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The summarisation of the Introduction to Linguistics (ZULL1514) module of the University of the Free State (UFS) for better understanding: a contribution to students' learning

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Abstract

Siddharthan's (2014) theory of text simplification posits that a complex language can be reduced to a simpler form through the process known as summarisation. This study explores the application of summarisation theory in the Introduction to Linguistics module of ZULL1514 at the University of the Free State (UFS). Many students perceive this ZULL1514 module as more challenging than the module called Introduction to Oral Literature (ZULT1524) with many learners attributing this difficulty to the module's scientific focus on language structure as compared to the cultural and historical perspective of oral literature. This research study uses a qualitative approach with aims of analysing the role of morphology, orthography, and semantics in the content of ZULL1514. Data is extracted from the module's course pack because the module is designed for isiZulu speakers. However, it should be stated that the ZULL1514 is also also attended by students whose mother tongue is in other languages. This study seeks to address the challenges faced by students due to the module's scientific orientation.

Keywords: IsiZulu, Linguistics, Summarisation, Text Simplification, Students' learning

Introduction

There is a general saying that there is a difference between a written and a spoken language. Language in its written form can be collected, stored, examined, manipulated, and analysed in ways that were until very recently impossible for spoken language (Chafe & Tannen, 1987). In a general sense, spoken language involves the actual use of speech or related utterances that convey meaning to share thoughts or other information. Studying a language scientifically can be difficult especially when a learner relies on written texts. This phenomenon suggests that a different approach needs to be adopted to overcome the challenges of studying a language in a scientific way. Generally, when one learns a language at a younger age, the focus will be on listening, they do not put much focus on the why? Why do we have prefixes, stems, and suffixes? Why do we have noun classes? Why do we have proverbs? These questions only arise when a student reaches a senior level of learning. It leaves a student with silent guilt of 'I thought I knew my language!' It is therefore vital to state that language is becoming increasingly valuable as a guide to the scientific study of a given culture (Sapir, 1929). That tells that linguistics is one major subject of language that needs to be taken into serious consideration.

Linguistics may be defined as a science of language (McGregor, 2024). The study of the science of language is complex when compared to the other genres of language. The other genres of language may include oral literature, literature, storytelling, etc. From a linguistic perspective, languages may be studied in many different branches including historical linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, ethnolinguistics (or anthropological linguistics), dialectology, computational linguistics and neurolinguistics. The prevailing issue on this matter is that since linguistics teaches us about the creation of words, their meanings, their syntactical order, and pronunciation, it becomes complex to understand such knowledge because as a native speaker your focus is always on conversations, hence, students always get distinctions when

studying Oral Literature which is offered in the second semester. Linguistic modules can pose challenges to students, even those who are native speakers of isiZulu get challenged, especially when the focus is on grammar.

Oral literature is a module that introduces students to the knowledge of isiZulu before the era of modernity. Oral Literature is an artistic way of talking. Within the Linguistic module, students and tutors are struggling to understand three categories of the module which include, morphology, orthography, and semantics. The three distinct categories of the module that have been mentioned introduce students to the building stage of a language, and that starts with the formation of words through morphemes. This foundational stage is followed by the process of writing, and this is guided by the currently approved orthographic rules of isiZulu, and lastly, the semantics which is the study of meanings. Some distinct factors and complications hinder undergraduate student's understanding of the module. These factors include the failure to place nouns to their classes correctly, the categorisation of independent morphemes of isiZulu, the placing of capital letters and the writing of place names accordingly and the meanings of proverbs and idioms. The failure of understanding noun classes is a main issue because the whole complexity of the module lies on students' understanding of matching noun prefixes to the exact noun classes. Byram and Grundy (2002) conducted research on how different issues in language teaching and learning are influenced by context and culture. Context and culture in language teaching and learning is developing in many directions and with considerable vigour in the last 10 to 15 years (Byram & Grundy, 2002). This means the science of language (context) versus the practicality of language (culture) is topical. A view of this paper is that a simple understanding of noun classes leads to the full understanding of the module.

Objectives

The paper aims to summarise the content of the linguistics module (ZULL1514) for better understanding for isiZulu mother-tongue and non-mother-tongue students studying at the UFS. It also aims to unpack the functions of isiZulu linguistics content using English, which could be helpful to non-isiZulu speaking students who study isiZulu as a course since the module is only available in isiZulu. The study also aims to support the drive for diversity and multilingual environments as envisaged by the UFS's language policy. Thus, this study is a step forward towards bridging the gap in understanding the challenges that undergraduate students experience created by the distinction between spoken and written language inherent in the scientific study of African languages.

