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University Language Planning and Development Office
First Quarterly Report: 2020

INSPIRING GREATNESS

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1. Introduction

Planning is a key component in the execution of the Language Programme at UKZN. Planning is the precursor of an effective and responsive programme, and ULPDO has made planning its first activity of the year to effectively review the work of the previous year and then proceed to plan for the current year. The ULPDO held its annual Planning Meeting on 22 – 24 January 2020.

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 (UCDP). It is in this regard that the ULPDO's 2020 activity plan is informed by **Goal 1** of the Strategic Plan and **Project 8** of the UCDP that pertains to Language Development.

The Language Program remains anchored on the two principal projects *viz.* terminology development and corpus building. 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.

Corpus building is focusing on processing speech corpus (also known as the oral corpus) and the parallel (English-isiZulu) corpus. These two corpora are a crucial and necessary development. The parallel corpus is being created as a basis for developing automated translations between English and isiZulu. Other technologies such as the isiZulu Term Bank and the Mobile Application are going to be monitored and evaluated for their uptake and user-friendliness.

Professor Langa Khumalo
Director: ULPDO

2. ULPDO 2020 Strategic Planning and Team Building

The University Language Planning and Development Office (ULDO) held a successful Strategic Planning workshop on 22 – 24 January 2020, wherein the programme of action and activity plan for 2020 was extensively deliberated and agreed upon.



ULPDO Staff members in a 2020 planning session

The strategic planning meeting has become the traditional annual opening session where the staff at ULPDO has made it a culture to critically assess the work of the previous year, review execution strategies, analyse weakness of these and failures, and then effectively plan ahead for the new year. The office also successfully infused the team building activity for the first time this year.



In the picture are ULPDO staff members during a team building activity

The objectives of the strategic planning meeting were outlined as follows:

1. to critically reflect on the 2019 overall performance
2. to critically assess the execution of the 2019 activity plan
3. to develop an informed 2020 ULPDO activity plan
4. to strengthen the team, its unity, skills and performance

The workshop began with team building activities. These activities were very well selected and inculcated *inter alia* the culture of team work, adaptability, endurance, problem-solving, and support for each other. The office was really re-energized and ready to work as a team after those activities.

The Director officially opened the strategic planning meeting by outlining the strategic perspective and direction of the office and the role of ULPDO in the university. He further highlighted the mission, vision and objectives of the office and got into details about the language project at UKZN and its links to the goals of the institution. In outlining the purpose of the planning meeting, he said "it was to evaluate the work that the office has done in the past year (2019), plan for the year 2020, and ultimately assess whether we are still pursuing the mandate bestowed to us by the university". He appreciated the

efforts and dedication shown by the team in doing the work of the office and the operationalization of the UKZN Language Policy and plan. The coordinator presented on operational matters of the office and how work is coordinated. He touched on all portfolios and how they should coalesce in executing the entire language programme.

All responsible portfolio heads presented their individual activities and how they were implemented in 2019, and the challenges thereto. Thereafter, the SWOT analysis was done in order to strengthen all aspects of work. This was followed by robust discussions focusing on each portfolio and strategies to improve it.

In the end, the ULPDO plan for 2020 was successfully crafted, however each portfolio was tasked to develop their individual project plans for 2020 in accordance with the Language Plan.

3. Running Projects

3.1. Bua Le Nna Sessions

The ULPDO together with leadership of the Student Division, (the SGLD and Student residences) together hosted a successful Bua Le Nna stakeholder meeting on 05 February 2020 at ULPDO Office to assess how the project implementation was done in 2019 and suggest improvements for 2020.

In the period under review the office had no Bua Le Nna sessions. The sessions are scheduled to commence in February 2020 owing to the disturbances to the academic program as a result of students protests.

4. ULPDO HLT's

4.1. Parallel and Oral Corpus

Corpus building is a central activity in the Language Programme. Two new novel corpora are under construction at ULPDO. The English-isiZulu Parallel Corpus (EIPC) and the IsiZulu Oral Corpus (IOC). The target for the former is 15 000 sentences and the later 100 hours for 2020. The corpus transcribers are hard at work on the oral corpus. The corpus team is cleaning and valorizing the parallel corpus. The two corpora are very strategic in the creation of novel computational solutions.

5. Publications

- a) Khumalo, L Azom , V. Olukanmin, P. 2019. The design and Implementation of a corpus management system for isiZulu national corpus. In Humanists and the digital toolbox. Novus Forlog: Oslo.
- b) Keet, MC. and Khumalo, L. 2019. Parthood and partwhole relations in Zulu language and culture. Applied Ontology 3 IOS Press.
- c) Khumalo, L. 2019. Corpora as agency in the intellectualization of African languages. In The Transformative Power of Language: From Postcolonial to Knowledge Society in Africa. Cambridge: CUP.