



RETRONYM: THE MISSING ENTRY IN THE NDEBELE MONOLINGUAL DICTIONARY

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ABSTRACT

This article seeks to explore the novel phenomenon of retronymy in linguistics and accommodates it in Ndebele lexicography. Retronyms are a special class of compound nouns that is not catered for in the Isichazamazwi sesiNdebele (ISN). Retronymy becomes part of derivational morphology because nouns are derived by combining different parts of speech in retronymy. This process is a major contributor to Ndebele lexical expansion. The process enables the language to accommodate new concepts as it is influenced by other cultures and technology. Retro naming is an area in Ndebele morphology that has not had much attention from linguists compared to other noun derivatives. The Ndebele language now operates in a global village where many cultures meet and mix. This creates a situation whereby many concepts are borrowed from other cultures and some from technology; most of these are retro named. Ndebele dictionaries cannot afford to ignore retronyms in future. While the Isichazamazwi sesiNdebele is a breakthrough in Ndebele monolingual dictionary work, it leaves out a very important entry the retronym.

Keywords and abbreviations

ISN-	<i>Isichazamazwi SesiNdebele</i> (Ndebele monolingual dictionary 2001)
bz-	<i>ibizo</i> (noun)
N-	noun
bzmv-	<i>ibizomuva</i> (retronym)
r-	retronym
bz 1(N 1)-	noun class 1

INTRODUCTION

The ISN is the first monolingual dictionary in Ndebele which gives the language an opportunity to include retronyms when the dictionary is revised. Retronyms are a novel area but contribute many lexemes to languages especially African languages that borrow a lot from western cultures. In retronymy the propensity is on naming and differentiating at the same time. Retronyms are

classified by most Ndebele researchers under compound nouns, and no further description is proffered. However, retronyms are a peculiar type of compound nouns that assume a particular structure and are derived following peculiar trends. Concepts are grouped together by similarity of form or function and then distinguished using certain aspects; it is the distinctions that give rise to retronyms. In Ndebele retronyms are distinguished using materials, function and ethnocentrism among other aspects.

RETRONYMY

In the domain of retro naming borrowing is central. A concept can be borrowed from another culture or from technology within the same culture. This transfer of new concepts between cultures and technologies is related to lexical borrowing in linguistics. A new concept is linked to an existent concept which it typifies. To identify characteristics for retro naming the Ndebele employ the classical theory of concepts. The classical theory of concepts is one of the five primary theories of concepts, the other four being prototype or exemplar theories, atomistic theories, theory-theories, and neoclassical theories. The classical theory implies that every complex concept has a classical analysis, where a classical analysis of a concept is a proposition giving metaphysically necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for being in the extension across possible worlds for that concept. That is, a classical analysis for a complex concept *C* gives a set of individually necessary conditions for being a *C* (or conditions that must be satisfied in order to be a *C*) that together are sufficient for being a *C* (or are such that something's satisfying every member of that set of necessary conditions entails its being a *C*). The classical view also goes by the name of "the definitional view of concepts," or "definitionism," where a definition of a concept is given in terms of necessary and jointly sufficient conditions. Earl (2005 in <http://www.iep.utm.edu/concepts> accessed on 12/01/2011). The issue of the nature of concepts is important in philosophy generally, but most perspicuously in philosophy of language and philosophy of mind. Most generally, concepts are thought to be among those things that count as semantic values or meanings. Hudson states that: The classical theory of concepts is that each one consists of a set of features (critical features), which are necessary and sufficient for something to count as an instance of that concept (Hudson, 1999). When the features are sufficient to count as an instance of a known concept, the name of the known concept is revisited to derive a retronym for the new concept. Retronyms therefore become typical instances of concepts while at the same time distinguishing the instances. Wardhaugh alludes to the use of typical instances to classify concepts: A variety of experiments have shown that people do in fact classify quite consistently objects of various kinds according to what they regard as being typical instances (Wardhaugh, 1998). Retronyms are nouns that are derived due to the need to distinguish elements of a related sense. Elements that come into a culture either through technology or from other cultures can be retro named.

