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By Ms. Lickel Ndebele, Dr. Nhira Edgar Mberi & Itai Muhwati
University of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe

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A Philosophical Analysis of the Nexus between Conceptions of Time and World View: The Ndebele/ Shona Example

Ms. Lickel Ndebele [α], Dr. Nhira Edgar Mberi [σ], & Itai Muhwati [ρ]

Abstract - The paper is an exploration of time referencing terms in Ndebele. The main thrust is on the nature of time referencing terms. Time on mastics in Ndebele is based upon the speakers' cognition. The speakers' experience and interaction with the world are of significant influence in the creation of meaning in Language particularly in the meaning of time naming terms. Time on mastics in Ndebele and in most African societies depend on speakers' Indigenous knowledge systems. Indigenous knowledge systems of a people are embedded in their language. It is impossible to detach them from the speakers' language. Their language will always reflect their experiences, thoughts, beliefs, culture and life in general. This paper establishes the idea that language is a product of the speakers' observation and perception of the world.

I. Introduction

The paper examines conceptual meaning in the context of time naming in Ndebele language. Heine [1997:3] argues that the main function of language is to convey meaning. The concept of naming is an important aspect in the study of meaning. Sager [1990:22] notes that the naming of a concept may be considered the first step in the consolidation of a concept as a socially usable entity. The study analyses the way speakers interact with the world, which is the way they understand, perceive, and conceptualize it. The main thrust of the paper is to analyze how speakers' interaction with the world contributes to word designation. The study is about Ndebele time referencing terms and how they are applied in the conceptualization of natural time .The paper focuses on terms that refer to different times of the day, month, year as well as terms that name periods of the past to explore how the terms in question can be representational of the phenomena that language is shaped by human cognition and is a product of the speakers observation and interaction with the world. The Indigenous knowledge systems of the speakers are here viewed as vital and essential in the creation and understanding of time on mastics terms.

Author α σ ρ : The Department of African Languages and Literature, University of Zimbabwe, Mount Pleasant, Harare.
E-mail : mberiuk@yahoo.co.uk

II. Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Time Onomastics

Indigenous knowledge systems concern the lives thoughts and culture of the people who speak a particular language [Van Huysteen 2005:182]. These aspects are extra linguistics factors. It is here argued that such aspects cannot be taken for granted in a meaningful study of onomastics in most African languages; they are embedded in a language. Languages can be studied with regard to the extra linguistics rather than solely focusing on linguistic concepts. Such an approach to the study of Language not only gives a fuller and deeper appreciation and understanding of the language but it also gives a profound understanding of the speakers' worldview and philosophy of life. The link between Indigenous knowledge systems and time on mastic s needs to be underscored in a study of time referencing terms. The speakers are the determinants of concept naming in any language. In undertaking the process of naming the referent, speakers cannot detach their culture, thoughts and perception of the world from the language, for these will always be part of them and they inform their existence. These will normally be reflected in the language they speak.

The view that language is shaped by human cognition, as here argued, has not been readily accepted by some theorists. Sweestser [1993:10] posits that there are at least two reasons for this scepticism.

1. Linguists have hoped to be able to analyse language relatively independently of the human abilities.
2. The Sapir –whorf problem: it may not be true that our cognitive systems shape our language, but if such a relationship exists why not the other direction as well.

One may like to base on the reason given in 2 to argue that the acquired linguistics categories shape people's cognition too, but such an argument does not hold, taking into cognizance that evidence in that area has always tended to be negative. There are a plethora of examples of domains/ entities which can be used as evidence for the shaping of language by human

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cognition. Such examples include the vocabulary of physical domains like color and spatial terms.

