

BOOK REVIEWS

IsiNdebele Esiphezulu: A Manual of the Ndebele Language By *N. P. Ndhlukula*. Gwelo, Mambo Press in association with the Rhodesia Literature Bureau, 1974, 278pp. Rh\$1,70.

The rate at which Ndebele has been developed as a school subject in its own right, over the past two decades, replacing Zulu, is remarkable. There has been a persistent spirit of determination among Ndebele speakers that this goal should be attained and the results are highly commendable.

The Ndebele Language Committee, formed in 1956, has been deeply concerned with the promotion of Ndebele literature for educational use, and the Rhodesian Literature Bureau has taken practical steps to implement this policy by offering prizes to authors. Among outstanding writers who have emerged, mention might be made especially of such names as N. S. Sigogo, P. Mahlangu, N. Sithole, A. Mzilethi and Lassie Ndondozi. Besides pure literature in the form of poetry, plays and novels there has been also a need for practical text books. In this field, Ndhlukula's recent contribution, *IsiNdebele-Esiphezulu*, is a particularly useful school language manual for young Ndebele speakers.

It contains a wide range of material, arranged in such a way as to maintain interest throughout by varying the recipe constantly. Grammar is introduced in easily digestible, small but regular doses, interspersed agreeably with a great many selected passages of prose, and some poetry, drawn from a wide spectrum of sources. Besides extracts from modern Ndebele literature, a fair sampling has been taken from works by leading Zulu authors (translated into Ndebele). In addition, the rich heritage of traditional Ndebele oral literature has not been overlooked: due attention is given to episodes from folk tales, to riddles and proverbs, and to traditions, customs and social conventions. Each lesson concludes with practical questions or exercises on the material. Attention is also given to matters such as letter writing (both formal and informal), to the art of précis, and to practical approaches to specimen questions from examination papers dealing with set books. The book has been neatly and efficiently produced and should certainly fulfil a valuable role for a long time to come.

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Assessment of English Proficiency in the African Primary School By *J. E. Hofman*. Salisbury, University of Rhodesia, Series in Education Occasional Paper No. 3, 1974, 75pp. Rh\$2,00.

The situation investigated by Professor Hofman is one in which Shona-speaking African children in Rhodesia are receiving their primary school education through the medium of English from teachers who are non-native speakers of English. After a brief outline of the circumstances leading to the existing language medium situation, Hofman sets himself the task of discovering the extent to which the policy of 'early-English-cum-universal-permeation-cum-instructional-innovation' has been effective.

For purposes of this research he uses the *cloze* technique developed by