

BOOK REVIEWS

Duramazwi Rechishona, By Herbert Chimhundu, Harare, College Press, 1996, 504 pp.

The term *Duramazwi* (*Kudura*: to reveal, explain; *mazwi*: words), to render the English word "dictionary", has been in use in Shona for some time. It occurs in M. Hannan's *Standard Shona Dictionary*¹ and in D. Dale's *Duramazwi: A Shona-English Dictionary*.² The title of the work under review indicates that it is a dictionary of Shona in Shona, in which the resources of the language are used for the first time lexicographically to analyse and describe itself. In this important and original aspect, it differs from the two predecessors mentioned, namely, in being completely monolingual. It is the work of a team led by Dr. H. Chimhundu that is undertaking an ambitious and formidable project code-named ALLEX (African Languages Lexical Project) which seeks to compile monolingual dictionaries in all the African languages of Zimbabwe.

The first phase of the ALLEX project was formally launched at a workshop held at the University of Zimbabwe in 1992 in which lexicographers and computer experts from the Universities of Oslo and Gothenburg also participated. The publication of *Duramazwi Rechishona* four years later demonstrated the efficient dedication and enthusiasm of the ALLEX team. Having used the dictionary over a period of some months, this reviewer can testify to the almost complete absence of misprints or misplacements; no small achievement for a group of editors faced with an exacting work schedule.

SCOPE

Duramazwi Rechishona is a medium-sized, general-purpose dictionary designed to be inexpensive and easy to handle. It is well printed with different kinds of type, signalling the movement from headword to synonyms in the treatment of each major entry. The components of a typical major entry are: the headword, in large bold lower-case roman; the tone pattern, indicated by sequences of plain upper-case letters K and D, standing for high and low tone, respectively; the type of word in question, described by an abbreviated label in standard lower-case roman; a number or numbers, in the case of a noun, indicating the class to which it and any irregular plural forms belong; an explanation of the meaning or

1 M. Hannan, *Standard Shona Dictionary*, 2nd edition (Salisbury, Rhodesia Literature Bureau, 1974).

2 D. Dale, *Duramazwi: A Shona-English Dictionary* (Gweru, Mambo Press, 1981).

meanings in lower-case roman, with the headword, when referred to, printed in italics; an illustrative example of examples in italics of the headword in context; finally, synonyms, printed in italics under the rubric FAN, which stands for "Similar forms". For example:

Chibage DDK z 7>6. *Chibage* imbeu inorimwa ichiita vana vane tsanga dzinogaiwa kuita upfu hunobika sadza. *Baba vakarima chibage choga*
FAN *magwere* 6, *mabarwe* 6.

(*Maize*: Maize is a plant which is cultivated and produces cobs with grains which are ground to make flour for cooking stiff porridge. Father has cultivated only maize).

The number of headwords listed is a modest 16 000, but the editors claim that the number of words included in the dictionary is much larger. Variants, differing only slightly in form, are entered within brackets immediately after the headword. Many synonyms are listed which receive no more than a simple mention, while many headwords are homonyms. In such cases, each of the several meanings receives an explanation and, often, an example of usage under the single homonymous headword. All these formatting devices are in the interest of economy of space and cost.

The work has a three-fold aim. The first is to provide a medium-sized dictionary aimed at teachers and students of higher classes to assist them understand and teach the structure of their language through the provision, for the first time, of a technical terminology in Shona, dealing with its linguistic features. Teachers and students of Shona are more likely to need to consult a dictionary than others and to make use of its contents in the course of their daily lives as well as to mediate its contents to others. For the ordinary reader, such a work of reference can provide, with ease and understanding, the meaning, use, and function of words such as would not be so easily or fully grasped if conveyed in, and then translated from, a foreign language as has been the case hitherto.

The second aim is to provide a "word hoard" (*dura romutauro wose*: lit. "a barn to store the whole language" — a conscious pun on the homophony between *dura*: "a granary" and "*dura*" "reveal"). Thus, contributions from all the dialects and regional forms are sought to swell the wealth of vocabulary of the unitary language, which is the property, and inheritance of all. These contributions result in a good deal of synonymy. In their treatment of synonyms, the editors take into account the usage of the majority of speakers, widely used forms receiving the full format with definition and exemplification, while forms with a narrower distribution are entered as headwords in a shorter format in which readers are referred to the main entry. This procedure is a straightforward and economical way of promoting the unification of the language, while reflecting its inner differentiation of use.

Editorial revision may be needed here to provide more consistency in the cross-referencing between headwords of full entries and their synonyms. It is important, in order to realise the aims of the dictionary, to unite linguistically all members of the Shona-speaking community, that all synonyms should be clearly and consistently cross-referenced. To emphasise this unity, synonyms, whether accorded the treatment of headwords or merely listed, are no longer labelled for dialectal origin as the editors feel such labels to be now unacceptable.

