

UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE
DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES
AND LITERATURE

PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH AN
AFRICAN LANGUAGES RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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1. PROPOSAL

An African Languages Research Institute (ALRI) be established from 1 January 2000 as a permanent non-faculty unit servicing and collaborating with existing departments in the Faculties of Arts and Education. The Research Institute will, subject to agreement by all the ALLEX Project¹ co-operating partners, take over responsibility for continuing the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) participation in work undertaken by that Project, which is currently the responsibility of the Department of African Languages and Literature. The Institute will be mainly a research unit with limited teaching responsibilities. Its field of research will be the African languages of Zimbabwe, and its principal tasks will be national language research and development. The Institute will also develop and offer a variety of language-related products and services from which substantial income can be generated in the medium and long terms. A full review of the Institute's activities will take place before the end of the first five-year period.

2. BACKGROUND

The Department of African Languages and Literature has grown significantly, and its contributions have come to be recognised at the national level in recent years, partly because of the monolingual lexicographic work being done by the ALLEX Project. From its inception in 1992, the Project has operated as a tripartite co-operative venture in monolingual lexicography, under the UZ/NUFU² Agreement (see Appendix A), with the Department of Nordic Studies at the University of Oslo and, less formally until very recently, with the Department of Swedish at the University of Gothenburg. The University of Gothenburg's participation has since been formalised by the signing in 1998 by all three parties of an appendix to the original Programme Agreement between the UZ and NUFU/UO³.

Although bilingual dictionaries have been produced for Shona and Ndebele in the past, monolingual lexicography in the national languages is a recent phenomenon, with initial steps having been made for Shona by Dale in the early 1980s, but with work on fully monolingual dictionaries beginning only in September 1992 with the launch of the ALLEX Project. The Project published *Duramazwi ReChiShona*, a 500-page general Shona dictionary, in 1996 in co-operation with College Press and is now developing a similar work in Ndebele and an advanced dictionary in Shona. It has plans for developing a variety of other monolingual and bilingual dictionaries for all the indigenous languages of Zimbabwe (see Appendix B). These activities are of national significance, particularly since they are raising people's consciousness about language issues, their own language situations and the context of language policy formulation. They are also deepening people's awareness about the need for monolingual dictionaries as well as for bilingual dictionaries (e.g., Shona-Ndebele), glossaries and other language reference works, especially now that the indigenous languages are coming to be used in an increasing number of domains.

As a result of its work so far, the ALLEX Project has acquired a substantial amount of computer and some recording equipment through the support of NUFU/UO and

¹ ALLEX – African Languages Lexical Project

² NUFU – Norwegian National Committee for Development Research and Education

³ UO – University of Oslo

SIDA/UG⁴. In addition, it has acquired enough books and journals for a small library on lexicography and language. It has also collected and electronically processed several hundred transcripts and audio tapes, as well as a wide variety of written materials in Shona and Ndebele towards its commitment to create electronically processed corpora, which can now be used as databanks for Zimbabwean languages and/or further developed into a national or regional language bank.

The current research group at the UZ comprises 25 full-time and part-time researchers, who are drawn from the Departments of African Languages and Literature, Linguistics and Curriculum and Arts Education. The full-time Project staff, all of whom have temporary contracts to the end of Phase Two of the Project in the year 2000, are: 2 Research Fellows, 3 Trainee Editors and 3 Project Assistants. Translation and lexicography have been taught for more than ten years in the Department of African Languages and Literature, and the Department has produced a number of graduates with some expertise in these fields. Capacity building in the areas of lexicography, corpus and database administration and other technical skills continues to be developed through the Project's activities, with its co-operating partners providing financial support, linguistic, lexicographical and technical guidance, as well as post-graduate and guest research scholarships. The guest researchers receive training and supervision from the Norwegian and Swedish team members at UO in cooperation with UG. To date, the Project has funded 9 MA graduands, and, as at 1998, was funding three MA students and supporting three DPhil candidates. The DPhil candidates will be trained according to the UO sandwich model. One result of all this training has been that a number of dissertations in the area of lexicography have already been produced. Administrative capacity is being developed through task sharing among team members, and especially through the internal organisation of the Project, which assigns a variety of administrative tasks to the Coordinator, the Shona and Ndebele Team Leaders and the Research Fellows, respectively, as well as to the Trainee Editors (see Appendix C). In addition, the Project's plans for 1998-99 include the intensive training at UO and UG of one or two team members in the software used for developing electronically accessed corpora and in current lexicographic practice.

In their Report on the *Evaluation of NUFU Programmes at the University of Botswana and University of Zimbabwe* (see Appendix D), the external assessors, Goolam Mohamedbhai, Keto Mshigeni and Tertit von Hanno Aasland, made extremely favourable comments on the management and performance of the ALLEX Project since 1992, and concluded with the following recommendation:

In view of the excellent performance shown by the ALLEX Project research team, and the regional leadership role which the team is already providing, it is recommended that NUFU sustains its funding to the Project beyond its current life period (pp. 25-6).

