

Beryl T. (Sue) Atkins Leksikograaf van A tot Z



Dit is onmoontlik om 'n omvattende oorsig te gee van wat die legendariese Sue Atkins tot wêreldleksikografie en die Suid-Afrikaanse leksikografie in die besonder bygedra het. Soos genoem in die voorwoord van 'n vorige *Festschrift in Honour of B.T.S. Atkins*, was sy 'n inspirasie vir generasies leksikograwe en het sy 'n deurslaggewende rol in die ontwikkeling van skakels tussen die praktiese wêreld van woordeboekmaak en die navorsingsterreine van die linguistiek en natuurliketaalprosessering gespeel. Sy was alombekend vir haar praktiese en pragmatiese benadering tot woordeboekmaak, haar inherente linguïstiese intuïsie en aanvoeling vir die leksikografie wat deur jare se ervaring in die samestelling van woordeboeke gevorm en geslyp is. Sue Atkins was sowaar iemand met 'n groot passie en onuitputlike entoesiasme vir die leksikografie. Onder haar talle prestasies is dit waarskynlik haar leidende rol in die konseptualisering van die Britse Nasionale korpus waarvoor sy onthou sal word — die Britse leksikografie is gerevolusioneer deur die beskikbaarheid van die korpus en korpusgebaseerde leksikografie het deel geword van die standaard leksikografiese praktyk in baie dele van die wêreld, o.a. in Suid-Afrika. Sy het talle professionele en akademiese opleidingskursusse en werksinkels in die leksikografie georganiseer waar sy ook onderrig het, en het leksikografiese konsultasiewerk in oorleg met 'n aantal toonaangewende instansies onderneem. Sy het meegedoen aan belangrike nasionale en internasionale navorsingsprojekte in die rekenaarleksikografievelde.

Haar talle eerbetone en akademiese toekennings, waarvan slegs 'n paar hier gelys word, dien as bewys van haar besondere status as internasionale figuur in die wêreld van die leksikografie. In 2000 het sy 'n eredoktorsgraad van die Universiteit van Brighton, VK, ontvang, gevolg deur 'n festschrift *Lexicography and Natural Language Processing* in 2002, wat deur EURALEX gepubli-

seer is ter viering van haar bydrae tot die internasionale leksikografie. Sy is ook verklaar tot lewenslange erelid van EURALEX, waarvan sy voorheen president was. In 2008 is 'n eredoktorsgraad deur die Universiteit van Pretoria aan haar toegeken vir haar uitsonderlike bydraes tot die leksikografiese praktyk wêreldwyd, maar spesifiek ook vir die rol wat sy gespeel het in die vestiging van 'n goeie leksikografiese praktyk vir die Afrikatale in Suid-Afrika.

Haar direkte betrokkenheid by die Afrikataalleksikografie het 'n aanvang geneem met die SALEX-tutoriaal van 1997, wat by die Rhodes Universiteit, Grahamstad, gehou is waartydens sy 'n weeklange opleidingskursus in die samestelling van eentalige woordeboeke aangebied het. Dit is opgevolg deur AFRILEX-SALEX '98, 'n tweeweeklange opleidingskursus in die samestelling van tweetalige woordeboeke wat by die Universiteit van Pretoria aangebied is. As gevolg van hierdie twee grondverskuiwende werkswinkels en die daaropvolgende wye belangstelling in die ontwerp en skep van woordeboeke vir hierdie tale, het woordeboekmaak in Suid-Afrika verander van lukrake, onsystematiese publikasies na 'n ernstige toewyding aan leksikografiese beginsels en praktyk. Al hoe meer woordeboeke van hoogstaande gehalte word nou in Suid-Afrika geskep.

Sue Atkins sal onthou word vir haar toewyding aan die leksikografie, maar ook as 'n deernisvolle mens met 'n egte belangstelling in ander en ook in die omgewing, asook vir haar alomteenwoordige sin vir humor.

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Beryl T. (Sue) Atkins Lexicographer from A to Z



It is not possible to give a comprehensive overview of what the great Sue Atkins has done for lexicography in the world and South African lexicography in particular. As stated in the foreword to a previous *Festschrift in Honour of B.T.S. Atkins*, she was an inspiration to generations of lexicographers and played a crucial role in developing links between the practical world of dictionary-making and the research communities of linguistics and natural language processing. She was well-known for her practical and pragmatic approach to dictionary making, her inherent linguistic intuition and feel for lexicography shaped and sharpened by years of experience in dictionary compilation. If ever there was someone who had a passion and unfailing enthusiasm for lexicography, it was Sue Atkins. Amongst her many accomplishments, it is probably her leading role in the conceptualization of the British National corpus that she will be remembered for — British lexicography was revolutionized by the availability of the corpus and corpus-based lexicography has become part of standard lexicographic practice in many parts of the world, South African being one of them. She has organized and taught at many professional and academic training courses and workshops in lexicography, and held lexicographic consultancies with a number of prestigious research institutions. She has participated in important national and international research projects in the field of computational lexicography.

Her exceptional standing as international figure in the world of lexicography is evidenced by her many accolades and academic awards, of which only a few are listed here. In 2000, she received an Honorary DLitt from the University of Brighton, UK, followed by a *festschrift* *Lexicography and Natural Language Processing* in 2002, published by EURALEX to mark her contribution to international lexicography. She was also made an Honorary Life Member of EURA-

LEX, of which she is a past President. In 2008 she was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Pretoria for her significant contributions to lexicographic practice worldwide, but also specifically for the role she played in the establishment of good lexicographic practice for the African languages in South Africa.

Her direct involvement in African language lexicography started with the SALEX Tutorial of 1997, held at Rhodes University, Grahamstown where she presented a one-week training course on the compilation of monolingual dictionaries. This was followed up by AFRILEX-SALEX '98, a two-week training course on the compilation of bilingual dictionaries offered at the University of Pretoria. As a result of these two ground-breaking workshops and the subsequent widespread interest in designing and producing dictionaries for these languages, dictionary-making in South Africa has shifted from random, haphazard publications to a serious commitment to lexicographic principles and practice. More and more dictionaries of a high quality are now being produced in South Africa.

Sue Atkins will be remembered for her commitment to lexicography, but also as a compassionate human being, taking a genuine interest in others and also in the environment, and for her ever-present sense of humour.

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