from the court observations is in the form of translations from English. This has profound implications on the nature of terms found in Ndebele.

*Terms used in the constitution-making process in Zimbabwe*

Here are some terms that I find interesting for this study:

- isizwe (nation/state)
- isizalwane (citizen)
- ubuzalwane (citizenship).

There is a problem in the Ndebele translations in distinguishing between 'State' and 'Nation' or 'nationality' and 'citizenship'. The word '**isizwe**' has been used to mean both nation and state. This creates confusion and blurs the important distinction between them. The word that is used for a citizen is '**isizalwane**' (one who is born in...). The plural for **isizalwane** (citizen) is **izizalwane** (citizens). These words can easily be confused with **umzalwane** (one born with...) meaning brother as used by churchgoers. In the constitutional documents citizenship is translated as **ubuzalwane** (being born at or having been born). This word can be mistaken for the one with the meaning associated with being re-born in the Christian sense.

The national anthem is translated as '**ingoma yobuzwe**' (the song of nationhood), whereas one can claim that a national anthem is **ingoma yesizwe** (the song of the nation) or **ingoma yelizwe** (the song of the country). In Zimbabwe, there is what is called 'customary law' and 'common law'. The customary law has been translated as **umthetho wesintu** (traditional law) while common law is said to be **umthetho wesilungu** (the European law). What is considered as customary law is actually colonially devised law that was specifically for Africans while the common law is the Roman-Dutch law. We also found the distinction between the pillars of the state, that is, the executive, the legislature and the judiciary, very problematic to grasp in Ndebele. For instance, the judiciary is referred to as **imithethwandaba** (courts) whereas it could have better been **Uhlangothi Lwemithetho** (the legal branch).

It was observed that in the Ndebele version of the Constitutional Proceedings the legal concepts were not translated into Ndebele but instead there were the literal translations of English terms. We cannot talk of any creation of legal terminology in Ndebele as what we have are literal translations by language specialists with no input from legal experts. The constitution-making process was a missed opportunity to create legal terminology in the African languages of Zimbabwe. Let us look into the legal language in the Zimbabwean courts of law.

*Some terms used in the courts of law*

The following extracts from court sessions were recorded by Nozizwe Dhlamini during court sessions in the magistrate's courts in Bulawayo.



*Court observation 1.*

The magistrate said, 'There is nothing further I can say as the case is 'res ipsa loquitar' Court interpreter, 'Akusekho okunye engingakutsho ngoba isilonda sokutsha lesi sitshengisa ukuba yinto eyenziwe ngokungananzi langabomo. Lokhu kusenza sicabangele ukunganaki kwakho umntwana.' (There is nothing further I can say as the case is clear from the wound from the burns that it was deliberate act of negligence. This makes us presume that you do not care for the child).

*Court observation 2.*

In another court case the accused was asked whether he had any excuse for stealing. The court interpreter asked the accused saying, 'Wawulemvumo Yokuntshontsha na?' (Did you have any permission to steal).

*Court observation 3.*

A court interpreter translated the statement, 'In the best interest of the child...' as "Lokho okulungele umntwana..." (That which is good for the child...)[Dhlamini 2001:21-29].

The court interpreters translate and explain the legal jargon in Ndebele. There are no legal terms being coined in Ndebele as such. Even the translations are not even proper. In court observation 1, the magistrate used the Latin expression 'res ipsa loquitar' which it would seem is an expression that court interpreters are familiar with. Then in court observation 2, the court interpreter mistranslates 'excuse' as 'permission', therefore, giving misleading information to the accused. Similarly, in court observation 3, 'in the best interest' is not the same as 'that which is good'. What we can establish in these court observations is that due to lack of legal language in Ndebele, the court translations are simply explanations. In the process of explaining, court interpreters make mistakes. The translations are likely to vary from interpreter to interpreter or even the same interpreter might interpret the same word differently. We cannot therefore at this stage talk of legal terminology in Ndebele.

*Comments based on legal documents and court observations*

In the constitution-making process proceedings there is recognition of the division of the legal field into private or civil law, procedural law, criminal law and constitutional law. These divisions within the legal system have also been defined in Ndebele in the following manner:

private/civil law – umthetho ophathelene lamacala ombango (the law dealing with dispute cases)

procedural law – umthetho okhangela ukubana lidaliwe na icala njalo nini (the law dealing with whether the crime has been committed and when)

criminal law – umthetho wamacala okuganga (the law for criminal cases)

constitutional law – umthetho wezimiso zikahulumende ezweni (the law pertaining to government affairs in the country)

We note also that some of the legal terms in Ndebele are not terms as such but paraphrasing of the English terms. Here are some cases for illustration:

- fraud – ukuntshontsha ngendlela zokukhohlisa (stealing by means of cheating)
- justification – izizatho ezitshengisa ukuthi kungani umuntu enze ulutho (the reasons that show why a person acted in a particular manner)
- obsolete – into/ umthetho ongasebenziyo ngenxa yesikhathi (a thing /law that is dysfunctional due to time lapse)
- circumstantial evidence – ubufakazi ngemicijo eqakathekileyo eyehlukeneyo okuthi bungahlanganiswa bukhomba ukuthi kungahle kube ngusibanibani olecala, kodwa kuyilapho kungaqondanga nqo laye. (important evidence from different points that when put together implicates a specific person when in fact that is not the case).
- interrogatories – imibuzo; imibuzo ebhaliweyo eqondiswa komangalelweyo ngummangali, kumbe ngokuguquka, phezu kwendaba eziphathelene lecala elizathoniswa. Lokhu kwenziwa kulandelwa umlayo wenkundla okumele impendulo ezizabhalwa zibe ngezifungelweyo. (questions; written questions directed to the accused by the plaintiff, or on changes on the case to be tried. This is done according to court procedures so that the written answers be made under oath). [Translations by court interpreters given by P.Makando at Tredgold Courts, Bulawayo].

While the Ndebele explanations of the English terms reflect appropriate definitions of the terms, there are no equivalent terms in Ndebele. These are definitions in Ndebele of English terms.

#### *Latin Terms with no English equivalents*

There are also Latin terms that have definitions translated into Ndebele but with no equivalent Ndebele term. The terms below were collected by the SRA from court interpreters in Bulawayo:

- bona fides- ubufakazi beqiniso (truthful witness)
- capax doli- ukuba lolwazi ukuthi isenzo silicala, umuntu owazi phakathi kokuhle/ kokuqondileyo, lokuyikona – okwande ukukhangelwa ebantwaneni abaphakathi kuleminyaka eyisikhombisa kusiya kwelitshumi lane. (knowing that an act is illegal, a person who differentiates between right and wrong – that usually expected of children between seven to fourteen years of age).
- contra bonos mores – okuphambana lemithetho yokulunga/ yokulungileyo (that which is contrary to moral laws)
- corpus delicti- isiqokoqela sobufakazi ecaleni; indikimba yecala. (the important evidence in trial; the core of the trial/case)
- de facto – ngokokuqinisa (for supporting)
- depose – lakaza; beka ilizwi (show anger; say something)
- ex curia – ngathoniswanga emthethwandaba/ enkundleni; umbangiswano ongathoniswanga waqunywa kwanikwa isinqumo.(not settled in court. A dispute that was not heard and adjudicated in court)
- ex delicto- okuvela ecaleni; okuvezwa licala (what comes from the case; what the case brings out)
- mutatis mutandis – ngemva kwenza inguquko efaneleyo (after making the necessary changes in points of detail).

sotto voce – okusobala kodwa okungachazwanga (in an undertone)  
priviso – okumunyethweyo, isixwayiso (stipulation, caution, a condition inserted in a document).

crimen injuria – icala elenziwe ngabomo (a case done in contempt of another)

This shows the widespread influence of English on legal terms in Ndebele. As shown above, English uses some Latin words and expressions as part of its legal jargon. This has been taken also by Ndebele and Latin terms are not substituted by Ndebele ones. Our earlier example from Court 1 observation for example has the Latin expression 'res ipsa loquitar' meaning that the facts presented are clear enough that the law was or was not violated. The court interpreter explained what he understood the expression to mean, in the following manner:

The magistrate said, 'There is nothing further I can say as the case is 'res ipsa loquitar'

Court interpreter, 'Akusekho okunye engingakutsho ngoba isilonda sokutsha lesi sitshengisa ukuba yinto eyenziwe ngokungananzi langabomo. Lokhu kusenza sicabangele ukunganaki kwakho umntwana.' (There is nothing further I can say as the case is clear from the wound from the burns that it was deliberate act of negligence. This makes us presume that you do not care for the child).

#### *Improperly translated terms*

There are some Ndebele legal terms that are an improper translation from the English terms. Two such terms are discussed here:

suspect – ocatshangelwayo (the suspected one), owethwesa icala (the accused one), isibotshwa esingakagwetshwa (a prisoner who has not been sentenced)  
accused – isibotshwa (the prisoner).

The translation of both suspect and accused as prisoner is misleading. However, in ordinary Ndebele talk, once you appear in court they say **ubotshiwe** (you are arrested) and then that derives the noun **isibotshwa** (prisoner). But legal language as technical language should delineate the concepts appropriately and differentiate **isibotshwa** (prisoner) from **ocatshangelwayo** (suspect) and **umangalelwa**<sup>13</sup> (accused).

#### *The problem of precision in some legal terms*

In cases where Ndebele versions of legal terms are given, we realise that more than one word is given. It would seem that the suggested terms are not concrete and still need standardisation as it is ideal to have one term for a concept. The following examples illustrate our point:

accessory – usizo(aid); umelekeleli (helper); sizayo (assisting), sekelayo (helping)  
adjudication – isinqumo(decision), isahlulelo(judgement)

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<sup>13</sup> Umangalelwa (accused) is the term used in the ISN.

admonish – laya(advise), -khuza(warn), -yala (advise)  
caution – isiqapheliso(sign of caution), isiyalo (advice), ukuxwayisa (to advise);  
isixwayiso (caution)  
investigations – ukucupha (to spy), ukuchwayisisa(to get details), ukudinga  
ubufakazi (searching for evidence)  
animus – umoya (feeling); isimilo (personality); isizondo (hatred)

The above examples are some of the cases where English legal terms are translated into two or more different words. In some cases like 'admonish' we get synonymous words like -**laya** (advise), -**khuza** (warn), -**yala** (advise). Other translations give us words that are not synonymous like 'investigations' – **ukucupha** (to spy), **ukuchwayisisa** (to get details), **ukudinga ubufakazi** (searching for evidence). **Ukucupha** (to spy) has negative connotations in Ndebele although the activity could be the same as **ukuchwayisisa** (to get details) which is viewed as a positive activity. For the Ndebele legal terms to function as ideal terms in a special field they need to be specified in terms of their designation. Accuracy and precision are essential elements of terms in general.

### 7.6.3. IMPLICATIONS FOR NDEBELE LEGAL TERMINOLOGY

We began by presenting the nature of English legal terminology, as the English language is the base from which Ndebele legal terms are translated. We noted that English legal terminology is influenced by the peculiar history of legal language in England, especially the role and influence of Latin and French. Part of this English historical background seems to have been transferred to the legal language of Ndebele. There is a problem when legal terms in Ndebele are translations from English as the two languages do not have a shared historical background. English has Latin and French words and expressions that are not translated. Their background is understood and they have become part of normal legal language, but when the same trend is transferred to Ndebele, it creates an anomaly. Ndebele, unlike English, does not form words based on Latin roots or related to French. To have Latin and French expressions in Ndebele creates an anomaly, which the same expressions do not create in English.

Although the study of terminology generally focuses mainly on lexical items, we noted above that legal language in English has a peculiar syntax and punctuation as well. We noted the avoidance of pronouns in English legal language and the prevalence of archaic morphology. For Ndebele to merely translate individual terms is not adequate to capture the overall concepts as they would be conveyed in the everyday Ndebele language. Features like the use of passive, avoidance of pronouns, long sentences and archaic morphology are peculiar to English legal jargon and cannot and should not be passed on to Ndebele.

Then, if Ndebele people create their own legal terms and define them in their own way, the question is whether the law described is still the 'Roman Dutch' and Common English law inherited from British rule. Language being the carrier of culture, it surely must be a carrier of notions on legality. Currently, the English culture and legal system is operational in Zimbabwe, making the whole legal system alien to most African Zimbabweans. If the legal system remains as it is, i.e. English in nature, then Ndebele and other African languages can only translate but cannot create terms. Translated terms, as seen from some examples above, do not capture all the concep-

tual dimensions of the notion being designated by the relevant term. The question of law and culture and whether the two are separable is an area that needs special research in the future. Actually, it is interesting to note that the few legal terms in Ndebele were translated by court interpreters and not by lawyers. Although most magistrates (especially in Matabeleland) speak and understand Ndebele, they conduct their court sessions in English and then court interpreters translate into Ndebele. Legal terms in Ndebele can be created only when Ndebele legal experts themselves create the terms and use them.

The legal terms presented here represent the little that is there on Ndebele legal terminology. It is the basis for further research and work in term creation for legal Ndebele. As what we presented are largely translated explanations of English terms, it is difficult to evaluate the Ndebele legal terms according to their accuracy, precision, descriptiveness or any other principles of term creation.

## **7.7. TERM CREATION IN THE NATURAL SCIENCES**

Although the terminology included in the ISN is mainly linguistic and literary, for comparison with other disciplines, we also discuss term creation in the natural sciences. So far, we do not know of any case where physics, chemistry or biology has been taught in Ndebele. There is no societal pressure to do so. However, a small minority of academics in these natural sciences have advocated for the teaching of the sciences in Ndebele. Here we are not discussing the merits or demerits of this attempt in developing science terms in Ndebele nor the possibility of its acceptance, bearing in mind the general attitude towards African languages. We are interested in the proposed strategies for term development.

Unlike the teaching of Ndebele grammar, which historically has relied on Zulu, the teaching of science has nothing to do with Zulu or any African language for that matter. The teaching of science has just been in English and no other option was ever thought of. The proponents of the teaching of sciences in Ndebele turn out to be university professors, some of whom studied in non-English European countries, thus getting accustomed to the study of science in a language other than English. We shall discuss measurement terms in the ISN and then review physics terms proposed by Temba S. Dlodlo.

### **7.7.1. MEASUREMENT TERMS**

In the back matter of the ISN there is an appendix of terms for measurement in Ndebele with English equivalents. Table 14 is extracted from the ISN appendices and shows measurement terms.

Table 14: Measurement Terms

NDEBELE	ENGLISH
imitha	metre
ilitha	litre
igiramu	gram
ihekhila	hectare
ithani	tonne
intshi	inch
iyadi	yard
imayili	mile
uhlamvu	grain
uhlamvana	ounce
iphawundi	pound
ikhilomitha	kilometre
khilogiramu	kilogram
ikhilolitha	kilolitre
desimitha	decimeter
sentilitha	centilitre

The measurement terms in Table 14 are all transliterations from English except **uhlamvu** (grain) and **uhlamvana** (ounce). The terms have been adapted to the morphological and phonological structure of Ndebele. The terms are also spelt according to the Ndebele orthography. In terms of spelling, morphology and phonology, the words are typical Ndebele words. Let us analyse the morphology of some terms as examples:

**ithani** from tonne

**i-** + **-thani**

**i-** (PREFIX)

**-thani** (STEM).

**iyadi** from yard

**i-** + **-yadi**

**i-** (PREFIX)

**-yadi** (STEM)

One interesting phonological feature is in the transliteration of 'hectare' to '**ihekhila**' in Ndebele. It seems there was addition of a syllable. One would have thought the word should have been **ihekitha**<sup>\*</sup>, that is, if we follow the form taken by **imitha** (metre), **ilitha** (litre).

The other notable feature about the above-listed measurement terms is that they are not used elsewhere to mean other things. The only exception is **imitha** (metre), **uhlamvu** (grain) and **uhlamvana** (ounce). However, in their general use, these words cannot be confused with their use in the technical sense. For example, in ordinary usage, the word **imitha** refers to a woman who has had a child by another man before marriage. It is a word that is rarely used in every-day talk and even when used the context can easily distinguish it from the term **imitha** (metre). **Uhlamvu** also means a bullet and **uhlamvana** is any small grain.

It is also important to mention that some of the measurement terms like **intshi** (inch), **ilitha** (litre), **imitha** (metre), **imayili** (mile), **ithani** (tonne) and **ikhilogiramu** (kilogram) are already used by Ndebele speakers. The selection of these measurement terms for the ISN was partly done to confirm terms that are already popular. Some terms were similarly transliterated into Ndebele although they are hardly used. These include **idesimitha** (decimetre), **isentilitha** (centilitre) and **idesigiramu** (decigram).

When we apply Gilreath's seventeen principles of term evaluation, we note that the above measurement terms fulfill up to eight of the principles. These are unequivocalness, mononymy, precedent, series uniformity, derivability, inflectability, acceptability, euphony and pronounceability. With this observation we can claim that measurement terms in Ndebele are good terms, even though they are not indigenous terms. Like all terms they have to be learnt and correct definitions acquired.