The UZ Administration has actively supported the research and training activities of the Project since 1992, and the University has made a commitment in its Agreement with NUFU for Phase Two of the ALLEX Project (1996-2000) to institutionalise lexicography by the end of 1999. It is now being proposed that continuation of this work should be undertaken by the new African Languages Research Institute.

⁴ SIDA – Swedish International Development Agency
UG – University of Gothenburg

3. RATIONALE

The UZ's two co-operating partners in the ALLEX Project, UO and UG, have the support of old, established and well-functioning language planning units that have public funding. Norway and Sweden both have well-established linguistic normative bodies in the form of the Norwegian and Swedish Language Councils, which have their own secretariats. These Councils have independent public funding from relevant government ministries, and they cooperate closely with the lexicography units at UO and UG respectively. The ALLEX Project and, through it, the Department of African Languages and Literature as a whole, have benefited tremendously since 1992 from their association with these Nordic institutes, especially in terms of planning, training and exposure. At the national policy level, Zimbabwe is now set to move away from the Anglo-American tradition which holds that language management is best left to publishers (of dictionaries, teaching materials, other literature and newspapers) who, in their turn, are forced to respond to the wishes of the market and that, therefore, language does not need public regulation. Zimbabwe is now adopting the tradition of direct intervention, which rules in Scandinavia, France and many other countries. This latter tradition holds that language management is too important to be left to publishers versus the market. In these countries, language management is regarded as a political topic which should be kept under some sort of democratic control. Therefore, these countries have language management policies that are founded on acts of parliament – the same direction Zimbabwe and other African countries now seem to be headed.

The time is now right to execute the decisions made previously by the co-operating partners in the ALLEX Project. Both nationally and internationally, the matter of the status and development of indigenous languages by direct intervention through policy, planning and research has now been brought to the fore. The importance of languages in national development has already been recognised by Government, which, in April 1997, initiated the process of formulating a comprehensive national language policy by setting up the National Language Policy Advisory Panel (NLPAP), following the Harare Declaration which was issued at the end of the Intergovernmental Conference on Language Policies in Africa, held in Zimbabwe from 17-21 March 1997. The research done by the ALLEX Project was found to be very important and very useful to the NLPAP. However, such work cannot be sustained and/or built upon without permanent full-time research personnel housed in a well-focused institution.

ALLEX is now acknowledged to be providing leadership in the areas of computerised lexicography and corpus linguistics in the region, even while it is still only a Project within a Department. The Project has already developed large corpora for Shona and Ndebele, which are very important for all forms of language-related research, including the generation of language reference works. Its corpora in both Ndebele and Shona and its first dictionary, *Duramazwi ReChiShona*, are already available on the Internet, something which has not been done, even by similar but older institutions in the region (see Appendix E).

This vantage point can be consolidated through institutionalisation. The core staff to maintain and expand this work at the proposed Institute is already there. Over the years, the ALLEX Project has trained people in the computational and linguistic skills required, informally and formally, through Honours, MA, MPhil and DPhil programmes, as well as through three-month guest research visits in Scandinavia and annual training workshops in Zimbabwe. It now employs five full-time research staff and three full-time project assistants. The plans being proposed are realistic, and the proposed activities have been prioritised and fitted into a time schedule, as shown in

sections 5 - 7 below, which separates basic, essential and lasting activities from specific projects.

The funding is obtainable, as the contribution and potential growth of the ALLEX Project are now widely acknowledged nationally and internationally. The original scepticism is gone, and expectations are actually high. To mobilise the necessary support and resources, the Project is planning an ALLEX Institutionalisation Seminar in October 1999, hopefully after regulations for the establishment of the proposed African Languages Research Institute would have been accepted by the UZ.

The Project, which is now on target for the production of one dictionary in Ndebele and another in Shona during Phase 2 (1996-2000), already has projects listed on its master plan for Phase 3 (2001-2005) and for Phase 4 (2006-2010). Judging by the response to the Project's work so far, there is already clear evidence that, for the products and language-related services that the proposed Institute can offer (see section 4), there is need, a potential market and both social and political support.

The UZ has now formally launched its Strategic Development Plan and in 1996 the Faculty of Arts' Strategic Development Plan had prioritised, as one of its major projects, the setting up of a "Dictionary Research Institute" leading to a full "Language Research Institute" (Project 5(b) in the Faculty's pink brochure). The current proposal, as a concept paper, incorporates both and fits in very well with the development thrust of the strategic planning process at both Faculty and institutional levels as defined in the UZ's Five-Year Strategic Development Plan for the period 1998-2002 (see especially 4-2 to 4-10, p. 10).

