

Reading and writing

Zul

A proposal for writing the Zul language

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Inviting your comments and suggestions. Please send them to:

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Aims and objectives

In this booklet we are making recommendations to the Language Committee and to the Zul leaders and community on how to write the Zul language. Our purpose is:

- (1) To seek to unite the Zul people in using one spelling system and thus to encourage the writing of new books for all Zul people.
- (2) To develop a writing system that will help Zul people who can already read Hausa and English to be able to read and write Zul language without difficulty.
- (3) To develop a writing system simple enough for Zul children to learn. They will be encouraged to use it in school.
- (4) To enable strangers and foreigners to learn to speak and read the Zul language easily.

Chapter 1

The vowels of the Zul language

Basic vowels

The Zul language has six vowels. Five of these vowels are written in the same way as they are in Hausa and English; these are: **a**, **e**, **i**, **o**, **u** and a sixth vowel **ɪ**. The first five vowels are pronounced in the same way as they are pronounced in Hausa. They are illustrated below in different positions in a word. However, only **a** and **i** have so far been found at the beginning of a word:

	Zul	Hausa	English
a	badire	iri	seed
	bai	kafa	fix
	baali	wake	beans
	balti	daura	tie
	base	uba	father
	dale	tauna	chew
e	be	buga	beat
	berum	aboki	friend
	ceni	karya	break
	cete	wasa	play
	ceti	figa	flucking
	debiri	fage	play ground
i	bi	bayarwa	give
	ci	ci	eat
	cigini	cinya	thigh
	diri	zo	come
	jiri	ciyawa	grass
	ri	je	go
o	bori	tono	dig
	ghone	ruwan sama	rain
	kori	noma	hoeing
	roni	rama	lean
	yoni	shiru	keep quite
	zom	zomo	hare
ɪ	dikiri	damo	monitor lizard

d̄imi	zama	sit
gh̄ip	ciki	inside
ḡiri	haihuwa	birth
ḡise	duwawu	buttocks
m̄ishi	matacce	death

u	ghulli	risga	Sudan potatoes
	ghumi	rufe	cover
	ghuni	fitina	pester
	ghuni	dutsen nika	grinding stone
	ghuri	dama/kwaba	mix
	kulu	kuka	cry

Long vowels

There are some words in the Zul language that have long (drawn) vowel sounds.

The three long vowels that have been found are aa, ii, and ee.

a/aa	labi	kira	call
	laabi	saa baki	put in the mouth

	lar	ƙarya	lie
	laare	gansakuka	algae

	hamtini	yaushi	wilt
	haame	hamma	yawning

e/ee	le	rufewa	to close
	lee	kiwo	to rear (animal)

i/ii	d̄irí	zo	to come
	d̄ìrì	kamo	to bring

	li	ƙata	to spoil
	liite	shamuwa	heron

	mi	mu	we
	miiri	mai	oil

ki kai you
kiiti gauta garden egg

No examples of other long vowels have been recorded so far.

The writing of long vowels as double letters will help people to read the language more easily. It will help Zul children and also foreigners who are learning Zul to pronounce these words correctly.

Vowel combinations (diphthongs)

There are a some occurrences where two vowel sounds occur together in Zul words, mainly at the end of words. The following combinations occur: **ai**, **ae** and **au**.

		Hausa	English
ai	pai	karewa	finish
	ɓai	kafawa	fix
	tlai	matsi	to press
ae	ɗae	tabarya	pestle
au	rau	yaya	how

Chapter 2

The consonants of the Zul language

The Zul language has 24 consonant sounds. Most of them are written in the same way as in Hausa or English. A few consonant sounds are written with two letters, for example, 'sh'. This letter combination represents a single consonant sound.