The initial effort is studying the properties of new elements these properties are then matched to elements within the language. The concept that is of the same 'type' with the new concept is used

to identify the new concept and thereafter the effort is on how to distinguish the two. Retronyms are a result of the efforts to distinguish two or more concepts of the same type.

Compounding is closely related to derivational and inflectional morphology. It is particularly related to derivational morphology in that it uses adjectives in most cases to derive nouns. Bybee alludes to the complexities of compounding:

Two morphological expression types related to derivation are compounding and incorporation. Morphologically complex words created by these processes differ from those created by derivation and inflection in that such words cannot be analysed as consisting of a stem or root plus affixes, rather they contain more than one stem or root (Bybee, 1984).

Compounding is distinct from other combinatory processes in Ndebele because it has both syntactic and lexical components. It resembles syntactic expression in that the units combined also always exist as independent words complete both phonologically and semantically while it also resembles lexical expression in that the resulting unit is a word in this case a retronym. The number of stems is more than one in that the original name assumes the position of primary stem and others secondary stems as in the example below: *Umumbu* (maize) (noun) primary stem + *wesikhiwa* (European) adjective (secondary stem = *umumbu wesikhiwa umumb'wesikhiwa* (retronym) (European maize) The first stem is the primary one because it carries the meaning of the concept while the secondary stems explain the type. Ndebele uses source to distinguish concepts thereby deriving ethnocentric retronyms in the process. The secondary stems that are derived from the source are names of places, civilizations, time and cultures from which a concept comes.

Retronyms in Ndebele

Ndebele nouns are made up of affixes and a stem. These affixes can be the prefix, infix or the suffix. Retronyms are constructed using the same constructs but their morphology deviates slightly due to the double stem construction. Retronyms are compound formations that can be a chain from the original noun through the stages of technology over years. Changes that occur to concepts over time are the source of retronyms. The Ndebele monolingual dictionary does not take care of the developments within the same concept.

It is important to understand that retronyms obtain from and within a culture and it is important to identify the levels of culture in which Ndebele retronyms are used. Language is used to name elements within a culture; concepts in ecology are mostly retro named due to a new concept from another culture, while social and material concepts can be from another culture or from the same culture. Concepts like fauna and flora are not subject to technological changes in Ndebele but can be loaned from other cultures while social institutions and materials are subject to both. Newmark defines the three levels of culture as follows (Newmark, 1991):

Language is substantial but partial reflection of a culture, culture being defined here as the total range of activities and ideas and their material expression in objects and processes peculiar to a group of people, as well as their particular environments.

Newmark's definition categorizes culture into three, that is, ecological culture, social, and material culture. Human beings master nature partly through the ability to name it. Aspects of the environment are named in a language, and those aspects that come through contact with other cultures need to be named too, necessitating ecological retronyms in Ndebele. In the ISN for example a chicken is *inkukhu* only defining the concept and ignoring the different instances of it. There is a degree of difference between a broiler and a layer although they are both chickens '*inkukhu*', this difference is clear in the Ndebele language but missing in the dictionary.

Ecology is those aspects that become part of a people's culture, by circumstances of their geographical location in time and space. Climate, geomorphology, fauna and flora can be common to some people and alien to others, creating differences in the way people experience nature. Language contact creates a situation whereby ecological concepts are also borrowed from one culture to another. Similarities between two elements in two different ecological cultures are identified, and they make the basis for the derivation of a retronym or retronyms to name and simultaneously distinguish the two concepts. The human responsibility to name nature creates the imperative to retro name in the ecological culture, and (Wardhaugh, 1998) says:

We cut up nature, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances, as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way.