The NLPAP's *Report on the Formulation of a National Language Policy*, which has been well received nation-wide (see Appendix H), has recommended a macrostructure in which government oversees policy formulation and review with the national university/ies being assigned the greatest responsibility for language research and development (see sections 8.2 and 8.3, pp 49-51). The proposal to set up the Institute at the UZ is thus very much in line with both the spirit and the letter of the recommendations made in that Report, which was presented to the Minister of Education, Sport and Culture in July 1998 and is expected to be accepted by Government. It is also expected that the Commission of Enquiry into Education and Training, which has one of its terms of reference dealing with language (2.1.8), will come up with recommendations that are similar to and consistent with those of the NLPAP on this particular issue. Whatever the case may be, the UZ, as the country's premier institution of higher learning and the only university in Zimbabwe with linguistics, language and literature departments, as well as curriculum, arts and teacher education departments that also deal with language, is uniquely equipped in terms of existing infrastructure, expertise and linkages to initiate serious research programmes of a national character to develop the indigenous languages in a multilingual context.

If the nation's languages are to be developed, they must acquire higher status and, in order for them to do that, they must be fully studied and documented. Until very recently, African languages in general have been marginalised and understudied and, in Zimbabwe, hardly any attention has so far been paid to the dozen or so minority languages (see Hachipola, 1998). No other department or institute exists that is similarly devoted to teaching or research in the minority languages. The UZ is in the best position to undertake such work through the Institute that is now being proposed for the reasons already noted above.

One way to develop languages is through the institutionalisation of lexicography and related activities such as translation, interpreting and terminology development. Lexicography is central to these activities because it helps to standardise languages and to document them as they are being developed. Precedents in the region, such as for

Afrikaans and Kiswahili, are well known. Moreover, healthy multilingualism, where every language is allowed to find its own space and place in national life, and more than one language is used in all spheres and at all levels of education, is an asset to a nation, as is shown in UNESCO's 1996 Report, *Our Creative Diversity*. The Report also shows that multilingualism is best nurtured through the institutionalisation of such activities as lexicography, translation and terminology. Higher language status is also achieved through the changing of people's attitudes about the languages in question, something that can be done by demonstrating that anything that can be achieved with some languages can also be done with all other languages. This is something that the ALLEX Project is already doing, but it requires some degree of autonomy to continue and expand this work.

The field of lexicography is inherently multidisciplinary, and there are unnecessary constraints placed on any multidisciplinary activity which is housed within a department with its own discipline's needs and goals guiding its development. Also, the Project's current members are drawn from a number of departments in two Faculties; hence the proposal to set up the Institute as a non-faculty unit. Most members do their Project work on a voluntary and part-time basis, and because they are already fully occupied with their regular work at the University, the Project's research output is smaller than it should be. The others are currently employed as temporary short-term contract workers, something which adds unnecessary administrative burdens and which can mitigate against continuity. Permanent full-time posts need to be created for the activities undertaken by the Project, and these can only be created through institutionalisation. In addition, the Project is getting too big to be housed within the Department of African Languages and Literature, and some staff and equipment are already housed in the Centre for Distance Education and others in the Department of Linguistics, which is another problem that works against the smooth running of the Project.

The primary responsibility of the Department of African Languages and Literature is teaching Faculty of Arts' courses at the undergraduate level. Since the primary activity of the ALLEX Project is research, establishing its autonomy through assigning it section status within the Department is not a viable option as this will stifle its research function and potential for growth because most members of such a unit or section will, of necessity, continue to have teaching as their primary responsibility. Moreover, more direct routes to potential users of the Project's products and services are needed than those that are possible through a teaching department or conventional faculty structures. Similarly, a well-known Institute for people from all fields to bring, and discuss, terminology for standardisation and dissemination is needed as well.

The proper institutionalisation of lexicographic and related studies within the University was originally prioritised as part of the Faculty of Arts' Five-Year Plan for 1997-2001, partly because it was realised that institutionalising them within the academic setting would strengthen their academic status within the region, and partly because the Faculty recognised that the development of these studies was important in the development of the nation. As noted earlier, relative autonomy and permanent full-time staffing are essential to the continuation and expansion of the work currently being undertaken by the ALLEX Project. The proposed Institute would, for example, offer work opportunities for students who would be or would have undergone honours and postgraduate training in lexicography. This is important because, in order for the training which has been supported through the development of the ALLEX Project to be useful, it must be used in actual lexicographic practice and in related language activities. The dictionaries, glossaries and other products of the Institute would marry theory and

rigorous research methodology with practical application in ways that are constrained by conventional academic disciplines.

It is only through institutionalisation that the Research Institute will be able to conduct such core activities as: (a) being responsible for policy; (b) being responsible for programmes of activities; (c) initiating and/or conducting its own staff searches; (d) being directed by specialists in language research and its applications; and (e) being overseen by an adequately representative Board of national character and standing. The autonomy resulting from institutionalisation will also give the successor to the current Project essential flexibility in dealing with those who will need its services and with those who can contribute to its work. For example, a variety of separate agreements with various bodies, both within and outside the University and the nation, could best be developed efficiently and consistently with an independent Institute. Further, the programmes and activities detailed in Section 4 below have considerable potential for commercialisation. The commercial work of the proposed Institute would be more efficiently administered through its institutionalisation as an autonomous unit.

