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Intellectualising African languages in literature and linguistics at selected Zimbabwean higher learning institutions

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The incorporation of specialised domains of knowledge such as STEM subjects into the discourse surrounding the intellectualisation of African languages has become increasingly prevalent. However, scant attention has been given to examining the extent to which the intellectualisation of African languages for the instruction and study of literature and linguistics at institutions of higher learning has progressed. The article argues that prior to focusing on a variety of fields of knowledge, the intellectualisation of African languages should begin with the areas of literature and linguistics. In addressing this argument, a questionnaire containing literature and linguistics terms was distributed to 15 lecturers selected from four institutions of higher learning, comprising two teachers' colleges and two universities in Zimbabwe. The results of the study revealed that literature and linguistics terms for identical concepts in the same language vary across Zimbabwean institutions of higher education. In some cases, even within the same institution, the terms used by lectures for the same concepts differed. It is concluded that the decolonisation of education at higher institutions of learning should begin with the intellectualisation of African languages through the development of standard terminologies for the instruction of literature and linguistics.

Introduction and background

The use of African languages in teaching and learning beyond confining them as subjects calls for the availability of terminology in specialised subject fields. The departments of African languages at institutions of higher learning are the ones that should spearhead the development of terminologies in various fields of knowledge. Academics in the departments of languages have actively advocated for the intellectualisation of African languages so that they are taught not only as subjects, but are used as media for teaching and learning across various fields of knowledge. Thus, the article examines the extent to which departments of African languages have progressed in intellectualising these languages in literature and linguistics. This is because these departments of African languages mainly teach literature and linguistics. There has been an overreliance on English in the teaching and learning of literature and linguistics at institutions of higher learning. It is therefore prudent to examine the extent to which the departments of African languages have developed their languages in this context. This holds significance because stakeholders in the field of language cannot ascertain the development of African languages for other academic disciplines until they have cultivated them sufficiently for use in teaching and learning in their respective departments.

The article investigates the preparedness and potential for intellectualising African languages, primarily focusing on the development and standardisation of isiNdebele linguistics and literary terminology at higher learning institutions in Zimbabwe. The higher learning institutions that offer isiNdebele in Zimbabwe that were studied are Great Zimbabwe University (GZU), Midlands State University

(MSU), Mkoba Teachers' College (MTC) and United College of Education (UCE). IsiNdebele was selected as a focal language for the study due to its long-standing presence alongside Shona in institutions of higher learning and its rich literary heritage, which predates that of other African languages in Zimbabwe. The argument presented in this article posits that for isiNdebele to develop beyond being merely taught as a subject at institutions of higher education, it must first undergo development to the extent that its terminology enables seamless instruction without hindrance. One would not anticipate academics in the field of isiNdebele to develop the language for teaching other subjects when it has not been adequately developed for use in its own disciplinary modules and courses. This is why we chose to scrutinise the extent to which isiNdebele has been intellectualised in the field of literature and linguistics. The article also looks at collaboration between institutions of higher learning as a strategy for coming up with a uniform development of the language. It is argued that without collaboration among departments offering African languages at various institutions of higher learning, the intellectualisation of African languages would not come to be.

Terminology development as a key intellectualisation strategy

The debate on intellectualisation of African languages was initiated by Finlayson and Madiba (2002). A renowned South African linguist, the late Neville Alexander, popularised the subject through several publications with the first being a book in 2003, entitled, *The African Renaissance and the use of African languages in tertiary education*. In 2007, Alexander published an article on

the role of African universities in the intellectualisation of African languages, with another one coming out in 2010. Prah followed in 2009 with a similar article entitled 'Mother-tongue education in Africa for emancipation and development: Towards the intellectualisation of African language' and another similar one in 2017. Thereafter, other articles that were published on the same subject included, for example, Madiba (2012), Kaschula and Maseko (2014), Ndimande-Hlongwa et al. (2014) and Khumalo (2016). Liddicoat and Bryant (2002: 1) are of the view that the 'intellectualisation of a language involves the development of new linguistic resources for discussing and disseminating conceptual material at high levels of abstraction'. According to Khumalo (2017: 252), 'intellectualisation entails a carefully planned process of hastening the cultivation and growth of indigenous African languages so that they effectively function in all higher domains as languages of teaching and learning, research, science and technology'.

