Nuwe Woordeboek sonder Grense: A Typological and Communicative Bridge

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Abstract: Within the South African lexicographical context, there have been several pleas for Afrikaans learner's and school dictionaries that incorporate innovative strategies and provide for specific identified target users and their particular problems. Nuwe Woordeboek sonder Grense (NWSG) is an Afrikaans learner's dictionary that is aimed at a specific group of users, can be used for text reception and text production and forms part of an established textbook series. Through new strategies and adaptations, this dictionary tries to form a bridge between different typological categories and to be a functional instrument for use in the classroom. In accordance with the theoretical formulation of dictionary functions, NWSG tries to further communication through initial support in and eventual assimilation of the foreign language. In this article, theoretical insights regarding learner's dictionaries as well as practical examples from NSWG are combined to illustrate the possibilities of a more user-friendly product.

Keywords: LEARNER’S DICTIONARY, USERS, TYPOLOGY, BRIDGE LANGUAGE, TEXT RECEPTION, MACROSTRUCTURE, TEXT PRODUCTION, MICRO-ARCHITECTURE, FRAME STRUCTURE

Opsomming: Nuwe Woordeboek sonder Grense: 'n Tipologiese en kommunikatiewe brug. Binne die Suid-Afrikaanse leksikografiese konteks is daar reeds verskeie pleidegoeie gerig vir Afrikaanse aanleerder- en skoolwoordeboeke wat vernuweerde strategieë inkorporere en vir spesifieke, geïdentificeerde tekengebruikers en hul eiesoortige probleme voorsiening maak. Nuwe Woordeboek sonder Grense (NWSG) is 'n Afrikaanse aanleerderwoordeboek wat op 'n spesifieke groep leerders gerig is, vir teksresepseie en teksproduksie gebruik kan word en deel van 'n gevestigde handboekreeks uitmaak. Dié woordeboek probeer om deur nuwe strategieë en aanpassings 'n brug te vorm tussen verskillende tipologiese kategorieë en 'n funksionele gebruiksmiddel in die klasroamer te wees. In ooreenstemming met die teoretiese formulering van woordeboekfunksies, probeer NWSG om kommunikasie te bevorder deur aanwaklike ondersteuning in en uiteindelike assimilering van die vreemde taal. In hierdie artikel word teoretiese insigte in verband met aanleerderwoordeboeke en praktiese voorbeelde uit NSWG gekombineer om die moontlikhede van 'n meer gebruikersvriendelike produk te illustreer.

Sleutelwoorde: AANLEERDERWOORDEBOEK, GEBRUIKERS, TIPOLOGIE, BRUGTAAL, TEKSRESEPSEIE, MAKROSTRUKTUUR, TEKSPRODUKSIE, MIKRO-ARGITEKTUUR, RAAMSTRUKTUUR

1. Introduction

Research in pedagogical lexicography has gained momentum over the past fifty years. Recently, theoretical issues such as the influence of language learning and language acquisition theories, as well as the incorporation of the mother tongue into learner’s dictionaries have come under the spotlight. Dictionary practice has centred on advanced learner’s dictionaries within the British lexicographical tradition. These dictionaries have been praised for their technological advances, creative presentation and structural innovations. A good deal of criticism has also been expressed about the complexity of the presentation and the level of reference skills expected from the users of these dictionaries. It is against this theoretical and practical background that planning for a new learner’s dictionary began.

2. Background

2.1 Learner’s dictionaries up to now

There are two important theoretical issues within pedagogical lexicography especially relevant to this article. Firstly, present-day learner’s dictionaries focus mostly on the advanced learner at the expense of learners at pre-high-school levels. Kernerman (2000: 829) predicts the following: "This will give rise to dictionary research for beginners and intermediates, and a new generation of English learners’ dictionaries designed specifically for lower levels." Secondly, lexicographers experience problems with the typological classification of learner’s dictionaries on account of the insertion of the learners’ mother tongue. An example of the typological confusion is the switching between terms like "bilingualised" and "semi-bilingual" for hybrid learner’s dictionaries.

2.2 Learner’s dictionaries in South Africa

The same problems can also be identified within the South African lexicographical context. No provision has been made for beginners and intermediate learners within the existing collection of learner’s dictionaries. This gave rise to a new learner’s dictionary, Nuwe Woordeboek sonder Grense, for learners from grades four to twelve with Afrikaans as a second, third or even fourth language. This dictionary aims at assisting these learners in everyday communication and usage in the classroom. The special typological classification of the dictionary will be discussed in the following section.