Here are some examples of each consonant at the beginning or middle of a word.

b	badire	iri	seed
	base	uba	father
	berum	aboki	friend
	bi	bayarwa	give
	bori	tono	dig
ɓ	ɓaali	wake	beans
	ɓai	kafa	fix
	ɓali	ɗaurawa	tie
	ɓatli	biya	pay
	ɓe	bugu	beat
c	ceni	karyawa	break
	cete	wasa	play
	ceti	figewa	pluck
	kucimi	nada	fold
	cigini	cinya	thigh
d	damtine	tunani	thinking
	desi	daka	pounding
	dikiri	damo	monitor lizard
	dimi	zama	sit
ɗ	ɗae	tabarya	pestle
	ɗale	tauna	chew
	ɗami	tsina	picking
	ɗamine	dan dutsen nika	upper grinding stone
	ɗiri	zo	come
g	gami	kayi	head

gasi	dare	night
geere	ido	eye
geshe	mashi	spear
giri	haihuwa	birth
gise	gindi	buttocks

gh	ghop	taki	manure
	ghone	ruwan sama	rain
	ghulli	risga	Sudan potatoes
	ghumi	rufe	cover
	ghuni	dutsen nika	lower grinding stone
	ghuni	fitine	disturb

*Notice the difference between the sound **g** and the softer sound written **gh**.*

h	hame	hamma	yawning
	hamtini	yaukwane	wilt
j	jebire	dinya	black plum
	jeli	kanya	African ebony tree
	jeni	wassu	others
	jiri	ciyawa	grass
k	kakani	kafin	before
	kan	sai	then
	kar	kore	drive away
	kari	aika	message
	kori	kaza	hen
	kulu	kuka	cry
l	la	sa	put
	lami	kwadayi	greed

	lare	karya	lie
	le	rufe	lover
	luluri	riga	dress
tl	tla	sa	cow
	tlai	matsi	crowded/press
	tlari	sassaka	curving
	tlatine	takura	compass
	tle	sha	drink
	tlyati	yage	taar
ld	dlane	rawa	dance
	dlantine	fada	fighting
	dlare	rawa	danee
	dlerkimi	rake	sugar cane
	dlerkimi	ralee	sugar cane
	dlo	sanela	stick
m	male	ruwa	water
	mishi	mushe	carcass
	mur	sata	stealing
	mure	barawo	thief
n	nagire	mata	wife
	nami	saura	remnant
	nanti	dashi	with him
	nari	babba	big
	nina	mahaifiya	mother
ny	nya	da	son

	nyashi	itace	fire wood
	nyine	gibi	gum
	nyingi	bakwai	seven
	nyini	nono	breast
	nyiingi	nononki	your breast
	nyene	yayan baure	black plum fruit
	nyetti	yunkura	wilt
p	pai	karewa	finish
	pali	mayar	give back
	paltine	dawowa	return
	panye	kuspa	adjoining wall
	pise	kibiya	arrow
	pite	rana	sun
r	rami	zago	termite
	rau	yaya	how
	ri	je	go
	rika	can	younder
	ringe	muntsini	pinch
	roni	rama	slim
s	sari	rowa	stinginess
	segini	sai gobe	till tomorrow
	sekini	yau	today
	setine	rudi	deceive
	suka	ciki	inside

sh	shame	kunya	shame
	shimi	tuwo	porridge
	shine	hakori	tooth
	shini	kalla	look
	shu	rami	hole
t	ta	gashi	hair
	tate	dutse	stone
	t̄ime	tunkiya	sheep
	tini	shine	he is
	turi	dafa	cook
w	ware	tsafi	fetish ritual
	wini	sune	they are
	wul	ce	say
	wuri	saye	buy
	wurpi	kudi	money
y	yaara	yanan nan	he is around
	Yami	Allah	God
	yemi	kwashe	gather
	yere	kare	dog
	yoni	yi shiru	keep quiet
z	zami	samu	found
	zape	igiya	rope
	zati	barshi	leave him
	zom	zomo	hare
	zupi	rufe	cover
zh	zhangirta	zal e	heron
	zheni	yaudara	deceit
	zhiki	burji	knoll
	zhimali	kaluluwa	swollen lymph
	zhimbire	tsutsa	worms
	zhindi	agwada	

Glottal stop

The glottal stop appears only in the negative marker and it is written with the symbol ‘ as in da’a
ba not.

