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**University Language Planning and Development Office
First Quarterly Report: 2018**

INSPIRING GREATNESS

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Director: Language Planning and Development Office

The highlight in this quarter is no doubt the Planning Meeting. The University Language Planning and Development Office (ULPDO) held a successful Planning Meeting on 17 – 18 January 2018 at the UNITE building at Howard College campus. The main objective of the planning meeting was to scrutinize and appreciate the University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP), particularly Project 8 of the UCDP that pertains to Language Development. The ULPDO staff agreed on an Annual Activity Programme that is in line with the approved activities as articulated in the UCDP. Another major highlight is the bid to host the DH2021, an International Conference of the Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations, for the first time in Africa. The bid led by Dr Khumalo has received financial support of close to R1 million.

First Quarterly Report
January-March 2018.

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1. Introduction

The year has begun in earnest. The University Language Planning and Development Office (ULPDO) held its annual Planning Meeting in January 2018. The meeting's main objective was to create a clear activity plan for the year, informed by two very important documents. The two important documents are the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Strategic Plan (2017-2021) and the University Capacity Development Programme. It is in this regard that the ULPDO's 2018 activity plan is informed by **Goal 1** of the Strategic Plan and **Project 8** of the UCDP that pertains to Language Development.

Terminology development, and the attendant strategies to disseminate the authenticated scientific terminology through novel digital technologies, remains one of the main activities of the language office. The office has already held its first workshop for Information Technology (IT) terminology development.

The *Bua le nna* (Let'sTalk) program has also resumed, and forms one of the major key programs in the activity plan. The program is implemented in conjunction with the office of the director of student services through language champions and ULPDO staff, whose objective is to foster social cohesion at UKZN. The program is aimed at teaching conversational Sesotho to non-Sesotho speaking students at UKZN student residences. This program seeks to introduce different indigenous languages to students in a relaxed, cheerful, but informative way. Participating students embrace, appreciate, and respect cultural and linguistic diversity.

Corpus building will focus on processing speech corpora that were collected in 2017 for addition in the isiZulu National Corpus. Another corpus typology is being created as a basis for developing automated translations between English and isiZulu. To this end ULPDO is developing a parallel corpus of English and isiZulu texts. ULPDO has also released the isiZulu spell checker (version II) with improved functionalities. Other technologies such as the isiZulu Term Bank and the Mobile Application are going to be monitored and evaluated for their uptake user-friendliness.

Dr Langa Khumalo
Director: ULPDO

2. ULPDO 2018 Strategic Planning

The University Language Planning and Development Office (ULPDO) held a successful Planning Meeting on 17 – 18 January 2018 at the UNITE building at Howard College campus. The main objective of the planning meeting was to scrutinize and appreciate the University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP), particularly Project 8 of the UCDP that pertains to Language Development. The ULPDO staff agreed on an Annual Activity Programme that is in line with the approved activities as articulated in the UCDP. The detail of the plan covered the activity, experts leading the activity, participants, and timelines. It was emphasized that all the activities are going to be carried out within the approved budget.

The Planning Meeting involved critical reflection, a principle that has become part of ULPDO annual planning meetings. This involves assessing the previous year's work plan in order to inform the new plan for the year ahead. The plenary at the Planning Meeting involves various activities namely, that include the director's report, language coordinator's report and the staff members' individual portfolio reports. Upon receiving these reports proper engagements and assessment is done with an intention to improve and to adopt new strategies and tactics to strengthen the implementation where necessary.

The review of the 2017 activity plan evinced that excellent work was done by the office in implementing the language policy and plan. The office maintained good stakeholder relations, hosting terminology workshops, hosting training workshops, and building the isiZulu National Corpus to be a resource useful for research and HLT development. Other important flagship projects that were positively reviewed were the Multilingualism Project, Bua Le Nna (Let's Talk) and the Annual Literature competition. The report indicated that all the planned 2017 projects were successfully implemented. This conclusion was supported by the milestones that were achieved and the evaluations and the public comments.

The biennial Language Research Symposium (LRS) was held in October 2017, at the UNITE building, Howard College campus. This is an important platform for academics and various project leaders to confer on how the University is responding to the pronouncements articulated in the UKZN Language Policy and Implementation Plan. The LRS's 2017 theme highlighted the centrality of human language technologies in the intellectualization of African languages. UKZN is thus making progress in developing isiZulu human language technologies such as the isiZulu spell checker, the Mobile lexicon and the isiZulu Term Bank.