Besides measurement terms, another important set of terms are numbers. In speech numerals are translated from English but in writing the Ndebele counting system is encouraged. Although one can count to any number in Ndebele, in everyday talk it would seem people rarely use indigenous Ndebele words for numerals. Maybe the numbers in Ndebele can also be transliterated like the measurement terms. If that were to be done it would be easy to derive terminology for decimals and fractions, which is likely to be problematic in Ndebele.

### 7.7.2. A REVIEW OF TERMS BY DLODLO

As already stated elsewhere in this thesis, there is barely anything written in Ndebele in natural sciences or in mathematics. The researcher could not even contemplate going into the field to gather material or interview people because the natural sciences have exclusively been in English. Part of the reason is that the Ndebele-speaking practitioners in the natural sciences have never thought or felt the need to work in Ndebele. There are exceptions like scientists T. Dlodlo, a physicist, and S. Sibanda, a chemistry professor. These have argued for the teaching of the natural sciences in Ndebele. Dlodlo has even published an article entitled '*Science Nomenclature in Africa: Physics in Nguni*' in the *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*. Vol. 36, No.3. Discussion on Dlodlo's physics terms should be prefaced by the appreciation of his ideological motivation.<sup>14</sup> He believes that Ndebele should be used to teach natural sciences and that if that happens the student performance in science subjects would be better than it currently is.

Dlodlo outlines his principle of term creation as follows:

The selected criteria should be such as to preserve and ensure (a) clarity of meaning – the chosen word must be that which explains; (b) universality – preference ought to favour a word that is common to all the versions of

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<sup>14</sup> Dr Temba Dlodlo is a physics lecturer at NUST in Zimbabwe. He did his doctoral studies in a non-English university in the Netherlands. His experience of switching from English to Dutch convinced him that whatever has been done in European languages could also be done in Ndebele. He even translated his doctoral thesis into Ndebele, but that translation has remained his personal work; that is, it has not been made public for scrutiny by other interested parties.

the Nguni language; (c) accessibility – specific meaning must be given to familiar words; and (d) brevity – do not use two words where one will do (Dlodlo 1999:327).

Table 15 shows some terms that Dlodlo has created and we shall also discuss his methods below.

**Table 15: Dlodlo's Science Terms**

<u>Scientific Term</u>	<u>Nguni Term (meaning)</u>
force	udli (use power)
particle	uhlanjana (very small grain)
system	uhlelo (a program, an arrangement, a set)
energy	isidlakela (ability to use force)
state	isimo (the way things are or look)
process	isenzeko (that which happens)
sum	isihlanganiswa (that which is a result of adding)
term	siqa (a piece of)
exchange	kwabelana (distribute that which each one has to the other)
positive (work)	eya phambili (going forward)
negative (work)	eya emuva (going backward)
opposite	phambana (pass the same point in opposite directions)
thermodynamics	isiDlakhoza / uNyakazokhoza (heat energy / heat motion)
heat	ikhoza (heat)
equation	isilinganisa (that which equates)
measure	linganisa (make equal)
motion	unyakazo (small movements)
numbers	iminwe (fingers)
mechanisms	izindlela (ways of doing)
gas	umoyana (part of air)
piston	isivimbonduku (a stick with a stopper head)
pressure	ushicelo/umfutho (pressing force/pushing force)
electric current	umsinga wombane (current of lighting)
resistor	inqabela / izabalazo (precentor /that which resists)
sun's radiation	imitha/inhlamvu zelanga (rays/particles of the sun)
displace	gudluka (move out a little)
macroscopic force	indlovula (large force, from <i>indlovu</i> = elephant)
area	ibangabanzi (ibanga = distance + banzi = width)
integral	isihlanganisa (that which sums up)
abscissa	umdwanta (straight horizontal line)
ordinate	umdwampo (vertical / upright line)
molecule	imolenkule (big spot)
atom	imolencane /iyathomu (small spot)

From Dlodlo (1999:327)

Some of the terms used by Dlodlo are explored below to ascertain the extent to which he kept to his guidelines. For oxygen he coined the term *iMpiliso* (that which sustains



life), for hydrogen he coined *iSomanzi* (that which makes water) and carbon dioxide as *iSontuthwini* (that which is in smoke). These three examples seem to fulfil the guidelines set in the above quotation. The idea of coining terms for Nguni languages instead of Ndebele alone is also a clever one. As stated previously, Nguni is the group of languages that encompasses Ndebele, Zulu, Xhosa and Swazi. The combined population for speakers Nguni languages is far much higher than for Ndebele. It would make economic sense to publish and market books in Nguni than in any one of the single language. Also the choice of Nguni simultaneously standardises terms as all the sister languages would be using the same term.

Let us look at the following terms proposed by Dlodlo:

**usompilo** (source of life) for oxygen

**imolenkulu** for molecule

**imolencane** for atom

In most of the terms coined by Dlodlo, one can see that the relationship of senses is not lost in Ndebele. The terms are derived by compounding and by adopting and adapting English words. For example, the word **usompilo** (source of life) does not yet exist in general Ndebele vocabulary but would suit well for oxygen as far as it is seen in terms of its function, that of sustaining living organisms. Dlodlo took the stem **-mpilo** (life) and used the nominal formative **-so-** (source of). Then the initial vowel **u-** is a typical noun prefix that most nouns in Ndebele take. Therefore, the term is potentially a Ndebele word.

The coined term **imolenkulu** for molecule is simply coining a term on onomatopoeic basis. There is no way a learner can deduce the concept of a molecule, atom and related notions from the coinage **imolenkulu**. The word form is a compound made up of **imole** and **-nkulu** (big). There is no concept independently carried by **imole**. However, Dlodlo goes on to coin **imolencane** (a small *imole*) for atom. **Imolencane** is similarly a compound from **imole** and **-ncane** (small). One is left wondering whether the fact that a molecule contains smaller units called atoms could be captured by the small versus big **imole**. According to Dlodlo:

For example, by creating a word *imolenkulu* = "molecule," the word *imolencane* = "atom" can be created, since the suffixes *-nkulu* = "big" and *-ncane* = "small," whereas "mole" = *itshatha* (spot). Therefore, a molecule is a big spot and an atom a small spot. This is consistent with the fact that molecules are made up of smaller atoms. "Mole" can then be given a Nguni meaning as a material particle smaller than the usual macroscopic particle (*uhlanjana*). "Mole" can then be used as a collective name for subatomic particles (Dlodlo 1999:326).

The potential terms **imolenkulu** and **imolencane** are likely to gain currency as there are no alternatives. As long as all physicists will learn that these words stand for molecule and atom respectively, the terms would be understood well although from the linguistic angle some questions remain. In any case, "A term is defined by the content it stands for and not by any peculiarities in its linguistic structure" (Pinchuck 1977:178).

It is not clear why Dlodlo decided to re-name numbers as *iminwe* meaning fingers. There already exists an adopted word for numbers in the Nguni languages and

the word is *inombolo*. It would be better to adopt those terms already known and used by the people and then coin where there is a need rather than try to coin new terms where a term already exists. Otherwise, the general principles used are ingenious and reflect Dlodlo's knowledge of his discipline and a very good grasp of terminology.

Dlodlo is very much opposed to transliteration or any form of borrowing from European languages. He states that 'Borrowing directly from European languages, by phonetic transcription as in (a) above, should be avoided since such borrowed words do not convey any meaning initially and such a method produces clumsy-sounding Nguni science words' (Dlodlo 1999:324). For that reason, Dlodlo even rejects words that are already part of Ndebele lexicon just because they were borrowed from European languages. For a language like Ndebele that has borrowed heavily from English especially, it is interesting to note whether terms can be created in Ndebele in order to avoid borrowed words. To show how difficult it would be to pursue this strictly purist language policy, Dlodlo also notes that, 'We would have to write *iyathomu* as one of the proposals for "atom"' (Dlodlo 1999:326). It would seem that Dlodlo realises that transliteration cannot be avoided totally. Therefore, he leaves two options for the term 'atom' as either *imolencane* or *iyathomu*.

Let us apply Gilreath's seventeen principles of term evaluation to some of the above terms and test whether they have a potential to be terms in Ndebele.

force	<i>udli</i> (use power)
macroscopic force	<i>indlovula</i> (large force, from <i>indlovu</i> = elephant)
energy	<i>isidlakela</i> (ability to use force).

These three terms, namely: force, macroscopic force and energy carry related concepts in physics. We are not questioning the Nguni terms suggested by Dlodlo but the consistency. If *udli* means use of power and *isidlakela* means ability to use force, then by similar logic *udli omkhulu* should be used for macroscopic force. Instead Dlodlo suggests *indlovula* for macroscopic force. Not that the term does not make sense; it does, as he explains that it is derived from the huge size of an elephant. What we question is the relationship with the other basic terms like that for force. We note that Dlodlo avoids by all possible means multi-word lexical units. Maybe that is the reason for not positing *udli omkhulu* for macroscopic force. In this respect Dlodlo's terms have a high degree of conciseness, that is, the orthographic length of a term.

By strictly adhering to Nguni word forms for his term creation, Dlodlo manages to fulfil etymological purity, that is, constructing his terms from a single language. This has advantages in creating other related terms for related concepts. Etymological purity enables derivability and inflectability, that is, the ability of terms to derive other terms with related concepts and the ability of terms to inflect well for superlatives, negatives and comparatives respectively. Dlodlo's terms fulfil these principles without any problem at all. Similarly, the terms fulfil the principle of series uniformity, which is the quality of terms to use common elements in naming related concepts. As these terms by Dlodlo are his coined terms that have never been officially used before, the terms fulfil the principles of mononymy and descriptiveness. On precision, that would need physicists to judge the degree to which the terms delineate the relevant concepts.

## 7.8. IMPLICATIONS FOR TERM DEVELOPMENT AND STANDARDISATION

We have looked at term creation in Ndebele with specific reference to linguistic, literary, legal and scientific terminology. In all the above named disciplines we have observed that historical factors have influenced term development in Ndebele. We have noted that forces that are beyond linguistic factors determine to a large extent the development of terms in Ndebele. One of the historical factors includes the colonial language policies that marginalized African languages and restricted them to the domestic domain. The education system buttressed the colonial language policy that excluded Ndebele and other African languages from the official and formal domains. Because of the education system that only had English as the medium of instruction, educated Ndebele people gained competence in English and lacked it in their mother tongue Ndebele.

The Ndebele language situation has been likened to what Sounkalo (1995) refers to as linguistic attrition. Educated Ndebele people lack competence in their mother tongue. This development contradicts the prediction by Cluver (1980) that when indigenous people become specialists their language begins to be used in specialised areas. It therefore calls for the intervention of the state through legislative processes and other forces at its disposal to enhance the use of marginalised languages like Ndebele at specialist level. The development of terminology in Ndebele cannot be left to individual effort but the state should play a greater and visible role.

Apart from the colonial experience, we observed that the influence of English is likely to continue to affect the development of Ndebele terminology and its standardisation. The hegemony enjoyed by English nationally and internationally, coupled by its status as a medium of instruction in Zimbabwean schools, would continue to thwart the effective growth of Ndebele terminology. One might claim that, even if terms are developed and standardised for any field of study or discipline in Ndebele, the dominance of English will persist and some users would prefer the outright use of English terms to their translations into Ndebele. For most languages undergoing terminology development, Ndebele included, the common debate has been whether to accept foreign words or coin indigenous ones. The debate is on nationalistic and cultural concerns on one hand and, on the other, the considerations for effective and efficient acquisition and dissemination of scientific ideas. Dlodlo's insistence on using strictly Nguni words and no transliterations is a typical example of a nationalistic linguistic policy.

Coupled with the hegemonic influence of English over Ndebele is the dominant role of Zulu in the Ndebele community. It would seem that Zulu and Ndebele are in a diglossia situation with Zulu considered as the higher variety. We have noted previously, especially in Chapter 2, that the Zulu language, although not spoken by any Ndebele, has permeated all aspects of Ndebele life. The Zulu influence has been noted in Ndebele orthography, Ndebele vocabulary and in term development in Ndebele. We noted especially in linguistic terminology that Zulu terms have been adopted where Ndebele could have developed its own. We have noted that due to the dominant role of Zulu over Ndebele, any term creation in Ndebele takes into cognisance developments in Zulu. It was also interesting to note that Dlodlo's physics nomenclature, although generally disguised as Nguni, is in fact biased largely to suit the Zulu

language. What has been adopted by Zulu is easily accepted by the Ndebele speakers and maybe Dlodlo had that in mind.

“Work on terminology is a more advanced stage of corpus planning” (Bamgbose 1991:138). This has therefore implications on the authority behind this language planning activity. While dictionary makers (ISN editors), individuals (Dlodlo) and institutions like ALRI can create terms in Ndebele and in other African languages, there is need for official sanction of these terms. The Ndebele Language Committee is ineffective and its composition, scope and mandate does not encompass term development and standardisation across the board. Its role is more on literary spheres, an area that still cries for attention. Zimbabwe lacks a terminological institution and terminological boards or departments empowered and financed by the government. South Africa has terminological departments and institutions and the development as well as the standardisation of terms in African languages is vigorously pursued. Actually it is easier even to identify language needs and train relevant personnel to engage in terminological activities. For the Ndebele language, all these factors are absent and have negative impact on term development in the language.

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned factors that hinder term development in Ndebele, we have shown in this chapter that there is significant term creation in Ndebele. We have also shown that term creation and the desire to use Ndebele across the board is not only confined to the teaching of Ndebele as a subject but is a general feeling in many disciplines including law and physics. We noted that various methods of term creation have been used in Ndebele. Some of these methods include transliteration mainly from English, while in others only concepts are translated into Ndebele. Other terms come from Zulu, especially linguistic terms. A number of terms are coined through various techniques, most common among them being compounding and suffixing. In all cases the terms are adapted to the morphological and phonological structure of Ndebele and they are spelt in Ndebele.

## 7.9. CONCLUSION

We have shown the interplay of factors in the creation and development of terms in Ndebele. The terms studied in this chapter, that is linguistic, literary, legal and scientific terms in Ndebele generally fulfil general standards of term evaluation as shown by Gilreath’s seventeen principles on term evaluation. We were able to generalise on this sample of terms on general term development in Ndebele. Further research should study possible term creation in commercial sciences like accounts, banking and commerce as well as in agriculture. The principles and trends already noted in this study would go a long way in enabling viable term creation in Ndebele in all disciplines.

Once a term is coined it still needs to be disseminated and used by the appropriate specialists. For linguistic and literary terminology, the ISN has popularised their terms and they are likely to gain currency among teachers and students of Ndebele. Future reference works, glossaries and specialised dictionaries should similarly disseminate terms in the other disciplines.

## ASPECTS OF NDEBELE ORTHOGRAPHY

### 8.1. INTRODUCTION

The discussion on vocabulary and terminology in Ndebele in chapters 6 and 7 respectively is incomplete without considering the implications on the Ndebele orthography. For instance, a loanword might be accepted into the language as part of vocabulary growth or a word could be coined as a term and be accepted, but the new word in the language has to fit in the Ndebele writing system. A number of words in Ndebele that are commonly used in speech are yet to be seen in written form; that is, they cannot be written in Ndebele spelling without causing some problems. The editors of the ISN could not avoid dealing with such cases of how to spell new words in the language. Addressing such spelling concerns has implications for the ISN as well as for Ndebele orthography in general. Spelling seems to be the second most important thing after meaning that users need a dictionary for. It would seem that the spelling in the dictionary is uncontested by the users in general. While variation in pronunciation is tolerated, variation in spelling poses problems. In the Ndebele writing system there are spelling and word division problems that are traceable to the history of Ndebele orthography and the principles guiding the Ndebele spelling system. The focus here is on those aspects on Ndebele spelling and word division that had a bearing on the lexicographic work leading to the production of the ISN.

In order to appreciate fully the nature and extent of the problems associated with the Ndebele orthography, a historical background of the Ndebele orthography has been given in Chapter 2. However, it is important to mention here that alphabets for African languages were influenced by the work of phoneticians at the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures in London, who came up with the Africa alphabet. This was first proposed by Diedrich Westermann and by 1930 the institute had produced the *Practical Orthography of African Languages*. It was based on the Latin alphabet. 'Developed under the influence of the IPA, it is based, by and large, on the principle of a simple one-letter / one-sound correspondence' (Coulmas 1999:2). Each language had its alphabet adapted to its needs and besides, for languages already with an alphabet like Ndebele, the Africa Alphabet had little impact. For instance, the Africa alphabet discouraged the use of diacritics, a practice that had already been dropped in Ndebele orthography. 'Another problem was that, where a Latin-based orthography had been introduced for African languages, it was generally employed in accordance with the conventions of the various European colonial languages which continued to play an important role in post-colonial Africa' (Coulmas 1999:2). In this chapter, we outline the problems in Ndebele orthography with special focus on how these problems affected the lexicographical work. Some of the areas we cover include monosyllabic words and compounds. Those that are of particular concern for our

study include the loanwords, the unacceptable sounds in Ndebele, the unacceptable clusters and vowel sequencing.