III. Time Onomastics

Time On mastics refers to the naming of time. Ullman (1962:7) views naming as an effective and adequate approach to referential definition of meaning. He defines a name as "a declinable part of speech signifying a body like stone, activity like education." Sager (1990:22) notes that the naming of a concept may be considered the first step in the consolidation of a concept as a socially useful or usable entity. The link between time On mastics and indigenous knowledge of people cannot be ignored in a study of time referencing terms. It is the people who determine the meaning of the words and their referents. They are the ones who choose to give words the referents they want or the referent, the words they want. In the process of naming the referents, speakers cannot detach their culture, thoughts; perception of the world from their language, these aspects will always be part of them and will be reflected in their language. Indigenous knowledge is embedded in the language and this explains why the current researcher find it difficult or rather impossible to totally abstract language from its users that is, to take language as an autonomous system devoid of its speakers.

As a result of the influential role played by indigenous knowledge systems in language, the designation of Ndebele time referencing terms demonstrate the application of culturally bound knowledge rather than foreign influence. One of the reasons for this undiluted cultural influence could be emanating from the notion that time is a natural phenomena; therefore it is most likely to be referred to using terms which are more natural and indigenous in the language.

a) Introduction

Time referencing lexical items is analyses in a bid to establish their nature in Ndebele and to find out how the speakers' conceptualization and understanding of the world contributes in the naming of time in Ndebele. The chapter also looks at some language devices like metaphor, idiophones and compound words that are employed in time onomastics in order to investigate whether their use can reflect people's conceptualization of the world. The chapter goes on to analyze how the speakers' observation of the physical environment and his indigenous knowledge systems can be of significant influence on the speaker's language. Thoughts and lives of the people are examples of indigenous knowledge systems which are discussed in relation to time naming.

b) Metaphor

A metaphor can be defined as a way of describing something in which a speaker refers to it through veiled or alternative referencing as if it was something else with similar qualities. In Ndebele part of natural time has been named and captured through the use of metaphors. This kind of naming reflects peoples' conceptualization of the world around them. Lakoff (1987:63) describes metaphor as an integral part of human categorization. It can be noted that some time referencing terms (the metaphoric ones) have a relationship with other references in the world. Leech (2001:55) writes about the relationship stating that:

Metaphor involves a relationship between a source domain and a target domain of the experience actually being described by the metaphor.

The term 'source domain' refers to the source or the literal meaning of the metaphorical expression. There is a link between what a metaphor describes (meaning of the metaphorical expression) and the literal meaning of the expression. The link can be shown through the following examples:

1. selisenkanda
   se-li-s-e-iN-k(h)anda
   ASP-5-SC-CON INS-LOC PR-9- head
   (lit. when the sun is on the fontanelle)
   'midday'
2. selingomtsha wendoda
   se-li-nga-um-tsha wa-iN-doda
   ASP-5 SC-INS- F-3-new- POS PR- 9-man
   (Lit.when the sun is on the loins of a man)
   'towards sunset'
3. sokunqundamehlo
   sa-uku-nqund-a-ama-ihlo
   ASP-INF-make blunt-VR-TV-6-eye
   (lit. at the time of the blunting of the eyes)
   'at dusk'

The word inkanda 'fontanelle' in example (6) refers to the mid front part of the head. Since metaphor involves comparison of the source domain and target domain, the position of fontanelle on the head is compared with the position of the sun at midday. In the example the fontanelle is the source domain whereas time (midday) becomes the metaphoric sense of the expression. The literal sense stems from the fact that at midday selisenkanda, the rays of the sun fall directly on the fontanelle. The relationship between the two is based on the fact that the fontanelle inkanda is on the head, a part above other parts and the sun at midday would be high above other objects. It only goes down when it is about to set and that position is captured in example (4).

The term in example (4) makes reference to a man's loin to describe the position of the sun (when it is about to set). The Ndebele have observed that when the sun is about to set it lowers its position downwards to an extent that it will be pointing straight at the male's loin. However one may argue that in the use of this metaphor, speakers take it for granted that men have a single standard height. The consideration of the reality

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that people have different heights may reveal that the metaphor may lack precision in its reference to time. It should be noted that the metaphor has mainly been designed on the basis that the body part is under the waist therefore it is used in the metaphor to capture that low position of the sun which indicates the period of time in the late afternoon.