Learning in General

Although learning is still widely treated as an unproblematic concept in educational writings, there is a growing trend that its meaning is being contested (Hager, 2004:4). According to Goldman (2012), we learnt that the twenty-first-century literacy poses different major challenges to students and their teachers. Firstly, successful readers must learn how to move beyond what text says to what text means; secondly, effective readers must be able to apply reading and interpretation skills depending on the subject matter using different knowledge, reading, and reasoning processes to interpret, analyse the causes of issues or explain the advantages of certain things. Moreover, ongoing advances in information technology make it necessary for readers to be able to navigate on vastly increased amounts of information found in traditional printed texts and multi-forms including complex visuals and annotations. In addition, readers must be able to connect information across multiple sources and evaluate whether the various sources are consistent. One of the hallmarks of the new system of learning is its emphasis on learning with understanding (Halpern & Hakel, 2003). Understanding the subject, course, and/or module is not only concerned about the information found within a book or study guide, but it also speaks to understanding why you even study that module and how it will help you after completion. The main question from the study by Halpern & Hakel (2003) titled 'Applying the Science of Learning to the University and Beyond: Teaching for Long-Term Retention and Transfer', is 'Why do we have colleges and universities?' Hartley & Whitehead (2006) state that universities stand for the values

of thinking, knowing, intellect and knowledge in national life. The main reason we have higher education is the transference of learning. The underlying rationale for any kind of formal instruction is the assumption that knowledge, skills, and attitudes learned in this setting will be recalled accurately and will be used in some other context at some point in future (Halpern & Hakel, 2003:38). In this regard, we understand that learning referred to is not that of having information in your head just because you are inside university premises, your learning should also influence others by making them understand issues around them and how they can be resolved. Halpern & Hakel (2003:38) support this statement by stating that, sometimes information learned in a school context will transfer to an out-of-school context, and sometimes it will not. If we want a transfer, we need to teach in ways that enhance the probabilities of transfer. Learning from university also grants you the opportunity to enter the working environment smoothly. As hard as it is to learn, we still understand that learning needs different tools and strategies so that it can be done in a best possible way.

According to Weinstein & Mayer (1983), some major categories of learning strategies may include; (1) rehearsal strategies such as copying, underlining, or shadowing; (2) elaboration strategies such as paraphrasing or summarising; (3) organisational strategies such as outlining or creating a hierarchy; (4) comprehension monitoring strategies such as checking for comprehension failures; and (5) effective strategies such as being alert and relaxed. The main targeted strategy in this research is elaboration strategies such as paraphrasing and summarising. Some of these strategies and tools may be developed by a teacher, but some need a collective decision to finalise. For example, students who study medicine need a lot of technological equipment to perform their work but students who study social work and psychology need only to understand how the human mind works. So, it is in the interest of students for the researcher to provide a summary of the content instead of bringing tangible machinery equipment.

Text Simplification Theory

Text simplification as a term means the universalisation of something complicated through the process of reducing the linguistic complexity of a text, while still retaining the original information and meaning (Siddharthan, 2014:259). This means that instead of trying to store the whole content of the module in your head, rather try and retain the thematic approaches. This includes sub-sections of the module, themes, and specific examples. Siddharthan (2014) further explains that text simplification encompasses other operations; for example, conceptual simplification to simplify content as well as form, elaborative modification, where redundancy and explicitness are used to emphasise key points, and text summarisation to omit peripheral or inappropriate information. Within the text simplification theory, one learns that studying a book page by page is of no use if the skill of understanding the context is not there. Unlike the ephemeral nature of general content such as news reports, academic modules demand a more rigorous approach to knowledge acquisition and application. Consequently, there is a compelling need in academia to streamline complex module content for undergraduate students for optimal learning and assessment.