The current Ndebele alphabet is as follows: <a, b, bh, mb, c, ch, gc, nc, d, nd, e, f, mf, g, h, hl, dl, i, j, k, kh, l, m, n, ng, ny, o, p, mp, ph, q, nq, qh, r, s, sh, tsh, ntsh, ns, sw, t, th, nt, u, v, w, x, nx, xh, y, z, zh>

## 8.2. SOME COMMON PROBLEMS IN NDEBELE SPELLING

What we refer to here as the common problems in Ndebele spelling, are those cases that were identified by Hadebe (1994, unpublished MA thesis) to be giving problems to teachers, students and writers in Ndebele. The problem cases are felt, especially in reading where a reader must first get the context in which the word is used in order to distinguish the appropriate pronunciation. The problem, as identified and explained by Hadebe (1994), is the problem of balancing alphabetic principles. The alphabetic principle of one letter one sound correspondence or one grapheme one phoneme could not always be met. This principle actually conflicted with the principle of alphabetic economy, where the number of letters in the alphabet have to be kept to a minimum. Here are some of the cases in Ndebele spelling where one letter represents more than one sound and hence presents problems to the writing system:

### 8.2.1. THE VOICED VELAR FRICATIVE [ɣ] AND THE VOICELESS VELAR EJECTIVE [kʰ]

These two sounds are phonemic in Ndebele and yet they are both represented by the <k> letter in the Ndebele alphabet. There is a problem for readers to distinguish the following pairs unless a context is given:

kala (does not have) [ɣ]

kala (measure) [kʰ].

### 8.2.2. THE VOICELESS PALATAL AFFRICATE [tʃ] AND THE EJECTED VOICELESS PALATAL AFFRICATE [tʃʰ]

In the Ndebele alphabet the voiceless palatal affricate and the ejected voiceless palatal affricate are both represented by the symbols <tsh> as exemplified in the following cases:

tshaza (to wither) [tʃ]

tshaza (to sprinkle) [tʃʰ].

It is interesting to note that the first Ndebele alphabet had distinguished in spelling these two sounds. However, the spelling reforms of the 1950s discarded the distinction 'on the premise that a mother-tongue speaker of Ndebele should not find it difficult to make out these nuances and that therefore these could not and need not be serious problems at all' (Mhlabi 1992:4). Research by the present writer showed that distin-

guishing these sounds in reading is a serious problem to Ndebele speakers contrary to the above quotation (see Hadebe 1994).

### 8.2.3. THE VOICED GLOTTAL FRICATIVE [ɦ] AND THE VOICELESS VELAR FRICATIVE [x]

The voiced glottal fricative [ɦ] and the voiceless velar fricative [x] are phonemic in Ndebele yet both are represented by <h> in the Ndebele alphabet. The following minimal pairs shows the need to distinguish these sounds in spelling as well:

ihala ( a thread) [h]  
ihala ( a rake) [ɦ].

### 8.2.4. THE BREATHY VOICED NASALS

In Ndebele breathy voicing in nasals is phonemic as it distinguishes meaning from ordinarily voiced nasals. The Ndebele alphabet does not distinguish between the voiced and breathy voiced nasals. Here are some examples of minimal pairs where breathy voicing is the distinguishing feature although not represented symbolically:

mina (take) [m<sup>+</sup> breathy voicing]  
mina (me) [m]

naka (take care) [n]  
naka (mother of so-and-so) [n<sup>+</sup> breathy voicing]

anga (to kiss) [ŋg]  
anga? (where are they) [ŋ].

What is of interest is that other Bantu languages do distinguish breathy voicing, for example, Shona distinguishes it with <mh> as in **mhuri** (family) and <nh> as in **nhamo** (poverty). One would have thought it would have been easy to incorporate the distinction into the Ndebele alphabet considering that it is already used in sister Bantu languages like Shona.

### 8.2.5. CONFLICT OF ALPHABETIC PRINCIPLES

Part of these problems, as highlighted above, stems from the conflict of alphabetic principles, especially the principle of alphabetic economy and that of one grapheme one phoneme. The other reasons include the history of the writing systems and the societal attitudes towards the alphabet. 'From a linguistic point of view a broad phonemic transcription which is systematically transparent, precise and economical is the ideal orthography, but these criteria are known to determine the success of a newly proposed orthography only to a limited extent – for scripts and orthographic conventions are never socioculturally neutral for those concerned. Rather than being mere

instruments of a practical nature, they are symbolic systems of great social significance. Both scripts and orthographies often carry cultural and political overtones' (Coulmas 1999:12). The Ndebele alphabet is no exception. In a research done by the present writer (see Hadebe 1994), some Ndebele speakers preferred to maintain the current Ndebele alphabet with its obvious limitations rather than adopt symbols that they felt belonged to other languages.

We decided to refer to the above as common problems because these are problems that have been highlighted and discussed before (see Hadebe 1994). Of course, there is as yet no tangible solution or spelling reform to address the anomaly. There are problems that writers have come to accept as part of the Ndebele spelling system and other language users do not even think there could be ways to address them at all. These problems did not pose serious difficulties for the editors of the ISN. For instance, the editors of the ISN would just abide by the convention of spelling in Ndebele, even if two or more sounds shared the same symbols. Such problems would not make the dictionary inaccessible to users. However, there are some spelling and word division cases in the Ndebele alphabet, which posed direct problems to the dictionary makers. The following discussion is on those problems that affected the compilation of the ISN.

### 8.3. SOME ORTHOGRAPHIC PROBLEMS AFFECTING THE ISN COMPILATION

The spelling issues we discuss here are very interesting for orthography standardisation. They are interesting in two ways: Firstly, they show the problems that the editors of the ISN faced. Secondly, whatever decision the editors of the dictionary made has significance to language planning and hence to the core of this thesis. Unlike the study of standardisation of vocabulary and terminology, which remains fuzzy, the standardisation of spelling is more concrete and more direct, thus likely to be easily noticed by language users. However, the complicating factor is that the editors of the ISN had no mandate to make spelling reforms and they did not want to have their dictionary rejected by the authorities on the grounds that it had an unacceptable spelling. It would be easier to defend inclusion of certain words in the dictionary against criticism than to defend what could be considered unacceptable spelling.

The decisions that the editors of ISN made had consequences for the spelling of Ndebele words. It is important to note whether the editors based their decisions on any principles at all. We refer to the principles of language corpus planning as espoused by Vikør (1993), although with adaptations to suit the Ndebele language situation. Vikør outlines the principles as follows:

1. Internal linguistic principles
2. Principles related to attitudes towards other languages
3. Principles concerning the relationships between the language and its users (society)
4. Principles derived from societal ideologies.

For our discussion we only choose those aspects that suit the Ndebele language situation. From the internal linguistic principles, we especially find relevance in phonemicity and invariance. Phonemicity is where each grapheme corresponds to one phoneme (Vikør 1993:280). This principle was the cornerstone of the Africa Alphabet as



noted above (7.1). Invariance means that, 'There should be one and only one accepted spelling of every word and form – no freedom of choice between alternatives' (Vikør 1993:281). This principle is also very important especially its relevance to the standardisation of orthography.

The other relevant principle for this study is the principle related to attitudes towards other languages which could be rapprochement or adaptation on one hand or reaction on the other. In rapprochement the focus is on minimizing the differences between languages while in reaction it is on maximizing the difference (Vikør 1993). Vikør identifies two types of rapprochement: mutual and unilateral. He says mutual rapprochement is rare and we are not going to focus on that one. In unilateral rapprochement, 'The general pattern is that a less prestigious language is brought closer to a more prestigious one' (Vikør 1993:281). We show below how the less prestigious Ndebele language is made to be as close as possible to the more prestigious Zulu language. For example, in the guide to Ndebele orthography, there are sections saying that, for this and that, Zulu orthography should be followed (Appendix V).

On reaction, Vikør states that:

Purism too can be found in two varieties: 1. total purism, directed against all foreign influence with the aim of keeping the language in question absolutely "pure"; 2. partial purism, directed against influences from certain specific languages, generally languages which are and have been dominant and playing an oppressive role towards the language in question and its users (Vikør 1993:282).

Here too, we are not going to discuss total purism because we feel that it is nearly impossible to attain. We focus on partial purism that is directed first towards European languages mainly, English and to a lesser degree Afrikaans. These are the languages of the former 'imperialists' and 'oppressors' of the common people. However, for our study the most interesting is the partial purism directed towards the Non-Nguni African languages of Zimbabwe like Shona, Venda, Kalanga, Nambya and Tonga. As shown below, the English are disliked for their colonial domination while the fellow African languages are either despised or perceived as rivals, considering that the Ndebele people dominated most of these clans and cultures just before the English colonial conquest.

We noted in the previous Chapters 6 and 7 on vocabulary and terminology respectively that a significant number of loanwords have entered and continue to enter the Ndebele language. We noted also that some of these words are assimilated into the morphological and phonological system of the language. These are not a concern in this discussion. Those that could not be assimilated completely or have not yet been fully assimilated into Ndebele morphology and phonology are a problem. Therefore, we have loanwords that have partially retained their structure either morphologically or phonologically. Put differently, some new sounds and morphological patterns have been introduced into the language from other languages. The question is how to deal with such cases. Some writers, for example, in creative literature use italics to show that the word is foreign, while others actually use the word as it is and either bold or italicize it. Thus, the problem of loanwords has been avoided by writers in general but the editors of the ISN could not apply these tactics of avoidance. Moreso by basing their dictionary on both the oral and written corpus, the editors could not ignore the evidence of the existence of foreign phonemes and clusters in Ndebele.

### 8.3.1. THE VOICED ALVEOLAR TRILL [R]

Originally, the Ndebele phonological system did not have the voiced alveolar trill [r] represented in the Ndebele orthography by the letter <r>. The /r/ sound which is not original to the language is now part of Ndebele, at least spoken Ndebele, due to influence from other languages, especially English and other African languages like Sotho and Shona. Language purists among the Ndebele people are opposed to the use of /r/ and whenever this sound is to be used they replace it with /l/ written <l>.

The controversy about /r/ did not end with arguments on the acceptability of the phoneme as part of the inventory of the Ndebele phonological system but extended to the alphabet. The use of the letter <r> is still being resisted in Ndebele although in speech it seems the /r/ sound is now prevalent. For some reason, it has been assumed that the /r/ sound is a distinguishing feature of the Shona language while /l/ has been assumed to be typically Ndebele. It would seem that this perception is mutual between the Shona and Ndebele speakers.<sup>15</sup> This cultural attachment to orthographic symbols is not peculiar to Zimbabwe as noted before. It confirms to some extent the view that writing 'is essentially an instrument of language constitution which both manifests and confirms the claim for a variety to be recognized in its own right' (Coulmas 1992:202) and its 'propagation and acceptance by indigenous networks are necessarily viewed as having implications for group loyalty and group identity' (Fishman 1977:xiv). The acceptability of <r> in Ndebele is discussed below with evidence from the corpus. What we can mention here is that the first review of the ISN in a newspaper column was a comment on the inclusion of <r> in the Ndebele dictionary.<sup>16</sup>

### 8.3.2. THE VOICED ALVEOLAR AFFRICATE [dz]

Another sound that is still controversial in Ndebele is the voiced alveolar affricate [dz]. In some Ndebele words, this sound has been replaced by <j >. This <dz> is also found in other African languages in Zimbabwe like Shona, Venda and Kalanga. Why it is so resisted we do not know. It would seem that this affricate /dz/ has replaced other sounds in Ndebele. Here are some cases to illustrate our claim:

ugcigciyane	(blue waxbill)		
udzidziyane	“	“	
ujjiyane	“	“	

It would seem that the original name of the bird is **ugcigciyane** but some speakers probably had difficulties with the click sounds and substituted that with /dz/ and saying **udzidziyane**. Now some speakers avoid /dz/ and substitute it with /j/ and say **ujjiyane**.

There are a number of loanwords that have /dz/ substituted by some speakers for /j/, as in the following examples:

<sup>15</sup> For example, the monolingual Shona dictionary *Duramazwi ReChiShona* avoided entries with /l/ but the latter advanced version *Duramazwi Guru reChiShona* has the /l/.

<sup>16</sup> Pathisa Nyathi in the *Zimbabwe Mirror* commended the editors of ISN for lemmatising words with /r/ as that reflected the current Ndebele language.

ubudzugwe (type of mushrooms) <dz>  
 ubujugwe “ “ “ <j>

ukudzimila (to be confused and lose sense of direction) <dz>  
 ukujimila “ “ “ <j>

These words have become either synonymous in Ndebele or are in free variation. Both spellings <dz> and <j> have been used in the Ndebele spelling. There are some loanwords in Ndebele that only use the /dz/ without the substitution by /j/, for example:

-dzwenka (to evade)  
 -ubudzayi (semen)  
 -dzwinyisa (to harass new-comers at school).

It is important to note that the affricate /dz/ is found in sister Nguni languages like Swazi<sup>17</sup> and Xhosa although it is found in other phonological environments than in Ndebele. For example, in Swazi the voiced alveolar stop /d/ would change into the affricate /dz/ when followed by the vowels /a, e, i/, as in the following examples:

/d/ + /a/ > dza  
 idada (duck:Ndebele) is lidzadza (duck:Swazi)

/d/ + /e/ > dze  
 udebe (lip:Ndebele) is udzebe (lip:Swazi)

/d/ + /i/ > dzi  
 idili (a feast:Ndebele) is lidzili (a feast:Swazi).

The /dz/ is therefore also a Nguni sound although average speakers of Ndebele might not be aware of it. However, the resistance to the sound /dz/ and the symbols <dz> in the alphabet seems to be less emotional than the resistance to <r>. Maybe this can be explained by what is referred to as partial purism. Partial purism has been explained as 'directed against influences from certain specific languages, generally languages which are and have been dominant and playing an oppressive role towards the language in question and its users' (Vikør 1993:282).

It is interesting that purism in Ndebele is much more emphatic towards the languages and language groups that were once politically dominated by the Ndebele. For instance, there is acceptance of what comes from Zulu but speakers are sensitive to what comes from Kalanga, Venda, Tonga or Shona. There is another interesting case of a sound that has become part of Ndebele phonology without any outcry from the speakers of the language. The sound is the voiced postalveolar fricative [ʒ], orthographically represented in Ndebele by the digraph <zh>. The sound is usually found in place names in the Ndebele-speaking areas like eBezha, eBhazha, eZhilo. Some

<sup>17</sup> Swazi (also referred to as Swati) is one of the Nguni languages and is mutually intelligible with Ndebele. Like Ndebele, Swazi has until recently relied for its teaching on Zulu grammar and literature texts.

might argue that these names are in fact not Ndebele, so it cannot be claimed that the language has accepted <zh> based on place names. There is a Ndebele loanword:

ibhizha (butter from cowpeas).

It would seem that <zh> entered the Ndebele phonological system at a relatively early time. There are Ndebele war songs that use the sound. Actually, the traditional Ndebele battle cry is 'zhi!' (probably meaning 'beware!'). The Zimbabwean nationalists' strikes in the 1960s were referred to as *izhi* (the struggle), deriving the word from the traditional Ndebele war cry. Apart from these instances, it would seem that the sound is not used in any other cases and the ISN has only two entries with the sound represented by <zh>. This illustrates how less frequent the sound is in Ndebele. So far, there is no evidence of the sound in any other Nguni language.

### 8.3.3. UNACCEPTABLE CLUSTERS

There are phoneme sequences that are not permissible in Ndebele, but which have entered through oral speech. Firstly, we have the unacceptable sequence of bilabials followed by semivowels. Where such sequences occur, the language avoids them by changing the place of articulation to produce an acceptable sequence. For example, most elder Ndebele speakers cannot pronounce the last syllable in the name of the country Zimbabwe<sup>18</sup>. Instead of saying /bw/ they either say /bh/ or /gw/ which are both common sounds in Ndebele.

The other case in point was the failure of the Ndebele people to pronounce the name of the deity of the Njelele shrine 'Mwari' and they instead said 'Ngwali'. Nowadays, the name used is Ngwali and most speakers of the language might not even be aware that Mwari and Ngwali are referring to the same deity. While /mw/ is unacceptable in Ndebele, /ngw/ is a common sequence in the language. Similarly, the writing system does not permit <mw>, <bw>, <my>, or <pw>.

Most loanwords from English have these phoneme sequences that have been modified to suit Ndebele. For example, English /bl/ as in 'blazer' became /bhule/ in Ndebele **ibhuleza**. Speakers of Ndebele have adopted such phoneme sequences in their speech yet the writing system is yet to address how they should be treated orthographically. Here are some examples of loanwords from English that are problematic in Ndebele:

museum could become imyuziyemu\* (museum) but is spelt either imnyuziyamu or imuziyamu.

Some other clusters that are avoided are: str, lk, pl, sl, dr.

street	becomes	isitilidi
silk	becomes	isilika
plank	becomes	ipulanka
wardrobe	becomes	iwadilobhu

<sup>18</sup> Zimbabwe is a Shona word meaning houses of stones derived from the ancient historical site of Great Zimbabwe Ruins in Masvingo Province of Zimbabwe.