The metaphor in (5) is an example of the speakers' experience with the world like in examples (3 and 4). The metaphor is a result of what the speakers experience at dusk. The observation has been that at that particular period of the night one's eyes cannot see effectively as they do during the day. The acceptance of the visual limitation has given rise to the formation of sekunqundamehlo, literally the time of the blunting of the eyes.

The use of metaphors that refer to the parts of the body (body-part metaphors) by Ndebele speakers in time onomastics can be accounted for using the cognitive view that postulates that language structure "is the product of our interaction with the world around us" (Heine 1997:3). Mberi (2003) observes that speakers use human categories to describe and understand non-human concepts. The examples give evidence that the body forms part of the speakers' immediate environment. Foley (1997:45) notes that human understanding of any target domain is structured mainly in terms of the human body and its interaction with the physical world. In that light the human body is viewed as a pre-eminent source domain of metaphor. Such a view of metaphor goes along with the enactionist school that postulates that embodied practical understanding in structural coupling is the nature of cognition. It is advantageous for speakers to use their immediate environment in the creation of terms in the language because the language becomes more understandable to them.

Animal body parts can also be used as references in time naming. The example below is a representative of such time onomastics.

4. empondozankomo
   e-(izi) N-p(h)ondo-za-(i)N-k(h)omo
   LOC-PR-10-horn-POS-PR-9-cow
   (lit. at a time of horns of a cow)
   'very early morning period after dawn'

The term refers to a period when one can hardly see things around due to the darkness that will still be covering the earth. It is the period when the cows start to stir, and their white horns will be raised and visible due to reflection of the available light and also due to their visible white colour. The light will be reflecting only on the horns and not on other objects. The metaphor indicates the time period around four o'clock to about 4:30 in the morning. The metaphors reflect how observant speakers are. Language reflects the speakers' observation, perception and understanding of the world. The analysis of the body part metaphors in 3 through 5 makes it clear that taking language as an autonomous system devoid of its speakers could lead to ignoring a vital role played by speakers' cognition in assigning meanings of words in a language. Such a cognitive view of language is against the view of structuralism that postulates the idea that the way speakers understand and perceive the world is an extra-linguistic fact that does not impinge on the language system itself. The argument in the current study is in line with Sweetser (1993:9) who notes that the conceptual system that emerges from everyday human experience can be the basis of natural language semantics.

The view that language is shaped by human cognition, as here argued, has not been readily accepted by some theorists. Reasons for this skepticism are summarized by Sweetser (1993:10) who posits that there are at least two reasons for such skepticism. The reasons are as follows:

1. Linguists have hoped to be able to analyse language relatively independently of the human abilities
2. The Sapir-Whorf problem: it may not be true that our cognitive systems shapes our language, but if such a relationship exists why not the other direction as well

One may like to base on the reason given in 2 to argue that the acquired linguistics categories shape people's cognition too, but such an argument does not hold because evidence in that area has always tended to be negative. The vocabulary of physical domains like color and spatial terms can be used as evidence for the shaping by language of human cognition. It is through speakers' cognitive structuring of the world that 'black' is identified with evil while 'white' is identified with purity. For example Lakoff (1993:203) argues for the shaping of language by human cognition and observes that the locus of metaphor is not in language at all, but in the way speakers conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another. The characterization of such cross domain results in the general theory of metaphor. According to Lakoff (1982:203) it is in such a process that everyday abstract concepts like time, states, change, and causation turn out to be metaphorical. Such a view gives prominence to the notion that the creation of metaphors is motivated by correlations between the speakers' experiences and their cognitive states.