3. Information Technology Terminology Verification Workshop

The ULPDO hosted the Information Technology Terminology Verification Workshop on the 20-22 February 2018 at Coastland on The Ridge Hotel.

In the picture are the collaborators for this workshop. These are Prof A. M Maphumulo, Dr N Sibiya, Mr. Z. Xala, Rev. Mazibuko, Mr B Nxumalo, the PanSALB's Mr J Simelane and Ms J Ngcobo. The subject specialists included; Mr. Luke Voster and Mr. S Dlamini and the ULPDO staff members.

This verification workshop follows from the work that started last year through the consultative workshop, and is the second stage in the terminology development processes. The verification workshop is led by a technical committee appointed by the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) whose remit is to refine the terms submitted as the output of the consultation workshop. This is the penultimate stage that prepares terms for the last stage, which is authentication (sometimes referred to as standardization). Subject specialists continue to be a crucial part of these workshops to offer their technical expertise on the subject, usage and application of the terms in their context to help linguists verify them appropriately. A total of 519 terms were verified and are now ready for the standardization stage.

4.   Running Projects

4.1.   Bua Le Nna Sessions

The Bua Le Nna sessions were held at Ansell May and John Bews Residence January – March 2018.

In the picture are the students who participated in this session including the ULPDO staff members.

The sessions for 2018 have begun with excitement from both students and the Bua Le Nna Champions. This project is one of the flagship projects of the ULPDO, working in close collaboration with student services. The students continue to support this project by attending the sessions in encouraging numbers. The numbers of students attending these sessions have been steadily increasing every term since the inception of the project. This multilingualism project is an initiative that is responsive to the imperative to enhance social cohesion and inclusivity at UKZN, which is important in uniting the university community. It is the target of the office that at the end of the fourth term of this current year participating students would have acquired conversational skills in Sesotho language and Sesotho cultural appreciation. According to the 2018 activity plan, this project is on track.

5.   2018 Film festival.

ULPDO is fully engaged in improving stakeholder relations in order to advance the language agenda and share ideas and experiences. It is in this regard that ULPDO was honored to be invited and be part of the isiZulu film festival hosted on the 26th- 28th of January 2018 in Esikhawini. The language coordinator delivered a presentation on the programmes that the office is engaged in and implored creative writers to call on the office should the need arise to draw from the language products and isiZulu Human Language Technologies that we have developed and deployed. The presentation was well received by the delegates at the festival. This has strengthened the ULPDO's relations with KZN film institutions, and opportunities are being explored on how language, particularly isiZulu, can be integrated in most of their productions.

6.   ULPDO HLT's

6.1   Corpus Project

As reported in the 3rd quarterly report of 2017, ULPDO embarked on a fieldwork to collect recorded speech data in all of the KZN's districts. The spoken corpora will be processed and stored in a reusable format as part of the IsiZulu National Corpus (INC) during the year. The spoken corpus will bring the much needed balance to the INC as it will have a healthy balance between written and spoken materials.

At our Planning Meeting in January 2018, the office took a decision to focus on cleaning both the written corpus materials as the major corpus activity. The cleaning of corpus files is continuing smoothly and is gradually increasing the cleaned corpus. This activity will be enhanced as we transition from manual corpus cleaning to an electronic method that will complete the cleaning task faster.