Such clusters are usually broken by means of vowels, thus creating a typical open syllable Ndebele word. For example, if we take the cluster <str> in the word 'street' in Ndebele is **isitlidi**. The cluster has been broken by means of vowels and the /r/ has been replaced by /l/. In the word 'silk' the unacceptable <lk> is broken up by a vowel and the result is an open syllable **isilika**. In 'plank' the <pl> is similarly broken up by a vowel resulting in **ipulanka**, while the <dr> in wardrobe is broken up by a vowel and the /r/ replaced by /l/ resulting in **iwadilobhu**. It is interesting to note that <dr> is not changed into <dl> which is acceptable in Ndebele. Instead the cluster is first broken up to an open syllable structure, and then the unacceptable /r/ is replaced by /l/.

We may note that not all new words could be rearranged successfully like the examples just given. The other problem is that changing the phonological structure of the word sometimes changes the whole word structure to a totally different word whose origins are unrecognisable. In speech users continue to pronounce the words the way they like and to spell them differently is to render the spelling system useless.

### 8.3.4. VOWEL SEQUENCING

The other orthographic problem in Ndebele is that of vowel sequencing. The Ndebele phonological system avoids two or more vowels within the same syllable by either resorting to vowel elision or vowel coalescence. The following shows vowel coalescence in Ndebele:

a + a > a  
 LA + ABANTU > LABANTU  
 (and + people > and-people)

a + i > e  
 LA + INYONI > LENYONI  
 (and + a bird > and-a-bird)

a + u > o  
 LA + UMFANA > LOMFANA  
 (and + a boy > and-a-boy)

This phonological feature of Ndebele has been transferred to the writing system. In the writing system, vowels are also not supposed to be in a sequence. Should that happen, a hyphen is used for separating them. Typical Ndebele words do not have any problem, as the phonological rule would deal with vowel sequencing. Yet, in loanwords it is difficult to avoid vowel sequencing.

Two ways of handling vowel sequencing have been identified in Ndebele and in Zulu in general. One way is to insert a semivowel in between the vowels. It should be noted that semi-vowels function as consonants and a sequence of SEMI-VOWEL-VOWEL is acceptable but not that of VOWEL – VOWEL sequence. This problem of vowel sequencing in loanwords arises in nouns. All Ndebele nouns have an initial vowel in the prefix. There is, therefore, no Ndebele noun that has a prefix proper which commences with a vowel. Most loanwords bring their phonological structure, which is different from that of Ndebele, and the problem arises when such words are written.

For example, words like *oil*, *oven*, and *iron* are now common words in Ndebele but very problematic to represent in writing consistently. In Ndebele, they could be spelt as follows:

i[ ]oyili (oil)  
i[ ]oveni (oven)  
i[ ]ayini (iron)

The empty square brackets [ ] are used here to mark space.

Using the semi-vowel to avoid vowel sequencing, the same words would be spelt as follows:

iwoyili (oil)  
iwoveni (oven)  
\*iyayini (iron).

Some people even pronounce these words with the semi-vowel but the majority of the people do not. For instance, the present researcher has not heard any one before who says \*iyayini for iron. The same words are spelt by other writers with a hyphen to separate the vowels as follows: *i-oyili* (oil), *i-oveni* (oven) and *i-ayini* (iron) respectively. The editors of the ISN chose a method which avoids vowel sequencing in the lemmatisation of loanwords. They either used hyphens or inserted a semi-vowel to avoid spelling with vowel sequencing. Whichever method the editors could have adopted, would have an impact on the standardisation of Ndebele orthography.

It is interesting to note that what we have described above as cases of vowel sequencing is in actual fact vowel syllables in a sequence rather than vowels co-occurring within a single syllable. The initial vowel constitutes a syllable on its own while the vowels *o-* in *-oveni* (oven) or *-oyili* (oil) and *a-* in *-ayini* (iron) are separate syllables in their own right. So what is being avoided is vowel syllable sequencing although the intention is to avoid vowel sequencing. This argument is dwelt upon in detail elsewhere (see Hadebe 1994). Here it suffices to mention briefly some key aspects of the issue.

### 8.3.5. MONOSYLLABIC WORDS

One of the long-standing word division problems in Ndebele is that of monosyllabic units. The 'word' in Ndebele, as in other Nguni languages like Zulu and Xhosa, has been identified and defined on phonological grounds, specifically by penultimate length. Therefore, given a string of continuous speech making a sentence, one can chop up that sentence into words basing the division on the penultimate length of the linguistic units or segments (Hadebe 1994:34). While the method of identifying words using potential penultimate length is one useful way of defining words in Ndebele, it has its limitations. An obvious limitation is on monosyllabic units, in which case, since there is no penultimate syllable, the element of a distinguishing degree of length falls away. For that reason, monosyllables fail to get the status of an independent word in writing due to this. Some of these monosyllables are grouped as enclitics even when

they are not enclitics. Because they are treated as enclitics, they are written conjoined to the other words, usually by means of a hyphen.

Examples of monosyllables that have been written either conjoined completely or hyphenated are:

ke (then, so)  
nje (simply, just)  
ma (if, or).

As already said earlier, different writers represent monosyllabic units differently as some conjoin them by a hyphen and others without a hyphen while in a few cases they are allowed to stand independently. Part of the problem was inherited from the history of Ndebele orthography (see Chapter 2). When the Ndebele writing system changed from the disjunctive to the conjunctive system, some of the lexical units that could on other circumstances enjoy independent status were conjoined with other words. It should be noted that Ndebele has many monosyllabic words that are not problematic, especially ideophones. The problem is those lexical items that have been treated as incomplete words based on one criterion, that of penultimate length, whereas if other criteria were to be applied these lexical items would enjoy full word status.

## 8.4. PRESENTATION OF MATERIAL ON ORTHOGRAPHY

Firstly, we shall outline the rules for word division as given in the RULES FOR ORTHOGRAPHY AND WORD DIVISION FOR NDEBELE in Appendix V, E.W. Krog (1982) *A Zimbabwean Author's Guide*. Evidence from the corpus will also be presented where applicable. It is important to note that the corpus has been least useful in our study of orthography, nonetheless there are areas where corpus evidence was useful. The rules for orthography and word division for Ndebele represent the official position. We then present corpus evidence as well as what is in the ISN. In that way, we show the discrepancies in the official position and actual performance on the ground and how these differences were addressed in compiling the ISN.

Aspects of the RULES FOR ORTHOGRAPHY AND WORD DIVISION FOR NDEBELE by Krog read:

### 6. *Word Division*

Zulu orthography should be followed, i.e. conjunctive writing.

- (i) Simple and compound verb forms. e.g. ngihamba, ngiyahamba, sizahamba, sizakuhamba...
- (ii) Verb forms compounded with the deficient verb *se-*. e.g. sengihamba, sengihambile, sesizahamba, sebahamba, wayesehambile,...
- (iii) Simple and Compound concords with copulatives, adjectives, etc., e.g. ngilaye, nginguyey, ngingumfana, ngimfitshane, ...

Note: In the above examples the verb stem -ba is not used, but the verb 'to be' is understood.

- (iv) When the verb stem -ba is used, the words that follow should not be joined on but written separately (as with all other verb stems).

e.g. ngizaba mkhulu, sizakuba khona, sizaba laye, uzaba yindoda, waba lathi, ...

Having given the outline of the rules on Ndebele spelling and word division, below are cases that show differences in word division and spelling. There are instances as shown below where the above-given rules are not followed. The evidence below in the form of concordances is from the Ndebele language corpus.

*Concordance for kwaku(there was)*

LabakwaIsrayeli,	<b>kwaku</b> ngcono kakhulu kulalokhu .
UNcube ukuba lapha	<b>kwaku</b> lendoda hayi indojelana nje .
abayabe bekhona	<b>kwaku</b> mele uchaze ukuba
Kwakukuhle ngoba	<b>kwaku</b> ngokwabo . Kwakulamazilo

According to the orthography rules, **kwaku** should not be written as a separate unit but should be conjoined to the following word. However, the above concordances show that some writers do not do so. There are inconsistencies in word division as far as this item is concerned. The same situation occurs for the following demonstrative pronoun **lowo** (that one).

### 8.4.1. THE DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUN

According to official Ndebele orthography rules, the demonstrative pronoun should be written as a separate word if it comes after the noun but should be conjoined to the noun it precedes. While the rule has long been stipulated, it would seem that writers and editors of books either ignore it or are ignorant of it. There is inconsistency in the word division of the demonstrative pronoun in Ndebele.

umuntu lowo (person that one)  
lowo umuntu\* (that person)  
lowomuntu (that person)

Corpus evidence is presented below to show these inconsistencies.

*Concordance for lowo (that one)*

Uyangaphi emini kunje? » wabuza **lowo** baba esondela eduze”  
lowo evela mbona esibhedlela. A **lowo** baba uyehlula  
thwele bamswela umninimthwalo **lowo** bacine besesulela elinye  
njengoba ngazingenela emlindini **lowo** bona sebefunelani  
bawavala ngezandla . Wasuka **lowo** comrade wafika



engxenye lezulu **ngalowo** mnyaka lingani , besokusenza zombili , ethule ethe zwi **Ngalowo** mzuzwana wezwa ubuntandane baphindela emuva **ngawonalowo** mgwaqo. Uthi phambili

As already mentioned above, if the demonstrative pronoun **lowo** (that one – for person) precedes the noun it should be conjoined to the noun coming after it. If the demonstrative comes after the noun, the demonstrative should be written as a separate entity. In the concordances above the demonstrative pronoun is written separately although the rules on word division state the contrary. The following concordance for the demonstrative pronoun **lelo** (that one – for a thing) shows the lack of consistency in Ndebele word division.

*Concordance for lelo langa (that day)*

ukuphikisana laye. Ngalelo **langa** umkakhe wakhanya engamaleli lutho endaweni yamakhiwa! **Lelo langa** wahlangabezwa yilizwi elilentokozo

According to the orthography rules, **lelo langa** should be written as one word **lelo-langa**. It is important to note that Zulu has since changed this rule on word division as stated in the preface to the combined **Zulu-English, English-Zulu Dictionary**:

N.B. In the new orthography rules, the demonstrative is written as a separate word. Doke's *lomuntu*, *leyanto*, *lezo-zinto*, described on page x of the Introduction to the **Zulu – English Dictionary**, are therefore now written as *lo muntu*, *leyo nto*, *lowo muntu*, *lezo zinto* [sic] (Khumalo 1990:i).

The problems are now two-fold. On the one hand the word division rule on demonstratives is not consistently followed by writers, and on the other, the rule has since changed in Zulu. Ndebele orthography has not been updated to accommodate the latest changes that have been made in Zulu although it is the usual practice for applying to Ndebele the same principles used in Zulu orthography.

#### 8.4.2. ON LOANWORDS

Only those loanwords whose spelling had not been officially sanctioned but nonetheless could not be avoided in the ISN are presented here. An attempt was made to account for the spelling options adopted by the editors of the ISN. Here are cases for illustration:

umphrofethi (a prophet)	ireza (a razor blade)
umphristi (a priest)	ubhururu (a relative)
irediyo (a radio)	irege (reggae music)
iribhoni (a ribbon)	irayisi (rice)
-rivesa (to reverse)	-renta (to rent)
-repha (to rape)	-rejesta (to register)
-rusa (to rust)	-rikhomenda (to recommend)

The above words were taken from the ISN and they represent what some speakers still consider to be unacceptable sounds in Ndebele, for example the sounds represented by <r>. Actually, the very first comment in a newspaper after the publication of the ISN discussed the issue of <r> in Ndebele. It is a very sensitive issue amongst the Ndebele speakers but the editors took the risk and lemmatised words with <r>. Those opposed to the use of the letter <r> would instead use <l>. This has led in some instances to the creation of variants, one with <r> and the other with <l>. One such case is that for **ihola** and **ihora** both meaning 'hour'. Below are the concordances of both from the Ndebele language corpus.

*Concordance for ihora (hour)*

ingixolele okwelanga elilodwa **ihora** elilodwa  
 konje ufile yindlala . Kwatshaya **ihora** ificaminwemibili  
 Zathi zithi zibetha **ihora** lesificamunye  
 isikhathi wabona sekutshaye **ihora** lesihlanuekuseni  
 sesitotoba nje. Latshaya **ihora** lesithathu  
 Ngizamelela nje kuze kutshaye **ihora** lesithathu .  
 khe wayesezafika. Kwatshaya **ihora** lesithupha lokhu  
 wengqondo. Kuthe kutshaya **ihora** lesithupha  
 njalo. Kuthe sekubanga **ihora** letshumi lanye  
 Zathi zithi zibetha **ihora** letshumi  
 ingaguquka ibe lihora, **ihora** libe lilanga.  
 Uhambolonke luthatha phose **ihora** lonke .Ngangithi  
 wayethe kayikuphuza kwathatha **ihora** lonke lengxenywe  
 Imizuzwana ingaguquka ibe **lihora**, ihora libanga.

*Concordance for ihola (hour)*

wakhe lowo latshaya **ihola** ayeselilindele.  
 Ekufikeni kwami ngihlale **ihola** eligcweleyo sikhangelene  
 kufa wena. Uthethe **ihola** eligcweleyo uMpofu  
 uDumisani wayeseqede **ihola** elilodwa efike  
 sokuphumula sasithatha **ihola** elilodwa kuphela, layo  
 umsebenzi. Uyavunyelwa **ihola** elilodwa ngelanga  
 UBubbles waqeda **ihola** elivayo ezama ukuxotsha  
 eNtelezi sekutshaya **ihola** lakuqala ebusuku .  
 Isikhathi sasesidlule **ihola** lakuqala emini  
 samabhasi eseCity Hall **ihola** lakuqala emini  
 esilindweni sazo esikhulu **ihola** lakuqala emini selibanga  
 imizuzu elitshumi lanhlanu **ihola** lakuqala emini selitshayile  
 Yona-ke yathutsha **ihola** lakuqala lisanda kutshaya  
 Khathesi sesimangala **ihola** lakuqala selitshayile .  
 ukuthi kwasekwedlule **ihola** lengxenywe ilokhu iphatheke  
 bani? "Sekusiyatshaya **ihola** lesibili, ngiyabona.  
 Lapho laselitshayile **ihola** lesibili. Sasesiyatha  
 isikhathi kwasekutshaya **ihola** lesibili. Zazingasahambi  
 zaze zasobela , kwatshaya **ihola** lesibili emini. Wayeselibala  
 ukuyafika emsebenzini **ihola** lesibili emini ayebuyela  
 emzini wesinyoka, **ihola** lesibili emini laselitshayile

It is interesting to note that in the ISN the definition is carried by **ihola** (hour) while **ihora** is cross-referenced. Therefore, where the variants are caused by /r/ and /l/, the editors of the ISN opted for the /l/. The same is observed for **ibhola** which carries the definition while **ibhora** (a ball) is cross-referenced, although the latter is more frequent than the former.

We have already discussed the controversy surrounding the voiced alveolar affricate represented by the letters <dz> (refer to 8.3.2). We also showed that the voiced alveolar affricate sound represented by diagraphs <dz> has been replaced by <j> although in speech more and more speakers seem to use the affricate /dz/ more than the fricative /j/. For that reason, the ISN lemmatised words with the affricate /dz/ spelt with the diagraph <dz> and not <j>.

There is also a problem in Ndebele spelling for the words **ihofisi** and **iwofisi** (office). The former is the officially recognised spelling while the latter is not, but sounds closer to the pronunciation of the word:

*Concordance for iwofisi (office)*

Wayesaba wayihlonipha **iwofisi** kaTshabangu , esihlonipha lesikhundla osebenza komanisipala **iwofisi** yakhe ilaphayana etower Block ehluhayo lapha yikuthi **iwofisi** yeSocial Welfare kasilayo lapha

*Concordance for ihofisi (office)*

ekhulusini eliya kweyakhe **ihofisi** .Ihofisi kabhudi Khembo yakhe wayesedlula egudla **ihofisi** kabhudi Khembo abhode ngemuva ezintsha kube yizo ezithanyela **ihofisi** kaManeja, zenze itiye zibuye phansi bavuke, babhodisane **ihofisi** kambe ivele inkulu kangaka Batshaya-ke ucingo betshayela **ihofisi** yeNguboyenja. Abaleyo wofisi babapha

Although the Ndebele language corpus reflects that both **iwofisi** and **ihofisi** are used by the speakers, the ISN only lemmatised **ihofisi**. This shows the problems in spelling loanwords. The same problem is noted in yet another pair of Ndebele words, **iwolu** and **iholu** (a hall), as shown in the concordances below:

izindlu zokulala , indawo yokudlalela **iholu**, indlu yokudlela, isonto, ingadi yemi akhe inkalakatha yeholu. Sithe sesakhe **iholu** leyana babuya amanye amaorganisation Isiteriyi sakhe senzelwa **iwolu** yabantu abayinkulungwane

The two words are lemmatised in the ISN and they are both defined. It is not stated on either that the one is a variant of the other. Although the failure to cross-reference these two words is an obvious error on the part of the editors, it seems that the two spellings would remain.