3.1 Precedents at UZ and Comparisons in the Region

Within the UZ, several precedents or models may be cited, ranging in status from departments such as the Centre for Applied Social Sciences, the Centre for Population Studies, the Centre for Educational Technology and the Institute of Mining Research to non-faculty units such as the Development Technology Centre, the Human Resources Research Centre, the Institute of Environmental Studies and the Institute of Development Studies. The structures and research agendas of all these units were carefully looked at during a special workshop of the ALLEX Project that was held at ZIPAM (the Zimbabwe Institute of Public Administration and Management) from 17-21 December 1997, during which the first draft of this proposal was produced.

As part of its research for the proposal, the ALLEX Project also sent two of its members on a fact-finding tour of language research institutions in the region. The two members covered three countries:

1. South Africa, where seven institutions were visited, and the three most relevant for the institutionalisation of lexicographic work were found to be:

- the Bureau of the WAT at the University of Stellenbosch, formerly Buro van die WAT [i.e., *Wordeboek Afrikaans Taal* or *Dictionary (of the) Afrikaans Language*], which has been developing multi-volume monolingual Afrikaans dictionaries since its inception in 1911; and
- the National Languages Services' two government-funded Departments operating from Pretoria: the National Terminology Services, which has been tasked with the development of terminologies for all the eleven official languages that are now recognised in the constitution; and the National Translation Services, which has been tasked with translating all documents produced by Government ministries into all nationally recognised official languages.

2. Malawi, where the Centre for Language Studies was set up in 1996 at the national University in Zomba to replace the Chichewa Board after the new government made a decision in 1994 to promote multilingualism. The Centre has been given a mandate to conduct research in and to develop Malawi's 15 indigenous languages.

3. Tanzania, where they visited:

- the Institute for Kiswahili Research (IKR), which is a faculty-sized unit that has been institutionalised as part of the University of Dar es Salaam since 1970, separate from but servicing and collaborating with the linguistics and language teaching departments; and
- the National Kiswahili Council, BAKITA, an acronym derived from Baraza⁵ Kiswahili Tanzania, which is the prescriptive body for the national official language that was set up by the government in 1967 with the status of a parastatal.

The tour of language research institutions was undertaken to look carefully at precedents and/or possible models and to solicit regional support for the proposed African Languages Research Institute at the UZ. The histories of these institutions were looked at, as were the relationships of each with other language bodies and institutions, its internal organisation and management, its facilities and equipment, its staffing and its activities and products.

The observations that were made during this study tour confirmed how essential university affiliation was for any research body engaged in developing lexicography and related work. It was found that government departments assigned practical language work tended to flounder and make very little progress, while university-affiliated bodies were much more productive. Specifically, it was established that university-affiliated, semi-autonomous language research units enjoyed the following advantages:

- access to university resources, which was found to be crucial for this work;
- development of prestige for practical language work, which seems to require an academic outlook and academic skills;
- academic backing for the professionalisation of practical language work, such as lexicography, translation and interpreting, which have traditionally been treated as hobbies but are now recognised as important disciplines in the modern world;
- collaboration and strategic partnerships with other university departments, e.g., Electrical Engineering and Computer Science and/or the Computer Centre at UZ, to develop language technology applications ranging from morphological parsers and syntactic analysers to spell-checkers and to automatic dictation systems and/or to computer-aided translation;
- collaboration with other language research institutions in the region which are mostly affiliated to universities: the ALLEX Project has already made many important contacts in this regard;
- collaboration with other language bodies within the country: some members of the ALLEX Project are already members of the Shona and Ndebele Language Committees and frequently participate in conferences and

⁵ Baraza = dare/idale/forum

workshops, for instance, through the Zimbabwe Languages Association and LASU (the Linguistic Association for SADC Universities);

- productive scholarship: a number of ALLEX team members are already well-published in their own right, and, collectively, they have to their credit an important standard reference work published in 1996, the monolingual dictionary *Duramazwi ReChiShona*, which won First Prize of the Zimbabwe Book Publishers' Association in the Non-Fiction Category during the 1997 Zimbabwe International Book Fair; and
- potential for self-publishing and income-generation, which has already been demonstrated through a co-publishing agreement the Project entered into in 1996 with a commercial publisher, the College Press, for its first dictionary.

4. PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES

The long-term vision of the proposed Institute incorporates its status as a regional centre of excellence in the areas of lexicography, translation and interpreting, terminological development and computational linguistics. The Institute will focus mainly on research in corpus work, computational lexicography and language technology, which are basic and essential research activities on which all other projects and services depend as their tools and facilities. Accordingly, the function of the proposed Institute will depend on applications of computational linguistics to the African languages that will be handled and, therefore, on having access to customised software. Everything else, such as terminology, translation and services to linguistic normative bodies, can be regarded as projects, products or services springing out from these basic, essential and lasting activities.