Module's Sub-Sections

The ZULL1514 module is divided into 3 sub-sections, namely, a) Morphology [the study of morphemes], b) Orthography [the study of languages rules and grammatical structures], and c) Semantics [the study of meanings]. These three sub-sections form the whole module known as The Introduction to Linguistics. All students who study isiZulu at the UFS begin with the ZULL1514. It introduces students to the body of knowledge which includes word formation through different morphemes, sentence writing through syntax, and approved ways of writing, and most students are struggling to understand some of these mentioned components. The introduction to multiple and conflicting noun class classifications at the tertiary level in ZULL1514 exposes a fundamental gap in pre-university isiZulu education, where students are typically presented with an oversimplified and singular perspective on the subject. The issue even escalates more when they are instructed to match noun prefixes to the correct noun classes. It gets

worse when they are required to match noun classes to a specific researcher. This means they must know what each researcher (since there are four) says in the study of noun classes. The issue of orthography also tricks them when it comes to the certified rules of writing isiZulu as a language. They get confused about where to place capital letters when writing place names and people's names. They also get confused and lost when it comes to the writing of years in isiZulu. The only section that gives them relief is semantics. Semantics deals with discussion of idioms and proverbs, antonyms, synonyms, euphemisms, and other figures of speech. The inherent disconnect between the intuitive and oral nature of language and the analytical and systematic approach of linguistics as outlined in the ZULL1514 module poses significant challenges for native isiZulu speakers. While semantics is presented as a purely theoretical construct, its practical application to spoken language is critical for a comprehensive understanding of linguistic systems. The next section aims to bridge this theoretical-practical division by providing valuable insights for both students and language practitioners seeking to deepen their knowledge of isiZulu linguistics in higher education.

Summarization

The Morphology of isiZulu nouns in ZULL1514

The term morphology is generally attributed to the German poet, novelist, playwright and philosopher Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1882), who coined it early in the nineteenth century (Aronoff & Fudeman, 2011). Aronoff & Fudeman (2011) explain linguistics as the mental system involved in word formation or the branch that deals with words, their internal structure and how they are formed. In the sense of generality, morphology is seen as the most complicated part of linguistics. Keet & Khumalo (2017) argue that there is a visible complexity in isiZulu morphology, especially on the issue of verbs. The researcher argues that this complexity is not only visible with ZULL1514 verbs, but it is also visible in the noun classes, and demonstrative pronouns. This is because traditional accounts of isiZulu grammar are based on outdated sources and limited accounts on Wikipedia and there is no comprehensive synchronic grammar of isiZulu (Keet & Khumalo, 2017). This hinders students from finding more relevant information which they may use to advance their knowledge. In other words, they do not have as many additional readings. Keet & Khumalo (2017:184) state that, Bantu languages have a characteristically agglutinating morphology, which makes their structure rich and complex. This means our Nguni languages mix all elements of words including prefixes, stems, and suffixes. This complexity becomes more visible when students try to categorise nouns according to the presentation of each researcher. IsiZulu noun is made up of three elements, a prefix (isiqalo), a stem (umsuka), and a suffix (unkamisa ogcinile). The prefixes are fixed to a set of classes known as noun classes. We have four studies that have contributed immensely to the development of isiZulu noun classes. These studies include Meinhof (1906), Doke (1927), Canonici (1987, 1990 and 1995) and Mathonsi & Rapeane-Mathonsi (2024), see Zawada & Ngcobo (2008), and Ngcobo (2010) for more.

These four different researchers had different findings which they presented: Doke produced eight isiZulu noun classes including class 1a which is a sub-category of class one (1). Doke believes that each singular noun in isiZulu is connected to its plural form. This means each class on its set of noun classes has two nouns, the singular and the plural:

Singular noun prefixes	**Singular Nouns**	**Plural Form Prefixes**	**Plural Nouns**
1. Umu-	*Umuntu* Human-being	Aba-	*Abantu* People/Human-beings
1a) U-	*Ugogo* Grand-mother	O-	*Ogogo* Grandmothers
2. Umu-	*Umuthi* Medicine	Imi-	*Imithi* Medicines
3. Ili-	*Ilizwe* Country	Ama-	*Amazwe* Countries
4. Isi-	*Isizwe* Nation/Tribe	Izi-	*Izizwe* Nations/Tribes
5. IN-	*Inkomo* Cow	IziN-	*Izinkomo* Cattle
6. Ulu-	*Uluthi* Stick	IziN-	*Izinti* Sticks