Liddicoat and Bryant (2002) note that a key component in the intellectualisation of a language is the development of academic discourse at various levels of education. We argue in this article that the academic discourse can be created through terminology development in a specific subject field. Alberts (2010) says that terminology development plays a critical role in language development. With the availability of terms for a specific field of knowledge in a particular language, knowledge can easily be shared. Van Huyssteen (1997) is of the view that a lack of terminologies in African languages hinders the use of these languages in specialised fields of knowledge. Khumalo (2017) argued that the intellectualisation of African languages begins with terminology development.

Although terminology has been perceived as a hindrance to the intellectualisation of African languages, some researchers have endeavoured to initiate the process. Dlodlo (1999) came up with a list of Nguni terms that can be used in science, particularly physics. Madzimbamuto (2012) proposed word compounding as the best strategy for creating Shona medical terms to facilitate communication between patients and medical personnel. The compounding that Madzimbamuto (2012) is referring to can also be viewed as literal translation, which is the same term-creation strategy that Dlodlo (1999) proposes. Dlodlo (1999) came up with a number of physics terms in isiNdebele, while Madzimbamuto (2012) proposed a number of medical terms in the Shona language. On the other hand, Alberts (1997) reported on a project on legal terminology which was conducted by the Centre for Legal Terminology in African Languages. The centre's establishment was meant to develop legal terminology for indigenous South African languages (Alberts, 1997). The establishment of this centre is testimony to the importance of intellectualising African languages through terminology development.

Terminology development as a way to intellectualise African languages has not been without challenges. The major ones identified include the slow pace, or complete failure to generate terms, and the creation of terms that are inadequate or not user friendly. Nhongo and Tshotsho (2020) observe that those researchers who have attempted to develop terms in specialised subject fields have not been

successful because of adopting a purist approach. Dlodlo (1999) and Madzimbamuto (2012) are a good example of those researchers who adopted such an approach in coming up with specialised subject field terms. Nhongo and Tshotsho (2020) argued that the failure to come up with specialised terms in African languages results from linguists who want to create terms that are self-explanatory and remain pure in the African languages. They suggest that linguists should also adopt transliteration as a term-creation strategy since English has grown to where it is today because of its reliance on transliteration. Many concepts enter African language speech communities through English. Hence, its co-existence with these local languages should be leveraged through the use of transliteration as a term creation strategy (Nhongo & Tshotsho, 2020). Madiba (2001) argues that the lack of terminology in the indigenous languages of South Africa in domains such as science, technology and commerce calls for a model of intervention in the intellectualisation of these languages. Madiba (2001) is against adopting a purist or liberal approach in the creation of terms in specialised fields of knowledge, but advocates for a pragmatic solution which incorporates the two approaches that he is against. As has been noted above, Dlodlo (1999) and Madzimbamuto (2012) used a purist and liberal approach and in doing so they created terms that are self-explanatory. The advantage of using a pragmatic approach is that the language users are also involved in terminology development as they would be creating terms through using the language (Madiba, 2001). It is evident through adopting a purist approach that they did not consider that Shona and isiNdebele co-exist with English.

Fourie (1994) identified two reasons for the rejection of African language terminology, and these are inaccuracies and cognitive difficulties. This is why Madiba (2001) advocates for the adoption of a pragmatic approach in terminology development, and which Mtintsilana and Morris (1988) and Nhongo and Tshotsho (2020) refer to as transliteration. Madiba (2012) argues that it will be difficult to intellectualise these African languages before they are used as media of instruction. Bamgbose (2011) is also of the view that the intellectualisation of a language should take place at the same time as its use. This implies that a language will only be fully intellectualised through its use since this will enable the users to identify the gaps and familiarise themselves with the new terms. Madiba (2001) also notes that terminology development in the African languages of South Africa has been hampered by a number of ideological, historical and educational factors. In scrutinising the linguistics and literary terms in this article, it is also shown that the intellectualisation of isiNdebele is negatively affected by a lack of adequate terminology. It will also be demonstrated that both linguistic and non-linguistic factors are a hindrance to the intellectualisation of African languages, particularly isiNdebele.