The clusters <sl>, <sk>, <st>, <str> are also considered unacceptable to Ndebele. However, as would be shown below, it was impossible to avoid these spellings in the ISN without totally changing the words.

isilingi (sling) *isilingi	isikonzi (a scone) *iskonzi
isiliva (silver) *isliva	isikirini (a screen) *iskrini

isilithi (slit) *islithi	isikolo (a school) *iskolo
isitampa (a stamp) *istampa	isitilaki (a strike) *istraki
isititshi (a station) *istitshi	isitilidi (a street) *istridi
isitiki (a stick) *istiki	isitirobho (a rope) *istrobho

The words with starred forms are unacceptably spelt although the corpus and some Ndebele books have such spelling. The editors of the ISN tried as far as possible to break the unacceptable clusters in Ndebele and create permissible combinations as illustrated in the above examples. However, there are cases where the unacceptable clusters had to be adopted as they were because re-syllabification changed the words drastically. Few of these cases were included in the ISN but nonetheless they need to be mentioned as they reflect the decision of the editors and might alter the perceptions of the language users on certain loanwords. The words include the following:

**iwiski** (whisky)      **isistela** (sister – Catholic church)      **ithestamenti** (testament)

### 8.4.3. INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

In the interpretation and analysis of the above results, the aim is to establish the guiding principles, if any, followed by the editors of the ISN in dealing with problematic cases in orthography. The problematic cases discussed above include compounds, not permissible clusters in Ndebele, previously unacceptable sounds and some loanwords. In the interpretation, one has to bear in mind that the last official guide to Ndebele orthography stated that Zulu should be used as a model. However, the problematic cases are largely peculiar to Ndebele spelling such that the Zulu models are inadequate to address some of the problems as shown above.

We have already demonstrated previously (refer 5.7) that word division in Ndebele leaves a lot to be desired. We have made a claim that writers are either ignorant of the existing guidelines or they do not take word division issues seriously. When one looks at books, word division is apparently haphazard, making one conclude that it is the area least taken seriously by writers, proof-readers and publishers of Ndebele works. We illustrated with **amazinyo enja** (dog's teeth) meaning 'canine teeth' and **amazinyomvundla** (hare's teeth) meaning 'incisors', and observed that one is written with a space while the other is conjoined (see 5.7). There is no clear explanation for the difference in word division in the two compounds other than that it is common practice. We also noted that such inconsistencies in word division are not confined to Ndebele alone but have been observed in English as well (cited in 5.7). Therefore, it would seem that dictionaries adopt already familiar word division styles for compound words. Writers should therefore consistently follow the word division style for each compound word if standardisation of Ndebele spelling is to be achieved.

From the evidence obtained from the corpus and the number of entries in the ISN with the letter <r>, it has become an accepted reality that the symbol is now part of the Ndebele alphabet. It has been illustrated above that it is not always feasible to substitute the <r> for <l> wherever the former exists without changing the meaning of the words completely. Because the letter <r> is still controversial at least among some language purists, where there is an option for <l>, it would be used instead of

<r>. For example, in speech the people say **ibhora** (a ball) but in writing **ibhola** (a ball) is encouraged. The other sound that has become apparently unavoidable is the voiced alveolar affricate represented by the symbols <dz>. Where it is possible to replace <dz> with <j>, it is encouraged, but there are instances where such replacement is not possible. The same applies to clusters that are not permissible in Ndebele. There are loanwords where the clusters are unavoidable and we have to accept that, because when the language adopts words from other languages, in the process it adopts sounds and aspects of spelling from the donor languages. It is interesting to note that the guide to Ndebele orthography is silent on the treatment of loanwords, yet most orthographic problems in Ndebele are associated with loanwords.

## 8.5. IMPLICATIONS FOR ISN

As already stated dictionaries generally promote official spelling, as it is not the objective of lexicographers to impose new rules on orthography, at least in Zimbabwe. The editors of the ISN were conscious of their limited authority when it came to decisions on spelling. Such authority is vested in the Ministry of Education. Nonetheless, in attempting to accommodate loanwords and in classifying words, the dictionary has to take a clear position and be systematic in its description and spelling. In that way, the word division and spelling used by the dictionary is likely to be more authoritative than any other unless the Ministry of Education produces a new spelling guide, something which at the time of writing was very remote.

In the front matter of the Ndebele dictionary, a claim has been made that only officially prescribed ways of spelling would be used. There are cases as highlighted above where official policy is silent on how such cases should be handled, leaving each writer to handle each case as he or she wishes. Given the various spellings by different writers, one is persuaded that the spelling used by the first monolingual Ndebele dictionary is likely to have more impact. This claim is based on the assumption that the dictionary tends to be the main reference to verify the “correctness” of spelling or to authenticate usage of some words or expressions.

What might have given rise to the proliferation of different spellings, especially of loanwords and different word division practices, was the lack of an up to date guide to spelling and word division. This inadequacy was worsened by the lack of a comprehensive monolingual Ndebele dictionary, which could be used as a reference for problematic spelling and word division. There is still no up to date guide to Ndebele orthography, but now there is a comprehensive Ndebele dictionary. We can claim that the dictionary is at present the only reference point for spelling and word division and teachers and other writers would have to rely on it for ‘standard’ spelling. In that way, the ISN becomes the standardising agent for Ndebele orthography. The ISN has been endorsed officially by the Ministry of Education and Culture, meaning that it could be used in all schools as a reference book. By implication, therefore, the spelling and word division used in the dictionary has been made official.

## 8.6. CONCLUSION

From the list of problems of Ndebele orthography highlighted above, we can draw a number of conclusions. Firstly, the principle of one phoneme one grapheme as propounded by the Africa Alphabet is not feasible, at least for Ndebele orthography. Secondly, the principle of alphabetic economy has been strictly applied even in cases where it could have been eased to allow for orthographic distinction of different sounds in Ndebele. Thirdly, the orthographic issues, at least in Ndebele, are more of socio-cultural than linguistic considerations. That has been shown by cases where some speakers would prefer certain spellings that they feel are typically Ndebele and a rejection of certain symbols as not Ndebele. Fourthly, that Ndebele spelling should remain as close as possible to Zulu. The need for Ndebele to cope with modern concerns especially in terminology have made the language and the orthography adapt and adopt new sounds and symbols. The <r> is a case in point. This is in line with what Vikør defines as modernity which is that: 'the language should be actively adapted to the needs of modern culture and technology – even if this implies a violation of traditionalism and national historicism' (Vikør 1993:284).

The editors of the ISN did not set out to solve orthography problems or to standardise Ndebele spelling. However, in their work on the dictionary they faced all these problems that are still unresolved in the Ndebele orthography. They made decisions based on whatever considerations they felt crucial then, and had to resolve those problems one way or the other in order to pursue their stated goal of producing the dictionary. The resultant standardisation of spelling and word division was a product of solving practical problems during the dictionary-making process. The standardisation of Ndebele orthography is a case in point of the general standardisation of language through dictionary-making.

## CONCLUSION

### 9.1. INTRODUCTION

In this final chapter a summary of the research is given, especially concerning the main focus of the study; vocabulary standardisation, term creation and standardisation of orthography. The research question is re-visited in the light of the findings of the study. Principles that were used as yardsticks to evaluate standardisation in the Ndebele language are also revisited and so is the importance of language standardisation. Lastly, recommendations are given both for language planners and for future researchers in the area.

### 9.2. VOCABULARY, TERMINOLOGY AND ORTHOGRAPHY STANDARDISATION

The evidence, observations and arguments presented in the thesis have led to a number of findings on the potential role of the ISN in the standardisation of Ndebele. In the Introduction Chapter (1.2) we stated that contrary to the often-held view that Ndebele has no variation, the Ndebele language corpus shows that there are varieties within the language. That Ndebele is spoken differently within the different Ndebele-speaking districts of Zimbabwe had already been confirmed by evidence from the corpus. In this study, we sought to establish the nature of variation in Ndebele and how the dictionary-making process addressed it. One notable area of difference established by this research is vocabulary. Certain words in the language are used differently by speakers in different geographical areas. The ISN, like any general-purpose dictionary for the mother tongue speakers, had to select some words and in the process exclude others. Similarly, certain usages were promoted at the expense of others.

In selecting entries for the ISN, the editors did not only address problems of variation in vocabulary within the Ndebele language but also differences between Ndebele and Zulu. There was also the problem posed by loanwords. Loanwords were divided into two categories according to their source. The first category consists of those from African languages, mainly Shona, Kalanga, Venda, Sotho, Nyubi and Tonga. Then, there are loanwords from European languages, mainly English, and to a lesser extent Afrikaans. It has been established in this study that different selection criteria were used for loanwords depending on their source. The selection and rejection of loanwords seems to have followed a clear pattern as outlined below.

Words from Zulu and other Nguni languages like Xhosa and Swazi were accepted into Ndebele without much changes. Zulu still remains a yardstick for Ndebele, since it still enjoys prestige due to cultural and historical links with the Ndebele

people. It was partly the aim of this thesis to find out whether the production of the ISN will change the status of Zulu among the Ndebele. From evidence on vocabulary selection at least, we can make a claim that the editors of the ISN maintained the close affinity between Ndebele and Zulu. Strictly speaking, words from Zulu or other Nguni languages like Xhosa and Swazi cannot be classified as loanwords in Ndebele. On linguistic grounds the varieties Ndebele, Zulu, Xhosa and Swazi are all dialects of Nguni and they share a high percentage of their lexicon. It is for political reasons rather than linguistic that these varieties are regarded as distinct languages.

We also noted on vocabulary selection in the ISN that loanwords from non-Nguni African languages were generally avoided. There are instances where the corpus shows an overwhelming use of certain words, but some of these words were rejected. In the few cases where loanwords from other African languages were lemmatised, they were cross-referenced to words considered indigenous to Ndebele. By cross-referencing these loanwords to indigenous Ndebele words, the impression given is that the loanwords are secondary to the indigenous words. It actually implies that when a writer wants to choose the most formal and appropriate word to use given the loanword and the indigenous word the choice is predetermined. The cross-referenced word is made secondary and by implication less suitable. One such case is the word **-kwanisa** (to be able) that is frequent in the Ndebele language corpus but excluded from the ISN. The word **idombo** has more hits than **umkhongi** (marriage-go-between) in the Ndebele language corpus, yet the latter carries the definition and the former is cross-referenced.

Loanwords from European languages were avoided where possible and, where not, the indigenous word carried the definition while the loanwords were cross-referenced. We noted that many words have come into Ndebele from English. These are words referring to objects and concepts that were foreign to the Ndebele community and were introduced through the English language. Such loanwords were lemmatised. There are some loanwords from English and other languages that have 'unacceptable' clusters or sounds in Ndebele but still had to be dealt with. The clusters that are not permissible in Ndebele were broken down and re-constituted to suit the Ndebele syllabic and morphological structure. Those that could not be adapted to Ndebele morphology were excluded from the ISN. The sound represented by the letter <r> is still controversial in Ndebele as some speakers do not accept this sound and hence the letter in the Ndebele alphabet. However, a considerable number of loanwords have the /r/ sound and it cannot always be substituted by /l/ as is the case in some words. The ISN lemmatised words with the /r/ sound. By this act, the editors of the ISN have confirmed /r/ as part of the inventory of Ndebele phonology. It is interesting to note that, although there are several words that start with <r>, for example as reflected in the Ndebele language corpus, there are only twenty entries under the letter **R** in the ISN. Of course with many more words with <r> like: *iviri* (wheel), *umphristi* (priest), *ihora* (hour) and *ireza* (razor) that are in the ISN but not easily attracting attention like those lemmatised under **R**. The acceptance of /r/ seems to be partial. By including very few words starting with <r> and excluding many others, the editors acknowledge the new development in Ndebele but only grudgingly. It would seem that the editors of the ISN do not encourage the use of <r>. This is perhaps part of the subjective editorial decisions noted here that:



The apparent objectivity of dictionaries rests on an extensive series of subjective editorial decisions. Lexicographers come to wield authority not only over how to define words but also what words merited definition. In fact, dictionaries and dictionary makers define what constitutes 'the language' as much as they do any individual word in the lexicon (Mugglestone 2002:96).

What we observed regarding vocabulary selection is that the editors of the ISN pursued a policy of partial or selective purism where words from favoured languages are preferred while those from negatively viewed languages are avoided. Words from Zulu and other Nguni languages are favoured but those from non-Nguni languages are avoided. This selective purism is not peculiar to Ndebele but has been observed elsewhere, as noted by Jernudd and Shapiro: 'It is interesting to note that the purging of foreign words is often limited to loans from a particular language only' (1989:217).

It is also shown in the thesis that terminology development is generally lagging behind in Ndebele. The reasons identified for this include the language policies of both colonial governments and the post-independence government. Apart from the lack of government initiative on terminology development, even practitioners in the various areas of specialization have not taken the initiative except for very isolated cases. Term creation techniques were also discussed as well as ways of evaluating and standardising them. As terminology by its nature is specific to each discipline, observations were drawn on term creation in linguistics, literature, law and physics.

Ndebele grammar is taught in the medium of Ndebele in schools and in teacher training colleges. All other school subjects are taught in English. That has necessitated the creation of linguistic terminology in Ndebele. Various methods were used to create this terminology. Firstly, terms were taken from the Zulu language. The use of Zulu terminology in teaching Ndebele grammar is due to historical reasons. Actually, until the 1970s Zulu was taught instead of Ndebele. When Ndebele began to be taught, it was taught alongside Zulu. In fact, even now Ndebele is taught alongside Zulu at university level. This teaching of Zulu led to the growth in Zulu publications while Ndebele lagged behind in publications. The teaching of Ndebele currently relies on Zulu textbooks and hence the use of Zulu terminology. The problem comes when Zulu changes or coins new terms that do not filter into Ndebele, leaving Ndebele with old irrelevant terms. Researchers working on Ndebele, like myself, find some Zulu terms inappropriate. It is difficult to rectify the situation and suggest an amendment because we have no say on the development and standardisation of Zulu terms. In that way, the Ndebele people are passive recipients of certain aspects of Zulu terminology.

Apart from using Zulu terminology, the Ndebele linguistic terminology is derived by transliteration. Terms are derived mainly from English terms by spelling the words in Ndebele. The majority of terms are derived by this technique. Its major weakness is that the term cannot be truly integrated into the Ndebele language. Such terms are problematic to inflect or derive other related terms from as they do not use Ndebele word-roots or morphemes. Also, a learner cannot attempt to infer the meaning of such terms by relating it to other known words, because these terms are only spelt in Ndebele, otherwise they are foreign. The other important way of creating terms in Ndebele linguistic terminology is through translation of foreign terms, mainly English. It was noted in the research that translated terms were better than

transliterated ones in that the former exploited the language resources of Ndebele. The translated terms can derive other terms or be inflected easily. Lastly, there are few linguistic terms in Ndebele that were coined. One would have wished for more of such terms as they express the concepts in the Ndebele language itself.

When it comes to literary terms, the situation is different. Most of the literary terms were coined from Ndebele roots. There are very few terms from Zulu and no transliterations from English. The ability to create terms from Ndebele, as demonstrated by literary terms, is a good example for other disciplines to emulate. Actually, such term creation is more systematic and easier to standardise than where terms are derived by different unrelated methods within the same discipline.

On legal terminology, we noted that strictly speaking there are no legal terms in Ndebele. What we have are explanations in Ndebele of what is meant by English legal terms. Because English legal terminology is influenced to a large extent by the historical circumstances of English and its relationship with Latin and French, the English language does not give a relevant model for Ndebele. Notwithstanding this fact, Ndebele derives its legal words by translating English words. The result is not the creation of legal terminology in Ndebele but explanations of English legal terms. The reason identified as the cause of the problem is the lack of use of Ndebele in legal matters. Although court interpreters explain in Ndebele what magistrates or prosecutors say in court sessions, no terms are developed. The court interpreters are not experts in law and their role is not to explain the legal concepts but to simplify in Ndebele what court officials have said in English.

Unless Ndebele lawyers themselves use Ndebele in their official business, it would be difficult to create legal terminology in Ndebele. The same problem affects African languages in general because the legal systems in most African countries were transplanted from the West with little or no modifications at all. Demoz states: 'It is difficult to deal with the problems of law and language without tackling the broader issues of the relationship of law to society. The transplantation of Western law into a non-Western society implies the transplantation of a wide range of cognitive categories and cultural norms and values that could be at odds with the local categories, norms and values. Problems that appear to be linguistic may therefore be only the superficial symptoms of an underlying conflict in legal cultures' (Demoz 1977:135). Findings in this thesis confirm that the problems in developing legal language in Ndebele are not linguistic but sociopolitical. The nature of the legal system in Zimbabwe is a factor, too; for example Zimbabwean courts continue to use Latin expressions resulting in mistranslations. Cases of misinterpretations in courts are cited in the thesis.