7. Ubu-	*Ubuhle* Beauty	-	-	
8. Uku-	*Ukufa* Death	-	-	

The capital letter 'N' on class '5' changes from time to time. It changes from 'N' to 'M'. Words like 'Impilo' (life) and 'Imali' (money) may also be found in class '5'. The same applies to all researchers though the numbers vary depending on the researcher's structure of noun classes in focus. All other researchers have class '5' as class '9' on their noun classes

Meinhof challenges Doke's assertion that all isiZulu nouns have corresponding plural forms. He argues that isiZulu noun classes exhibit great complexity because some nouns possess only plural forms, others lack plural forms altogether and not all nouns form simple pairs. Words like 'Amanzi' (water) & 'Amasi' (maas) have no singular forms. Words like 'Intsha' (youth) and 'Uhla' (list) have no plural forms. In that sense, Meinhof did not change much from Doke's theory and understanding of noun classes, he just multiplied them and gave each noun its noun class. This was because every word is independent according to his theory and understanding. He proposes that even numbers (2, 2a,4,6,8, and 10) will act as plural forms. He then presented these noun classes.

Independent prefixes	**Examples of Nouns**
1. Um- / Umu-	*Umuculi* A musician
2. Aba-	*Abaculi* Singers
1a) U-	*Umama* Mother
2a) O-	*Omama* Mothers
3. Umu-	*Umusho* A sentence
4. Imi-	*Imisho* Sentences
5. I- / (Ili-)	*Isu* Strategy
6. Ama-	*Amasu* Strategies
7. Isi-	*Isisho* An expression
8. Izi-	*Izisho* Idioms
9. IN-	*Inkantolo* The court
10. IziN-	*Izinkantolo* The courts *Izinkalo* The waists Wilderness
11. U- / (Ulu-)	*Ukhalo* a) The waist b) Wilderness
-	-
-	-
14. Ubu-	*Ubuzwe* Nationality
15. Uku-	*Ukuma* Standing

Note that we do not have noun classes 12 & 13 in isiZulu. One may assume that the plural for class 11 is class 12. The plural for class 11 is class 10 'IziN'. These two noun classes (12&13) are found in other African languages including Shona language with prefixes 'Ka' for class 12 such as *kamuti* (tree) and 'Ta' for class 13 such as *tamuti* (trees) which acts as a plural form of class '12', (Déchaine, Girard, Mudzingwa & Wiltschko, 2014).

Canonici did not change anything from Meihof's theory, instead, he added more noun classes and that is class '3a' and '9a'. He supported his argument with the issue of borrowed words. He said that there are many words that have found a place in isiZulu, and Zulus themselves have even accepted those words in their daily interactions and conversations. Since isiZulu nouns go in pairs of singular and plural forms, Canonici said class '3a' will find its plural form in class '2a' and class '9a' will find its plural in class '6'. Most of these words have the letter 'R' which has recently been accepted on isiZulu as a new consonant. He then presented these noun classes:

Independent prefixes	**Examples of Nouns**
1. Um- / Umu-	*Umsakazi* Broadcaster
2. Aba-	Abasakazi Broadcasters

1a) U-	*Ubaba* Father
2a) O-	*Obaba* Fathers *Opharafini* (plural for class 3a) Paraffin
3. Umu-	*Umunwe* Finger
3a) U-	*Upharafini* Paraffin
4. Imi-	*Iminwe* Fingers
5. I- (Ili-)	*Ihlathi* The forest
6. Ama-	*Amahlathi* Forests *Amarama* (plural for class 9a) Ramas
7. Isi-	*Isitho* Organ
8. Izi-	*Izitho* Organs
9. IN-	*Inkinsela* Rich man
9a. I-	*Irama* Rama
10. IziN	*Izinkinsela* Rich men *Izinkuni* (plural for class 11) Woods
11. Ulu-	*Ukhuni* Wood
-	-
-	-
14. Ubu-	*Ubudlova* Violence
15. Uku-	*Ukusha* To burn