A note on the sound ng

The letters **ng** represent a nasal sound said at the back of the mouth. A cluster of **ng** followed by **g** can occur, as in the at the beginning of some words. However, since ng does not occur elsewhere, we will write the cluster simply as ng. Here are some examples:

ngan	shuka	plant
ngeni	nema	seek
nge	diba	fetch
ngegi	ki	refuse

Consonant combinations

There are three types of consonant combinations which occur only at the beginning of a word:

1) The following consonants occur in combination with ‘w’:

gw	gwagimi	namu	our own
	gwan	nawa	my own
	gwasi	nashi	his own
	gwazini	nasu	theirs
kw	kwatle	makankari	shell
	kwatli	tsinka	plock
	kwani	burgewa	admire
mw	mwan	a bude	opened
ghw	ghwahum	tara	nine
	ghwa	bara	last year
	ghwatira	zuciya	temper
	ghwundiri	boyewa	to hide

2) Examples of the following consonants with “y” have been recorded:

by	byari	yan/uwa	brothers
ky	kyai	tallafewa	support
	kyankyai	musical	gong
	kyansi	tofuwa	spear grass
gy	gyatli	dariya	laugh

mby mbyati shuri kick
my myakan uku three

3) “m” or “n” can occur before a consonant at the beginning of a word: Most commonly these occur at the beginning of a word. Examples:

mb mba'i maka bow ring

4) There is a combination that is more complex. These have a nasal combination followed by a consonant w or y.

mby mbyati shuri kick

Chapter 3

The Zul alphabet

After having carefully examined the pronunciation of the Zul language and studied the vowels and consonants, we wish to recommend the following alphabet for the Zul language:

a b ɓ c d ɗ dle g gh h i i j k l tl m n ny o p r s sh t u w y z zh

A note on tone (pitch) in Zul

In addition to the consonant and vowel sounds, Zul words are also different according to the pitch, or tone, of the voice. Each syllable is either high tone or low tone.

In most cases, when a word occurs in the context of a sentence, speakers of the language will recognize the meaning of the word and will read it with the correct tone. Occasionally it may be necessary to mark the tones. Further research is needed on this point.

In some cases tone marks important grammatical distinctions. Specifically, singular and plural subject pronouns in Zul are distinguished by difference of tone only. See the full description in chapter 4.

Chapter 4

Some notes on the grammar of Zul

1. Subject pronouns in Zul

All subject pronouns are written as separate words.

Person	Singular	Plural
1 st	a	mì
2 nd	ki	kin
3 rd	Tì	wu

2. Object Pronouns

Person	Singular	Plural
1 st	mí	mì
2 nd	Í	inè
3 rd	tì	Wuri

3. Possessive Pronouns

kopldan gini	my stool (chair)
kopldan gi/gini	your stool
kopldan gisi	his/her/it stool
kopldan gizini	their chair
kopldan gimi	our chair

4. Demonstrative adjectives in Zul

bom ta that house

bom ja those houses

bom tu this house ga gida

bom ju these houses ga gidaje

bom ta that house wancan gida

bom ja those house wadancan gidaje

5. Present Continuous Tense

Singular

ami den dirtine I am coming

ti den dirtine he/she is coming

ki den dirtine you are coming

Plural

min den dɪrtine	we are coming
kin den dɪrtine	you are coming
wi den dɪrtine	they are coming

Present Tense

Singular

ami ra dɛ	I am here
ki ra dɛ	you are here
tɪ ra dɛ	he/she is here

Plural

min ra dɛ	we are here
kin ra dɛ	you are here
wi ra dɛ	they are here

Past Tense

Singular

a dɪr sekini	I came today
ki dɪr sekini	you came today
tɪ dɪr sekini	he/she came today

Plural

mu dɪr sekini	we came today
ki dɪr sekini	you came today
wu dɪr sekini	they came today

Future Tense

Singular

aa dɪr gini	I will come tomorrow
ki dɪr gini	you will come tomorrow
tɪ dɪr gini	he/she will come tomorrow
tɪ diri	he/she always comes ...

