



## **President's Annual Report: 2011-2012**

### **Presented at the AGM of AFRILEX 2012**

**3 July 2012, Pretoria, South Africa**

The year between the previous annual Afrilex conference, held in Windhoek, Namibia, and the present conference, was one of the busiest one ever for the Afrilex Executive and Board. In my report I will select a few highlights only to illustrate this.

#### **Workshop 2011**

As was the case in 2010, a workshop on dictionary use was once again facilitated by Board Member **Prof Danie Prinsloo and his colleagues**, this time in September 2011. As in earlier editions, this dictionary-use workshop took place in Mamelodi and was sponsored by Afrilex, with substantial discounts for dictionaries and free workbooks from OUP SA. This edition was attended by around one hundred secondary school learners and their teachers. At the request of the Board, Prof Prinsloo and his colleagues were asked to submit a paper for this conference, in which they reflect on their experiences running these workshops. I am glad to be able to inform you that the adjudicators accepted their paper, a paper which is scheduled for presentation tomorrow morning.

### **Annual International Conference 2012**

Each year, most energy of the Afrilex board goes into preparing the organization of the next international conference. The Board met to that intend, here in Pretoria, last September. As you have all come to appreciate, now that we're halfway the present conference, I think it is fair to say that we have succeeded once again in bringing all of you together under the best possible circumstances. A renewed word of thanks and appreciation to the local organisers, **Proff Elsabé Taljard and Danie Prinsloo**, is therefore certainly in place.

### **Annual International Conference 2013**

A few years ago the board decided to start planning for its international conferences two years ahead of the occasion, which is why we have kept contact with potential local conference organizers, keynote speakers and pre-conference workshop presenters throughout, not only for this edition, but also for the next. In this respect, I can already inform you that we will be going to NMMU in PE (that is, the **Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth**) in July 2013, that our international keynote speaker will be **Prof Yukio Tono**, from Tokyo, Japan, and that **Prof Jacques Van Keymeulen**, from Ghent, Belgium, has accepted to facilitate a pre-conference workshop. Our local conference organiser will be **Annél Otto**, who according to our Constitution will be co-opted to the board for the coming year; Prof Tono will be entertaining us on dictionary use studies; while Prof Van Keymeulen will be training us on good fieldwork practices in lexicography.

### **Honorary Membership**

I would now like to quote a section from our Constitution, Section E, point (11):

“Honorary membership can be bestowed by the Board upon persons who have made outstanding contributions to lexicography and the Association. Any member of the Association can nominate a person for honorary membership by submitting a detailed motivation to the Board. Honorary members are exempted from the payment of membership fees. Honorary members will be acknowledged where applicable in publications of the Association such as newsletters, conference programmes and proceedings as well as on the website of the Association.”

— Afrilex Constitution | Adopted: 14 July 1995 (1st AGM), Amended: 9 July 2002 (7th AGM) & 6 July 2011 (16th AGM)

We currently have two Honorary Members, **Prof A.C. Nkabinde**, since July 2002, and **Prof Rufus Gouws**, since July 2010. At the Afrilex Board Meeting last September I tabled a proposal to also confer this honour to a third member of our Association. The Board unanimously accepted my proposal, and I would now like to reveal the identity of our new Honorary Member.

This person is, of course, **Dr. Johan du Plessis**, the editor of *Lexikos* for no less than fourteen of the first twenty years of our journal, from Volume 7 in 1997 until Volume 20 in 2010, an amazingly long tenure. His tenure was not only exceptional in terms of length, but especially in terms of quality. As we have witnessed, Johan and the journal went from strength to strength with each new volume. With his last volume, Volume 20 in 2010, Johan put a magnificent capstone to an outstanding series. Weighing in at 800 pages,

Johan's capstone simply outgrew the concept of a single journal issue, catapulting it to the most valued library shelves, where it now rubs shoulders with the heftiest of dictionaries — quite appropriate for our discipline.

*Lexikos* is not the journal of Afrilex — as it attracts contributions from all over the world, with the best only being published following, for each, a rigorous blind adjudication process by at least two referees — but it is the *favoured outlet* and as such mouthpiece of the members of Afrilex. For fourteen years Johan has supervised the conversion from mere manuscripts to articles that were often very nearly perfect. Such aspects did not go unnoticed, and it is no doubt thanks to the good submissions, improved with the help of Johan's extensive network of adjudicators, and a timely editorial process, that *Lexikos* was selected, as of Volume 15 in 2005, for inclusion in the databases of the Thomson Reuters Web of Science Citation Index.

When Johan accepted the editorship of *Lexikos* in 1997, he was still holding the demanding position of Final Editor at the *Woordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal*. As Dr. Willem Willem has pointed out: "Suddenly he no longer had office hours: he was more or less permanently at the office." After his retirement in 2000 he stayed on as editor for a further ten years, spending the equivalent of six months of every year on the production of a volume of *Lexikos*. He went to extraordinary lengths to help create a true culture of scientific reporting on lexicography in Africa. In addition to the painstaking guidance he offered to new entrants, helping them through the numerous rewritings of their contributions, in 2003 Johan also launched the "*Lexikos* encouragement prize for scholarly writing". In his own words, the aim of this prize was:

“To encourage students in lexicography and young lexicographers to conduct significant research in their field of study, and to raise the standard of scholarly writing in the field of lexicography. Competing for the prize therefore takes the form of a scientific article.”