It is human responsibility to name nature; therefore no element of ecology can be without a name, exotic or indigenous. Retronyms are employed to make sure that all exotic ecological concepts are distinctly named. Ndebele names *inkomo* 'cattle', *umuntu* 'person', *umumbu* 'maize' and *ingulube* 'pig' became ambiguous after other cultures brought into Ndebele instances of the concepts but different in some ways. The borrowed concept is the same but differs in colour, function and at times behavior, making a distinction between the two necessary. It is important to note that while the dictionary does not account for the above ecological retronyms the people use them everyday. Retronyms are not only a result of western dominance of the Ndebele environment. Even before colonialism the Ndebele used retronyms to distinguish concepts. They developed their utensils technologically; different materials were used to make utensils and tools - a sign that they were developing from one material to another.(Ndlovu *et al.*, 1995) identify a case were Ndebele developed a concept using different materials:

Ingcebethu esintwini ziphiwa amabizo kusiya ngokuthi zithungwe ngani, eyelala, eyesikhukhukhu, eyebunda, eyomnyankomo, eyomcobosi...

‘Grain sieving utensils were given names according to the material used to weave them; some were named after *lala*, some *sikhukhukhu* tree, some *bunda* grass, some *mnyankomo* grass, some *mcobosi*.’

Social culture consists of human activities and processes, the philosophy they follow, in religion, politics and relationships. Contact with other cultures and changes brought about by time create ambiguities in the names of some social functions in Ndebele. There are two distinct forms of marriage in the world which are; heterosexual and homosexual creating an instance of retronymy. Marriage is an institution that exists in all human societies. There are two types of marriage: heterosexual and homosexual. What is acceptable in Zimbabwe is the heterosexual type. (Mangena and Ndlovu, 2013) The ISN comes close to accounting for retronyms when it gives the retronyms for the concept *umtshado* ‘wedding’. The noun *umtshado* is entered as follows in the ISN (Hadebe, 2001):

Umtshado bz 3. Umtshado lidili elenziwa ngabantu abathathanayo kumbe asebethethene ukuze benze izifungo zabo babuye bathole lezipho. (wedding- N class 3. A wedding is a party done by two people who are marrying or married in order to make their vows and get gifts).

The concept of a wedding in Ndebele has differences based on religion and culture. The advent of Christianity and western law changed the concept of wedding and marriage to include elements that create different typed of marriages. The retronyms *umtshado wakomsitheli* (customary marriage) and *umtshado wekhothi* (court marriage) are well defined in the dictionary. The defining of the wedding retronyms in the Ndebele dictionary is enough justification that all retronyms should be entered. The retronyms are entered as follows (2001:485):

Umtshado wakomsitheli bz 3. Umtshado wakomsitheli ngumtshado wesintu ovumela isithembu. (msitheli marriage N class 3. Msitheli marriage is a traditional marriage that allows polygamy.)

Umtshado wekhothi bz 3. Umtshado wekhothi ngumhlobo womtshado lapho abatshadayo abatshadiswa khona ngumantshi njalo akuvunyelwa khona isithembu. (court marriage N class 3. A court marriage is a type of marriage whereby the parties are married by a magistrate and no polygamy is allowed.)

There are many concepts that have different instances in Ndebele it is not marriage only. In all the examples of retronyms in the above levels of culture only marriage retronymy is accounted for by the ISN.

Technology and contact of cultures affect the material culture more than the other two levels, which are ecological and social culture. Objects for human activities tend to be the same because

human beings are the same, for example we all need to cook using containers and heat. The materials we use to fulfill these functions will differ according to people but the function remains the same.

Function is very important in classifying concepts into types for retro naming. If a new object has a similar function as that of an existing object a condition for retro naming arises. The material used to make the object is also considered. When the Ndebele saw that the English used an iron pot to cook, they did not coin a new word for it but used the name they use for a cooking object *imbiza* and then referred to the pot as *imbiza yensimbi* 'iron pot'. The ISN also acknowledges the presence of retronymy with regards the entry *imbiza* 'pot'. The dictionary has *imbiza* for the entry; pot referring to the metal one and another for the clay pot '*imbiza yomdaka*'.