Several researchers have advocated for the instruction of science and mathematics in African languages. These include Dlodlo (1999), Madiba (2001; 2012), Bamgbose (2011; 2015), Bangura (2014), Mthiyane (2016) and Nhongo and Tshotsho (2019; 2020). Nevertheless, the argument advanced here is that before branching into other areas of knowledge, language researchers should first have terminologies conducive to the effective teaching

and learning of linguistics and literary studies in African languages. Bamgbose (2011) argues that African languages need to be developed for them to cope with different domains where they are still not being used. Bamgbose (2015: 22) asks the following questions:

Why not simply go for an imported language such as English?
How can a language be used for literacy and as medium of instruction if it is yet to be reduced to writing? How can a language be used for teaching science if there is no terminology already worked out in such languages for the scientific concepts to be encountered?

Terminology development is the most important part of language that can enable it to be used in specialised subject fields. Rugemalira et al. (1990: 31) argue that some countries such as Japan, Finland, China and Norway have not been isolated and lost track of technological developments because of not using 'an international language' in education. Osborn (2010) says that the multiplicity of African languages in each country on the continent makes it difficult to develop terminologies in them. Despite all the negatives about teaching specialised subject fields in African languages, what remains key is to intellectualise these languages so that they can effectively function as instructional media in various fields of knowledge.

Intellectualisation of African languages has many advantages that include enhancing the learners' understanding and boosting their confidence, developing and expanding the functionality of local languages, and demystifying the idea that it is only ex-colonial languages can be used in teaching and learning of specialised fields of knowledge. In a study conducted by Mthiyane (2016) on the choice of language to be used in teaching science, the findings indicated that English was a barrier in student teachers' understanding of science concepts, both at high school and at university. This led to feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem as both learners and future teachers of science. Prah (2017) points to the idea that African languages as intellectualised media are culturally an advantage which can be utilised in African interests. On the other hand, Alexander (2003) says that the intellectualisation of indigenous African languages facilitates the revitalisation of these languages in economic and technological development. The intellectualisation of African languages would give Africa a competitive and comparative advantage in the global economy (Mapadimeng, 2019). Finlayson and Madiba (2002) note that the intellectualisation of African languages would be of significant advantage where both the teacher and the learner are not first language speakers of English as this would facilitate mutual understanding between the two. Bamgbose (2011) is of the view that the major advantage of extending the use of African languages in domains where they were previously not utilised is the resulting prestige that they would acquire through intellectualisation. All these sentiments reflect that there are more advantages in intellectualising and using African languages than disadvantages as first languages of the majority of people in Africa.

Although the intellectualisation of African languages has been seen by many researchers as a positive move, some have backtracked on the idea. For instance, Liddicoat and Bryant (2002) are raising negative sentiments about the

intellectualisation of languages other than the lingua franca. Their concern is that the costs of intellectualising languages are too high. They further note that

[i]ntellectualisation of a local language is potentially problematic for higher levels of education, where the desirability of intellectualising the local language may be in tension with the use of international academic *linguae francae*...it may be more important to be able to communicate in an international lingua franca than to do so in the local language (Liddicoat & Bryant, 2002: 1).

This view of local languages and their intellectualisation is dismissed in this article. The argument advanced is that all people's languages should be developed so that they can be used for any purpose. Their agenda is that of continued perpetuation of the superiority of certain languages over others. Medgyes and Kaplan (1992) argue that academic communication in a local language can lead to isolation of the discipline. However, in his later publications, Kaplan advocated for the uplifting of local languages, for instance, Kaplan and Baldauf (1997), Baldauf et al. (2011) and Kaplan (2015). In these later publications, Kaplan advocates for multilingualism as a positive approach in language policy and planning.