3. Nuwe Woordeboek sonder Grense

3.1 Users and typology

Nuwe Woordeboek sonder Grense (NWSG) is a dictionary aimed at learners who
have neither English nor Afrikaans as mother tongue. Strictly speaking, NWSG cannot be called a learner’s dictionary, since it is not aimed at adult learners, but at learners in the intermediate, senior and FET phases, i.e. grades 4-12. However, it is primarily a learner’s dictionary, since various characteristics of learner’s dictionaries have been incorporated and the dictionary can be used in the mastering of Afrikaans. The target users are African language speakers and English speakers who fall within the beginner and sometimes the intermediate phases of language acquisition. For these learners, a learner’s dictionary taking typical mistakes into account and explicitly pointing them out to users can be very helpful.

In an attempt to facilitate the learning process and to support learners, a so-called “bridge language”, namely English, is used to help learners find the correct word in the target language. Translation equivalents of the lemma are added in the example sentences. Consequently the dictionary functions as a language bridge. Text reception is also facilitated and accelerated. NWSG is therefore a hybrid monolingual dictionary.

Figure 1: Translation equivalents in example sentences

Learners using monolingual dictionaries often experience the following problem, as formulated by Atkins (1985: 21): “Users of a monolingual L2 dictionary can access the material in it only by means of a foreign language headword. It might be just that word that they do not know.” In order to prevent this from happening, NWSG includes an equivalent register as outer text, thus helping learners to find the lemma via an English equivalent. This outer text functions as a communicative bridge whereby learners are referred from a foreign language, English, to the object language, another foreign language, Afrikaans. According to the typological classification of Tarp (2004: 323), NWSG is a monolingual dictionary with a bilingual feature. This dictionary therefore bridges the boundary between different dictionary classes, because it is primarily monolingual with one bilingual feature, namely translation equivalents.
3.2 Why NWSG is different

There are three reasons why NWSG differs from most other learner’s dictionaries.
3.2.1 Part of a textbook series

Firstly, NWSG forms part of an established Afrikaans textbook series, *Nuwe Afrikaans sonder Grense*, aimed at school learners from grades 3 to 12. The dictionary therefore agrees with the series in title and look. Otto (1989: 24) emphasizes that the ideal for a learner’s dictionary would be when textbook writers and lexicographers could confer and write two books with cross references to one another. During the compilation of NWSG, there was a close cooperation between the writers of *Nuwe Afrikaans sonder Grense* and the lexicographers. While the textbook writers made recommendations for the dictionary, the lexicographers in turn gave advice on the writing of the dictionary workbooks which accompany NWSG.

3.2.2 The lemma selection

The target users play an important role in the difficult task of selecting the lemma-sign list: "What words to put in, and what to leave out," as Bakker (1999: 294) puts it. "Indeed, how does one begin to assess what words South African school children currently live with?" The fact that NWSG is linked to the textbook series definitely influenced and helped the lexicographers in the lemma selection.

A major lexicographical challenge is compiling "a truly 'tailored' dictionary for a specific target user group" (De Schryver and Prinsloo 2003: 31). According to them, a delicate balance should be struck between a general-language corpus and a custom-made corpus consisting of material culled from the immediate environment of the envisaged target user group.

The target set by the publisher was a lemma-sign list of 2 500. In compiling the corpus, a selection of lists and corpuses were used: a manual list of roughly 5 000 lemma-signs compiled by the publisher (De Schryver and Prinsloo 2003: 35), the Pretoria Afrikaans frequency Corpus (PAfC) (De Schryver and Prinsloo 2003: 36), the lemma list of *Junior Verklarende Woordeboek*, as well as a corpus containing words found in the textbooks. The macrostructure of the dictionary therefore includes words that learners will come across in the classroom and in typical conversations. The collection of lexical items is therefore representative of the language generally used by the target users. Once again the interaction between the selection of textbooks and the dictionary insured that NWSG is a functional and relevant instrument for its users. The detailed process of selecting the lemma-sign list is described in an article by De Schryver and Prinsloo (2003).

3.2.3 The user profile

The third advantage of the dictionary being linked to the textbook series is that the lexicographers had extensive knowledge of the target users. The primary as well as secondary characteristics of the target users, namely their needs, skills and the situations wherein the dictionary will be used, were known to the lexi-
cographers. This knowledge made the task of aiming the content and presentation at specific target users much easier. The greatest part of this article will deal with aspects of text reception and text production in NWSG.

3.3 Text reception in NWSG

When it comes to text reception, the macrostructure and the form of the lemma-item play a very important role in helping the users.