The dictionary realises the ideal for which the Reverend B. H. Barnes, the first editor and compiler of a unified Shona dictionary, argued nearly seventy years ago. He wrote:

Let us have a dictionary which shall include all the vocabularies in one alphabetical order, printed in the common orthography . . . The various dialectal areas will all be able to use the dictionary, for their own words will be in it, and at the same time, they will be getting familiar with the words found in other dialects . . . In a generation or two, we shall have advanced perceptibly towards a common language, not by the road of conquest, but by the road of peaceful interpenetration. Is it not true that we English of all parts of the English-speaking world have been brought to share a common speech very largely by the unifying influence of the dictionary? The Bible and Shakespeare have done much, but it may be argued that Dr Johnson has done even more.³

The third aim, the animating heart of the project, is to promote the status and use of the language. The dictionary, it is hoped, will help to make people use it appositively in widening areas of life, and to value it as conferring self-respect and the means towards a better and developed standard of life. This will be achieved by self-help and greater participation through the medium of the mother tongue in affairs at all levels. Towards the full realisation of this end, dictionaries of other kinds, other degrees of completeness, and other languages, will be needed. *Duramazwi ReChishona* is a mere beginning.

It is up to those whose mother tongue it is to realise that their language is capable of developing into a medium able to express and communicate to people at all levels the concerns, aims and techniques of national development. Having seen the potential and the first steps of growth towards the status of a national language which enshrines both indigenous cultural values and is actively adaptable towards the breadth of modern knowledge and the applications of science, it is up to them to actually realise this growth. However, confronting such growth is not only the effort of adaptation, somewhat like that of a rose creeper covering

3 B. H. Barnes, "A Campaign against Babel: The Unification of Dialects of Mashonaland" in *NADA* 6 (1928), 50.

a wall, but competition with the official language to which it would adapt, and which, at present, is so much more powerful, necessary for external contacts, and efficient in the fields to which the editors hope to see Shona develop. Yet, indigenous speakers are able to make the effort and the example of the editors, themselves all indigenous speakers of Shona, lies before them.

The metalanguage, or the technical language about itself, which the editors present, partly assembled from current use and partly specially devised, is listed in three columns of (1) abbreviations, (2) Shona terms in full, and (3) English equivalents. For example:

z	Zita	Noun
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This triple column is, itself, triplicated to allow each of the three columns, alphabetically arranged, to provide an index for cross-reference. The editors expect these lists, and the lists of noun class prefixes and verbal extensions, both with examples, to be a help towards the teaching of Shona through the medium of Shona at all levels from the primary classes up to University courses. It is in the field of linguistics and literature that the first devising of technical terminology is being made.

SELECTION OF HEADWORDS

To the editors, seeking at once to promote both unification and development, the selection of what words to include in their dictionary to present problems of choice call for a great deal of care. We have seen how the question of dialectal diversity has been dealt with. The diversity arising from culturally determined styles of speech proper to intimate or distant relationships, the occasions on which veiled and allusive speech alternates with direct and open language, and the further developments within slang are not treated. Questions like these, as also the presence of the spoken dialects and their relation to the standard literary language, await treatment in the larger dictionary now being compiled.

A second problematic aspect of word selection arises from the adaptable nature of language as it suits itself to the needs of life. The greater the growth and development of adaptation, the more numerous are the innovations. The editors' task is to discriminate between neologisms which, being the result of passing fashion, are quick to disappear, and those which strike deeper roots and persist, sometimes unexpectedly. For example, *chikafu* (English: scoff, food), *futseki* (Afrikaans: voertsek, "Be off"), and *hobho* (Afrikaans: hoop; English: a heap) have survived. Modern inventions are naturalised at once, for example *firiji* (English: fridge) and *kombiyuta* (English: computer). Some adoptives have been in use for a long time, for example, *mbanje* (Indian hemp or bhang),

ndarama (gold, cp. Arabic *daraham*, "coins") and *sinyoro* (a praise name of the Njanja clan, adopted from the Portuguese "senhor"). However, particularly since independence, Shona and Ndebele are being increasingly used in business, central and local government, commerce, industry, mining, agriculture, education, health, advertising, broadcasting, and television, all areas which create pressure for term creation.

The two bilingual dictionaries mentioned earlier have provided a primary source for entries. Dale's *Duramazwi: A Basic Shona-English Dictionary* had gone some way towards being monolingual in that definitions are partly in Shona and partly in English. It was drawn upon for the majority of its entries. These were supplemented by choosing words of wide distribution from Hannan's *Standard Shona Dictionary*, a massive work of some 54 000 entries but still far from being complete. Research for *Duramazwi ReChishona* was able to discover many words not contained in it. The availability of these two earlier works obviously facilitated and expedited the production of *Duramazwi ReChishona*.

In order to make the selection of entries as widely representative of life as possible within the compass of a general purpose, medium-sized dictionary, the editors ensured that their nets were cast widely. Areas researched were schools and colleges, especially for terms covering language and literature, the media, sports and sporting, churches, trade and commerce. Thus, *Duramazwi ReChishona* is a corpus-aided dictionary, using language that has actually come from the mouths or pens of Shona speakers themselves.