According to Maphumulo (2021), 'R' is a borrowed consonant that falls under 'Trill' *(uvevezela – ungwaqa ovovezelayo / ungwaqa oririzayo).* To Understand more about this, see Maphumulo's latest book 'Ukuvamisa Imithetho Yokubhala Nobhalomagama LwesiZulu Lonyaka Wezi-2021'. It is not surprising that most borrowed words with 'r' are now available in isiZulu. The trickiest part of this is that not only classes '3a' and '9a' present borrowed words. All noun classes have borrowed words. The classes '3a' and '9a' are for words with letter 'r' and words that were not accepted as borrowed words in Zulu culture before like *iDatha* (data), *uRizla* (rizzler), *iRabha* (rubber), etc. Words like *Iwindi* (window), *Ispuni* (spoon), *Imoto* (motor) are borrowed but their classification has nothing to do with class '3a' and '9a'. That means Canonici only added noun classes that were catering to words that had no place before or in Meihof's noun classes. Below is the noun classes for the words mentioned above:

- *iDatha* (data) – Class 9a
- *uRizla* (rizzler) – Class 3a
- *iRabha* (rubber) – Class 9a
- *Iwindi* (window) – Class 5
- *Ispuni* (spoon) – Class 7
- *Imoto* (motor) – Class 9

Mathonsi is the first native speaker of isiZulu on the list to contribute to the issue of isiZulu noun classes. He did not change much from Canonici's; he was Canonici's student when he was studying for his MA and Ph.D. Mathonsi argued that if isiZulu words have an initial vowel at first, they do not qualify as independent words because that is a form put together with the function. In the case of words like 'umfana' – 'u' is a form and 'mfana' is function. A non-native speaker of isiZulu usually forgets that the word 'umfana' should be put without 'u' in a sentence, e.g. 'asambe umfana – 'a boy, let's go' instead of 'asambe mfana – boy, let's go'. In simple English, 'u' of 'umfana' is representing article – it is just that it is written agglutinatively with the whole word 'mfana'. Mathonsi then removed all initial vowels at the beginning of words. All nouns is isiZulu begin with vowels. Mathonsi replaces initial vowels with a disambiguation sign '**Ø**' where the nouns have vowel prefixes

only, like classes 1a, 2a, 3a, and 9a. This is the presentation of his noun classes:

No initial vowels on prefixes	**Examples of nouns**
1. M- / Mu-	*Musebenzi* Work
2. Ba-	*Basebenzi* Workers
1a. **Ø**	*Dadewethu* Sister
2a. **Ø**	*Dadewethu* Sisters *Shizi* (Plural for class 3a) Cheese
3. Mu-	*Musebenzi* Work
3a. **Ø**	*Shizi* Cheese
4. Mi-	*Misebenzi* Activities
5. Li-	*Lifa* Legacy/Inheritance
6. Ma-	*Mafa* Legacies/Inheritances *Marimu* (Plural for class 9a) Rims
7. Si-	*Sitsha* Dish
8. Zi-	*Zitsha* Dishes
9. N-	*Mpesheni* Old age grant
9a **Ø**	*Rimu* Rim
10. ZiN-	*Zimpeshini* Old age grants - Note that, the word 'lubisi' does not have a plural form.
11. Lu-	*Lubisi* Milk
-	-
-	-
14. Bu-	*Bukhazikhazi* Bling-bling
15. Ku-	*Kusa* Dawn

The difference between the four researchers is countable. Each researcher is different in their way. The apparent difference in Mathonsi's class nouns is the deletion of vowels at the beginning of nouns. To some, this is bemusing because isiZulu has nouns that start with vowels. To non-native speakers of isiZulu, this means they would not struggle with building sentences and intelligible conversations. With native speakers, this means they should know each noun class by heart because it may be confusing when it comes to the issue of translation. The word 'musebenzi' may be confusing if it has no initial vowel because you do not know whether it is 'umsebenzi' as in 'work' or 'umsebenzi' as in 'worker'. Canonici added only two class nouns whereas Meinhof only divided noun classes to be independent.

The Morphology of isiZulu verbs in ZULL1514

The morphology of isiZulu verbs is hard to understand when it is in a sentence. Normal verbs in isiZulu consist of words like (*pheka* [cook], *hleka* [laugh], *khala* [cry], *washa* [wash]). All isiZulu verbs end with the vowel 'a' if they are not in a sentence. The morphological composition of the verb is considerably more complex than that of any other word category in Zulu, (Bosch & Pretorius, 2017:155). Why? It is because isiZulu verbal morphology typically comprises a verb root to which extensions such as the causative, applicative, reciprocal, passive, etc, are suffixed and to which morphemes that encode negation, subject concord, and object concord that cross-reference noun phrases, tense/aspect, modality, etc. are prefixed, (Keet & Khumalo, 2017:184). Amongst other languages, isiZulu is characterized by its rich agglutinative morphology in which the verb is the most complex word category, (Bosch & Pretorius, 2017). The ZULL1514 module of the UFS consists of two (2) affixes. It has a subject concord and tenses/aspects. The subject concords are found in noun classes, and the tenses/aspects are provided as examples.