Hadebe (2002) studied isiNdebele literary and linguistics terms that were used in tertiary institutions that included the University of Zimbabwe's Department of Curriculum Education, Hillside Teachers' College (HTC) and United College of Education (UCE). In his study, Hadebe observed that most linguistics terms in isiNdebele are created through transliteration. Mtintsilana and Morris (1988: 111) observe that '[i]n most cases foreign loanwords are Africanized by transliteration, i.e. by changing their phonological and morphological structure to accord with African language structures'. Hadebe (2002: 152) says that '[a] learner or any speaker of the language cannot deduce their meanings from their structure. These terms can only be taught or read for someone to know or get an idea of what they mean'. While Hadebe (2002) views transliteration from a negative perspective, this article regards it as an ideal term-creation strategy, especially if it is complemented with other strategies such as literal translation. What needs to be borne in mind is that English has grown to become a global language because of transliterating terms from languages such as Greek, Latin, French and others. The tendency to come up with terms that are self-explanatory as advocated for by Hadebe has resulted in the creation of redundant and lengthy explanations instead of terms. It should also be noted that these are specialised subject terms and not just ordinary descriptors and therefore they need to be learned in each particular field of knowledge. Again, as Hadebe (2002) acknowledges, concepts come into African languages via English and therefore, where it is unnecessary, there is no need to totally divorce these new terms from English. It should not be thought that users of African languages cannot benefit from English in multilingual contexts where African languages co-exist with it.

Van Huyssteen (1997) says that there is a need for coordinated efforts in the intellectualisation of African languages so that the terms that are put into use become standard across all areas where they are used. This study looks at isiNdebele literary and linguistic terms that are used in institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe. Their

similarities and differences will determine the extent to which coordinated efforts are being made by academics in the fields of literature and linguistics in the area of African languages, particularly in isiNdebele.

Theoretical grounding

In intellectualising a language through terminology development, the functionality of the created terms is the most vital aspect. The study adopts Cabre's (2000) communicative theory of terminology (CTT), which is guided by the assumption that terminology is 'a set of needs, a set of practices to resolve these needs and a unified field of knowledge' (Cabre, 2003: 182). The first assumption guiding the CTT is that terminology is 'a set of needs, a set of practices to resolve these needs and a unified field of knowledge' (Cabre, 2003: 182). This view is used in this study to scrutinise similarities and differences in isiNdebele literature and linguistic terms that are used in selected institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe. There is a need for terminology in a variety of specialised subject fields in isiNdebele and therefore it is prudent to first investigate the progress being made in literary and linguistic terminology development before looking at other fields. It is important to begin by looking at the field of literature and linguistics because the people who are involved in this field are the ones other academics look up to for the development of terminologies in a variety of fields of knowledge. Msimang (2000) argues that the paradigm shift from the teaching of African languages in English calls for the standardisation of literature and linguistics terms at a national level. The article argues that African languages as a field of study should first attain the level of becoming a unified field of knowledge through the development and standardisation of terms before moving on to develop terms for other fields of knowledge.

The second assumption is that 'terminology operates with terminological units which are multi-dimensional and which are simultaneously units of knowledge, units of language and units of communication' (Protopopescu, 2013: 196). These differ from other units of language that express specialised knowledge in different subject fields. This view is used in this article to argue for different strategies of terminology development in the field of linguistics and literary studies. We acknowledge that there are some terms that are used in everyday speech but that assume special meaning in linguistics and literary studies.

Methodological path

This article adopts a qualitative study where selected linguistics and literary terms were listed in a questionnaire in English and the research participants, who were lecturers in the discipline, were asked to provide isiNdebele equivalents that they use at their institutions of learning. The lecturers who taught isiNdebele in the departments of African languages were drawn from the Great Zimbabwe University (GZU), Midlands State University (MSU), Mkoba Teachers' College (MTC) and United College of Education (UCE). These institutions were purposefully selected because they offer isiNdebele, and this is the language

that we were interested in. It should, however, be noted that these institutions also offer other African languages as programmes of study, but isiNdebele was chosen because it has been taught for a long time in these institutions as compared to the other African languages.