The argument in the present section is well in accord with Quinn (1991:58) who notes that the choice of metaphors for some domains is not totally random but reflects some basic cultural understandings individuals have of that domain. Metaphors can be used to understand more abstracts concepts. Source domains (of metaphor) are typically well known everyday experiences. Speakers find it easy to use such source domains because they are part of their everyday

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life. Source domains of this type are 'good to think within that their component elements and their interrelations are non-problematic with everyday sensible experience" (Foley 1997: 182). Listed below are examples of such metaphors:

5. ekukhaleni kwenkukhu zakuqala
   e- ku- khal- (a)-eni kwa-(i) (zi) Nkukhu za-(u) ku-qal-a
   LOC PR-INF-crow VR-LOC SUF- POS PR-10-cock POS PR-INF-first VR-TV
   (lit. at the time of the first cockcrow)
   'beginning of early morning period'
6. ekukhaleni kwenkukhu zesibili
   e-uku-khal-(a)-eni kwa-iziN-khukhu za-isi-bili
   LOC PR-INF-crow VR-LOC SUF POS PR-10-cock-POS- PR- two
   (lit. at the time of the second cock crow)
   'early morning'
7. ekukhaleni kwenkukhu zesithathu
   e-uku-khal-eni kwa-iziN-khukhu za-isi-thathu
   LOC PR-INF-crow VR-LOC SUF POS PR-10-cock-POS PR-7 three
   (lit. at the time of the third cock crow)
   'later early morning'
8. ekwehleni kwenkukhu
   e-(u)ku-ehl-eni kwa-iziN-khukhu
   LOC PR-INF- descend-VR-LOC SUF POS PR-10-fowl
   (lit. at the descent of fowls)
   'morning period around 5'

In the examples in 7-11 one finds that the daily routine of fowls (crowing and working up) is used to capture the concept of the abstract domain of time. The fowls represent things of the physical world (everyday sensible experiences) that speakers use in order to understand other aspects especially the more abstract ones like time. Some terms of this nature can also be found in the Shona language as shown below:

9. kumashambanzou
   ku-ma-shamb-a-nzou
   LOC PR-LOC M-bath-TV-elephants
   (lit. at the elephants' bath)
   'early morning period'
10. runyanhiriri
    ru-nya-nhiriri
    LOC PR-defacate-wild cat
    (When wild cates defacate)
    'early morning'
11. rubvunzavaeni
    ru-bvunz-a- vaeni
    LOC PR-ask-TV CL2-visitors
    (lit. at a time when visitors ask directions)
    'evening, when darkens begins'

Example 12 indicates that Shona speakers have observed that elephants usually visit the river to 'bath' in the mornings. The observation is passed on to indicate and name the specific morning period. The observation of the wild cat's excretory daily habits is reflected in the naming of time in 13. The name in example 14 has been given prominence by the observation that evening is the time when strangers ask for assistance or directions in fear of the encroaching darkness. The example help to demonstrate what is in accord with Foley (1997: 62) who say that by mapping certain salient features of the source domain, metaphors allow speakers to construe the more abstract, less directly knowable in terms of the more concrete and directly experienceable. In the examples one may realize how the concept of time is mapped onto features of more familiar experiences of the world.

Mainstream linguistics is another field like structuralism which postulates the treatment of language as an autonomous system. Since the late 1950s mainstream linguistics has been conceived of as a largely formal enterprise increasingly divorced from the study of languages as they are used in everyday life (Romaine 1994:36). The statement implies that mainstream linguistics concentrates only on the structure of the language to the exclusion of the language users. It can be argued that since language is a product of its speakers, studying it without reference to them is like studying and quoting works of an author without any reference to that author. To study language without reference to the speakers is to exclude the possibility of finding explanations for the constructions of terms as well as conceptualization and designation of concepts. The speakers' knowledge and beliefs can be reflected in the symbols they use (signification) as shown in the examples. Khumalo (2001:5) highlights that it is the aim of cognitive linguistics to achieve a cognitively plausible account of what it means to know a language, how languages are acquired and how they are used.

The speakers' cognitive structuring of the world can be the basis for understanding the language. Sweetser (1993:5) says that a cognitively based theory does not take the objective 'real world'; it takes human perception and understanding of the world to be the basis for human language. The 'real world' here refers to the one outside human cognitive organization. The argument brought here is that the 'real world' does not classify or create identifications but it is the speakers' cognitive structuring of the world which can do so. Such an approach to language can be taken to be controversial from the view of the truth-conditional semantic which focuses on logical relations like inference. Saeed (1997:26) notes one of the weaknesses of the truth-conditional semantic approach. Saeed notes that by viewing meaning as the relationship between words and the world, truth-conditional semantics eliminates cognitive organization from the linguistic system. The cognitive approach proves to be the plausible approach in the understanding of human language in everyday usage.