The study of Dlodlo's physics terms in Nguni was done for comparative purposes. The study of term creation in Ndebele necessitated comparing term creation techniques from different fields. It was also to show that, with the appropriate policy towards term development in Ndebele, there is no discipline that cannot be handled in that language. The study focussed on physics terms created by Dlodlo. Dlodlo argues against transliterations, which he refers to as phonetic transcription. He instead proposes the coining of terms from Ndebele. The terms he created reflected consistency and precision. The terms can easily derive other terms with related concepts. Dlodlo's effort is a commendable attempt by an individual to create terms in a specialised field like physics.

### 9.3. SOME PRINCIPLES ON THE STANDARDISATION OF NDEBELE

In the study of aspects of the standardisation of Ndebele vocabulary, terminology and orthography certain principles were applied to enable the comparisons to be systematic. On vocabulary study we applied the notion of core vocabulary espoused by Carter (1998). This enabled us to delineate what constitutes mainstream vocabulary in Ndebele as opposed to stylistically marked words or loanwords. On the selection of vocabulary for the ISN, the editors stated in the style manual that preference would be given to indigenous Ndebele words against loanwords or recently coined ones. Highly frequent words were to be given preference to less frequent ones. The frequencies were obtained from the Ndebele language corpus. The effect of these decisions on vocabulary selection on the standardisation of Ndebele vocabulary is significant. The vocabulary selection reflects partial purism.

On terminology, the principles adhered to were drawn from term evaluation criteria by Gilreath (1993). This is a seventeen-point set of criteria for term evaluation. The criteria are very close to the International Standard Organisation principles on terminology. The most applicable features of Gilreath's points to Ndebele include *accuracy*, *precision*, *conciseness*, *series uniformity* and *acceptability*. By using Gilreath's criteria we were able to evaluate terms according to how they are created, used and standardised.

Vikør's principles of language corpus planning were applied in the study of orthography in Ndebele (Vikør 1993). Although minor modifications were done to suit the Ndebele language situation, the principles give a useful guide. Most significant are the internal linguistic principles. Some features of the internal linguistic principles that were found to be most relevant to Ndebele include phonemicity, simplicity and invariance. Of the principles related to attitudes towards other languages, both rapprochement and reaction are relevant to Ndebele (Vikør 1993:282). Zulu is a good example of the former feature as Ndebele orthography is adapted to look as close as possible to Zulu. The general attitude towards the letter <r> is an example of partial purism directed against non-Nguni languages. Amongst many Ndebele speakers, <r> is perceived as a Shona alphabetic symbol perhaps in the same way as some Shona perceive <l> as a Nguni symbol.

In the Introduction (1.2), I posited the question: 'Has the ISN broken the tradition of relying on Zulu as the standard?' The findings from the thesis show that while the ISN made its own innovations when addressing language problems in Ndebele, it has not broken the traditional link between Ndebele and Zulu. This is illustrated especially in vocabulary selection; words from Zulu were taken in easily unlike words from other non-Nguni languages. The editors of the ISN took into cognisance the linguistic and historical links between the two languages as well as the desire by some speakers to keep the languages close to each other.

### 9.4. REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question (1.2) that this thesis attempted to answer is, 'What contribution can the ISN make towards the standardisation of the Ndebele language?' It has been shown in the previous chapters that the first monolingual Ndebele dictionary has contributed to the description of Ndebele vocabulary, terminology, orthography

and morphology (albeit in a very elementary manner). As noted in the introduction, the standardisation of Ndebele was not the primary focus for the editors, but in addressing problems that arose in the dictionary-making process, decisions on standardisation had to be made. It is on this basis that this research's title is 'The standardisation of the Ndebele language through dictionary-making.'

First, the compilation of the ISN enabled a systematic description of Ndebele grammar. The front matter of the ISN has a Ndebele mini-grammar. Ndebele morphemes were identified and word categories defined. Every entry in the dictionary was assigned to its word category and rules of inflection explained and fixed. For loanwords, unacceptable clusters were broken down and the words rebuilt to suit the morphological structure of typical Ndebele words.

Second, the editors of the ISN made a systematic approach when dealing with vocabulary, terminology and orthography. The lemmatisation of what the editors perceived as core vocabulary entailed the selection of words that are considered to be mainstream language while excluding those that are considered informal, colloquial, slang or archaic. The use of the Ndebele language corpus adds to this view. The corpus is mainly composed of published works that are considered by its editors to be representative of formal and mainstream Ndebele language. Although the editors did not claim that the senses each lemma carried were all the possible senses that a particular word had, the definitions fix the meaning of a word. Dictionary users refer to a dictionary to get a standard or 'authentic' meaning of a word. Therefore, the ISN has not only contributed to the notion of what constitutes the core vocabulary of Ndebele but it has also fixed meanings of those words. In that way, the dictionary is contributing towards the standardisation of Ndebele. When dictionary users talk of a dictionary definition of a particular Ndebele word, they would be referring to the ISN definition, as there is currently no other monolingual dictionary.

It was also shown in the thesis that Ndebele orthography has areas of inconsistencies and variation in spelling and word division. The ISN could not afford to be inconsistent in spelling or to vary it. By their nature and purpose, dictionaries guide users in spelling and therefore have to seriously address spelling problems. On spelling, the ISN fixed the spelling of those loanwords that it lemmatised. These are words already accepted in general as part of the Ndebele lexicon, yet they are written differently by different authors. Although the ISN has no authority to impose or change spelling, in the case of loanwords the editors had little choice. They had to either exclude such loanwords, which would not reflect the current Ndebele language, or as they eventually did, include the loanwords and spell them to suit Ndebele orthographic rules as much as was possible. In loanwords, clusters unacceptable to Ndebele were broken down and replaced by typical Ndebele syllables. A major contribution was the recognition of <r> as part of Ndebele spelling symbols. We have shown how emotional the issue of <r> is amongst the more conservative elements of Ndebele society.

The other area where the ISN contributes towards the standardisation of Ndebele is word division, especially of compound words. While it should be noted that there is no clear pattern on word division for compounds, which the ISN seems to follow, the representation of individual compounds is in itself standardising how they should be written. We noted also that compounds are problematic for lexicographers in general and the problem is not peculiar to Ndebele.

When it comes to terminology, the ISN lemmatised linguistic and literary terminology. Historical and practical reasons justify this choice. Firstly, only language and

literature are taught in Ndebele and terms have been developed in these areas. Secondly, the dictionary is a general language dictionary and technical terms should be kept to a minimum. In the absence of a comprehensive Ndebele grammar book, the ISN's mini-grammar in its front matter is all that Ndebele has of grammar. Apart from this mini-grammar, the metalanguage list is included in the front matter while all that is in the front and back matter is lemmatised too. The terms compiled for the ISN are, therefore, to be used in the teaching and learning of grammar and literature. This is a significant contribution towards the standardisation of terminology in Ndebele.

From the above facts a solid claim can be made that the ISN has contributed significantly towards the standardisation of Ndebele vocabulary, terminology and orthography. These are some of the key features of a standard language. It is essential to reiterate the earlier observation that standardisation is a process, not an event. As a process, it is ongoing and can be evaluated relative to particular stages. It is an acknowledged fact that it is still too early to assess and conclude with certainty on the impact of the ISN on the Ndebele language and society. In this thesis, that awareness was never lost sight of. Nevertheless, the dictionary's standardising role is undoubted.

## 9.5. THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE STANDARDISATION

We have shown the areas that need standardisation in Ndebele and how the ISN has addressed these problematic areas. However, we have not addressed the importance of a standard language apart from giving reasons why, for example, spelling should be standardised. We only gave a brief definition of what a standard language is (refer 1.5.9). It is perhaps the appropriate place at the conclusion of this research to define in depth a standard language and to highlight the importance of language standardisation.

Earlier on the standard language has been described as that variety which has been decreed as the ideal and acceptable norm, marked by rules of grammar and spelling (1.5.9). I see codification as the important feature of 'standard language'. Garvin and Mathiot define a standard language as a 'codified form of language, accepted by, and serving as a model to, a larger speech community' (1960:783). This definition is appropriate for our situation. "The term *codified* – based on Latin *codex* and English *code* – refers to the existence of explicit statements of the norms of a language, as in dictionaries and grammars, especially concerning aspects of language use where some variation exists among speakers' (Mesthrie et al 2000:21). The advantages of a standard language are realized against the limitations of a non-standard language.

A standard language improves communication and enhances comprehension, especially for the Ndebele language where some speakers have other languages as their mother tongue. This situation contributes to an extent to the variation in Ndebele according to region. These speakers whose first language is either Kalanga, Shona, Venda, Sotho, Nambya and Tonga learn Ndebele at school as long as they are in Matabeleland. Except Shona, all these languages are spoken in the Ndebele-speaking districts. For that reason, Ndebele-speakers need a standard language with a core vocabulary that could unite them. Only a standard language can be codified and described in grammar texts to enable teachers to help children learn it. That codification and description are also part of the process of standardisation.

A standard language with a standard spelling makes it easier for writers and readers of the language. Those who learn the language have their task made easier when the spelling is standard. Variation in spelling and inconsistency in spelling make writing and reading difficult and consequently comprehension is compromised. From a standard language, it is easier to develop specialised technical languages for special areas. This would be difficult if the base language has no standardised grammar, spelling and other relevant rules of word formation, inflection and derivation, for example.

Writers, researchers, teachers, translators, editors, publishers and media workers all need a standard language with a standard vocabulary and rules of usage to enable them to do their work with language. All these different areas need a standard spelling system, standard terms and standard vocabulary. Although international trends show that the role of English as an international language is increasing, implying that English will continue for some time to dominate official space in Zimbabwe, indigenous Zimbabwean languages are growing in influence and claiming public space too. There are efforts to legislate for the official use of Ndebele and Shona as official languages alongside English. The need to research, document and write reference works in the African languages of Zimbabwe like Ndebele becomes an urgent and important activity if these languages are to serve as 'official' in future. If Ndebele is to be used in other spheres than the domestic private one, then its standardisation is one of the language corpus activities that need to be done. The production of monolingual dictionaries is one way of standardising language, especially vocabulary, terminology and orthography. This research has shown the contribution of monolingual lexicography in language corpus planning, especially standardisation.

## 9.6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Having discussed the importance of language standardisation and the urgent need to standardise Ndebele, the main recommendation is to institutionalise the standardising authority. The significance of dictionary-making in language standardisation has been demonstrated in this study. However, that does not substitute the official role played by an authorised government department. Some of the problems that are facing writers in the Ndebele language result from a lack of an authorised institution that addresses language problems in Ndebele. For example, there are cases in spelling that only need the sanction of authority to make them legitimate, but in the absence of such authority, the language continues to be written and spelt differently by different writers, not out of choice or defiance, but because there are no guidelines. The Ndebele Language Committee, even before it was defunct, was not only powerless but it was poorly constituted in that it lacked the necessary expertise to identify and address pertinent language problems. This absence of an official authorising body partly explains why some writers have described Zimbabwe's official language policy as a 'no-policy' approach (see Chimhundu 1992,1997).

The need for an authorised body to deal with language matters is even felt more acutely on terminology matters. Zimbabwe needs a national terminology authority that has the power to create, disseminate and standardise terms in the indigenous languages of the country. The present efforts by individual writers and lexicographers are not enough and cannot cope with the amount of work that needs to be done. There is a need to introduce terminology courses at tertiary colleges and to train personnel

to address terminology and translation problems in the African languages of Zimbabwe like Ndebele. Such an authorised body should be a government-sanctioned body, otherwise its recommendations would be useless. If languages like Ndebele are to be effectively used officially e.g in the media, there is a need for a deliberate policy on term creation and to push for the use of such terms by practitioners in the various disciplines. Similarly, the success of the terminology thus coined depends on the specialists themselves. For example, it was noted in the thesis that legal terms are lacking in Ndebele partly because the lawyers are not willing to use Ndebele and hence cannot create legal terms in the language. Therefore, while institutions are necessary to control the use of languages, the need and advantages of using indigenous languages should be cultivated amongst especially the educated people of Zimbabwe and the various administrators.

## 9.7. CONCLUSION

This research has contributed to the study of language standardisation in Ndebele in particular and language planning in general. It has drawn insights from sociolinguistics, corpus linguistics and lexicography. The multi-disciplinary approach was also shown by the array of theoretical tools, which were employed as they were similarly drawn from different disciplines and fields of study. The dictionary criticism approach will specifically be valuable to researchers and lexicographers in future dictionary-making and dictionary research in Ndebele. Useful findings will also benefit language planners, spelling reformers and terminologists working on Ndebele and other African languages in a similar situation.





APPENDIX I

## LINGUISTIC AND LITERARY TERMS FROM THREE NDEBELE DEPARTMENTS

The terms are from the Ndebele Departments at the United College of Education and Hillside Teachers' College respectively and from the Department of Curriculum and Arts Education at the University of Zimbabwe. Most of the lecturers in the three institutions were trained at the University of Zimbabwe, therefore, they were taught more-or-less the same terms. All the institutions rely mainly on Zulu textbooks and that further entrenches Zulu terms in these institutions as shown below.

TERM	UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE*	HILLSIDE TEACHERS' COLLEGE	UNITED COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
adjective	Isiphawulo	isiphawulo	isiphawulo
adjective concords	izivumelwano zesiphawulo	izivumelwano zesiphawulo	izivumelwano zesiphawulo
adjectival stems	iziqu zesiphawulo	iziqu zesiphawulo	iziqu zesiphawulo
possessive	Ubumnini	ubumnini	ubumnini
possessive concords	izivumelwano zobumnini	izivumelwano zobumnini	izivumelwano zobumnini
word	ibala/igama	ibala/igama	ibala/igama
alliteration	imvumelwano yabongwaqa	imvumelwano yabongwaqa	imvumelwano yabongwaqa
assonance	imvumelwano yabonkamisa	imvumelwano yabonkamisa	imvumelwano yabonkamisa
concord	isivumelwano	isivumelwano	isivumelwano
verb	Isenzo	isenzo	isenzo
verb stem	umsuka	umsuka	umsuka
noun stem	Isiqu	isiqu	isiqu
quantitative pronoun	isabizwana senani	isabizwana senani	isabizwana senani
pronoun	Isabizwana	isabizwana	isabizwana
absolute pronoun	isabizwana soqobo	isabizwana soqobo	isabizwana soqobo
subjectival concord	isivumelwano sikamenzi	isivumelwano sikamenzi	isivumelwano sikamenzi

objectival concord	isivumelwano sikamenziwa	isivumelwano sikamenziwa	isivumelwano sikamenziwa
verbal derivatives	impambosi zesenzo	impambosi	impambosi
conflict	---	---	udwetshu
personification	ukwenza samuntu	ukwenza samuntu	wenza samuntu
irony	Ukubhuqa	ukubhuqa	ukubhuqa
imagery	---	---	imifanekiso
labilisation	ukundebezisa	---	---
alveolarisation	Ukunsininiza	---	---
vowel ellision	ukweqiwa kwabonkamisa		
labials	Ondebembili	ondebembili	ondebembili
dentilabials	Ondebezinyo	ondebezinyo	ondebezinyo
prepalatals	Olwangeni	olwangeni	olwangeni
velars	Omalakeni	omalakeni	omalakeni
assimilation	ukwethekelana kwabonkamisa okungaphelelanga	ukwethekelana kwabonkamisa okungaphelelanga	ukwethekelana kwabonkamisa okungaphelelanga
syntax	ukuhlelwa komutsho	ukuhlelwa komutsho	ukuhlelwa komutsho
semantics	ingcazelomagama	---	---
vowel coalasence	ukulumbana kwabonkamisa	ukulumbana kwabonkamisa	ukulumbana kwabonkamisa
complete assimilation	ukwethekelana kwabonkamisa okupheleleyo	---	---
demonstrative	isabizwana sokukhomba	isabizwana sokukhomba	isabizwana sokukhomba
morphology	ukwakhiwa kwamagama	---	---
satire	Umbhinqo	---	---
plot	Isakhiwo	isakhiwo	isakhiwo
literary criticism	ukucutshungulwa kwemibhalo	ukucutshungulwa kwemibhalo	ukucutshungulwa kwemibhalo
round character	umlingiswa oququkayo	umlingiswa oququkayo	umlingiswa oququkayo
prefix	Isiqalo	isiqalo	isiqalo
noun	Ibizo	ibizo	ibizo
substantive	Usobizo	usobizo	usobizo
verb	Isenzo	isenzo	isenzo
suffix	Isijobelelo	isiphongozo	isijobelelo
relative	Isibaluli	isibaluli	isibaluli

relative concord	isivumelwano sesibaluli	isivumelwano sesibaluli	isivumelwano sesibaluli
tense	Isikhathi	inkathi	inkathi
copulative	Isibanjalo	isibanjalo	isibanjalo
future tense	isikhathi esizayo	inkathi ezayo	inkathi ezayo
figure of speech	Isifinqo	isifinqo	isifinqo
comprehension	inzwisisa-inqondisiso	---	---
exam -test	Isivivinyo	isivivinyo	isivivinyo
dialogue	Ingxoxo	ingxoxo	ingxoxo
excerpt	Isiqendu	isicaphuno	isicaphuno
chapter	Isahluko	isahluko	isahluko
line	umugqa –umzila	umzila	umzila
theme	Indikimba	indikimba	indikimba
intention	Injongo	injongo	injongo
feelings	Imizwa	imizwa	imizwa
sarcasm	Ukubhuqa	---	---
tense	Isikhathi	inkathi	inkathi
drama	Umdlalo	umdlalo	umdlalo
character	Umlingiswa	umlingiswa	umlingiswa
characterisation	ukuchaza abalingiswa- ubulingiswa	ukuchaza abalingiswa- ubulingiswa	ukuchaza abalingiswa- ubulingiswa
plot	isakhiwo- ukwakhiwa kogwalo	isakhiwo- ukwakhiwa kogwalo	isakhiwo- ukwakhiwa kogwalo
book	Ugwalo	ugwalo	ugwalo
diction	ulimi- ukusetshenziswa kolimi	ulimi-ukusetshenziswa kolimi	ulimi- ukusetshenziswa kolimi
idioms	uliminyonico	---	---
praise poetry	Izibongo	izibongo	izibongo
clan praises	Izithakazelo	izithakazelo	izithakazelo
riddles	iziphico- amalibho	amalibho	amalibho

\*Department of Curriculum & Arts Education



## APPENDIX II

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# SOME ESSENTIAL TERMS FOR NDEBELE STUDENT TEACHERS

These were obtained from the Ndebele Department at Hillside Teachers' College. The terms and words listed below with English translations are meant to help trainee teachers in their everyday work in schools.

