

Clifford Simango. *Concise Chindau Dictionary*. 2019, xii + 263 pp. ISBN: 978-1-77929-682-5. Harare: Dream Discovery. Price US\$9.

As a language that was first described and written by Portuguese and English explorers, traders, and missionaries, ChiNdau possesses the sort of intermittent lexicographic tradition seen in several other indigenous African languages. A vocabulary wordlist in Wilhelm Bleek's (1856) *The Languages of Mozambique* that records some Ndau words and their glosses under the Sofala column set the stage for lexicographic development in Ndau. Whereas Bleek's effort may sometimes fail to qualify as a 'dictionary' in several contested senses of the word, succeeding bilingual paper dictionaries such as Dysart and Orner's (1915) *ChiNdau–English English–ChiNdau Vocabulary with Grammatical Notes* and Manuel dos Anjos Martins's (2013) *Elementos Da Língua Ndau: Gramática, Literatura Oral e Dicionário* provided a springboard for a meaningful development of Ndau lexicography in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The dictionary under review, Clifford Simango's (2019) *Concise ChiNdau Dictionary* (hereafter CCD), is then a fourth lexicographic endeavour to be published in Ndau.

It is thus not only a welcome addition to the growing Ndau corpus but equally a strategic intervention "to document ChiNdau words" as it "is suffering from language degradation", as Simango (2019, iii-iv) says in his introduction. Because "ChiNdau-speaking students are taught Shona at school" notwithstanding its constitutionally acquired official language status in Zimbabwe, the CCD was excellently designed to be a significant turning-point in the lexicographic history of Ndau. The CCD is the first Ndau dictionary written for use in schools in view of conscious language development events transpiring at both macro and micro language planning levels in Zimbabwe. At a macro level, Ndau was constitutionally recognised as one of the 16 official languages that must be legally supported to function in all high status domains. Thus, with government authorisation and sufficient activism from mother-tongue speakers, it has somewhat penetrated domains such as broadcast media on radio and television, parliament and education. At a micro level, higher and tertiary education institutions such as Midlands State University, Great Zimbabwe University, Masvingo Teachers' College and Marymount Teachers' College have, to varying degrees of success, already introduced and implemented Ndau training personnel programmes in their institutions. In view of such a promising background for Ndau's development in Zimbabwe, a Professor of Biomedical Pathology at the University of Zimbabwe, Clifford Simango (now deceased), diverged from his own area of speciality to, despite his limited lexicographic skills, knowledge and experience, compile after a century the second bilingual ChiNdau–English and English–ChiNdau dictionary.

The CCD is a medium-sized, general-purpose, bilingual dictionary with 263 pages of main text and 13 pages of front matter. In line with normal dictionary practice, the compiler acknowledges, in one front matter text, seven

lexicographic and other works that were "used extensively in compiling the dictionary". The listed works are *Nduyo Dzokudira* (1907), *ChiNdau–English English–ChiNdau Vocabulary with Grammatical Notes* (1915) and the *Holy Bible* in Nda (1957), *Standard Shona Dictionary, Duramazwi Guru ReChiShona, A Practical Ndebele Dictionary* and *Scholar's Zulu Dictionary*. It is, of course, unfortunate that Simango did not refer to Manuel dos Anjos Martins's (2013) *Dicionario* section in his *Elementos Da Língua Nda: Gramática, Literatura Oral e Dicionário*. It is apparent, to the extent that dictionary data is distilled from previous works in Nda and other languages, that CCD is not a corpus-based dictionary but a lexicographic effort that was largely influenced by its compiler's intuition as a mother-tongue speaker. It also depended on his own personal judgment and preference in selecting data sources, an approach that, though somewhat understandable given the lack of a Nda corpus, is still regrettable because the front matter texts do very little to describe and explain the principles followed in compiling the dictionary. For instance, some reviewers and ordinary dictionary users might require further explanations on the lexicographic benefit/s of 'extensively consulting' Shona, Ndebele and Zulu dictionaries for a medium-sized bilingual Nda dictionary such as the CCD. Again, in the absence of a befitting justification, the value of centuries-old evangelical literature such as *Nduyo Dzokudira* (1907) and dictionaries such as *Chindau–English English–ChiNdau Vocabulary with Grammatical Notes* might be critiqued against the needs of present-day school users of Nda lexicographic products. To what extent is the CCD responsive to the needs and expectations of its target users?

Indeed, notwithstanding the dictionary's limited sources of data, the CCD is a very useful lexicographic product that functions "as a reference book for teachers and students of Nda" not only in the education sector (primary, secondary and tertiary education) but also in the media, legislature and the society at large.