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c) Time onomastics and physical objects

The meaning of words cannot be easily separated from the speakers' perception of the real world. The meanings can be understood in relation to concrete objects. Heine (1997: 45) observes that "one basic strategy to deal with our environment is to conceive and e.

i. *The sun as a concrete object in time onomastics*

Most African societies are keen on observing the environment. This subsection gives evidence that the sun can be a useful source in the designation of concepts in a language.

12. ilanga lingakaphumi
    i(li)langa-li-ngaka-phum-i
    5-sun-SC-NEG M-rise-TV
    (lit. before the rising of the sun)
    'morning before sunrise'
13. ekuphumeni kwelanga
    e-uku-phum-(a)-eni kw(a)-i(li)langa
    LOC PR-INF-emerge VR-TV-LOC SUF-POS-PR-5-sun
    (Lit.when the sun emerges)
    'at sunrise'
14. ekukhweleni kwelanga
    e-uku-khwel-a -eni kwa- i(li)-langa
    LOC PR-INF-climb VRP-TV-POS-PR-5-sun
    (lit.at the time of the climbing up of the sun)
    'mid morning'
15. ekuthambameni kwelanga
    e-uku-thambam-(a)-eni-kwa-i(li)-langa
    LOC PR-INF-get soft VR-TV-LOC SUF -POS-PR5-sun
    (lit. at the time of the softening of the sun)
    'evening, before sunset'
16. selikhotheme
    se-li-khotham-e
    ASP-5 SC-bend-VR-T FV
    (lit. when the sun has bent)
    'evening, before sunset'
17. selisiyakunina
    se-li-s-iya-ku-nina
    ASP-5 SC-CON INS -go-VR-TV-LOC PR-mother
    (when the sun is on its way to its mother)
    'lit. towards sunset'
18. ekutshoneni kwelanga
    e-ku-tshon-eni-kwa-i(li)langa
    LOC PR-INF-sink VR-TV LOC SUF-POS-PR-5-sun
    (when the sun sinks)
    'sunset'
19. selimathunzi
    se-li-(a)ma-thunzi
    ASP-5 SC-6-shadow
    (list. at time of mountain shadows)
    'nearly sunset'
20. selihlezi ezihlahleni
    Se-li-hlez-i-e-izi-hlahla(a)-eni
    ASP-SC-seated-LPR-trees-LS
    (lit. when the sun is at the base of trees)
    'nearly sunset'

The sun is part of the accessible physical environment. It is the concrete physical object which is used to understand a more abstract concept (concept of time). From the examples it is evidenced that the movement and position of the sun is used to indicate different times of the day. Because speakers observe and understand the movement of the sun they can actually make appointments using the time referencing terms stated in the examples. It is however important to note that one of the weaknesses of solely relying on such time onomastics is that it lacks exact accuracy. The weakness needs not be over emphasized at this point, what is of major importance here is to reveal how the speakers' interaction with the world can be used in language structuring. Commenting on grammatic-alisation, Heine (1991:28) argues that the cognitive activity that results in grammaticalisation is 'egocentric' and 'egodeictic' in the sense that it moves from domains of conceptualization that are close to human experience to those that are more distant. The description of the movements of the sun captured in the examples carries with it the belief that most African societies have about the sun rising, moving and setting vis-à-vis the geo-scientific reality that it is the earth that moves around the sun.

ii. *The moon as a concrete object in time onomastics*

The moon forms part of the speakers' environment. The speakers' environment and their observations of the world cannot be detached from the language they speak as shown below:

21. ekuthwaseni kwenyanga
    e-uku-thwas-a-eni-kwa iN-yanga
    LOC PR-INF-begin-VR-TV-LOC SUF-POS PR-9-moon
    (lit. at the time of the new moon)
    'beginning of month'
22. inyanga isilucezu
    i-(N)-yanga-i-si-u(lu) -cezu
    9-moon-SC-ASP-COP PR -half
    (When the moon is half its size)
    'towards month end'
23. ekufeni kwenyanga
    e-(u)ku-f(a)-eni-kwa-(i)nyanga
    LPR-INF-die-VR LOC SUF-POS-PR-9-moon
    (at the time when the moon dies)
    'month end'

The speakers observe the cycle of the moon and some of their daily activities are organized in relation to the cycle of the moon. The numerical days of the month are not much considered. The Ndebele talk about inyanga yesintu lenyanga yesikhiwa traditional month and western month. The traditional month is marked by significant phenomenon whereas the

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western month is marked by days and dates of the calendar.

IV. Times of the Year

In the present section it is noted that the year is also composed of events which are notably of a wider scale than those which compose either the day or the month. The events are situated precisely in time like those of the day.

Time conceptions differ according to cultures. p'Bitek (1986:47) defines culture as a philosophy as lived and celebrated in a society. It is crucial to note that African (Ndebele in particular) conception of time is different from that reflected in European cultures for example in English Language. Mbiti (1969:19) observes that "when Africans reckon time, it is for a concrete and specific purpose, in connection with events, but not just for the sake of mathematics". Mbiti goes on to argue that since time is a composition of events, people cannot reckon it in vacuum. Times of the year day, the month and the year are all divided up according to their specific events which make them meaningful to speakers. Traditional African societies do not normally rely on numerical calendars; such calendars are a foreign inventory. Instead of numerical calendars African societies mostly rely on what Mbiti (1969:19) terms "phenomenon calendars in which the events or phenomena which constitute time are reckoned or considered in their relation with one another as they constitute time".

V. Activities/Events and Times of the Year

In a community where agriculture is practiced, it is the seasonal activities that compose a year. The actual number of days is irrelevant in this kind of time naming. A year is reckoned in terms of events rather than mathematical days. Years may differ in length according to days contained in each year but not in their seasons and other regular events. Such a method is mainly meaningful and applicable to an Agricultural community. Examples are as follows:

23. ngesikhathi sokulima
    nga-isi-khathi sa-uku-lim-a
    INST PR-7-time Pos-INF-ploughVR-TV
    (lit. the time of ploughing)
    'around late October-January'
24. ngesikhathi sokuhlakula
    nga- isi-khathi sa –uku-hlakul-a
    INST PR-7-time Pos PR-INF-weeding-T
    (lit. the time of weeding)
    'January-early February'

ngesikhathi sokuvuna V
nga-isi-khathi sa- uku-vun-a
INST PR-7-time Pos-IN F-reapVR-TV
(lit. time of reaping)
'April to early June'

25. ngesikhathi sokubhula
    nga-isi-khathi sa-uku-bhul-a
    INST PR-7-time Pos-INF-stamp-TV
    (lit. the time of stamping corn)
    'July to August'

The events illustrated in the examples are basic and are significant in people's lives. Their significance is motivated by the fact that they have to do with food production. Speakers find it meaningful to reckon time according to its significant events. Cattle are at the heart of the people among the Ndebele people and for that reason the day is reckoned in reference to events pertaining to cattle. :

a. 6 am is milking time (isikhathi sokusenga)
b. 2pm is the time for cattle to drink (isikhathi sokunathisa inkomo), and the herdsmen drive them to the watering places.
c. 5pm is the time when the cattle return home (isikhathi sokubuya kwenkomo), being driven by the herdsmen.
d. 6pm is the time when the cattle enter their kraals or sleeping places (isikhathi sokuvalela inkomo)

a) Times of the Month

The speakers' observation of what takes place in the world in any given month may be influential in reckoning times of the month. Sweetser (1993:3) posits that "our real world exists, but only access to it is through our experience, both physical and cultural. The following list consists of terms that are used to indicate lunar months of the year.