Subject concords appear when we work on sentences of isiZulu. The following table of

Canonici's Class Nouns has subject concords in brackets:

CLASS NUON NUMBER	**NOUN EXAMPLE**	**SUBJECT CONCORD**	**SENTENCES' EXAMPLES**
1. Um- / Umu -	*Umuntu*	U-	*Umuntu [u]yadla* A person eating
2. Aba-	*Abantu*	Ba-	*Abantu [ba]yadla* People are eating
1a. U-	*Ugogo*	U-	*Ugogo [u]yadla* Grandma is eating
2a. O- Class 3a plural – O-	*Ogogo* *Opende*	Ba- Ba-	*Ogogo [ba]yadla* Grandmothers are eating *Opende [ba]yachitheka* Paints are spilling
3. Umu-	*Umuzi*	U-	*Umuzi [u]shile* The house burned down
4. Imi-	*Imizi*	I-	*Imizi [i]shile* Homes burnt down
3a. U-	*Upende*	U-	*Upende [u]yachitheka* Paint is spilling
5. I (Ili)	*Izwe*	Li-	*Izwe [li]bhubhile* The country is destroyed
6. Ama- Class 9a plural - Ama	*Amazwe* *Amarama*	A- A-	*Amazwe [a]bhubhile* Countries are distroyed *Amarama [a]ncibilikile* Ramas have melted
7. Isi-	*Isizwe*	Si-	*Isizwe [si]bhubhile* The nation is destructed
8. Izi-	*Izizwe*	Zi-	*Izizwe [zi]bhubhile* Nations are destructed
9. iN-	*Inkawu*	I-	*Inkawu [i]file* The monkey is dead
9a. I-	*Irama*	I-	*Irama incibilikile* Rama is melted
10. IziN- Class 11 plural - Izin	*Izinkawu* *Izinswazi*	Zi- Zi-	*Izinkawu [zi]file* *The monkeys are dead* *Izinswazi [zi]phukile* The sticks are broken
11. U(ulu)	*Uswazi*	Lu-	*Uswazi [lu]phukile* A stick is broken
-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-
14. Ubu-	*Ububi*	Bu-	*Ububi [bu]yahlekisa* Uglyness makes one laugh
15. Uku-	*Ukusha*	Ku-	*Ukusha [ku]yabhubhisa* Burning is destructive

Tenses/aspects

The ZULL1514 module has five morphemes of tenses/aspects, namely, 'ya, zo, yo, be and a'. These tenses are usually added to verb stems as prefixes, they are also put after subject concords, and as suffixes. These morphemes determine the time of action. They have well-developed formulas in terms of verb construction. The above-mentioned elements are added to support - *Izivumelwano zenhloko* (Subject concords), *Imisuka yezenzo* (Verb stems), *Izijobelelo* (Suffixes).

These morphemes are as follows if translated to English:

- Ya – presents progressive tense morpheme – 'ya' is put after subject concords.
- Zo – simple future tense morpheme – 'zo' is put after subject concords.
- Yo – near future tense morpheme – 'yo' is put after subject concords.
- Be – past progressive tense – 'be' is put as a prefix.
- A – past perfect tense – 'a' is put as a prefix, but for it to make sense, it should be supported by consonants depending on various situations.

The examples below show how the above-mentioned tenses are applied in isiZulu:

a) Present tense

Bayakhuluma (Ba + ya + khulum + a – they are talking)

- *Isivumelwano senhloko* (Subject concord) + *Inkathi* (aspect) + *Umsuka wesenzo* (Verb stem) + *Isijobelelo* (Suffix).
- 'Ba' is a subject concord for class '2a' – possibly '*Abantu* – human beings'.
- 'ya' is a present tense morpheme.
- 'khulum' – is a verb stem.
- 'a' – is a verb suffix, it can be found in all verbs of isiZulu especially before they can be used in sentences.

b) Simple future tense

Bazohlukana (Ba + zo + hlukan + a – they are going to separate/break up)