Therefore, the prioritisation of the activities of the Institute should be as listed below. The timing of their implementation and/or addition should follow the same order.

.1 Corpus Development and Maintenance

- started in 1992 for Shona and in 1996 for Ndebele
- to continue to expand and update these existing corpora in Phases 2 and 3
- to create corpora for more indigenous African languages of Zimbabwe in Phases 3 and 4.

.2 Lexicography

See projects listed in the Master Plan for Phases 3 (2001 - 2005) and 4 (2006 - 2010), Appendix B.

.3 Language Technology Applications

- Creating morphological parsers (Phase 3)
- Creating syntactic analysers (Phase 3)

- Developing spell checkers (Phase 4)
- IT engineering and programming.

These activities will require co-operation between IT engineers and linguists.

.4 Terminology and Translation

- Develop the specialised glossaries listed in the Master Plan from Phases 1 - 4 (1992 - 2010): see Appendix B.
- Train a terminologist or terminologists.
- Take up specific translation projects, which also tend to lead to term - creation, e.g., to produce authorised versions of the National Constitution of Zimbabwe in Shona and Ndebele.
- Offer consultancy services on translator training.

.5 Language Advisory Services

Besides translation and terminology, other national language services might also include offering advice on language usage (e.g. to language workers in the media and in advertising), on the production of language manuals and textbooks (e.g. to teachers and publishing houses), and on language planning and development (e.g. to government officials). Some of the activities should be related to community or public service in order to make the Institute visible in larger circles, to stimulate language awareness in general and to create popular demand for its continuation and strengthening.

.6 Teaching

The Institute will also service undergraduate courses in some areas (e.g., dialect studies, lexicography, translation). Postgraduate training will be offered in lexicography, and, in co-operation with other departments, translation and interpreting, as well as computational linguistics. Teaching at the Institute will be strictly limited and will depend on left-over capacity, in order to:

- support the departments of African Languages and Literature and Linguistics by arrangement
- offer special courses covering the fields of work listed below
- supervise MA, MPhil and DPhil theses.

.7 Special Projects

In addition to the above regular programmes and activities, special projects could also be undertaken from time to time that are consistent with the following objectives:

- professionalising translation and interpreting, particularly with respect to competence and ethics;
- conducting special short-term courses (see item 5 in section 6 below) to train interested people in the private and/or public sector, as well as people from neighbouring countries;
- conducting language surveys, with a view to producing language maps and atlases;
- establishing an archival centre for all research done on the indigenous languages of the nation: books, articles, conference papers, dissertations (Honours, MA) and theses (MPhil, DPhil), with as much as possible in electronic form;
- encouraging databank exchanges throughout the region and elsewhere and enhancing collaborative academic exchange;
- assisting in the development, consolidation, standardisation and dissemination of terminology in at least the national languages from a wide variety of subject areas, such as medicine, law, physical and biological sciences, etc.;
- contributing to language development policies and standardisation through research publications;
- developing outreach programmes for public education on dictionaries, dictionary use and general language issues, with the aim of cultivating a culture that recognises and appreciates multilingualism;
- launching and publishing a regional journal or other serial publication;
- supporting research seminar and public lecture series on appropriate themes;
- facilitating host arrangements for guest research scholars in appropriate disciplines; and
- organising international conferences and workshops, starting with an African lexicographic conference early in Phase 3.

5. STRUCTURE AND UNITS

The Institute will begin with a core staff comprising the current full-time Project employees, i.e., two Research Fellows, three Trainee Editors (currently appointed in the

Teaching Assistant grade but the posts are to be upgraded to Research Fellowships) and three Project Assistants (two to be appointed in the Secretarial Grade as at present and one to be upgraded to Administrative Assistant).

During the initial developmental phase to 2005 (cp. ALLEX Phase 3, 2001-2005), the overall structure envisaged for the Institute will be headed by a Director, who will be appointed at the level of Research Professor or Associate Research Professor or Senior Research Fellow. There will be two divisions of the Institute. The parent division, Lexicography and Computational Linguistics (LCL), will have its own Coordinator in

Phase 3, who shall be one of the lexicographers in the dictionary units but, in Phase 4, this position shall be upgraded to that of Deputy Director. It will start with two dictionary research units by converting the current team for the Advanced Shona Dictionary (ASD) into the Shona Dictionary Unit (SDU) and the current team for the General Ndebele Dictionary (GND) into the Ndebele Dictionary Unit (NDU). Three other language-specific dictionary units will be added for Kalanga (KDU), Tonga (TDU) and Nambya (BDU) after L1 speakers have been recruited to undertake post-graduate training in Phase 3. Work on other minority languages that have official status in neighbouring countries will be undertaken in collaboration with institutions or relevant departments in those countries where they are officially recognised. Included in this category will be Chewa (Malawi), Venda (South Africa), Changana (Tsonga in South Africa) and Sotho (South Africa and Lesotho). Work on the remaining minority languages such as Hwesa, Tonga (Mudzi) and Tshwawo (Khoisan) will be undertaken after basic linguistic research by postgraduate students who are mother-tongue speakers of these languages and who shall be prioritised for scholarships and staff development training by the Institute.