— Johan du Plessis (2003, from a leaflet included with *Lexikos* 13)

Johan also put his money where his heart was, and further included prize money for the winners.

In conclusion, then, one can confidently state that through the unconditional devotion to his job, Johan not only raised the prestige of *Lexikos* and thus Afrilex, but also of lexicography as an academic discipline as a whole. To Dr Johan du Plessis— valued colleague and dear friend — our sincerest gratitude is extended, and an Honorary Membership of Afrilex is highly due.

Given Dr Johan du Plessis was not in a position to join us today, I would now like to ask **Dr. Willem Botha**, the Executive Director and Editor-in-Chief at the Bureau of the *Woordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal*, to please accept this honour on Johan’s behalf. Can I also ask **Prof Danie Prinsloo** to hand over Johan’s Honorary Membership certificate to Willem, and can I ask **Dr Mariëtta Alberts** to hand over an Afrilex pottery shield to celebrate the occasion?

### ***Lexikos* in Gold Open Access**

Still on the subject of *Lexikos*, the other major development that the Board initiated and saw to a successful conclusion, in conjunction with the Bureau of the WAT, is the move towards Gold Open Access. Starting with the 2011 volume, number 21, *Lexikos* is now freely available to all online readers. Back issues are being added as they are digitized and indexed. Last I checked,

Volumes 21, 20, 19 and 15 were already available in full, with work on Volume 18 ongoing. To access *Lexikos*, please visit <http://lexikos.journals.ac.za/>.

With *Lexikos* up there in cyberspace, and soon in its entirety, we hope to have a greater exposure, beyond the in-group of Afrilex members, and we trust that more material that appeared in *Lexikos* will start to be quoted by other journals. It must be said, alas, that *Lexikos*'s self-citation is too high at present, so I would like to make use of this year's presidential report to please remind all of you to remember to also refer to material that appeared in *Lexikos* when writing articles that you submit to other journals.

As a result of going Gold Open Access, a limited number of paper copies of *Lexikos* will still be available but will not be mailed to members any more, given all material is freely accessible online.

### **Good Reasons to be a Member of Afrilex**

Now you may wonder what the current advantages are of an Afrilex membership. The Board has decided to keep the membership fee for Afrilex at the symbolic R150 per year. As all of you will appreciate, running an association costs money and the membership fees we collect do not even cover that cost at present. Even so, the list of what you get in addition for your membership is an impressive one:

- Membership of a respected association, with active links to its sisters associations (i.e. Euralex, Asialex, Australex and the DSNA);
- Members are offered a substantial discount at the annual international Afrilex conference (a discount largely equivalent to the membership fee);

- Members may attend workshops and seminars organised by Afrilex free of charge;
- Only Members have the right to vote at the AGM;
- Members can share the available expertise through dedicated channels, for example the Afrilex Mailing List;  
[being negotiated, but very likely to materialize]
- Members are offered a discount at selected publishers (-10% on all dictionaries and lexicography titles);
- Members receive a substantial discount on a subscription to the *International Journal of Lexicography* (IJL).

Therefore, if you have not already done so, please renew your membership. Payments for several years are also welcome; you all know our Treasurer, she is Prof Elsabé Taljard.

### **Afrilex Website**

The Board also continued to oversee the contents of the Afrilex website, located at <http://afrilex.africanlanguages.com>. Our website has a double mission, to continue to be as up to date as possible, and thus to contain all the latest documentation, but also, and especially, to be a store for the full archive of all our activities since the birth of our Association back in 1995.

### **Afrilex Mailing List**

As was decided at last year's AGM, we have replaced the Afrilex Newsletter with a more active use of the Afrilex Mailing List. I am happy to see that many

of us have indeed channelled dictionary news through the mailing list, but I would like to invite all of you to make even more us of it.

### **Sponsors**

We should not forget to thank our sponsors, at our conferences and workshops, of course, but also during the year, through their continuous help. To Pharos (NB Publishers), OUP SA and Pearson Longman-HAT, we say, thank you.

And to all of you, who sponsor through your attendance of this conference, thanks too.

### **A personal note**

In conclusion, you will recall that I could unfortunately not attend the conference two years ago, as a result of the birth of my son, Malaika-Louis. At last year's conference I informed you that he was busy preparing his abstract for this year's conference, but his daddy didn't find it quite ready yet, so he will now hopefully submit for next year's conference. Lastly, know that Malaika-Louis has been joined by a little brother last April, who listens to the name of Piko-François. (See the photos accompanying this item.)

Long live Afrilex!



Gilles-Maurice de Schryver

President: AFRILEX

3 July 2012

Pretoria, South Africa