Types of Ndebele Retronyms

Two or more words are put together to derive retronyms these words contribute partially to the meaning of the retronym. The original name identifies the type of the concept while the added words distinguish the concepts. The morphological process of compounding becomes very important in the derivation of retronyms in Ndebele. Compounding is closely related to derivational and inflectional morphology. It is particularly related to derivational morphology, in that it uses adjectives in most cases to derive nouns. (Bybee, 1984) alludes to the complexities of compounding:

Two morphological expression types related to derivation are compounding and incorporation. Morphologically complex words created by these processes differ from those created by derivation and inflection in that such words cannot be analyzed as consisting of a stem or root plus affixes; rather they contain more than one stem or root.

Compounding is distinct from other combinatory processes in Ndebele because it has both syntactic and lexical components. Compounding resembles syntactic expression in that the units combined also always exist as independent words, complete both phonologically and semantically. Compounding resembles lexical expression in that the resulting unit is a word.

If the number of stems is more than one the original name assumes the position of primary stem and others that of secondary stems as in the example below:

Umumbu 'maize'- noun primary stem + *omhlophe* 'which is white' adjective
secondary stem = *umumbu omhlope* > *umumb'omhlope* 'retronym' 'white maize'

Ndebele uses source, function, composition and form to distinguish concepts, deriving retronyms in the process. The four categories derive different secondary stems for Ndebele retronyms. Concepts

are retro named according to where they originated (**source**), concepts are also retro named according to the **function** they perform. Function also includes what makes the concept or object function, the type of **energy used**. Concepts are also retro named using the **materials** they are made of and also according to their **forms**, which includes colour, shape and size. The secondary stems that are derived from the source are names of places, civilizations and cultures from which a concept that has a primary stem in Ndebele hails; it also includes the time at which a similar concept took place. (Ndlovu, 2012)

The four categories from which Ndebele derives secondary stems for retronyms are dependent on the primary stem, which establishes the type first. It is important to note that the type, which is the primary stem, carries the meaning of the retronym; the secondary stem is just a differentia or qualifier. The first type of Ndebele retronyms to be discussed is the possessive retronym. The Ndebele dictionary identifies some of these as headwords. As much as the retronyms are categorized as nouns they are not given their proper designation which is retronym, possibly *ibizomuva* in Ndebele. The following is an example of a possessive Ndebele retronym taken from the Ndebele dictionary (Hadebe, 2001):

***Inkondo bz 9.** Inkondo ngumdlalo wokujikijelana ngamalongwe loba ngomqobampuzi, odlalwa ngabafana ekweluseni.*

***Inkondoyamalongwe bz 9.** Bona inkondo*

‘inkondo N 9. inkondo is a game of pelting each other with cow dung or mqobampuzi (wild inedible small fruit eaten by goats), played by heard boys.

***Cow dung nkondo N 9.** See inkondo.’*

The *inkondo* played using cow dung is retro named from the primary stem *inkondo* using a function secondary stem, which denotes the tool used the cow dung.

Some Ndebele retronyms are derived using secondary stems that are adjectives but not possessive, these can be classified as adjectival Ndebele retronyms. Ndebele adjectival retronyms will include the following noun + adjective combinations:

Umumbobomvu ‘yellow maize’

Imota encane ‘small car’ (Ndlovu, 2012)

Another example of this type of retronym in Ndebele is *isichazamazwi esindimimbili* ‘bilingual dictionary’, which is an entry in the Ndebele dictionary but not indicated to be a retronym.

The third type of Ndebele retronyms is noun-to-noun retronyms. These combine a noun and a noun to derive a retronym. These retronyms are constructed using the form of two concepts in instances where a new concept has features of two types. The two nouns were adapted into the Ndebele noun system and can be used as primary stems in deriving Ndebele retronyms. However a new concept

'the grape fruit' was later introduced into the ecological culture of Ndebele fitting into the types of both lemon and orange. The two nouns were combined to derive a retronym for the grape fruit in Ndebele as in the schema below:

ilemoni 'lemon' + *i-orentshi* 'orange' > *ilemoni-orentshi* 'lemon orange/ grape fruit'.