FORMAT

The editors have followed the cobuild-type of format for their definitions. According to the editors,

Each definition consists of a complete sentence, so that the user is shown the word as it appears in natural language use. Such a definition illustrates both the typical grammatical context and the typical use of the word. From the user's point of view, this method of defining is particularly useful for an inflecting language like Shona, where headwords are not necessarily orthographic words.⁴

A good example is the following:

-famba K it. *Kufamba Kubva pane imwe nzvimbo pane imwe, netsoka kana kuti uchishandisa mudziyo, senge bhasikoro kana motokari kana chitima. Rwendo rurefu rwakadai harudi kufamba netsoka.*
(To travel is to go from one place to another, on foot or by using a

⁴ The editorial team, "Response to Professor G. Kahari's Review of *Duramazwi ReChishona*", Harare, *The Herald*, 20 March, 1997, Features Section, 2-7.

conveyance such as a bicycle, a motor car or a train. *Such a long journey is not to be travelled on foot*).

It is interesting to compare this entry with that given in *Hannan's Standard Shona Dictionary* which follows a more traditional format.

-famba [H] KkoMZ v t & i Move. Walk. Progress. Journey. Travel. *Nyoka inofamba nedumbu: a snake moves on its stomach.* (H indicates high tone, KkoMZ, the dialects concerned, v t & i stand for "verb, transitive and intransitive").

In many cases, the definition of a headword is so informative that there is no need for a further sentence as an illustrative example of use. Of course, the definition of a headword cannot cover all the senses inhering in it. Its aim is to present "the typical case" in such a way that the meaning is clear and the user is enabled to become aware of its use and further applications, and to use it in sentences of his own. When the definition is not sufficient of itself, then an example must be provided to clarify it further, always by way of a complete sentence.

The advantage of adhering closely to a formatting system is that, once a particular format has been agreed upon, then headwords of the same constituent class (noun, verb, ideophone etc.) can be defined in a consistent way. The Introduction to *Duramazwi ReChishona* describes the different defining formats used for nouns (five types of sentence), verb stems (two), adjectives (two), ideophones (two), and others (two). By following these, the dictionary attains a high degree of consistency.

The introduction to the dictionary ends with an explanation of the rubrics which provide descriptive linguistic information about the headwords which is complementary to that supplied by the definitions and examples. This information is helpful to those who are not used to consulting dictionaries.

Altogether, this is a remarkable publication, worthy of note from a number of aspects. It is remarkable in being among the very first of monolingual dictionaries of an African language; in the consistency and rational character of its early planning, its preliminary research, its targeting of the most effective section of the public in view of the further aims of the dictionary programme, and its designedly well-timed collaboration with professional and technical expertise of the most advanced kind. It is remarkable also in being such a positive response to the challenge of independence, inspired by the belief in the potential of national languages to liberate and unite their speakers' energies in the task of national development.

In its execution, it has given a very good example of collaboration in that it is the work of a dedicated team aided enthusiastically by help from a number of national agencies. The team has already embarked on a

further stage of its enterprise, a large Shona dictionary, making much more use of the information stored, and a medium-sized Ndebele dictionary, similar to that which we have been reviewing. In the words of *Duramazwi ReChishona*, we can say: "Mazvilita, musanete namangwanal (Thank you for what you have done! Keep it up, tomorrow as well!)"

England

GEORGE FORTUNE

Environmental Security in Southern Africa, Edited by Daniel Tevera and Sam Moyo, Harare, SARIPS, 2000, ISBN 1-77905-101-8, 236 pp.

Environmental Security in Southern Africa is a compilation of selected papers presented at the SAPES Trust Colloquium on Regional Environmental Security and Natural Resources held in 1998. Consisting of 13 articles grouped in four sections under the following themes: Environmental Security Frameworks, Land Use, Water Conflicts and Insecurity and Cross-Cutting Issues, the book seeks "to provide a coherent treatment of key themes in relation to contemporary environmental security in the region".

The first section on Environment Security Frameworks contains papers by Sam Moyo and Daniel Tevera, Meena Singh and Backson Sibanda. Moyo and Tevera's paper, 'Regional Environmental Security in Southern Africa', opens with an observation that, hitherto, the study of environmental security has been an "eclectic and multidisciplinary effort informed by a variety of analytic perspectives". It contends that what is needed is a multi-factoral approach to understanding the various social, economic, ecological and political influences on the demand, utilization and management of natural resources. Such an approach, it is argued, is best suited to providing solutions to environmental conflict in the region. Meena Singh's paper, entitled 'Environmental (In) security: Loss of Indigenous Knowledge and Environmental Degradation in Africa' analyses land and environmental development and conservation strategies among the Afar of Ethiopia and Basuto of Lesotho and highlights two critical factors in environmental security. These are: a historical perspective to environmental insecurity, famine and poverty in Africa, and the need to fuse local indigenous knowledge systems to build sustainable environmental security. Singh concludes that the state's "imposition of conservation measures upon an unconsulted rural farming community was at best unsuccessful and at worst harmful to the environment".

In 'Community Participation: NGOs and IGOs in Nature Management' Backson Sibanda argues that the era of liberalization and globalization has brought to the fore Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) and