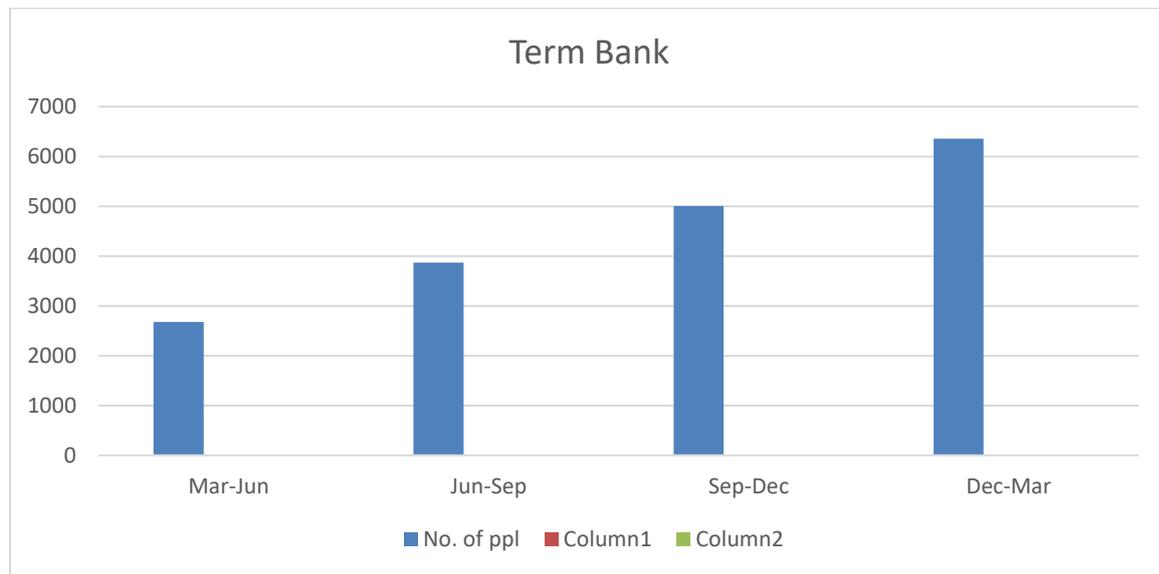### 6.2   Term Bank, Spellchecker and Zulu Lexicon

The ULPDO continues to monitor the use of its technologies. The records are indicating that people are indeed using them and their usage is gradually increasing every day. So far, 6358 people have visited the isiZulu terminology bank.

Different institutions and stakeholders continue to download the Zulu Lexicon, a mobile application that provides access to specialized disciplinary terminology, and the isiZulu spell checker. So far, the people in the range between 1000–1500 have downloaded the Zulu Lexicon. Overall, the softwares are being used as expected and their utility is gradually increasing. As a result of this, the office has received compliments about the quality of these software

applications and their functional capacity. This affirms UKZN as increasingly becoming an epicenter for language development and innovation. Below is the figure illustrating the uptake of the isiZulu Term Bank.

Figure 1

People accessing the Term Bank

The graph shows that in the second quarter of last year, between June and September 2017, only 2678 people had visited the term bank. The number grew in the third quarter with more than 1000 people visiting the term bank, which accounted for a total of 3869 people who had accessed the term bank. The number further grew with more than 1100, to end the year with a total of just over 5000 visitors to the term bank. In the current quarter under review (January to March 2018), there has been 1357 users accessing the isiZulu Term Bank, which has seen the total number grow to an encouraging 6358. This is impressive, and it provides evidence that the deployment of digital technologies such as the term bank is a very effective way of disseminating the authenticated disciplinary terminology that we develop in the office. These terms are accessed easily through a URL or the mobile application.

7. Conferences and Meetings

7.1   Director's conference/meetings attendance

In another effort to be the centre of excellence in digital technologies for African languages, the ULPDO Director, Dr Langa Khumalo was invited to attend MeetingsAfrica Business Matchmaking Programme held on 25-28 February 2018, in Johannesburg. He was leading a bid for the Digital Humanities Association of Southern Africa (DHASA) to host the International

Conference for the Alliance of Digital Humanities Organization for the first time in Africa in Durban in 2021. To date the South Africa National Convention Bureau (SANCB) has supported the bid led by Dr Khumalo, and has availed a sponsorship for the bid of R725 000.

While attending this Business Programme, the director also held meetings with the CEO of the PanSALB, Dr Monareng to finalize the Memorandum of Agreement between ULPDO and PanSALB. Both parties agreed that the MOA should be finalized and launched in August 2018. The director also met the South African Weather Services to share strategies on terminology development and dissemination. Both meeting were held on 27 February 2018 in Pretoria.

8. Publications

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Dhunpath, R., Amin N., **Khumalo, L**. (Eds.) 2017. ***Alternation***: Advancing teaching innovation and research excellence in higher education. CSSALL, Durban.

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Khumalo, L. 2018. IsiNdebele. In *The Social and Political History of Southern Africa's Languages*. Kamusella, T and Ndhlovu, F. (Eds.). 2018. Palgrave Macmillan: 101-117.