*Hillside Teachers College - Ugatsha Lwezifundo Zesindebele*

*Ulublu Lwamagama Angaphathisa Umfundi-mbalisi*

lecturer	umqegetshi
student teacher	umfundi-mbalisi
to quote	ukucaphuna- ukucupha
quotation	isicaphuno
translate	humutsha
indent	hlehlisela phakathi ekhasini
reference	inhlelangwalo
bibliography	umthombo wolwazi
lesson source	umthapho
quotation marks	inkophe
brackets	izibaya
full stop	ungqe
comma	ikhefana
author	umlobi
psychologist	usungqondo
experience	inkambiso
mentally engaged	ukuphatheka
actively engaged	ukuphathisa
tasks	imininingwana
suspense	ulukuluku
motivation	umdladla
enthusiasm	isasasa
chalkboard	umgwembe
instructional learning aids	impahlakuphathisa/izincedisio

The Standardisation of the Ndebele Language Through Dictionary-making

job cards	amagwalibamsebenzi
chart	itshathi
text	umbhalo olomqondo ophelileyo
word	ibala – igama
discourse	inkulumo
sentence	umutsho
explanation mark	isibabazo
question mark	unobuza
rhetoric question	umbuzo odungayo ongadingi mpendulo
alliteration	imvumelwano yabongwaqa
assonance	imvumelwano yabonkamisa
rhythm	isigqi
rhyme	imvumelwano
pace	isiqubu
prefix	isiqalo
suffix	isijobelelo
concord	isivumelwano
syllable	ilunga
verb stem	umsuka
noun stem	isiqu
part of speech	ucezu lwenkulumo
phoneme	uhlamvu
consonantisation	ukungwaqazisa
palatalization	ukulwangisa
approach	indlela
method	indlela
strategies	amasu- amacebo
technique	iqhinga
feedback	impumelamuva
challenge	ukuqhudelana
lesson evaluation	impumela yesifundo
evaluate	hluza
describe	chaza
arrange	hlela
explain	chasisa
interpret	cacisa
analyse	hlaziya-cubungula
narrate	landisa
to test	ukuvivinya- ukuhlola
a test	umhloliso
pretest	isivivinyo mandulo

post test	isivivinyo sokuphetha
skill	ubuciko
competence	ubungcitshi
capabilities	amakhono
cram	thamunda
qualities-characteristics	izimpawu
atmosphere	umumo
classroom atmosphere	umumo wesifundo
conducive atmosphere	umumo okhululekileyo
research	isichwayisiso
theory of literature	umhlahlandlela
theory of language	isimiso- isisekelo
drive	umfutho
essence – gist	umfukula- umongo-umnkantsho
plot	isakhiwo
characters	abalingiswa
suspense	ulukuluku- ingwabungwabu
theme	indikimba
tragedy	imbangalusizi
comedy	inhlekisa
satire	umbhinqo
intensive listening	ukulalela ngokuchophela
metaphor	ukungathekisa
irony	ukubhuqa
simile	isifaniso
hyperbole	ihaba
sarcasm	ukubhinqa
antithesis	ukuqathanisa
personification	ukwenzasamuntu
euphemism	inhlonipho
interaction	ubudlelwano
interact	dala ubudlelwano
senses	izinzwa
role play	ukulingisa
plays	imidlalo
dialogue	ingxoxo
question & answer	imibuzo mpendulo
games	imidlalwana
simulation	ukuzifaka esimeni esiphilayo

Uluhlu Luqoqwe Ehillside Teachers College  
Ngolwezi 2000





APPENDIX III

## NDEBELE TRANSLATIONS OF ENGLISH & LATIN LEGAL TERMS

Terms obtained from the magistrate's court used by court interpreters during sessions. As the Ndebele translations show below, there are no Ndebele equivalents for English or Latin legal terms but lengthy explanations of each term.

ENGLISH	NDEBELE
private/civil law	umthetho ophathelene lamacala ombango
procedural law	umthetho okhangela ukuthi lidaliwe na njalo nini
constitutional law	umthetho wezimiso zikahulumende ezweni
criminal law	umthetho wamacala okuganga
defamation	ukungcolisa ibizo lomuntu/lenkampani ngenkulumo
libel	ukungcolisa ibizo ngombhalo
to lie under oath	ukuqamba amanga ufungile enkundleni
beyond reasonable doubt	ngendlela esuthusayo kungelakuthandabuza
murder with intent	ukubulala umuntu uhlosile
murder with constructive intent	ukubulala unгахlosanga kodwa ngenxa yokucatshulwa kumbe ukuzivikela
suspect	ocatshangelwayo, owetheswa icala, isibotshwa esingakagwetshwa
facing charges	ukwetheswa/ukubekwa icala
bail	imali yesibambiso
appeal	ukukweza icala ulisa enkundleni ephezulu
maintenance	isondlo/ukondla
police custody	ukugcinwa esitokisini
child abuse	ukuhlukuluza umntwana
equal rights	amathuba/amalungelo afanayo/alinganayo
civil court	inkundla ethonisa amacala ombango
prejudice	ukulahlekelwa/ukusekela uhlangothi
testimony/evidence	ubufakazi
null and void	into/ubufakazi/umthetho ongasebenziyo
chief justice	umahluli omkhulu
judge president	omkhulu wabomahluli
de facto	iqiniso/okuyikho

obsolete	into/umthetho ongasasebenziyo ngenxa yesikhathi
justification	izizatho ezitshengisa ukuthi kungani umuntu enze ulutho
depose	ukufakaza ufungile
open court	inkundla evumela wonke umphakathi
abduction	ukuthumba
fraud	ukuntshontsha ngendlela zokukhohlisa
treason	ukuhlamukela uhulumende
incest	ukulala lesihlobo segazi
beastiosis	ukulala sifuyo/inyamazana
sodomy	owesilisa esenza omunye owesilisa umfazi
investigations	ukucupha, ukuchwayisisa, ukudinga ubufakazi
dockets	amaphepha amacala abhalwa ngamapholisa

(Source: Mr P.Makondo, Tredgold Building, Bulawayo)

## APPENDIX IV

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# TERMS USED IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION BY MEDIA

This is an extract from the back matter of the ISN. These are some of the terms generally used by the media in reference to administration and politics.

ENGLISH	NDEBELE
president	umongameli
acting president	obambele umongameli
vice president	umsekeli kamongameli
minister	umphathintambo
member of parliament	omele isiqinti/isabelo kudale lephalamende
speaker of parliament	usomlomo
legal & parliamentary affairs minister	umphathintambo wezomthetho lezephalamende
home affairs minister	umphathintambo wokuqhutshwa kwezelizweni
foreign affairs minister	umphathintambo okhangelane lobudlelwano belizwe lamanye amazwe
chairman	umgcinisihlalo
mayor	umeya
district administrator	umsitheli
parliament	idale lephalamende
province	isabelo
village	isigaba



## RULES FOR SPELLING AND WORD DIVISION FOR NDEBELE

These are the rules for spelling and word division in Ndebele. Some of the rules are outdated but in the absence of any updated ones, the rules remain operational, at least in theory.

### 1. Long and short plural forms, Class V nouns

Except in the case of monosyllable stems where prefix is IZIN or IZIM, nouns of Class V plural may be spelt either as the singular form (the most common practice) or with the prefix IZIN or IZIM.

e.g. inkomo lezi OR izinkomo lezi  
inkabi zami OR izinkabi zami

Monosyllabic stems must take the long form.

e.g. singular: inja yami                      plural: izinja zami  
      "        imvu kababa                      "        izimvu zikababa

Note: Class VI plural nouns come under the same rule.

e.g. singular: ugwalo                      plural: ingwalo OR izingwalo  
      "        ufudu                      "        imfudu OR izimfudu

### 2. Consonants

- (i) Bilabial Implosive. This will be represented by the Roman letter -b- e.g. baba, ubudoda, umbuzo, ayecabanga.  
This means in effect that no special symbols representing consonants will now be used in Ndebele. Roman letters only will be used.
- (ii) Bilabial Explosive. The partially devocalised bilabial explosive, which always occurs at the beginning of a syllable, will be written -bh- e.g. ukubhema, idolobho, umbhali.
- (iii) Bilabial Explosive in Nasal Compound. The combination of voiced bilabial nasal and explosive will be written -mb- e.g. hamba, imbongi, umkhumbulo.
- (iv) Voiced Glottal Fricative. This sound will be represented by a single h e.g. ihatshi, ihofisi.

### 3. The Hyphen

The hyphen will be used as follows:

- (i) When money signs are used, e.g. imali engange-\$5:  
Letha imali eyi-\$1,20.

- (ii) To separate two similar vowels coming together, (found only in foreign words) e.g. ama-apula, ama-altari.

#### 4. Apostrophe

- (i) The apostrophe will be used to mark elision, which occurs mainly in poetry and dialogue, e.g. 'Ngob' isab' izal' ukuduma.' In prose literature for the primary school words will be written in full.
- (ii) Common elided forms may be written without the apostrophe, e.g. mntanami.

#### 5. Capital Letters

Capital letters will be used for the following:

- (i) Personal names (Proper names) of Class 1A, including compounds of so- lo- and ma-, e.g. uNtombenhle, uLozizwe, uSobantu, uMaSibanda, uMaNdlovu, uThemba.
- (ii) National and Tribal designations. The first letter of the stem will be the capital, e.g. iXhosa, umuThwa, amaNgisi, iNdebele, amaNdebele.
- (iii) In nouns denoting languages the first letter of the stem will similarly be a capital, e.g. isiNgisi, isiZulu, isiSuthu, isiNdebele.
- (iv) Geographical names. The first letter after the initial vowel of the prefix or after the adverbial formative ko- or the locative prefix e- will be capital, e.g. eGwanda, eLupane, eNgilandi, koBulawayo.
- (v) In other nouns, if a capital is needed, the first letter after the initial vowel of the prefix will be capital, e.g. iMbongi, uMnumzana, iNkosi.
- (vi) The Deity. The first letter after the initial vowel of the prefix will be capital, e.g. uNkulunkulu, uMenzi, uMelusi, oLungileyo, uMoya oNgcwele or uMoya oyiNgcwele.

N.B. The absolute pronouns and possessives referring to the Deity will be written with small letters.

- (vii) Days of the week. The first letter after the initial vowel of the prefix will be the capital, e.g. uMvulo, ngoLwesibili, ngeNsonto, etc.

#### 6. Word Division

Zulu orthography should be followed, i.e. conjunctive writing.

- (v) Simple and compound verb forms.  
e.g. ngihamba, ngiyahamba, sizahamba, sizakuhamba...
- (vi) Verb forms compounded with the deficient verb se-.  
e.g. sengihamba, sengihambile, sesizahamba, sebahamba, wayesehambile, ...
- (vii) Simple and Compound concords with copulatives, adjectives, etc.,  
e.g. ngilaye, nginguye, ngingumfana, ngimfitshane, ...

Note: In the above examples the verb stem -ba is not used, but the verb 'to be' is understood.

- (viii) When the verb stem -ba is used, the words that follow should not be joined on but written separately (as with all other verb stems).  
e.g. ngizaba mkhulu, sizakuba khona, sizaba laye, uzaba yindoda, waba lathi, ...
- (ix) Demonstrative pronouns

When the demonstrative pronoun follows the noun it is written disjunctively, e.g. umfana lowo, ilanga lelo, abafana laba.

When the demonstrative pronoun precedes the noun it should be written conjunctively, with the initial of the noun being elided, or the vowel of the pronoun being elided.

e.g. lowomfana, lelolanga, lababafana, lezizinkomo, lumfana, lindoda, lumfula

Note: When the elision is not required, then the pronoun is written disjunctively,

e.g.

lo umfana, le indoda.

### 7. Enclitics

-ke will be joined by a hyphen to the preceding word, e.g. hamba-ke, wakhuluma-ke, walala-ke.

Ni? Phi? These suffixes will be joined to the preceding word or formative, e.g.

Wenzani? Ufunani? Ulalaphi? Uzalwaphi?

Nje Bo These will be written separately, e.g. Wazibonela nje. Hambo bo. Kahle bo. As an adverbial suffix nje will be joined to the adverb, e.g. lamhlanje.

Na? This will be written separately, e.g. Uthini na? Ungubani na? Kawumbonanga na?

### 8. Spelling

In Ndebele the written form for the sound 'ch' will be 'tsh' e.g. ukutshada, umtshitshi. (extracted from E.W. Krog (1982) A Zimbabwean Author's Guide)





## APPENDIX VI

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# USER RESPONSE

The editors of the ISN conducted seminars in selected schools and colleges in Ndebele-speaking districts to solicit views on the dictionary. Among issues of concern raised by some dictionary users was the inclusion of loanwords in the ISN. The chief editor of the ISN was not part of the team that conducted these seminars. These views reflect the attitudes of the people towards language change rather than knowledge of linguistic or lexicographic matters as some participants were school children and lay people. Only sections that are relevant have been extracted.

REPORT ON THE NLU'S OUTREACH PROGRAMME HELD IN MATEBELELAND AND MIDLANDS PROVINCES FROM THE 15<sup>TH</sup> TO THE 30<sup>TH</sup> OF AUGUST, 2002.

### TEAM MEMBERS

MR L. KHUMALO (TEAM LEADER)  
MR M. MAPHOSA  
MR C. NCUBE  
MR V. NDLOVU  
*MR T. DUBE*

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report chronicles the findings of the NLU during its outreach programme visit to Matebeleland and Midlands provinces. Section 1.1 outlines the purpose of the visit. Section 1.2 is a presentation of views and opinions from the users of **Isichazamazwi sesiNdebele**. Section 1.3 presents the recommendations of the NLU team and a conclusion. Four papers were presented during seminars conducted by the team in the places visited.

[ sections left out ]

### 1.3.1 THE PROBLEM OF LOAN WORDS

The inclusion of loan words in the dictionary is a bone of contention to the users of Isichazamazwi sesiNdebele. There was a general feeling by some people that too much borrowing could corrupt the language. The inclusion of words carrying the sound 'r' was widely criticised by people. Some people felt that the editors should not have inclu-

ded loan words in the dictionary, especially where Ndebele has equivalent terms. The following examples were noted:

<u>NDEBELE</u>	<u>LOANWORD</u>
Isijeza	inopi
Insingo	ireza
Umbangazwe	ipolitiki
Ubabhemi	idonki
iwule	ishamari
.....	irula
.....	irobhothi

This criticism came despite the team having explained how the collection of words was carried out. That is, through recording every day conversations from different Ndebele communities dotted through out Matebeleland and Midlands provinces and that the dictionary is a reflection of how the people speak the language today and not how the language was spoken some centuries ago. The irony of the criticism is that some people are comfortable to accept the sound 'r' in words such as 'irula' and 'irobhothi' but are not comfortable when the same sound appear in words such 'ishamari'. It was apparent from the discussion that some words were being denied place in the dictionary on the bases of attitude towards the source language at the expense of the principles of the science of lexicography. Thus words such as 'inopi' and 'ishamari' were criticised because they are borrowed words from Kalanga and Shona respectively. After demonstrating that Ndebele has a lot of borrowed words which today people misconceive to be authentic Ndebele words there was a change of heart as the majority were agreeable with the criterion of selecting headwords because this is how the language is used everyday. Those who understood the 'Frequency List' criteria however felt there is need to explain the source of the borrowed words. Others also suggested that there is need for people to come together and concur on how some loanwords should be put down in writing or coin Ndebele equivalents for these loan words.