One lecturer from each of the institutions was interviewed, except for GZU, where two were interviewed: one from the Department of Languages and the other from the Department of Language Education. Although these two departments are part of the same institution, their operations are unique in that one trains teachers and the other accommodates students who are doing general degrees and honours and master's degrees in languages. On the questionnaire, it was observed that some spaces were left blank without equivalents. This indicated either that the respective departments had no equivalents for such terms, or they were not using those terms at all. In designing the questionnaire, we tried to include those terms that are common in the study of language and literature and which would be difficult to avoid in the study of African languages. A total of 36 terms were listed on the questionnaire, with 20 linguistics terms and 16 literary terms.

To protect the identity of the research participants, their names are not included. However, it was not possible to exclude the names of the institutions since it was necessary to make a comparison of terms that are used by these different higher learning institutions.

Interrogating literary and linguistics terminology at institutions of higher learning

The results of the study indicated that there were a lot of variations in isiNdebele linguistics and literary terms used at different institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe. This shows that these institutions have not come up with standard terminology for the teaching of isiNdebele linguistics and literature. What could also be the case is that even in same departments, different lecturers may be using different terms for the same concepts. What is interesting is that at one institution, the two different departments that offer isiNdebele used different terms, which is clear testimony that issues of standardisation have not been taken seriously. Table 1 shows the variations in linguistic and literary terms used by departments of isiNdebele at various institutions of higher learning in the country.

From Table 1, it is evident that these institutions used two term creation strategies, namely literal translation and transliteration. These two strategies are what Madiba (2001) refers to as the purist and liberal approaches respectively, while he refers to the adoption of both as the pragmatic approach in terminology development. Literal translation is purist in the sense that it tries to maintain the purity of isiNdebele while at the same time trying to make the terms self-explanatory of the concept being referred to. Transliteration can be defined as the use of a foreign language stem to create a target language equivalent (Mphahlele, 2004). Transliteration entails that a term is created through adoption but written in such a way that it conforms to the phonological and morphological rules and other grammatical patterns of the receiving language.

Table 1: IsiNdebele linguistic and literary terms from institutions of higher learning

Linguistic or literary terms in English	Linguistic or literary terms in isiNdebele			
	Midlands State University Education Department	Great Zimbabwe University general academic	Great Zimbabwe University Education Department	Mkoba Teachers' College
Linguistics	Isayensi yolimi	Ilingwistiki	Izifundo zendimi	Uhlelo lolimi
Phonetics	ngcwengazinhlamvu ifonoloji	fonethiki	Izifundo zokwakheka lokusetshenziswa kolimi	ifonethiki
Phonology		Ifonoloji/ incwengazinhlamvu	Izifundo zemisindo	Incwengazinhlamvu/ fonoloji
Morphology	Ukwakhiwa kwamagama	Imofoloji/ inhlelamabala/ inhlelakwakhiwa	Ukubunjwa kwamabala	Ukwakhiwa kwamagama/ imofoloji
Syntax	Ukwakhiwa komutsho	Inhlelamutsho	Ukubunjwa kwemutsho	Ukuleliwa kwemutsho/ isintaksi
Semantics	Ingcazelomagama	Isemantiki	Ingcazelo yamabala	Ingcazelomagama/ isemantiki
Phoneme	Ifonimu	Uhlamvu lwebala/ ifonimu	-	Uhlamvu/ foneme
Allomorph	i-alomofi	i-alomofu	-	Imisindo yezakhi/ alomofu
Discourse	Inkulumo	Nkulumo	-	Inkulomomumo
Style	Indlela yokusebenza ulimi	-	Uhlobo	Indlela yokuloba
Register	Ukusebenza kwamagama	Irejesta	Ulimi lwendawo lesikhathi	Amagama lomumo
Speech	inkulumo	Inkulumo	Inkulumo	Inkulumo
Variety	Ulimi lwendawo	Uhlotshana	Okwehlukileyo	Imihlobo etshiyeneyo
Dialect	Indlela ethile yokukhuluma ulimi	Ulinyana	Ulinyana	Izindinyana zolimithile
Sociolinguistics	Ukusenza kolimi emphakathini	Ulimiphakathi	-	Isimolimi
Lexicography	Isayensi yezichazamazwi	Nhlelazichazamazwi	Izifundo zezichazamazwi	ukwenziwa kwezichazamazwi
Lexical item	Igama	Ibala	Ucezu lwenkulumo	Igama
Translation	Ukukumutshela	Ukukumutsha	Ukukumutshela	Ukukumutsha
Sociolect	Indlela yokukhuluma yabantu abathile	Ulimi lweqembu	-	Ulinyana lwezigaba
Idiolect	Indlela yokukhuluma yomuntu ofihle	Ulimi lomuntu murye	-	Ulinyana lomuntuthile
Literature	Imibhalo	Iithiritsha	Imibhalo	Imibhalo
Theory of literature	Umhlalandlela wemibhalo	Umhlalandlela	Umhlalandlela wombhalo	Imihlahandlela yemibhalo
Short story	Indatshana emfushane	Indatshana	Indatshana	Izindatshana
Round character	Umlingiswa oyindilinga	-	Isimilo esiguqukayo	Umlingiswa oququkayo/ oyindilinga
Flat character	Umlingiswa oyisicaba	-	Isimilo esingaguqukiyo	Umlingiswa oyisicaba/ onguququkiyo
Play	Umdlalo	Umdlalo	Umdlalo	Umdlalo
Nomenclature	Amagama	-	-	Amathemu
Formalism	Iformalizimu	Iformalizimu	-	Ukucubungula imibhalo ngolimi
Afrocentricity	i-Afrocentricity	Umhlalandlela wabaNsundu	-	Ubuntu
Criticism	Ukucubungula	Ukucubungula/ ukuhlaziya	Uhlahlalo	Ukucubungula/ ukuhlaziya
Narrative	Ukulandisa	ukulandisa	Umdlalo	Ukulandisa
Stanza	Indima	Indima yenkondlo	Indima	Isiqendu
Fairy tale	Inganekwane	-	Inganekwane	Inganekwane
Fable tale	Inganekwane	-	-	Inganekwane
Myth	Insumansumane	Insumansumane	Insumansumane	Insumansumane
Legend	Inganekwane	Imbali/ inganekwane	-	inganekwane