Plural

mi dɪr gini	we will come tomorrow
kii dɪr gini	you will come tomorrow

wi dir gini they will come tomorrow

Chapter 5

Counting and times in Zul language

Seasons of the Year

Zul	Hausa	English
watline	damina	rainy season beginning of rainy season
lurpi tlon	bazara	
bari	kaka	harvesting period
gisi	rani	dry season

Days of the Week

Zul	Hausa	English
lakdi	lahadi	Sunday
litni	litimin	Monday
komɓo	talata	Tuesday
lukge	laraba	Wednesday
boitati	alhamira	Thursday
kacina	jumma'a	Friday
sabar	asabar	Saturday

Zul Numbers

	Zul	Hausa	English
1	Num	ɗaya	One
2	Rop	biyu	Two
3	myakan	uku	Three
4	wupse	huɗu	Four
5	nantam	biyar	Five
6	mukka	shidda	Six
7	nyingi	bakwai	Seven
8	wuzupse	takwas	Eight
9	ghwanum	tara	Nine
10	Kutl	goma	Ten
11	kutl cet num	Goma sha ɗaya	Eleven
12	kutl cet rop	Goma sha biyu	Twelve
20	hauya num	ashirin	Twenty
	Hauya num na	Ashirin da huɗu	Twenty- four
24	wupse		four
40	Hau ya rop	Arba'in	Forty

60	Hauya myakan	sittin	Sixty
80	hauya wupse	tamanin	Eighty
100	Hauya nantam	ɗari	Hundred

Chapter 6 Traditional story

Zom na dikiri

Zom na dikiri ni berum ki ezini, gasi gono dikiri dir bom di zome kan zom ba turi wur mami wuden ci mammo kan dikiri ba wule mam kin njeti, anni kan zom ba wul tie in kin ki ndue di mam njet untu wo tur badiri kakani kan ki nde ngani an mba njeti kan dikiri ba ri gi mam giso ti tur badiri ka ti ngani.

Ki lurpi wo mam den yelitin wi, dikiri shino gwas ba yehl daa kan ti dir di zome ti wul tie mam gino an yelt daa anni ya wul tie a! kan ki tur badir kawo imni am ba yeltra wu? to kan ba ci lo dikiri ka nan ya ri bommo kan ti dam ti, ti wule kikino untun a pi daa, kan ti shirim na nase ti wul tie kikino a bor shu a la ki suka a wi bar sukar kika a labi berum gini ya dir ki shirmi gini, tin ya diro a wul ki e ki karin bar dir nari kano ki bim tori. Gasi gomo kan ti labi zom diri ti wul tie nana gin mish kawi dir ki layen kulu, ya dir wu den kulu mish tino kan ti wul tie dir mu ri kar kushaya giri a ri shirmi ti a liri ti bari, kan wu diro kan ti shirmi ti ti wul tie to, lulur pain ka wi karin bar dir na miri jeni ani kan nina gs ba ta munto tori anni kan ti nimi.

Zom shino an timi ti biwo kan ti dir bommo kan ti nda nina gs na be ti wule nye korsikino ki mush daa ki karin barra ir daa kan ya kashe ti ka gwa kan tiri kapti kapa kan ti kari bar dikiri rika ya ba wul tie amma nina gin mish kawi di ki tayen kulu. Nan ya diro wu den kuluwo kan ti wule dir amma a ri shirmi ti ko tin karin bar dir na bari, kan ya shirmi ti wokan ti wule amma kikino ami na lulur daa karin mir bar jen diri amma a zam ki lai. Anni kan wu dim yasi wu dim yasi am ngon dir daa, wu dim wu dim ar ngan dir daa kan ti nda bori, ti nda bori wo sai kasir ni ghup wur tori kan wi pali alti suka wu pal wu le ka kan wu lti gizin lasi kan dikiri ba wule i! kima wo in ki ki ltum ni dawo mbarum ba mishka kan ya pal dira untu rawo argou tu ki pim deu mammo anni a pii den nne.

Conclusion

Finally, it is our hope that the committee will take serious note of the observations and recommendations that we have made in this booklet in order to fulfill the aims and objectives that were stated on page 2 of this booklet.

The Zul group
Bauchi Workshop.

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