26. uZibandlela u-Zib-a-i(N)-dlela
    1-coverVR-TV-9-path
    (lit. the month when paths are overgrown)
    'the month of January'
27. uNhlolanja
    u-N-hlol-a-(i)N-ja
    3-BP-checkVR-9 BP-dog
    (lit. the month of mating of dogs)
    'February'
28. uMabasa
    u-ma-bas-a
    1-LOC M-light fireVR-TV
    (lit. the month when the winter fires are first lit)
    'April'
29. uNkwenkwezi
    u-nkwenkwe-zi
    1-boy-SUF
    (The period of boys – time of circumcision)
    'May'
30. uNhlangula
    u-(N)-hlangul-a
    1-9-assistVR-TV
    (lit. the month of early winds)
    'June'

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31. uNtulikazi
    u-(i)N-t(h)uli-kazi
    1-9 BP-dust-AUG SUF
    (lit. the month of the winds)
    'July'
32. uMfumfu
    um-fumfu
    3-wild violates
    (lit. the month when the new shoots show)
    'October'
33. uMpalakazi
    u-mpala-kazi
    1-impala-AUG SUF
    (lit. the month of the Impalas-time of pregnancy/ giving birth to young)
    'December'

It is evident in the examples that certain events are associated with particular months and the months are in turn named after those events. For example due to the rains that would have started some two months before, the month of January is a period when vegetation will be growing so fast such that most paths will be well covered by it. The period is then marked and named on the basis of the appearance of the overgrown paths. The month of February (in example 53) has been named after the reproductive cycle of dogs. Speakers believe that although dogs mate throughout the year, the month of February can be recognized as the month when this activity is done more significantly than in any other period. There are some parts in Matabeleland for example in Ntabazinduna and Mbembesi areas where there is a community of the Xhosa people living together with the Ndebeles. The Xhosas are keen on conserving their culture; adults make it a point that on the cold month of May boys who are at puberty stage undergo the process of circumcision. It is upon the observation of the proceedings of the Xhosa culture that the month of May is reckoned and named in reference to this significant event of circumcision *uNkwenkwezi* (a period of boys). On one hand there is a possibility that the term could be a borrowed word in Ndebele, which has its origins in the Xhosa language.

b) The weather and time onomastics

The weather to the Ndebele speakers is one of the important phenomena that is recognized by most cultures in relation to time. Different weather conditions can be used as significant symbols in the naming of times of the months and times of the year as in the following examples:

34. isikhathi sezulu
    isi-khathi sa-i(li)-zulu
    7-time Pos PR-5-rain
    (lit. the time of the rains)
    'late October to March'
35. isikhathi somqando
    isi-khathi sa-um-qand-o
    7-time Pos PR-3-coldVR-NDM
    (lit. the times of cold weather)
    'May to early August'
36. isikhathi sokutshisa
    isi-khathi sa-(u)ku-tshis-a
    7-time Pos PR-INF-hotVR-TV
    (lit. the time of hot weather)
    'September to early October'

When the cycle is complete, the natural phenomena (weather conditions) will repeat themselves once more and speakers would consider the year complete. The whether conditions may not be strictly fixed to exact months of the numerical calendars, they may be subject to change from year to year, as a result of climatic changes. Ndebele speakers like other African traditional societies are not much concerned about the mathematical calendars or about the actual days of the mentioned weather conditions .What the speakers are concerned about is the completion of the cycle.

VI. Conclusion

The study looked at the conceptualization and the naming of time. It has been observed that the speakers' environment is an important source for language. The sun and the moon are not simply silent phenomena of nature but they speak to the community that observes them. The human body has been considered as the speakers' immediate environment.

From what has been presented in the study one can draw a conclusion that Ndebele time referencing terms are not just mere words because speakers have coined them relying on what they have observed and understood in their environment. The study depicts that language represents man's most sophisticated use of signs. Ndebele time referencing terms are a reflection of how speakers understand and interact with the world and conceptualize objects, abstractions and experiences. The analyses of time naming terms gives evidence that proves that the phenomena that language is a product of the speakers' observation of the world exists in Ndebele which has been part of the quest of the research.

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