The unit for Computational Linguistics will have a section for Corpus Linguistics, a field in which three current members of the ALLEX Project are already being trained at DPhil level through special sandwich programmes arranged in collaboration with the University of Oslo in Norway, which, together with the University of Gothenburg in Sweden, could be approached to provide the initial expertise required to set up the whole unit. Basically, the work entails computer-aided linguistic research in which corpora (huge bodies of data) are electronically stored, processed, searched and manipulated using special programmes designed for the same, including both commercial and custom-made database programmes. Similar arrangements could be made through institutional linkages to provide the initial expertise to set up the section for Language Technology Applications (LTA) and to train local staff in these areas. In this way, the Institute and the University would keep abreast with international trends in IT, especially as it is applied to language research and development. The LTA section will use the knowledge base accumulated in developing the corpora built by the Institute as a whole for the individual languages to develop special programmes ranging from morphological parsers and syntactic analysers to intelligent spell-checkers and to automatic dictation systems, and then to computer-aided translation and, at least theoretically, ultimately to automatic (i.e., machine) translation. All the special programmes so produced will obviously have immense commercial value.

The research programme of the LCL is already well-established through the activities of the ALLEX Project. However, other applications deriving from lexicographic work will be handled by the new division for National Languages Services (NLS).

NLS, the second division in the structure, will have two separate units, one for Translation and another for Terminology, each of which shall have two sections as follows:

- The unit for Translation will have one section for the new academic discipline Translation Studies (to conduct research and special courses in Translation Theory and Practice, to apply these to the local languages and to conduct courses in Translator Training) and another section for Translation Services (to offer a wide range of commercial services in translation and interpreting, as well as consultancy services, in media and advertising).
- One of the sections in the unit for Terminology will be called the National Terminology Services (NTS). The NTS will develop and document general and specialised terminologies in the languages that will be researched by the Institute and offer terminology services in them, priority at first being given to the official national languages. The other section will have the primary responsibility of building a Language Archive and a Term Bank, drawing from the resources and research results of all the units and sections of the Institute (see Organogram 1.).

With time, as the volume of work grows and as both productivity and the income generated increase, the individual research teams and programmes could grow into sections within departments, the divisions and units could grow into departments, and the Board of Management would review the administrative structures accordingly.

The Division of Lexicography and Corpus Linguistics will be viable from the outset because it can be set up by simply transforming the ALLEX Project as it exists today and by appointing the Director after an open search for a senior academic to provide the leadership. However, it will be necessary to initiate the process of setting up the second division, the National Languages Services, to start the work envisaged for the two units for Translation and Terminology during Phase 3. The persons appointed as the two Managers for the two units in the NLS will assist the Institute Director to draft regulations and job descriptions of academic core staff required in each unit of this division. Also, during Phase 3, a member of staff from either of the two units of the Division of Lexicography and Computational Linguistics will be appointed as its Coordinator for a fixed term while retaining his/her permanent status on the establishment. By Phase 4, the operational units and volume of work of the Institute as a whole, and in particular in the LCL division, will have increased sufficiently to justify the creation of the position of Deputy Director by upgrading the position of Coordinator.

In addition to these full-time staff members, the Institute will have participating part-time staff and research assistants, some of whom are currently members of the ALLEX Project and who are otherwise full-time members of the academic staff in other departments but could also be given honorary status in the Institute. Over and above these categories of staff, there will also be specially-funded honorary and visiting fellows from other institutions and universities. Such affiliation will be facilitated through linkages and made by special appointment or invitation for mutually-agreed periods of time.

5.1 SUMMARY OF STAFFING STRUCTURE

The core staff requirements for the ALRI may be summarised as follows:

5.1.1 Core Staff Establishment at Inception in 2000

(a) Academic Staff

1 Director (RP/ARP/SRF = P/AP/SL)*

5 Research Fellows(SRF/RF = SL/L)* [currently appointed as 2 Research Fellows and 3 Trainee Editors]

* Key to Grades

P = Professor
AP = Associate Professor
SL = Senior Lecturer
L = Lecturer
TA = Teaching Assistant

RP = Research Professor
ARP = Associate Research Professor
SRF = Senior Research Fellow
RF= Research Fellow
TE = Trainee Editor

(b) Non-Academic Staff

1 Administrative Assistant (to upgrade one of the three Project Assistant posts)
2 Project Assistants (Chief Secretary/Senior Secretary/Secretary)
1 Computer Laboratory Technician