Firstly, pursuant to its interventionist goal of stopping the degradation of Nda, the dictionary has a combined total of approximately 7703 entries where around 4124 entries feature in the ChiNdau–English section whereas 3579 lemmas appear in the English–ChiNdau section. At a microstructural level, the dictionary subscribes to commonly accepted modern standards by consistently utilising different kinds of typographical conventions in each treatment of an ordinary headword. This helps in illustrating both the morphological and grammatical links between the headword (which is always in a larger bold lower case), tone (pronunciation), word type (part of speech), number (singularity and plurality), definition as well as illustrative example/s (consistently in italics and bold when in Nda but just italicised when in English), for example,

- muisa**, [LHH] n., pl. vais-, man. *Pane muisa uri kutengese urimbo.*
There is a man who is selling bird lime.
chiro, [H] n., pl. zvir-, fierce animal; thing.

The treatment of microstructural elements of noun entries in the CCD provides a solid foundation upon which orthographic and morphological properties of Ndau can be appreciated. For example, indicating plurality on the singular nouns above is instructive not only on the morphological structures pertaining to the **mu-/va-** or **chi-/zvi-** prefixal agreement but also on the orthographic conventions governing the language regarding spelling.

Secondly, the compiler commendably adheres to best lemmatisation practices by ensuring that all noun word lemmas i.e. noun headwords are entered with their prefixes. Following standard practice for Bantu languages, the CCD also utilises stem lemmatisation by stripping verbal prefixes from their stems which are then entered as headwords in a dictionary as seen in three examples below,

- beuka**, [LLH] v.i., be open.
- beura**, [H] v.t., open e.g. door; school. *Chikora chakabeurwa zona. The school was opened a day before yesterday.*
- beurira**, [H] v.t., open for someone or something. *Endai mwobeurire mwombe kuchibaya. Go and open the cattle kraal.*

Research reveals that stem lemmatisation may, in appropriate environments, prove superior, more scientific and more economical than word lemmatisation (Van Wyk 1995). Verbs, however, typically have a productive series of inflectional suffixes which could needlessly multiply the number of entries. In general, Simango has taken an intermediate approach, giving the three derivatives of **-beu-** (open) above, but omitting others, such as **-beurika** (be openable), **-beurwa** (be opened). This is one aspect among many others that future compilers of Ndau dictionaries might need to decide and improve on to enhance dictionary quality.

Thirdly, in view of Ndau's marginalisation and "degradation" as well as the dictionary's target users in Zimbabwe, it can be argued that the dictionary's lemma stock offers a fair coverage of the language's lexicon. The dictionary describes diverse vocabulary items such as nouns, verbs, pronouns, adjectives, demonstratives, quantitatives and ideophones that broadly identify with the targeted users' needs. Further to this, the CCD commendably provides a full description of the language as it includes several loanwords from Zulu, Shona and English. But unlike preceding dictionaries such as Dysart and Orner's (1915) *ChiNdau-English and English-ChiNdau Vocabulary with Grammatical Notes* which marked Zulu loanwords by a superscript (z), the CCD does not indicate the origin of borrowings in Ndau, probably because they have already been naturalised as permanent features of the Ndau lexicon. The examples of Zulu headwords include 68 click words as exemplified below and several non-click lexemes such as **chibochwa** (slave), **chibhedhlera** (clinic) derived from **isibotshwa** and **isibhedhlera** respectively. Some English loanwords include but are not limited to **alithari** (altar) and **awa** (hour) derived from **altar** and **hour** respectively.

Without a corpus approach, it becomes difficult to know how to limit the increasing number of borrowings from English or any other language with which Ndau is in contact. However, to comply with certain macrostructural requirements for larger projects, future Ndau lexicographers might need to select lemmata based on principled criteria set to better respond to the different needs of target users. This suggests the imperativeness of conducting some prior dictionary research of some sort to improve the compilation of new and big size dictionaries in Ndau or to enhance the revision of the CCD.

Fourthly, examples cited in this review show that the CCD follows proper defining principles where all Ndau headwords are provided with English equivalents and vice versa. Because a dictionary explains the meaning of words while simultaneously demonstrating how they combine with each other to form phrases, sentences and clauses, the dictionary succeeds in giving simple definitions that provide 'all the answers to the questions that made a user consult the dictionary' (Gouws and Prinsloo 2005: 144). Similarly, the compiler uses examples that provide additional contexts to strengthen given definitions as seen in provided examples. Although Simango does not explain the principles guiding their use, it is apparent that appropriate examples can actually be considered natural extensions of the definitions as has been illustrated already. Taken together, the qualities of the CCD, for instance, good definitions, proper examples, legible fonts, layouts and spacing of entries, presentation simplicity, as well as the medium and easy to handle size contribute in qualifying it as a user-friendly dictionary.

