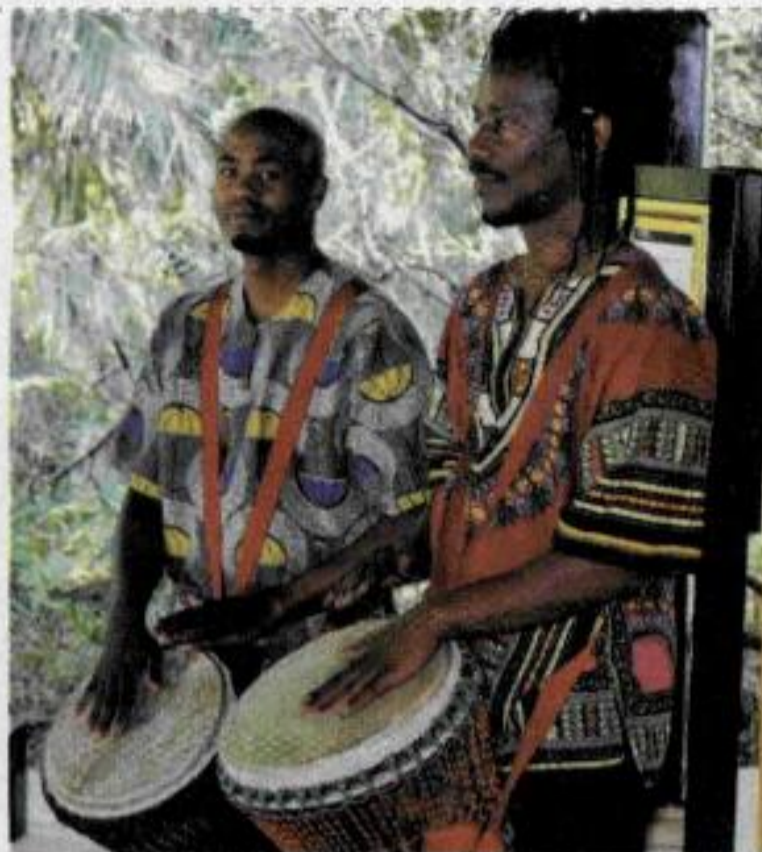


BY THEMBISILE MAKGALEMELE

**DRUM LANGUAGE**



and its people through the provision of excellent educational materials and support.



**MAIN PICTURE:** Mangosuthu Buthelezi receives a special leather-bound edition of the dictionary from Lieze Kotze, managing director of Oxford University Press South Africa. **LEFT:** The sound of beating drums welcomed guests to the launch party.

"In some instances there are some isiZulu words which are written and pronounced the same way but their usage is different – icala, for example, can mean both 'side' or 'criminal case'."

Fred Pfeiffer, senior editor and project manager of dictionaries at Oxford University Press South Africa, says the making of the dictionary started with three years of research to collect new words – at schools, travelling around rural KwaZulu-Natal and speaking to experts.

The next step was to bring in the editors, translators and lexicographers (people who specialise in writing dictionaries) and then spend long hours debating how an English word that has never been translated into isiZulu could be created. This process took a year to complete.

"Sometimes we'd sleep for only two hours!" Nomusa says. "It was really hard, especially because not everyone was in the same province. Each person was given a set of words to work with and there was a lot of back and forth between them and the other members of the team to come up with an explanation."

Megan Hall, the publishing manager and team leader, says they initially collected a million isiZulu words from newspapers, magazines and teachers but that list had to be whittled down to 5 000, in line with other dictionaries that had been published.

"We had a lot of words and chose the words that are used most often. We tried as hard as possible to stay away from creating words, but sometimes we had to. For example, teachers wanted us to include key curriculum words, together with definitions, something that had never been done before in this sort of bilingual dictionary. So we selected terms from text books across the curriculum, such as 'acid', 'greenhouse effect' and 'multiply' and gave learners and teachers the support they asked for," she says.

The dictionary has an additional 30-page section in the middle with extra activities, such as a quiz to develop dictionary skills required by the new school curriculum, how to write a formal email or letter in isiZulu, and a section on how to read 'SMS speak'

and isiZulu translations of common SMS 'emoticons', such as a happy face :- ) or a surprised face :- O.

WHILE there is much praise for the new book, it also has its critics, who say it doesn't fully encourage the growth of the isiZulu language because it fails to include many of the newer words Zulus are now using.