The terms created through literal translation include *indlela yokusebenzisa ulimi* (style), *indlela ethile yokukhuluma ulimi* (dialect), *indlela yokukhuluma yomuntu othile* (idiolect), *ulimi lomuntu munye* (idiolect), *indatshana emfitshane* (short story), *ulimiphakathi* (sociolinguistics) and *isimilo esiguqakayo* (round character). These terms are more explanations than 'simple' terms. One observation about them is that if back translation were to be done, hardly any term would be equated to its original. Such a term-creation strategy can be advantageous when it comes to the cognitive aspect, but in writing and reading, it may be too cumbersome. Academics who create these terms should bear in mind that the source language is English and therefore when these isiNdebele terms are written side by side with their equivalents, it should not appear like one is reading a bilingual dictionary with the headwords being in English and the meanings in isiNdebele. The co-existence of English together with African languages, particularly isiNdebele in this case, should never be downplayed in term creation. An interesting observation is of the isiNdebele equivalents of 'idiolect', where the research participants from different institutions gave different versions. The four equivalents were *ulimi lomuntu munye*, *indlela yokukhuluma yomuntu othile*, *ulimi lomuntu ngokwakhe* and *ulinyana lomuntuthile*. The back translations of these four terms are 'language for one person', 'the way of speaking for a particular person', 'language for a specific person' and 'a branch of language for a particular person' respectively. All these back translations define an idiolect, but they are not terms, they are explanations. The multi-dimensionality that Cabre (2000) emphasises in the CTT is fulfilled by the approach taken by institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe where they come up with terms with the main aim of communication regardless of their diversity. However, the problem with literal translation is that if this strategy is used incorrectly, the resulting descriptor becomes a definition or an explanation instead of a term.