#### ALRI AND THE MINISTRIES OF EDUCATION

While the publication of Isichazamazwi sesiNdebele comes with lots of advantages for students and teachers of Ndebele Structure, there is a general concern of whether the Ndebele reflected in the publication is now examinable. People wanted to know how closely ALRI work with ZIMSEC through the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture to ensure that the loan words are examinable. There is a general conceros that the ALRI should ask the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture to issue a circular to schools and colleges to the effect that sounds such as 'r' and 'dzi' are now part of the Ndebele lexicon and should be acceptable in the curricular syllabi. The institute was general criticized for not vigorously campaigning for the teaching of isiNdebele using Ndebele as a medium of instruction at University level. This was viewed as contradiction of ALRI's objective to promote local languages.

# STYLE MANUAL FOR THE ISN IZIQONDISO ZOKULOBA ISICHAZAMAZWI

This is an extract from an abridged version of the ISN Style Manual and Metalanguage List. The final version of the Style is entirely in Ndebele, therefore below are extracts from earlier drafts in English. Only sections of the style manual that are directly relevant to the thesis are included.

## THE STYLE MANUAL

### ABBREVIATIONS

-see metalanguage list

### ACRONYMS

1. Ndebele does not have acronyms.
2. If English acronyms are re-phonologised to form Ndebele words, these to be entered as Ndebele words:  
e.g. *i-eyidzi*, *izanu*, *isadakhi*, etc.

### ADJECTIVES

To be entered in stem form marked by hyphen

### AFFIXES

To be entered as headwords with appropriate hyphenation.

### ALPHABET

1. List alphabet in preface with examples
2. Start each letter in the alphabet with a description of the sound the letter(s) present
3. Use alphabetic order

### CAPITALISATION

1. Headword will appear in lower case bold e.g. **-dlana**
2. Rules for capitalisation will follow present Ndebele orthography.

### CENTRE PERIOD[.]

If used, it will mark morpheme boundaries

### COLOUR TERMS

1. To be listed in the ordinary way as headwords
2. A colour chart with labelled shading and Ndebele terms to be appendices

### COLLOQUIAL WORDS

Style marker snj < isimanje

This category may include slang words.

### CONTRACTIONS

Contracted forms to be cross-referenced.

e.g. **ubabamkhulu** > **Khulu**

### COMPASS POINTS

A maximum of eight compass points will be entered as headwords

### COMPOUNDS

1. To be entered as headwords The choice of the noun class of the compound is semantically and associatively determined. It is the first noun which determines the noun class of the compound.

1. **Umchilowamakhosikazi** (rainbow) -
2. **Umgcinisihlalo** (Chairperson) -
3. **Inyokayabafazi** (type of worm) -
4. **Iqathanzipho** (Clean person) -

NB. No hyphens in compound words

### DEFINING FORMATS

1. Be brief.
2. Separate entries are to be made for each sense.
3. Primary sense will determine which sense is listed first.
4. Aim for definitions that are long enough to cover the concept, but avoid overparticularisation. E.g. with concrete nouns define just far enough to suggest the reality of the object.

### DEFINITION STYLE

Cobuild's format to be used. For an example:

### NOUNS

1. **indwangu** kpp bz 9 indwangu yinyamazana elesiphongo, ifana lenkawu kodwa yona inkulu. FAN imfene Isib. Indwangu intshontshe umumbu emasimini  
**indwangu** kpp bz 9 indwangu lilembu.
2. If you are a **master** -(**HeadWord**) of something .....  
e.g. **iqhawe** - nxa uliqhawe empini uyabe utshengise isibindi lokukhalipha.
3. You call someone (**HeadWord**) when you  
e.g. **Isitha** - Uthi umuntu yisitha sakho nxa lizondana
4. When you call someone a ..( headword) you mean/ you think  
e.g. **Igovu** - Nxa usithi umuntu ligovu uyabe usitsho ukuthi uyaphanga nxa esidla njalo uyancitshana.
5. In the armed forces an officer is ...  
e.g. **Umetroni**- Kwezokwelapha umetroni ngunesi omkhulu.

**Ukutshengisela** - Nxa emsebenzini, emakolitshini kube lokutshengisela abantu bayabe bekhalele umsebenzi, besebenze mbijana, kumbe bematsha ezitaladini bekhonona ngomumo wezinto.

(b) **VERBS** The definition of verbs to have a **typical subject**. Giving a typical subject contextualises the definition and makes it more lucid

**-thenga** kp sz ukuthenga yikubhadalela ulutho olufunayo. Isib. *Thenga izigqoko lokudla.*

-Nxa uthenga impahla uyabe ulubhadalela

### EXTENSIONS

**-ela** jbl sz.mwa kp lesi yisijobelelo esisetshenziswa ukutshengisa ukuba umenziwa nguye osizakalayo kuleso senzo. Isib. *mina nginqinekela impilo yakho mntanami.*

### IDEOPHONES

**vumbu** pp szk lesi yisenzukuthi esitshengisa ukuthutsha okungakhangelelwanga. Isib. *Sithe sisalibele vumbu umfana owayegalule.*

**goje** -Nxa umuntu angathi **goje** okunathwayo uyabe enathe ngokuphangisa njalo wahle waqeda.

**Ntshobe**- Nxa igundwane lingathi **ntshobe** liyabe ligijime langena emlindini ngokuphangisa okukhulu. The GND team was yet to give a response to these suggestions.

### DIALECTS

Where necessary, regional usages will be mentioned otherwise comparisons will be made in Zulu.

### DIVISION OF WORDS

Current Ndebele/Zulu orthography will be followed.

### ETYMOLOGY

To be reserved for the Advanced Ndebele Dictionary.

### EXAMPLES

1. A maximum of one example, taking into account the different meanings.
2. Short and in italics.
3. To illustrate meanings or uses only as necessary.

### EXTENTIONS

(See affixes)

N.B We will make a list of these and then deal with them later in defining stages.

### FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Necessary abbreviations, in capital letters will be included in the abbreviation lists and will be derived from the Ndebele form of the language name.

### GEOGRAPHICAL ENTRIES

None as main entries, possibly a detailed map of Zimbabwe.

### HEADWORDS

To be entered in lower case bold type and be will generic terms only (no proper names)

### HEADWORD SELECTION

To be provided (see appendix)

### HEADWORD VARIANTS

To be entered according to the status held in the variant in common usage.

### HOMOGRAPHS

List as separate entries.

e.g. *ingulube* - pig

- type of stars

*indwangu*-baboon

-loose fitting garment/robe made from cloth.

### HYPHENATED WORDS

See affixes

### IDEOPHONES

1. Reduplicated forms: enter as headwords only if meaning is unpredictable.
2. Ideophone based verbs: enter as headwords the basic ones e.g. *bani*
3. The ones with ideophonising morphemes like *-iyane* and *-i* are endless and therefore, for the time being, should be left out.e.g *dlaniyane, dobbiyane, hambiyane*, etc.

### IDIOMS

Defer entering them in the meantime.

### ILLUSTRATIVE PHRASES AND SENTENCES

If used, to be taken from the corpus. Full examples, proverbs, sayings, idioms, and examples not found in the corpus will be avoided, but final decisions on what to include after decisions on what to include will be made after the corpus has been built.

### ILLUSTRATIONS

To be omitted for purposes of saving space.

### INFLECTED FORMS

see affixes

### MYTHOLOGICAL ENTRIES

Enter generic words only, not names.

## NOUNS

Main entries in the singular except for those plural forms without a corresponding singular. Will use prefixes as a way of entering headwords unlike Pelling who used stems. For an example:

### Pelling

umu-zi > **umuzi**

isi-ziba > **isiziba**, etc

To revisit nouns which have singulars which are rarely used.

e.g. **iliva**(singular) > **ameva**(plural)

## NUMBERING OF DEFINITIONS

Bold Arabic numerals.

## NUMBERS

As head words both cardinal and ordinal numbers will be entered for 1-9, 10, 100, 1000, million.

## OFFENSIVE WORDS

Selection: words needed for health information will be included and corpus is to be relied on for selection.

## ORDER OF DEFINITIONS

The first definition will be that of the most common meaning of the word in usage.

## ORTHOGRAGHY

Current Ndebele/ Zulu orthography will be followed with some decisions made where inconsistencies exist in the orthography.

## PROPER NAMES

Not to be entered.

## PUNCTUATION

In editorial language

### FULL STOP:

(a) after grammatical information

(b) after examples

(c) after synonyms

(d) after antonyms

(e) after compare item(s)

(f) at end of entry

Other punctuation will follow the conversions of orthography

## SEE ( use of )

Form in editorial language bona in straight type.

### SERIES ENTRIES

1. Selection: Semantic sets to be identified before defining begins. Series entries to include at least days of the week, months of the year, seasons, musical terms, units of measurement etc.
2. Members of a semantic set to be entered as ordinary headwords in alphabetic order.
3. Definition style members of the semantic set to be defined in the same format and, ideal by the same editor.

### SIGNS AND SYMBOLS

See metalanguage list.

### SYLLABIFICATION

Not to be entered in the entries.

### SYNONYMS

Synonyms are words which are different in spelling but which mean the same thing. Any synonym should be entered as a separate head word.

If the synonymous words are an indigenous and a loan word e.g **unesi/umongikazi**, the definition should be placed in the indigenous word **-umongikazi**.

The more commonly used word should be the one that carries the meaning e.g **umbane/inkosazana** (lightning). The word that is commonly used is umbane. For the entry inkosazana, in the definition you write -umbane.

1. One or two synonyms may be entered after the definition proper. Antonyms to be used sparingly and only when useful.
2. Range of synonyms: enter very near synonyms only. List synonym with the closest meaning first, then in descending order with respect to closeness in meaning.

### VARIANTS

A variant for our purposes are words which mean the same thing but which differ slightly in spelling. Any variant should be entered as a separate word.

Variants which are borrowed words, choose the variant which fits best with the orthography e.g **umanisipala/umanisipalathi**, **umanisipalathi** is the variant that would carry the definition.

### TECHNICAL LANGUAGE

Enter words as they are used by the community, re-morphologised into Ndebele if possible e.g, **ikhompuyutha, iglobhu**.

### tone PATTERNS

For high tone > K meaning khwela

For low tone > P meaning phansi

e.g. **-thanda kp**

**umuzi kkp**



USAGE NOTES

To be made

VERBS

To be entered by stem e.g. **-hamba**



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## THE METALANGUAGE LIST

ENGLISH	NDEBELE	ABBREVIATIONS
adverb	isandiso	sd
affix	isakhi	sak
affricate	umfuthwa	mftth
alveolar	unsinini	ns
also	njalo	njl
antonym	aphikisanayo	phk
applied extension	impambosi yokwenzela	ela
aspirated	okutshiwo ngokuhahazisa	hh
alphabet	uluhlu lwenhlamvu zamabala	luhl
assimilation	ukuthathelana kwemisindo	
auxiliary verb	insizasenzo	nzs
bilabial	undebembali	ndb
bracket	isibaya	by
capital letter	uhlamvukhulu	hlk
causative extension	impambosi yokwenzisa	isa
central meaning	ingcazelo emqoka	ngc.mqk
click sound	ungwaqabathwa	ngb
colloquial/informal	isimanje	snj
complex sentence	umutsho ombaxa	mbx
compound word	umbaxa	bx
comprehension	ukuzwisisa	zw
concord	isivumelwano	isiv
conjugation	ukuguqulwa kwesenzo	gsz
conjunctive	isihlanganiso	shl
consonant	ungwaqa	ng
contents	okumunyethweyo	okmny
composition	indatshana yokuzibumbela	ndtsh
continuous tense	inkathi esaqhubeka	nk.qk
copulative	isibanjalo	sbj
cross reference	khangela njalo	kh.njl
deficient verb	isingasenzo	ssz
demonstrative copulative	isibanjalo sokukhomba	sbja
demonstrative adverb	isandiso sokukhomba	sda
dental	uzinyweni	z
denti-labial	undebezinyo	nd
derivative	impambosi	mp
derivative verb	impambosi yesenzo	mpsz
dialogue	ingxoxo	ngx
dictionary	isichazamazwi	chaz
diminutive	isinciphiso	ncp
ejective	uphutshu	ptsh
elementary stage	ekucathuleni	cat
elide	yeqa	yeq
enumerative	inani	in
example	isibonelo	isib
exclamation	ukubabaza	bbz
explosive/plosive/stop	obhamu	bh
extension	ukujobelela	jbl
figure of speech	isifenzo	fnq
form	isimo	sm
formative	isakhi	sak
fricative	umfuthwa	mftth

future tense	inkathi ezayo	nk.zy
gender	ubulili	bil
glottal	umphinjeni	mphnj
grammar	uhlelo	hl
headword	ibala	bal
high tone	iphimbo eliphezulu	k
ideophone	isenzukuthi	szk
idioms	izitsho	ztsh
illustration	umdwebo	dweb
imperative mood	indlela ephoqayo	ndl.phq
impersonal noun	ibizonto	bznt
indicative mood	indlela eqondisayo	nndl.qnd
infinitive mood	indlela esabizo	ndl.esabz
infix	isakhi saphakathi	sak.phk
inflection	inguquko	ngq
intensive extension	impambosi yokwensisa	isisa
interjective	isibabazo	sbbz
intonation	iphimbo	phimb
intransitive verb	isenzo esingelamenziwa	szgmwa
labial/bilabial	ondebe/ondebembili	nd/ndb
lateral sound	ohlangothini	hlngth
labial-dental	ndebezinyo	ndz
letter	uhlamvu	hlv
locative adverb	isandiao sendawo	sdo
low tone	iphimbo eliphansi	p
meaning	ingcazelo	ngc
mood	indlela yesenzo	ndl.sz
morpheme	imofimu	mof
morphology	imofoloji	mflj
nasal	umankankana	mnk
nasalisation	ukunkankaza	nkz
nasalised	okunkankaziweyo	nkzyo
Ndebele	Ndebele	nd
negative	ukuphika	phk
neuter extension	impambosi yokwenzana	ana
noun class	isigaba sebizo	isig.bz
noun	ibizo	bz
object	umenziwa	mwa
object concord	isivumelwano sikamenziwa	isiv.mwa
onomatopoeia	Isifuzamsindo	fzms
opposite	okuphikisayo	phk
orthography	ubhalomagama	bhg
other meanings	ezinye ingcazelo	
palatal	olwangen	lw
palatalisation	ukulwangisa	lws
paragraph	indima	ndm
participial		
passive extension	impambosi yokwenziwa	iwa
past tense	inkathi edluleyo	nk.dl
perfect tense	inkathi yokwenziweyo	nk.kwyo
personal name	ibizomuntu	bzmnt
plural	ubunengi	bng
positive	ukuvuma	vum
possessive	ubumnini	mn
possessive concord	isivumelwano sobumnini	isiv.mn
potential mood	indlela yamandla	ndl.ma
predicate	isilandiso	slnd
prefix	isiqalo	sq
prepalatal	olwangen-thamba	lwth
present tense	inkathi yamanje	nk.nje
pronoun	isabizwana	sbz
pronunciation	ukuphinyiswa kwamagama	phm
proverb	isaga	s
qualificative/qualifier	isichasiso	isich
quantitative	inani	in
reciprocal extension	impambosi yokwenzana	ana

reduplicative extension	impambosi yokwenzayenza	ynz
relative adjective	isiphawulo	isiph
relative concord	isivumelwano sesichasiso	isiv.sich
relative descriptive	isibaluli	isibal
root	umsuka wesenzo	msuk
semantics	isayensi yokuchazwa	smtks
	kwamazwi/semantiksi	
sentence	umutsho	m
simile	isifaniso	sif
simple sentence	umutsho ongela mbaxa	
semi- vowel	usingankamisa	snk
synonym	amagama alengcazelo efanayo	fan
singular	ubunye	buny
spelling	isipele	sp
stabilizer	isakhi sokuqinisa	sak.q
stem	isiqu	sq
structure	uhfelo	hf
subject	umenzi/inhloko	mz/nhl
subject concord	isivumelwano senhloko	isiv.nhl
substantive	usobizo	sbzo
suffix	isijobelelo	sjbl
syllable	ilunga	lg
syntax	isintaksi/ukuhlelwa	stk
	kwamazwi emutshweni	
tense	inkathi	nk
transitive verb	isenzo esilomenziwa	sz.mwa
usage	ukusetshenziswa	setsh
velar sound	ulwangen-i-muva	lwmv
verb	isenzo	sz
verse/stanza	isiqendu	sqd
voiced	olezwi/onezwi	zwi
voiceless	ongelazwi/ongenazwi	ngzwi
vowel	unkamisa	nk
word division	ukwehlukaniswa kwamabala	kwb



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Indinganiso yolimi lwesindebele edalwe yikulotshwa kwezichazamazwi

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ALLEX Project Ndebele Corpus // [www.lexilogik.se/](http://www.lexilogik.se/)