"It is frustrating that not all the new words in isiZulu are included," says Eric Khathi, manager of the Zulu copy editing team at DRUM.

"There aren't translations for words such as 'antibodies', 'paternity test', 'bisexual', 'hermaphrodite' or even 'stalwart', which are now commonly used."

Nomusa says this is their biggest regret. "This dictionary goes hand in hand with

the workbook used by learners, so we prioritised words that would be beneficial to learners rather than the greater isiZulu-speaking population. I hope there will be a second edition which will include a lot more commonly-used words."

Despite this shortcoming, however, the dictionary is by all accounts a major step in the right direction.

"It is a good complement to the current dictionaries," Eric says.

"A lot of research has been done and they've taken time to explain the words and usage, unlike the old dictionaries where some of the words still don't make sense. In the old dictionary the translation for a franchise is ilungelo lokuvota which is 'the right to vote', whereas in the new dictionary they only explain the one which has to do with business which is ifrentshayizi."

"It's great!" says Sheryl Mdluli, a Grade seven student from Lenasia.

"I looked through it and there are some words that I always struggled with. Now instead of a whole long sentence to say isitsha sokudlela, meaning 'a bowl', I can just say isitsha!" □

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**HOW DO YOU SAY THAT IN ISIZULU?**

**ENGLISH**

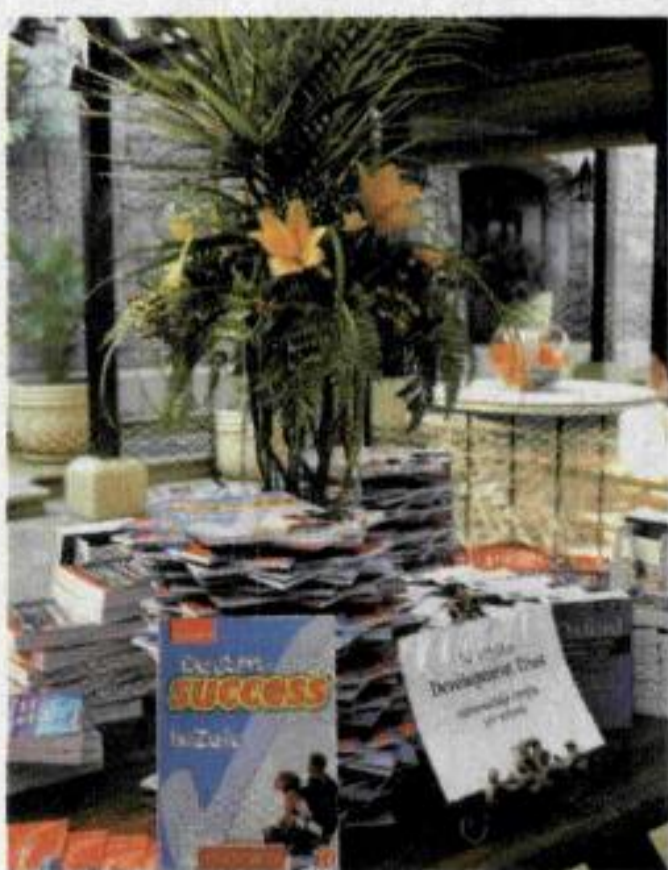
- 1 Cellphone/cellular phone .....
- 2 Anti-retroviral drugs .....
- 3 Value-added tax .....

**ISIZULU**

- Umakhalekhukhwini
- Imishanguzo
- Intela yentengo

**WORD USAGE AND TRANSLATION**

- 1 Ngidinga ukuthengela umakhalekhukhwini wami i-airtime.  
I need to buy some airtime for my cellphone.
- 2 Ungqongqoshe weZmpilo kufanele aphumele obala ngemishanguzo.  
The minister of health should come out into the open about the usage of drugs.
- 3 ... intela oyikhokhela izimpahla nezinkonzo ozikhokhelayo.  
... a tax that you pay on goods and services.



**GIVEAWAY!**

100 lucky readers will each win a copy of the new Oxford Zulu/English school dictionary. To stand a chance of winning, SMS the word ZULU, your name and address plus the answer to this question: How many copies of the dictionary were printed? to 34926 to reach us before 8 November. Each SMS costs R1,50.



MADONZI NOZINKA