5.1.2 Additional Full-Time Posts to be Created by 2002

(a) Academic Staff

3 Research Fellows in Lexicography (for new Language Units, one each for Kalanga, Tonga and Nambya)
4 Research Fellows in National Language Services (two each for Translation and Terminology)
2 IT Engineers (including a linguistics-oriented IT academic)

(b) Non-Academic Staff

1 Librarian/Archivist
1 Driver/Messenger

5.1.3 Additional Full-Time Posts by Phase 4 (2006)

1 Deputy Director

3 Research Fellows [more SDFs in Minority languages: Hwesa, Tonga (Mudzi,), Tshwawo].

5.1.4 Organogram 1: Core Structure by 2005

African Languages Research Institute
[ALRI]

Lexicography and Computational
Linguistics (LCL)

National Language Services (NLS)

Lexicography
(LEX)

Computational
Linguistics (CLG)

Translation

Terminology

Shona Dictionary Unit (SDU)	Ndebele Dictionary Unit (NDU)	Other Dictionary Units in Minority Languages (ODUs)	Corpus Linguistics (CL)	Language Technology Applications (TS) (LTA)	Translation Studies (TTS)	Translation Services Term Bank (ATB)	Language Archive & Services (NTS)	National Terminology
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5.1.5 Organogram 2: Full Administrative Structure by Phase 4

UZ
(Chairman, Management Board)

ALRI
(Director)³

LCL
(Coordinator)³
(Deputy Director)⁴

LEX

CLG

NLS

SDU [1992] (Chief Editor)³
NDU [1996] (Chief Editor)³
ODUs [2000+] (Chief Editors)⁴

CL
(Technical Manager: Corpora & Databases)³

LTA
(Technical Manager: Language Engineering & Programming)³

ATB
(Technical Manager: Documentation & Informatics)³

TS
(Operations Manager: Extension & Training)³

Note: Chief Editors to be appointed from among the Research Fellows in the Dictionary Units for each language.

NOTES

3. Phase 3 (2000 - 2005)

4. Phase 4 (2006 - 2010)

- ◆ Hierarchy: Board (cp. IDS⁶): governance and policy; an external body not part of the Institute's establishment.

Director (cp. IDS): academic and administrative leadership; must be a working linguist/lexicographer involved in project work.

Deputy Director (cp. IDS): to assist the Director and deputise for him/her during his/her absence; otherwise also a full-time research post.

[Coordinator (cp. Project Coordinator, ALLEX): Phase 3 only; a lexicographer]

Chief Editor/ Manager (cp. Team Leader, ALLEX cp. Section Head, CSC⁷): to provide leadership within each working unit.

All posts, including that of Director, shall be research posts from which a research output will be expected. There shall be no purely administrative post in the Institute as most of the administration in such a research establishment can be done by task sharing. All the positions in this three-tier hierarchy (from Chief Editors/Managers to Deputy Director and to Director) shall be occupied for fixed terms by persons otherwise appointed to the Institute as researchers.

- ◆ Once in post, the Director's principal responsibilities will be:
 - to provide academic leadership within the Institute and to ensure that all projects undertaken are carried out to the highest professional standards and completed on time and within the proposed budgets;
 - to build the structure from the base starting with the ALLEX Project's current core activities (Shona and Ndebele Lexicography) and assisted by the ALLEX Project's current full-time staff (5 Research Fellows); and
 - recruiting and training to expand and diversify the functions and operations of the institute; in order to

⁶ IDS - Institute of Development Studies

⁷ CSC - Communication Skills Centre

- develop a fully operational unit that will give research support to existing departments in relevant areas and fulfil national needs on language research and development.

5.2 Board of Management

The work of the Institute will be overseen by a fifteen-member Board of Management which, during the initial period, will need to be adequately representative. Both the size and composition of the Board shall be subject to review (see 1 above), but initially its membership shall be as follows:

- the Vice Chancellor (Chairman)
- the Director of the Institute (ex officio)
- the Dean of Arts
- the Dean of Education
- the Dean Engineering
- the Director of the Computer Centre
- the Librarian
- two members of Council who are not members of the UZ
- a senior education official
- the Chairman or a member representing the Shona Language Committee
- the Chairman or a member representing the Ndebele Language Committee
- a prominent citizen whose mother tongue shall be an indigenous minority language
- a publisher representing the Zimbabwe Book Publishers Association
- two media practitioners with backgrounds in public relations and advertising, one representing the electronic media and another representing the print media.

The quorum shall be half of those members who are able to attend after all the members of the Management Board have been dully notified of a meeting.

6. PROGRAMMES AND COURSES

The ALRI will essentially be a research unit which will also offer some specialist services and courses designed to generate income, the bulk of which it must be allowed to keep in order to reduce the Institute's dependence on institutional funding and, over time, hopefully to commercialise.

