

**language**matters**@UKZN**

**University Language Planning and Development Office  
Second Quarterly Report: 2020**

**INSPIRING GREATNESS**

## **Second Quarterly Report April-June 2020.**

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# 1. Introduction

The second quarter of the year has seen our language activity plan suffer the full impact of Covid-19 pandemic's disruption. While we note and acknowledge the effect of the coronavirus global pandemic on the language work, ULPDO took a decision to continue with our weekly operational meetings on Microsoft Teams (MS Teams).

The first highlight in this quarter is the progress that has been made on our corpora. Work on corpus development and corpus processing has progressed very well. The size of the English-IsiZulu Parallel Corpus (EIPC) has already exceeded its 2020 target with an impressive 15 503 parallel sentence texts. The annual target was 15 000 parallel sentence texts. Work is still continuing, and I am glad to state boldly that the target will be exceeded by a mile. The IsiZulu Oral Corpus (IOC), one of the three corpus types, continues to grow towards reaching the 2020 target of 100 hours. The IOC currently stands at just over 93 hours of recorded and processed texts.

The second highlight is the transitioning of all our language activities to online platforms to mitigate disruption as a result of Covid-19. The ULPDO has reconceptualized the Bua Le Nna plan, a Sesotho training programme for UKZN students designed to enhance social cohesion, to allow for the programme to be offered virtually to our target students. Further to that, the Bilingual Tutorial Training Programme has also been repackaged so that it can be offered online without any hindrance.

The impact of Covid-19 pandemic has thus provided new and exciting opportunities. Some of these will be shared in this quarterly report.

Professor Langa Khumalo  
Director: ULPDO

## **2. ULPDO operations under lockdown**

The impact of the Covid-19 global pandemic on higher education in South Africa has inspired the academy to adopt new ways of doing university business, both in professional services and in research, teaching and learning. As a result, the ULPDO took a decision to transition its operations to virtual platforms. The weekly staff meetings are being held on MS Teams. These are crucial operational meetings that monitor the effective outlay of the Language Programme as a whole.

In order to facilitate the virtual workspace, the ULPDO successfully applied and acquired internet routers from ICS. The internet routers were distributed to staff who are still working from home under lockdown, with all the accountability measures in place and lodged with our office administration and the ICS. All staff are able to attend without fail the weekly operational meetings on MS Teams, the project meetings with internal and external experts and stakeholders on Zoom, and provide language services (translation and editing) to the university community.

It is important to state that all the language activities in the Language Programme are on track. These include the development of corpora; the literature competition; terminology development for Chemical Engineering, Research and Accounting; the Bua Le Nna Social Cohesion Programme; the DR 9 Implementation; the Bilingual Tutorial Training Programme for Music and Psychology; and Language Services, which include translation, editing and interpreting.

## **3. Bua Le Nna**

### **3.1. Online Bua Le Nna Sessions**

The plan to conduct the 2020 Bua Le Nna sessions was disrupted first by the student protests that took place at the beginning of the first semester, and later by the global crisis that resulted in many countries taking unusual measures such as closing schools, colleges and universities in a massive lockdown in order to stem the spread of the novel coronavirus.

As has been stated above, the ULPDO took a decision to transition Bua Le Nna sessions from physical contact sessions to virtual sessions, wherein the language champions who teach Sesotho will deliver their content on line. The content

will be prepared following a designed lesson plan, pre-recorded and edited, and then posted online through WhatsApp. The WhatsApp Group class will have an administrator and an assistant administrator from ULPDO. The scheduled sessions have been planned as follows:

1. The sessions now will now be conducted virtually through a WhatsApp Group class with pre-recorded audio content.
2. The sessions will be delivered weekly through this WhatsApp classroom.
3. The time for these sessions will remain the same (18h00-19h00).

The ULPDO has made arrangement to acquire data for the Bua Le Nna champions who are teaching in these sessions. ULPDO staff and students are already supported in this regard. Additional data for students that attend Bua Le Nna sessions is being considered between ULPDO and the Student Services Division.

The ULPDO has held two meetings with Students Services on 20 May 2020, and with the Bua Le Nna champions on 27 May to concretize these arrangements. A dry run was successfully executed on the online offering of the Bua Le Nna sessions. The champions pre-recorded the content following a carefully designed lesson plan, and sent it to the Bua Le Nna WhatsApp group. The content was critically evaluated and sent back for improvement. The office is now ready to role out the virtual lessons, having appointed the WhatsApp Group classroom administrator and the assistant administrator for the smooth delivery.

## **4. Terminology development**

Terminology development remains one of the core projects in the intellectualization of isiZulu at UKZN. There are three terminology development projects lined up for 2020. This is the Chemical Engineering, Account and Finance, and Research terminology development workshops. Plans are underway to hold these workshops. Chemical Engineering project leader and his team are finalizing term harvesting, which include lexical choices in English, their English glosses and tentative isiZulu corresponding candidates.

The Accounting project has two project leaders, one external and another internal to UKZN. They are both currently finalizing the MoU, while simultaneously initiating the term harvesting process. Research terminology is an IsiZulu African Union project led by Dr G Mazibuko. Term harvesting has already been finalized. The current task is to generate isiZulu candidates, while identifying research experts who will insert English glosses.

