

**Sibusiso Nyembezi.** *Isichazimazwi Sanamuhla Nangomuso.* (*Dictionary for today and the future*). Zulu dictionary, 1st edition 1992, 561 pp. ISBN 0 947457 40 2. Pietermaritzburg: Reach Out Publishers. Price R48,40.

## 1. Introduction

*Isichazimazwi Sanamuhla Nangomuso* is an important addition to the development of explanatory dictionaries in Zulu and other Bantu languages of South Africa. The publication is a clear recognition of the importance of the preservation and development of Zulu as a language. It also establishes the need to reinforce and develop this language's capacity to explain itself.

## 2. Word Classes

The classification of words into various grammatical categories constitutes the key to the compilation of dictionaries.

Historically, the Dokean approach has dominated the classification of Zulu words into various categories. Later attempts to improve on the Dokean model have not been generally accepted. This has created a problem for the lexicographers.

The Dokean model classifies Zulu words into twelve parts of speech. The model mainly uses a functional approach. Consequently, nouns for example, are classified as different parts of speech if used as qualificatives (cf. Adjective, Relative, Enumerative, and Possessive) or when used as adverbs. Similarly, the pronoun is also recognised even where it is strictly speaking a qualificative, cf. the demonstrative. Other parts of speech identified in the Dokean classification include the Copulative and the so-called Conjunctive. Several of Doke's parts of speech do not constitute independent words with a particular meaning. Some of the "parts of speech" are not semantic units at all but mere grammatical entities.

Nyembezi has deviated somewhat from Doke's approach. He classifies the language into ten parts of speech, viz. the Noun, Verb, Ideophone, Pseudo-verbs, Interjective, Adverb, Pronoun, Relative, Adjective and Conjunctive. He has left out Doke's Copulative and Possessive.

The identification of the following parts of speech by Nyembezi do not seem to facilitate the lexicographer's task:

- (1) **Pronoun:** Although this part of speech is listed in the list of abbreviations, only a few pronouns could be traced in the text of the publication. The definitions given for the two words show clearly that the 'pronouns' are qualificative in use and import.

- (2) **The Adverb:** Many adverbs identified in the dictionary are simple nouns used as adverbs. Therefore, it appears that they should be labeled as nouns and defined as such, cf. certain nouns of classes 6, 11, 12 and 14; nouns such as *impela*, *imbala*, *obala* (see *ubala*), *ebusuku* (*ubusuku*), *ebusika*, (*ubusika*), *ekuphaleni* (*ukuphela*), *emini* (*imini*), etc. It appears more feasible to define the primary forms of these nouns only. The meanings of secondary forms can be derived from the primary meanings. The identification of secondary forms of nouns for lexicographical purposes is inappropriate. No dictionary can contain an exhaustive description of all uses of nouns. This should be left to semantics which gives special attention to the connotations of words.
- (3) **Pseudo-verbs and the Conjunctive:** It is a moot point if these parts of speech exist. The meaning contained by them is limited to the grammatical function they perform. The true realisation of the meanings conveyed by these words only occurs within the context of a following verb in the clause in which they are used. They belong more appropriately to the domain of grammar rather than the field of lexicography.
- (4) **The Adjective and the Relative:** There are no natural adjectives and relatives in Zulu. These are derived from nouns or verbs. Therefore, the definition of the meanings of the nouns and the verbs covers the definitions of the adjective and the relative adequately.

An interesting phenomenon about the qualificative is that whereas some nouns undergo a structural change to perform a qualificative function, many Zulu nouns are inherently qualificative in nature. They do not co-occur with other nouns used qualificatively in the sentence. An intriguing question is whether or not these "nouns" should be classified under the relative.
- (5) **The Use of the Imperative form of the Verb:** Nyembezi recognises the most important aspect of the Zulu verb, viz. that it can only be identified in its use. The use of the imperative as the key word for the verb is from a functional point of view an improvement over the use of the infinitive. The only shortcoming with its use as the keyword in a dictionary is that not all Zulu verbs are capable of being used in this form of the verb. Only the activity and achievement verbs are amenable to such usage. Process and stative verbs resist this use. For example, *khula*, *futha*, *chachamba*, *khuluphala*, *buna*, *ncipha* and a host of other verbs cannot be used in the imperative in normal speech. Therefore, the use of the imperative in the definition of the Zulu verb is inappropriate.

### 3. Technical Points

The use of diacritic marks to indicate tones of words is very helpful.

The bold lettering used for the items defined gives the dictionary a very neat and pleasing appearance.

The use of the singular and plural noun prefixes behind the noun stems and one prefix (singular or plural) to show that the noun only occurs in one of the forms will assist users of the dictionary.

The conjunctive indicated as *hl* is not given in the list of abbreviations. Similarly, the asterisk used to indicate *hlonipha* words is not explained.

The definitions of the diminutive, locative, and possessive forms of nouns, and derivative forms of verbs are unnecessary. These are functional forms of these parts of speech. They should be explained by the grammar of the language rather than the dictionary. Only exceptional cases of established derivations which have virtually become independent lexical items should be defined in a dictionary.

The entry of words with phonetic variants as independent items though defined identically is inelegant.

The preceding two observations mar the presentation of the definitions in the dictionary. They contribute to unnecessary repetition. This has resulted in lack of economy and unwarranted increase in bulk. This is unfortunate because it has adverse implications for the affordability of the dictionary.

### 4. Definitions

The definitions of words are very good.

The compiler has succeeded in maintaining a remarkable consistency in the format of definitions of nouns, verbs, the interjectives and the ideophones. For example, most definitions of nouns and verbs have the word bearing the key meaning occurring first in the definition. Similarly, the definition of the ideophone mostly commences with the words "*ukuchaza isimo / isenzo / isenzeko*" etc., and the interjective: "*isibabazo soku ...*" These features may be responsible for the concise and economical definitions found in the dictionary.

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