**Preparing an isiNdebele LSP Dictionary: From Idea to design**

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This article discusses the plan for the compilation of an online IsiNdebele Dictionary, an isiNdebele Language Special Purposes (LSP). IsiNdebele is a lesser resourced language with a very limited corpora available. The isiNdebele LSP dictionary will be the first online dictionary that will be compiled by the isiNdebele Dictionary Unit. The software for the proposed online dictionary will be adapted from the isiZulu. The dictionary will be made available through an online software interface. It will be an open source and will be tailored to the isiNdebele grammar, bird terminology list, covid-19 terminology list and other terminology lists. Its online interface will be in isiNdebele and it is appropriate for mobile use.

The online dictionary will be hosted using the IsiXhosa.click software (Marquard 2024). IsiXhosa.click is an open-source, online dictionary software originally built for isiXhosa. It was chosen for the IsiNdebele online dictionary because it is open-source and free to use, supports capturing of grammatical information and examples, and has already been successfully adapted to isiZulu (Buthelezi & Marquard 2024). Additionally, it also allows for members of the public to suggest edits and inclusion of new words and example sentences, which allows for the dictionary to be expanded over time by isiNdebele speakers.

Since the dictionary was originally designed for isiXhosa, it was adapted to isiNdebele. The pertinent difference between the two languages are the different prefixes used for the noun classes. In order to adapt it to isiNdebele, the noun class prefixes were made configurable and then set to the correct ones for isiNdebele. The incorporation of the terminology lists is performed using a set of Python scripts (one for each format). The script extracts the isiNdebele and corresponding English terms from terminology documents (usually PDFs) and reformats them into a format suitable for import into the dictionary. The reason why isiXhosa click software was chosen is because isiXhosa also belongs to the Nguni languages. These two languages are mutually intelligible. The parts of speech used in both languages are the same.

**References**:

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