The terms gathered from different institutions of higher learning also indicate that another preferred strategy is transliteration. Terms created through transliteration exhibited minimal differences across institutions compared to those created through literal translation. Some of these terms include *ifonoloji* (phonology), *imofoloji* (morphology), *ifonimu* (phoneme) and *ifomalizimu* (formalism). Cognitively, anyone who also has knowledge of English whether as L1 or L2 would understand what these isiNdebele terms represent in linguistics and literature. What was also noted is that with transliteration, terms created from different institutions were the same. The only variation was noted where one institution differed from others on the equivalent of 'phoneme'. Where others had it as *ifonimu*, the one institution had *ifoneme*. However, this term still gives a clue to any reader with a knowledge of linguistics. One other important point that can be noted with terms created through transliteration is that back translation would not be problematic as the proper equivalent would be spelt out at first glance. Although transliteration has both cognitive and communicative advantages, there are those who have an aversion to it as a term creation strategy.

Terminologists 'often regard transliteration as the quickest lexicographical and terminological procedure without taking the practical demands of users into account' (Mphahlele,

2004: 339). Although transliteration is viewed as a strategy that should be adopted as a last resort, it should also be noted that this strategy has been in place since African languages started to be in contact with European languages. Some of the terms that are today regarded as purely African are actually not, but are transliterations from European languages. While it is correct for Mphahlele to say that transliteration should be considered as the last resort in term creation, reality shows that the majority of terms that appear in everyday language usage were created through transliteration. One then wonders why we should defy transliteration when it comes to the more complex terms in specialised subject fields. Although transliteration is being preferred in this article as a strategy that has higher cognitive and communicative advantages in the modern era, we are aware that overreliance on this strategy will result in African languages becoming appendages of English.

Bamgbose (2011: 3–4) notes that in the process of intellectualising a language through terminology development, 'competing terms emerge through actual use of a language by different stakeholders, such as teachers, writers and media practitioners'. These sentiments justify that while efforts by institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe to intellectualise isiNdebele in the teaching of linguistics and literature have yielded a variety of terms for specific concepts, this should not be viewed as negative. Bamgbose (2011) points out that the intellectualisation of a language and its use should occur simultaneously. Language use in specialised fields should not wait for a language to be fully intellectualised before being utilised; rather, these two processes should occur at the same time. Once these terms continue to be used, the most favoured ones would eventually become popular and standard ones. The terms that finally emerge are sometimes drawn from a pool of competing terms (Bamgbose, 2011). It is therefore prudent for the institutions of higher learning to create a corpus for these literary and linguistic terms, and then produce the standard terminology through analysis of the frequency of each term's occurrence. That strategy would determine the most favoured terms and therefore adopt those as standard.

A closer look at these literary and linguistics terms that were gathered from different institutions indicate that although the same concepts are being taught, the use of different terminologies is clear. The use of different terms for identical concepts poses a significant hindrance in the intellectualisation of isiNdebele specifically, and other African languages in general. Institutions of higher learning need to come together and make coordinated efforts in the intellectualisation of African languages, particularly in literature and linguistics as a starting point.

Conclusion

The intellectualisation of African languages needs to commence in the realms of literature and linguistics, as these are the domains where we encounter a number of experts in language-related fields. Moreover, this is where the majority of academics and activists advocating for the broader utilisation of these languages beyond mere subjects are concentrated. The implications emerging from the discussion are that terminology development is the most

important part of the intellectualisation of any language. The intellectualisation of African languages through terminology development should not be viewed as a project that seeks to fight English, but should be treated as one that gives African languages a functionality beyond just being taught as subjects. The term-creation strategies used in the intellectualisation of African languages should also not be the ones that undermine the capability of the L1 speakers of African languages to the extent of creating explanations instead of terms. In addition, the co-existence of English should not be viewed as a threat to African languages, but as an advantage since some terms can be created through their adoption from English and transliteration into the respective African languages.

There is a need for institutions of higher learning to come together and agree on terms that are going to be used in the teaching of literature and linguistics so as to avoid each institution having its own unique terminologies for the same concepts. This can be done by creating a database (i.e. corpus) of literary and linguistic terms from the institutions of higher learning in the country. Once a corpus is available, then standardisation will follow through selecting the most commonly used terms across all the institutions by looking at frequency of each concept's appearance in the corpus. A dictionary of literary and linguistics terms for each African language can then be compiled based on their frequency in the corpus, and that dictionary will have to be distributed to all institutions of higher learning in the country.

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