## 5. Corpus Project

The ULPDO is developing three types of corpora concurrently. These are the IsiZulu National Corpus (INC), the English-IsiZulu Parallel Corpus (EIPC) and the IsiZulu Oral Corpus (IOC). These corpora have a strategic purpose in the development of various human language technologies. The INC is currently the biggest African Language Corpus in the world, with 31.7 million tokens, and is deputized by the Helsinki Corpus of Swahili with 25 million tokens.

ULPDO has made commendable progress on the EIPC and the IOC. This, despite the challenges of lockdown. The EIPC has already surpassed the annual target of 15 000 parallel sentence texts, and now stands at 15 503 parallel sentence texts. The IOC is chasing a target of 100 hours by the end of the year, and currently stands at just over 93 hours. The corpus team is developing tag sets for the annotation of the IOC using the Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML). This work is progressing well.

## 6. The implementation of the DR9

The implementation of the Doctoral Rule (DR9) is progressing well. A total of 171 doctoral abstracts for graduating PhDs have been uploaded on the Translation Management Tool (TMT). A total of 159 doctoral abstracts for the April 2020 graduation were submitted. College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science submitted 33, College of Health Science 28, College of Humanities 66 and College of Law and Management 32. The translation of these abstracts is currently underway. A recurring concern has been that these doctoral abstracts do not follow the stipulated length as articulated in the DR 9a rule. The rule states that:

### **DR9 Format of thesis**

b) Every thesis submitted shall be in such format as prescribed by the Senate and the rules of the relevant college; provided that each thesis shall include an abstract in both English and isiZulu. Each English and isiZulu abstract shall not exceed 350 words.

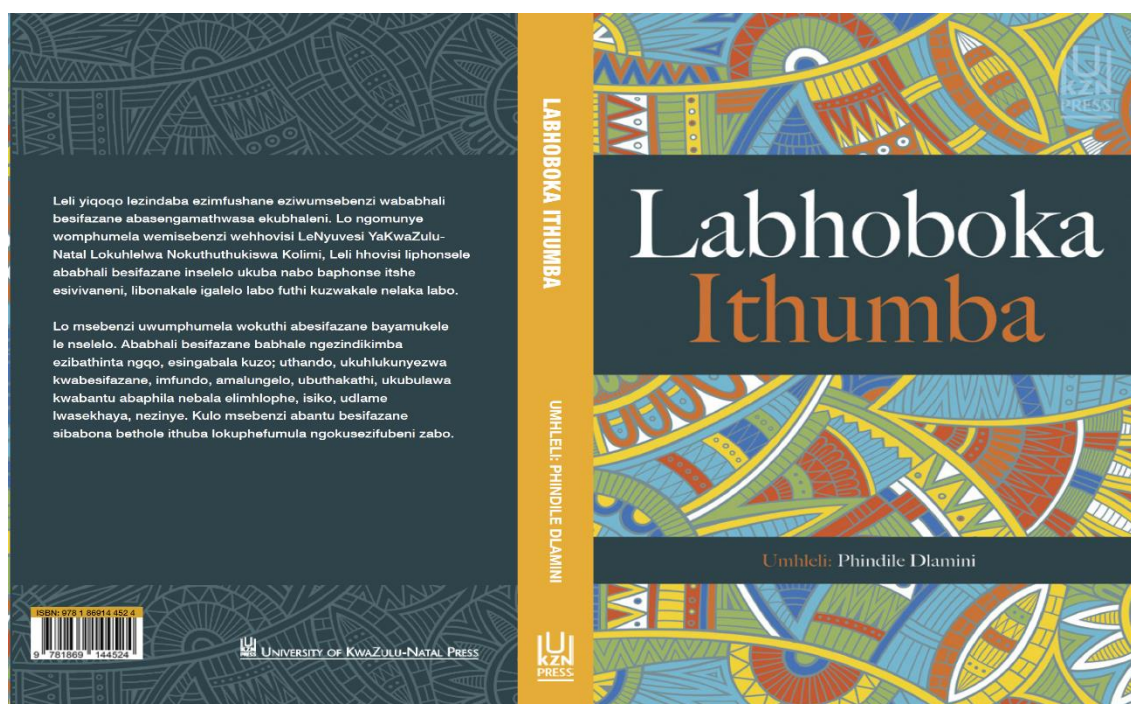
However, some doctoral abstracts are as long as three pages. The Chair of the ULB committed to take this matter to the University Research Committee.

## 7. Seminar Series

In year 2019, the ULPDO initiated the seminar series programme, where all staff members are given an opportunity to present the topic of their choice, which should be in line with the work that is done at ULPDO. The objective is to share knowledge in the area in which a staff member is working (e.g. translation, corpus, language policy research, lexicography, etc.), and to also receive feedback from colleagues on the knowledge shared. The first 2020 Webinar was delivered by Mr. Siyabonga Nkontwana, on 29 of May 2020. His seminar presentation was titled: *Bua le Nna online using technology as a response to Covid-19*. The presentation is attached as addendum A.

## 8. ULPDO 2020 Launch

The launch for the 2020 book publications will be held in November. The book *Labhoka Ithumba*, Edited by Dr P Dlamini, which is a collection of short-stories by female authors only, has been finalized.



The IsiZulu orthography book is now in the printing press and should be out by the end of July 2020. The third publication, whose manuscript is still being

finalized, is the Anatomy Glossary. The editor is adding illustrations, and the manuscript should be submitted to the UKZN Press before the end of July 2020.