The same formulation is used to derive the Ndebele retronym *umwawamgwadi*, for a wild fruit that tastes and shares physical features with the traditional Ndebele fruits called *umwawa* and *umgwadi*. Some retronyms can be written as separate words while some can be written as one word. Retronyms in Ndebele are nouns that have two stems: a primary stem that carries the meaning and the type of a concept and a secondary stem that carries the differentia.

Recommendations for *Isichazamazwi Sesindebele*

Adoption and accommodation of retronyms into Ndebele lexicography should begin with the accommodation of the novel concept in Ndebele linguistics. The retronym has to be given a name in Ndebele and there after the different types of retronyms be identified and after these tasks the retronyms can be entered into the dictionary.

The naming of the retronym in Ndebele should follow the etymology of the concept. Retronyms are nouns that are derived by going back to a concept and using it to name a new concept of the same type. The name for retronym in Ndebele can be a simple loan from the English word. The retronym will then be called *irithironimu* in Ndebele. The option does not follow the norm in Ndebele as other word categories have Ndebele names not borrowed constructions. The retronym has to have a Ndebele name that factors in the ideas of name and going back. The name *ibizomuva* might do for a Ndebele name for retronym. The ISN will need to clearly define the entry *ibizomuva* (retronym) before adopting a system for entering retronyms.

In Ndebele morphology the retronym can be given different types. The first category of identifying retronyms is by using the source, function, material and form. The materials used to make a concept can be combined with form to make one type of Ndebele retronym. Three Ndebele retronyms will then be derived using the above categories as follows:

- a) ***ibizomuva lemvelaphi*** (source retronym) examples:
 - *inkomo yesikhiwa* (English cow)
 - *utshwala besintu* (Ndebele beer)
- b) ***ibizomuva lomsebenzi*** (function retronym) examples:
 - *udokotela wamazinyo* (teeth doctor/ dentist)
 - *umumbu wamaputi* (pop corn maize)

- c) ***ibizomuva lesimo*** (form retronym) examples:
- *imbiza yomdaka* (clay pot)
- *umumbu obomvu* (yellow maize)

The above categorization of Ndebele retronyms should form part of Ndebele morphology for people to understand the concept. The categorization can be considered in the ISN although it can be against the principle of saving space in the dictionary.

Ndebele retronyms can also be categorized using the type of secondary stem used. This method is also very effective and essential in the understanding of retronyms in Ndebele. Secondary stems in Ndebele retronyms can be either nouns or adjectives. the possessive secondary stems form the majority in Ndebele retronymy, it might be a good idea to use possession as a differentia in Ndebele retronymy. The type of secondary stems will derive the following retronym types:

- a) ***ibizomuva likasobizo*** (noun to noun retronym) examples:
- *indodamfazi* (man woman/ bisexual)
- *ikhamerafoni* (camera phone)
- b) ***ibizomuva lobumnini*** (possessive retronym) examples:
- *imota yezidumbu* (corpse car/ hearse)
- *inkukhu yamaqanda* (layer chicken)
- c) ***ibizomuva lesichasiso*** (adjective retronym) examples:
- *imota encane* (small car/ sedan)
- *umumbu omhlophe* (white maize)

the above retronym types in Ndebele can adopt the suggested names. The retronyms are part of Ndebele morphology but are treated as ordinary compound nouns in the dictionary and morphology in general. Retronyms are nouns that fall under a particular class and should be treated as such as Landau points out:

a noun definition must immediately answer the question, what is it? In order to answer that question it must use a noun, whether qualified or not, in the first part of the definition that identifies the class of things or kind of things to which the definiendum belongs (2001:171).

Following Landau's guideline on defining a noun, retronyms in Ndebele may be listed as run-on entries under the concept entry. (Landau, 2001) states that many regularly formed adverbs and adjectives, called run-on entries are thus listed without definitions at the end of the entry for an adjective, noun, or verb. The presumption is that if one knows the meaning of the entry word and of the suffix- which is defined in its own alphabetic place as a main entry- one will have no

difficulty understanding the derivative word. Retronyms may be entered as run-on entries under their primary stem.