- *Isivumelwano senhloko* (Subject concord) + *Inkathi* (aspect) + *Umsuka wesenzo* (Verb stem) + *Isijobelelo* (Suffix).
- 'Ba' is a subject concord for class '2a' – possibly '*Abantu* – human beings'.
- 'zo' is a simple future tense morpheme.
- 'hlukan' – is a verb stem.
- 'a' – is a verb suffix.

c) Near future tense

Bayobuya (Ba + yo + buy + a – they will come back)

- *Isivumelwano senhloko* (Subject concord) + *Inkathi* (aspect) + *Umsuka wesenzo* (Verb stem) + *Isijobelelo* (Suffix).
- 'Ba' is a subject concord for class '2a' – possibly '*Abantu* – human beings'.
- 'yo' is a simple future tense morpheme
- 'buy' – is a verb stem
- 'a' – is a verb suffix.

d) Past progressive tense

Belibhonga (Be + li + bhong + a – it was roaring)

- *Inkathi* (Aspect) + *Isivumelwano senhloko* (Subject concord) + *Umsuka wesenzo* (Verb stem) + *Isijobelelo* (Suffix).
- 'Be' is a past progressive tense morpheme.
- 'li' is a subject concord for class '5' – possibly '*Ibhubesi* – a lion'.
- 'bhong' – is a verb stem.
- 'a' – is a verb suffix.

e) Past perfect tense – 'a'

Balishaya (Ba + li + shay + a – they hit it)

- *Inkathi* (Aspect) + *Isivumelwano senhloko* (Subject concord) + *Umsuka wesenzo* (Verb stem) + *Isijobelelo* (Suffix).

- ‘a’ is a past progressive tense morpheme supported by ‘B - ba’.
- ‘li’ is a subject concord for class ‘5’ – possibly ‘*Ibhubesi* – a lion’.
- ‘shay’ – is a verb stem.
- ‘a’ – is a verb suffix.

IsiZulu Orthography in ZULL1514

A great deal has been documented about English orthography and optimal reading strategies for its readers, but there is yet scant research on reading in African Languages (Land, 2015). The lack of production of research in isiZulu orthography poses a problem to students who are expected to be writers and/or researchers of isiZulu language. Orthographic rules consist of the use of punctuations precisely, correct placement of capital letters, and a clear understanding of numbers in isiZulu which include, mostly, the years in isiZulu. When students are submitting their activities, one can learn that the issue is not with question marks, full stops, exclamations, etc. I would not talk about editing, this is a general tendency that all students enjoy doing, they do not edit work before submitting it. The visible issue is that of writing numbers including years, time, totals, etc., in short forms of isiZulu. When writing years in isiZulu, we usually shorten the whole word and leave prefixes, e, g:

- Year 2008, *ngowezi-*2008 *(ngowezinkulungwane ezimbili nesishiyagalombili)*
- 10 people, *abantu abali*-10 *(abalishumi)*
- Year 1994, *ngowe-*1994 *(ngowenkulungwane eyodwa namakhulu ayisishiyagalolunye namashumi ayisishiyagalolunye nane)*
- At noon, *ngehora le*-12 *(leshumi nambili)*

The other important rule that students need to take into consideration is the issue of demonstrative pronouns. We do not write demonstrative pronouns agglutinatively with other words in isiZulu isiZulu. When we write them, they should be separated from other words, e.g.

- (Unacceptable) [*Lomfana uyadelela* – this boy is rude]
- (Acceptable) *Lo mfana uyadelela*
- (Unacceptable) [*Lelibhubhesi linamandla* – This lion is full of power]
- (Acceptable) *Leli bhubesi linamandla*

This study supports and recognises the necessity of regular verified updates on isiZulu orthographic rules across various sources including books and online platforms. As Thango (2017) points out, the dynamic nature of isiZulu orthography is influenced by the historical marginalisation of African languages and this context necessitates consistent updates. For the most current orthographic guidelines on isiZulu, please refer to Maphumulo (2021).