Fifthly, the lexicographer commendably attempts to reform and standardise the Ndau spelling system. To that extent, the CCD's guide to the dictionary does well to list the single consonants, digraphs and trigraphs that feature in the Ndau alphabet. All single consonants are included except the lateral /l/ which unfortunately precludes the inclusion of possible Ndau headwords such as **lamba** (barrenness), **-lemuka** (cleverness) and **-lunga** (niceness). However, the CCD makes up by incorporating lateral sounds which it represents by graphemes /hl; dhl; ndhl/ in these entries:

- hlanga**, [H] n., pl. mahl-, dry maize stalk. *Isai mahlanga muchibaya kuti mwombe dzirye. Put maize stalk in the cattle kraal as fodder for cattle.*
- madhleyo**, [LHH] n., pl. only, grazing area; pasture land. *Majaha vaende kooshe mwombe kumadhleyo. The boys have gone to herd cattle at the grazing area.*
- khandhlera**, [LHH] n., pl. makh-, candle. *Basai khandhlera mumphatso mukhanye. Light the candle so that there is light in the house.*

The labelling of **madhleyo** as plural only instead of singular only is one of the few mistakes observed in this generally well-edited dictionary. Future dictionary compilers might therefore need to pay particular attention to minor descriptive, grammatical and typographical errors which can negatively impact

the quality of dictionaries in Ndau.

In addition, the CCD deals decisively with clicks and aspirated sounds in Ndau. With regard to clicks which have been variously and often inconsistently represented by different symbols in previous publications, for instance, /x/ as in **nxwadhi** (letter), /c/ **ncwadhi** (letter), the CCD adopted the voiceless uvular plosive /q/ as the standard orthographic symbol to represent all clicks as shown in these examples.

- qonda**, [H] v.i., be straight. *Pato rinori rakaqonda. This road is straight.*
- qhasa**, [L] v.t., clarify; explain.
- gqoka**, [L] v.t., wear; put on clothes; dress oneself. *Uya ugqoke ngubo yako tombi. Come and wear your dress little girl.*
- ngqondo**, [L] n., sing. only, mind, power of reasoning.
- nqaka**, [H] v.t., catch anything thrown at you e.g. ball. *Nqake bhora rendiri kuposhere kweuri. Catch the ball which I am throwing at you.*
- nqwadhi**, [L] n., pl. idzi, letter.

The uvular /q/ can stand on its own in **-qonda**, be aspirated in **-qhasa** and be prenasalised in **nqaka** and **nqwadhi**. The dictionary's contribution towards the standardisation of Ndau spelling is also witnessed through the aspiration of all voiceless stops /t, k, p/ as in **thika** (hyena); **k^hamba** (leopard) and **p^hinda** (repeat) which were also seriously misrepresented by other writers of Ndau. Evidently, aspiration remains an orthographic challenge in Ndau that is best exhibited by different spelling systems on social media and other platforms in Zimbabwe (Sithole 2020). When the potential that dictionaries contribute towards the standardisation of languages (Hadebe 2002) is considered, it is therefore hoped that some form of standardisation of Ndau spelling conventions will be achieved as the CCD entrenches its position as a lexicographic reference tool in education and other high status domains in Zimbabwe.

However, it may also be observed that the compiler adopts some peculiar sound combinations that are often difficult to explain both at phonetic and orthographic levels. For example, he uses /nts, ntsw, thsw/ to represent lexemes such as **ntsanangudzo** (explanation), **ntsentswa** (wood shaving), and **mupfuthswa** (dried vegetables). While this could be a mere reflection of dialectal variation in Ndau and perhaps an acknowledgement of the variable nature of orthographies the world over, it is instructive that the prenasalisation of the affricate /ts/ as in these given examples is extremely rare in Ndau, Shona and related languages. This may therefore imply that the compiler, as a new lexicographer without relevant training not only in the art, craft and science of making dictionaries but also lacking a sound basis in phonetics and phonology, made an orthographic error. Such an error creates a mismatch between the Ndau words which appear in the CCD and those that are spoken and used in Ndau speaking communities' daily communicative situations. One last observation on spelling is

that the compiler misspells **sonto** (Sunday) which was directly taken from Dysart and Orner's *ChiNdau–English English–ChiNdau Vocabulary with Grammatical Notes* (1915). Whereas this is not a good lexicographic practice, it is noted that the entry **sonto** might either be changed to **sondo** or be replaced by **soto**. Based on the reviewer's intuition as a mother-tongue speaker of Ndaou too, both suggestions enjoy popular usage in the Ndaou speaking community.

Finally, in appreciation of Clifford Simango's excellent work in contributing to the development of Ndaou lexicography and because Ndaou now has two bilingual dictionaries, one with translations into English and one into Portuguese, the next step could be the building of a corpus to assist with the creation of a monolingual Ndaou dictionary and other specialised school dictionaries.

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Emmanuel Sithole
School of Languages and Literatures: African Language Studies
Rhodes University
Makhanda
and
Faculty of Humanities
Northwest University
Potchefstroom
South Africa (emmanesu@gmail.com)