

These criticisms are substantial. Nevertheless, CSD represents a sensible and useful reference tool. Its claim to be the "perfect reference companion" cannot be sustained, but it does offer easy access to simple definitions of a large number of words. While other dictionaries such as the *Collins COBUILD Dictionary* and the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* may more justifiably be described as "comprehensive reference works", this dictionary is more likely to be widely used. Its slim-format and inexpensive pricing make it a realistic choice for the majority of pupils.

## References

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**G.R. Dent (Compiler) and C.L.S. Nyembezi (Editor).** *Compact Zulu Dictionary. Eng.-Zulu; Zulu-Eng.*, 5th edition 1990, 2nd impression 1992, 152 pp. ISBN 0 7960 0265 7. Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter. Price R13,65.

### 1. Introduction

The dictionary is small, condensed and portable. One can keep it in one's back pocket. This makes it a very handy publication for quick reference by a learner of Zulu or English as the case may be.

The dictionary appears to have been compiled for the purpose of assisting non-Zulu speakers to learn Zulu.

The main title *Compact Zulu Dictionary* is somewhat misleading. This is a bilingual dictionary as the sub-title *English-Zulu/Zulu-English* shows.

## 2. Organisation of the Dictionary

### 2.1 Identification of Words

The compiler of the dictionary has attempted to present Zulu nouns in their complete form (prefix + nounstem). It appears that his aim in doing so is to assist the user of the dictionary to identify nouns easily. This is good as far as it goes but Zulu nouns occur in varying contexts in the sentence and are likely to baffle the uninitiated when they occur in the locative, agentive, vocative, possessive, instrumental and other forms.

This is exemplified by the needless entry of locative, instrumental and other forms of Zulu nouns in the dictionary. These entries clutter the dictionary with grammatical forms of nouns and confuse rather than facilitate the user's task of learning the Zulu language.

The verbs have been entered in the imperative. This arrangement is flawed on two counts, firstly, it disregards the fundamental syntactic structure of sentence concordance.

An impression could be created to the user of the dictionary that verbs always occur in the form in which they have been entered in this dictionary. To suggest, as the compiler does, that "concord is prefixed to the different parts of speech" is misleading. A part of speech comprises the complete word (i.e. prefix + stem). The word stem alone is not the distinguishing factor of a part of speech. Secondly, only activity and achievement verbs are amenable to use in the imperative. The entering of verbs in the imperative does not accommodate stative and process verbs.

The compiler of the dictionary assumes that the adjectives in English can be classified in a corresponding part of speech in Zulu. Compilers of translation dictionaries would be well advised to give the part of speech of the corresponding English adjectives in Zulu or use some method of showing the difference of classification of the adjectives in English and Zulu.

The classification of numerals as an independent part of speech is a misconstruction. These are nouns in Zulu. They may be classified as nouns and adjectives in English much depending upon their use in the sentence.

The entry of the possessive forms of the absolute pronoun for all classes in the dictionary testifies of the lack of economy in this dictionary (for example, practically the whole of page 129 is devoted to this form of the nominal). This is certainly not the function of a dictionary.

### 2.2 Definition of Words

The foregoing paragraph touches upon the primary purpose of a dictionary. Is the main purpose of a dictionary to define meanings of words or simply to give equivalents or translation of words?

A translation dictionary is confronted by, *inter alia*, the following problems:

- (1) The paucity of technical terms in one of the languages, Zulu in this case. This results in inelegant descriptions of actions, phenomena and matter rather than providing a direct equivalent word.
- (2) The difference in the word and sentence structure in the two languages. Many English words, particularly adverbs, adjectives and interrogatives, can only be defined in terms of corresponding Zulu stems. This could impede a rapid mastery of the Zulu language by a foreigner. Sentence concordance only occurs in Zulu and varies according to the noun prefix used. This also complicates the use of the dictionary as the word sought by the user of the dictionary may not be entered in the form in which it is encountered in use.
- (3) Difference in suprasegmental structure. English words have stress and Zulu words have tones. Failure to indicate these in the entries of a dictionary does not facilitate pronunciation. The method suggested by the compiler, i.e. asking native speakers of English or Zulu, as the case may be, to pronounce "exceptional or unusual words" is impractical.
- (4) The selection of entries. This is very important for the compilation of a compact dictionary. Ideally, it would be helpful to select a vocabulary that includes commonly used words, expressions and other items for a compact dictionary.

### 3. Definitions

The definitions used in the *Compact Zulu Dictionary* are satisfactory.

A more complete definition of many English adjectives could have enhanced the quality of this work.

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