Semantics in ZULL1514

Saeen (1997:3) defines semantics as the study of meanings, communicated through language. In this section, the students are introduced to the proverbs and sayings of isiZulu. The other part is easy to understand and that is antonyms, synonyms, euphemisms, metonymic transfer, and borrowed words. The researcher wants to put focus on the issue of the difference between proverbs and sayings. The trickiest part of these categories is that they convey indirect messages and/or warnings. Mieder (2004) defines a proverb as an expression that, owes its birth to the people and testifies to its origin in form and phrase. It expresses what is apparently a fundamental truth – that is, a truism, in homely language, often adorned, however, with alliteration and rhyme. Fayzullayeva (2022) defines it as a type of saying that contains a piece of advice or simply contains truth or any other universal value. It is a short statement that is popular, and people make use of it to express their feelings. A proverb can say a lot more than a thousand words. Morality, truth, wisdom, friendship, loyalty, etc. are the values that are glorified with the use of proverbs.

A saying is an accepted phrase or expression that is contrary to the usual patterns of the language or has a meaning different from the literal speech. Idioms add confusion and difficulty to the learning of language and so they occupy a special place in

the teaching of language and reading (Bromley, 1984). There is a clear tangible difference between a proverb and a saying. Most writers believe that a saying/idiom should start with a prefix of Class 15 'Uku'. This is not a tangible difference because there are proverbs that start with 'Uku', e.g:

- *Ukubona kanye ukubona kabili* – meaning, no one wants to repeat the same mistakes now and then.
- *Ukuhamba ukubona* – meaning, try to learn about other cultures, otherwise, you will be surprised some other day by how other people live in their culture.

Some researchers believe that a saying is shorter than a proverb. This is also not true. There is a saying that says:

- *Ukuhlangana nezimbila zithutha ziholwa ngemhlophe phambili* – meaning, you had an unexpected terrible issue/problem on your way-up trying to achieve something.

Below are the apparent differences between a saying and a proverb.

A saying can change its aspects/tenses mainly because it has to do with the eloquent use of speech.

- The saying - *Ukubamba ngobhongwane* (The strangulation/ throttling)

The above-mentioned saying in different tenses:

- Past tense - *Wambamba ngobhongwane* (He strangulated him)
- Present tense – *Umbamba ngobhongwane* (He is strangulating him)
- Future tense – *Uzom'bamba ngobhongwane* (He is going to strangulate him)

A proverb cannot change its aspects/tenses because it states a truth as it is. That means you cannot go against a proverb because it was derived from natural occurrences.

- *Umhlaba kawunoni* – it is true (death never gets satisfied by consuming the living things).
- *Umendo awuthunyelwa gundane* – it is true (a woman cannot predict a kind of man that she will spend her life with).
- *Ayihlabi ngakumisa* – it is true (you cannot trust people just by judging their eloquent speeches).
- *Inkosi ayibusi nombeki wayo* – it is true (people usually forget people who helped them reach success).

One most important thing about proverbs is that they are specifically designed for human life. The use of animals and other things different from humans to coin proverbs and sayings is because those things are regarded as part of life in oral literature. Oral literature has been defined as an artistic way of talking, saying, and doing things.

Conclusion

The evolving landscape of isiZulu which was once primarily a language of oral tradition is now encompassing a broader academic and intellectual sphere. Its increasing prominence within South Africa's universities' language policies reflects this shift. This study acknowledges this development by analysing how native and non-native speakers of isiZulu engage in a scientific interrogation of the language. The scientific understanding of isiZulu is of paramount importance because language is easily accessible through its linguistical settings which include the simplification of morphology, orthography and semantics. What has been the major observation on this study is that the mother-tongue speakers of isiZulu have a duty of teaching their language to other racial and/or ethnical groups through linguistics. Non-mother-tongue speakers of isiZulu have a keen interest of learning it. One can only teach others about his/her language only if she/he understands its science. The trickiest part of studying your mother-tongue language is that you must master its rules in order to teach it to others. Without understanding the science of your language, you are only good at conversing through it. The normal saying from students of ZULL1514 module is that the Linguistic part of the module is more complicated than that of Oral literature. This has pushed the researcher to the realisation that the summarisation of the module must be done.

Lastly, the study will be helpful to other linguists and/or lecturers or teachers who work with isiZulu students, who could use the information to compare English functions to that of isiZulu and understand certain trends in their students' learning of isiZulu. The researcher is of the view that through summarisation, most students could be able to find the content of their studies intelligible. As Davis (2021) had stated, summarising teaches students how to discern the most important ideas in a text, ignore irrelevant information, and integrate the central ideas in a meaningful way. Teaching students to summarise texts improves their memory and level of understanding thoroughly.

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