The core staff appointed to full-time positions during the initial developmental phase (2000-2005) will be expected to draw up regulations for any special programmes and courses which the Institute may want to offer by itself and/or in conjunction with teaching departments in other Faculties in the areas listed below. The number of such courses offered at any one time will depend on demand, on levels of participation by academic staff members in existing teaching departments, and on the capacity of the Institute's own full-time staff to carry limited teaching loads without compromising its main research agenda.

1. Undergraduate Diplomas:
 - (a) Translation and Interpreting
 - (b) Terminology.

2. Postgraduate Diplomas:
 - (a) Translation and Interpreting
 - (b) Terminology
 - (c) Corpus Linguistics (Introduction to)
 - (d) Language Technology Applications (LTA) (Introduction to).

3. MA Courses:
 - (a) Lexicography
 - (b) Translation Studies
 - (c) Terminology
 - (d) Corpus Linguistics
 - (e) LTA

4. Course Units (to be made available to and/or offered jointly with other departments and faculties: e.g., African Languages and Literature, Linguistics, Curriculum and Arts Education, Educational Technology, Engineering/Computing):
 - (a) Language Policy and Planning
 - (b) Cross-Cultural Communication
 - (c) Communication for Development
 - (d) Language Standardisation and Development
 - (e) Corpus and Computational Linguistics (e.g., in Dialect Studies and Dialect Geography)
 - (f) Language Technology Applications (e.g., morphological parsers, spell-checkers and automatic dictation systems).

5. Special Short-Term Courses:
 - (a) Language and Advertising
 - (b) Language and Gender
 - (c) Language and Development
 - (d) Language and Power
 - (e) Language Change
 - (f) Language in Education
 - (g) Language Policy and Planning
 - (h) Language and Culture
 - (i) Language and Media
 - (j) Zimbabwean Languages as Second or Foreign Languages
 - (k) Artificial Intelligence (Introduction to)
 - (l) Research Methods.

7. INFRASTRUCTURE

Initially, substantial investment will be required for physical infrastructure. (See 8 below.)

7.1 Physical Space

A building or portion of a building will need to be allocated, with specifications of floor space and other requirements to be supplied after professional assessment for accommodating the following general requirements:

- offices for full-time core staff and for visiting scholars;
- computer lab with cubicles or broken down with room dividers for use by part-time staff;
- computer lab for students and for teaching;
- seminar room for meetings and for teaching;
- adequate space to house the Institute's Library and Language Archive (books, journals, dissertations, conference and seminar papers, compact disks, tapes, transcripts, etc.) with provision for protection of archival materials (e.g., humidity control and fire protection); and
- good telecommunications facilities to enable interactive teaching, learning and research, especially since the Institute will be operating and using its own research network and working in collaboration with other departments in the University and with other institutions, both within and outside Zimbabwe.

7.2 Equipment and Furniture

The ALLEX Project has decent equipment, mainly in terms of computers needed for its current research activities, but more equipment will need to be acquired for the ALRI after professional assessment of its additional requirements. Similarly, furniture requirements will also need to be quantified and costed.

8. COSTS AND FUNDING

As the Institute is expected to generate income, the cost of setting up the physical infrastructure and equipment should be viewed as an investment on the part of the University and as seed money by outside funding agencies. Institutionally, the UZ's long-term commitment would be mainly to the salaries and benefits of the Institute's full-time core staff and to the provision and maintenance of physical infrastructure.

On the basis of the experiences they have had so far in setting up and sustaining the ALLEX Project, as well as the linkages and contacts that they have made since 1992, the Zimbabwean and Nordic co-operating partners are quite optimistic that, once the UZ

has accepted this proposal in principle, adequate funding to set up the ALRI can be sourced through grants, linkages, partnerships and endowments, both locally and internationally, to establish all the units and sections required and to support their programmes of activities. NUFU is likely to continue to support on-going work in Lexicography through the UZ's link with the University of Oslo. SIDA, which has also supported the ALLEX Project since its inception, is likely to continue its support through the University of Gothenburg, which also has special interests in language surveys in the region and in lexicography and computational linguistics.

It is also hoped that, once the Government of Zimbabwe adopts a comprehensive national language policy, which should happen quite soon, other funding agencies and international organisations such as UNESCO can be interested to support specific units and activities in the Institute, especially the new units for Translation and Terminology, and the new dictionary research units to be added for Kalanga, Tonga and Nambya. Endowments will also be sought for professorial chairs when the individual units grow.

A proper assessment of the requirements and budget projections will be done as a separate exercise by a competent authority in order to determine costs against the proposed timetable for implementation. A special institutionalisation seminar planned for October 1999 will address the question of funding. In the meantime, the estimated costs of implementation for that part of the initial phase that falls within the current UZ Five-Year Strategic Development Plan (2000 - 2002) is attached as Appendix I for the purposes of budgeting and planning in the shorter term.

9. CONSULTATIONS

The following persons, departments, organisations and institutions were consulted and are supportive of this proposal (see Appendices F and G):

[Pending – to be listed when received]