The idea of concept field must be closely followed in defining retronyms in Ndebele. The classical theory of concepts uses the concept field approach in defining concepts. Retronyms represent classes of things and cannot be defined outside the concept field. Hartmann and Gregory define a concept field as:

A thematically related set of concepts within a technical subject, for example; classes of ‘drinking vessels in catering’, or types of ‘dictionaries’ in lexicography (Hartmann and Gregory, 1998).

Retronyms in the Ndebele dictionary can be entered under the concept field without definitions as long as the concept field is adequately defined. The Oxford Word Power English dictionary third edition gives a good example of this format. However it also does not identify the entries as retronyms but it identifies a concept field and lists the classes under the main entry without definitions as in the following example:

Train /term/noun/[c] **1** a number of categories or wagons that are pulled by one engine along a railway line: a passenger/goods/freight train- a fast/slow train- an express/stopping train (Stell, 2001).

Ndebele can follow the same formula but indicate that the run-on entries are retronyms. The English example above is easy to understand as people who use the dictionary are likely to know the meaning of the secondary stems. The propensity is on combining the meanings of the two words to get an idea of the concept type. Ndebele retronyms may be entered following the example below:

Udokotela bz 1. udokotela ngumuntu owelaphayo njalo owakufundelayo: bzmv, udokotela wenyamazana/owabantu-bzmv, udokotela wamaziyo/ wamehlo/ wabafazi- bzmv, udokotela wesiKhiwa/ wesiNtu.

Doctor N 1. A doctor is someone who treats ailments and is trained to do so: **r**, animal doctor/ people doctor- **r**, teeth/eye/female(gaenacologist)/ doctor- **r**, Western/ Traditional Ndebele doctor.

The above retronyms can be understood as long as the users of the dictionary get the meaning of the concept field. Nesting is the ideal way of entering the retronyms as run-on entries. Nesting is the clustering of several related words and phrases inside one entry in non-alphabetical order, in contrast to niching. Niching would require that the retronyms be entered in alphabetical order,

which might not be necessary. The retronyms can only be identified as retronyms and their different types be left for morphology not lexicography.

Retronyms are prevalent in technical dictionaries where there is need to define them all in detail for purposes of clarity and practical use. In such dictionaries the retronyms have to be entered as entries not run-on entries. The entering should still follow the concept field formula. The primary stem which is the concept has to be defined in its alphabetic place and its meaning be assumed in all retronyms such that only the secondary stem is defined. Landau gives the following example:

If the term to be defined is a phrase, such as infectious hepatitis, and hepatitis is elsewhere defined, it is perfectly proper to use hepatitis as the defining noun, as in “hepatitis characterized by” or “an acute form of hepatitis in which”. There is no need to repeat the definition of hepatitis, especially in a technical dictionary (2001:171).

Infectious hepatitis is a retronym under the hepatitis concept field. The same can be applied especially with regards to technical terms or technical dictionaries. The retronyms have to bear the sign *bzmv* to indicate that they are retronyms. The retronym for a clay pot in the ISN can be entered following the above method as in the example below:

Imbiza yomdaka bzmv 9. Imbiza eyenziwe ngomdaka.

Clay pot r 9. A pot made of clay.

In the above format the retronyms are based on the definition of the concept field and they are all extensions of the concept field definition. The ISN can adopt the nesting format and enter retronyms as run-on entries while technological dictionaries in Ndebele employ the format of entering them as entries but make the definitions extensions of the concept field definition.

CONCLUSION

The Ndebele monolingual dictionary is a positive development in the lexicographic work in the language. However the dictionary overlooks an important entry, the retronym. Retronyms are derived using the classical theory of concepts, which states that concepts are grouped according to type. New concepts that come into Ndebele culture from other cultures and technology are identified with a type in Ndebele culture. Function, features and purpose are used to determine the type of a concept, which then carries the core meaning of a retronym. Retronyms have to conform to morphologies that give rise to different types which should be part of Ndebele morphology. The dictionaries may not worry about the types of retronyms but only identify them as such. The retronyms can be entered as run-on entries or as separate entries from the concept field.

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