

The Kernerman Dictionary Research Grants

Kernerman Publishing and K Dictionaries are launching a project aimed at encouraging research in selected areas of lexicography. This project, named Kernerman Dictionary Research Grants, will have a 3-year trial run. At the end of that period the project will be reviewed, and the next 3-year period will be planned.

In the first period (2002-2004) the sum of USD 9,000 will be available. The grants will be administered by the associations for lexicography in Africa, Asia and Europe (AFRILEX, ASIALEX and EURALEX). Each association will appoint an Assessment Committee consisting of its president and two officers, who will review and approve applications. The Committees are independent, and their decisions are final.

One grant will be awarded annually by each Committee. The maximum sum of each grant is \$1,000, but a grant may be renewed fully or partially at the discretion of the Committee, or money held over for the following year. The grants are open to candidates anywhere in the world, who may apply to any one of the three Committees.

Applicants should submit a 500-word outline of their proposal, which, if accepted, will be published in Kernerman Dictionary News, as well as a 2,000-word summary on completion of their project. Five areas of lexicography have been selected for consideration for grants during the first three years:

- 1 The study of the dictionary-using behaviour of language learners at the elementary school level, the junior-high school level and the high school level, and of non-academic adult language learners at the beginning and intermediate levels, as well as the design of these dictionaries.**

Lower and intermediate level students constitute the vast majority of foreign language learners and dictionary users. Until now, their interests have been vastly neglected, as most dictionary research is carried out in universities and colleges, and have as subjects university and college students. It is hoped that by encouraging research at the pre-tertiary levels lexicographers can gain much-needed information about the dictionary needs of pre-academic language learners.
- 2 Specialized corpora for foreign language learners**

More and more dictionaries for L2 are being based on general word corpora. However, these corpora do not meet the linguistic and lexical needs of students who are learning another language. Basing learner dictionaries on corpora that reflect more closely the needs of learners of that particular language, not the level of a native speaker, might enhance pedagogic lexicography, making modern learner dictionaries more relevant and user-friendly. Work done toward the creation of specialized corpora would be very beneficial for learners of those languages.
- 3 The function of lexicography in the process of vocabulary acquisition**

Where new vocabulary means both new words and phrases, and new meanings of familiar words and phrases, and acquisition means storing in the reader's long-term memory, the function of the learner dictionary in vocabulary acquisition takes on an important dimension. Studies are needed not simply of how the dictionary helps the learner understand new meanings and uses, but also of how it facilitates their retention in the long-term memory. How can dictionaries assist users in remembering what they read?
- 4 Trilingual and multilingual lexicography**

A surprisingly large number of persons are bilingual. These include members of such groups as national and ethnic minorities who speak the language of the majority, refugees, emigrants, foreign students, transient workers and their families, and numerous others who may be on the move. Many of these learn a third language (such as English as the global lingua franca), becoming trilingual. The theory and design of trilingual and multilingual dictionaries, yet in its infancy, is now more viable with the development of computational lexicography.
- 5 Lexicography programs concerning language preservation and survival**

The genuine fears about the extinction of small languages in the face of globalization, together with the dissemination of a few favoured languages, are stimulating efforts to preserve small languages, or even to revive them in cases where the number of speakers has declined almost to the vanishing point. Dictionaries, whether historical, monolingual, bilingual or descriptive, can help in the preservation and revival of endangered languages. The construction of oral and written corpora is required for such languages, as well as critical research into available material.