3.3.1 The presentation of irregular flexion forms

In a dictionary with a text reception function, it is very important that users can find the specific word they are looking for. Second and third language speakers of Afrikaans often have problems with irregular flexion words such as *is/was*, *hê/het*, *sal/sou*, *wil/wou* etc. In NWSG, an attempt was made to insert and present these words in a consistent way. A user who, for example, finds *sou* in a text and does not know that it is the past tense of *sal*, will find a reference at *sou* to the reference address *sal*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sal</th>
<th>hulpwerkwoord</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'n Mens gebruik sal as jy na iets in die toekoms wil verwys. ⇒ My pa sal [will] môre die gras sny. ⇒ Ek belowe ek sal [shall] volgende week by jou kom kuier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'n Mens gebruik sou as jy 'n begeerte wil uitdruk. ⇒ Ek sou [would have] daardie fiets gekoop het as ek genoeg geld gehad het. ⇒ Oms sou [would have] buite gespeel het as dit nie gereën het nie.</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sou</th>
<th>werkwoord</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kyk sal</td>
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⇒ *Hy sou [would] kom, maar kan ongelukkig nie meer nie.* ⇒ *Christine het gesê sy sou [would] my bel.*

Learners also have problems finding nouns and adjectives with "strange" flexion forms. Examples of such words are *skepe* (skip), *stede* (stad), *oë* (oog), *ore* (oor), *hoë* (hoog), *nuwe* (nuut), etc. These words also get lemma status in NWSG and refer the user to the articles where they are explained.

3.3.2 The macrostructure

Certain strategies have been adopted to make the macrostructure as accessible as possible in order to facilitate and precipitate the dictionary consultation pro-
procedure. In NWSG, the main lemmas have been ordered vertically and no sub-
lemmas have been added. All homonyms have been listed as separate lemmas
and the lexicographical convention of marking them with superscript markers
has been followed.

3.4 Text production in NWSG

NWSG can only function as a communicative instrument if attention is given to
the types and presentation of data which make text production possible. One of
the biggest problems concerning learners using the dictionary comes to the fore
when they are not familiar with the Afrikaans words they need. Here the
equivalent register gives access to words included in the macrostructure of the
dictionary.

It is essential that a learner using a learner’s dictionary should get confir-
mation that he/she has reached the correct word. To achieve this, data about
parts of speech, pronunciation and meaning should be included. According to
Tarp and Gouws (2004: 289), data is necessary to distinguish between the
different parts of speech of a multifunctional lemma. Multifunctional lemmas
in NWSG are highlighted as units to indicate to learners that one lemma has
more than one function. Ordering within these grey blocks is done according to
a consistent system, namely nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions etc.
The names of the parts of speech are not abbreviated, but given in full, because
the lexicographers cannot rely on the intuition of the users.

![Highlighted multifunctional lemmas](http://lexikos.journals.ac.za)

**Figure 4:** Highlighted multifunctional lemmas

3.4.1 Indication of stress

In NWSG, data about pronunciation is limited to the indication of stress, assist-
ing users in the production of spoken Afrikaans.
**Naue Woordeboek sonder Grense: A Typological and Communicative Bridge**

**boodskap**

*naamwoord*

*(boodskappe, boodskappie)*

Wanneer jy vir iemand wat nie op die oomblik beskikbaar is nie, iets wil sê, los of stuur jy ’n boodskap. ⇒ "Marie, ek het ’n boodskap [message] van jou ma. Jy moet na skool vir haar wag." ⇒ As my vriendin se selffoon afgeskakel is, los ek altyd ’n boodskap [message].

**Figure 5:** Indication of stress

Furthermore, typical pronunciation problems of second and third language speakers are addressed in special usage notes. These notes are especially useful during the process of producing Afrikaans. They are presented in text blocks and marked with a bee or a tortoise. Thereby the lexicographers ensure easy access to this special data category.

**bom**

*naamwoord*

*(bomme, bommetjie)*

’n Bom is ’n voorwerp wat ontwerp word om baie skade aan te rig. ⇒ Die polisie het gelukkig die bom [bomb] gevind voor dit ontplof het. ⇒ Tydens die Tweede Wêreldoorlog het baie mense gesterf weens die bomme [bombs].

**boom**

*naamwoord*

*(bome, boompie)*

’n Boom is ’n groot plant met ’n dik stam, takke en blare. ⇒ My pa het my gehelp om ’n boomhuis in die groot boom [tree] in ons agterplaas te bou.

**Figure 6:** Usage note addressing pronunciation problem

### 3.4.2 Word formation

A learner's dictionary with a text production function should include data about word formation. NWSG, in the same manner as other Afrikaans learner's dictionaries, indicates the morphology of words in an explicit, i.e. an uncondensed way. The user does not have to deduce anything concerning word for-
information. For example, plural and diminutive forms are given in the case of nouns. In the case of adjectives, degrees of comparison are also given in the full form and "die" is added before the superlative form to help the learner with the production of Afrikaans.

boomhuis  naamwoord
(boomhuis, boomhuisie)
Dit is ’n huisie wat gewoonlik met houtplanke of ander materiaal bo in ’n boom gebou word. ⇒ Ek en my maats speel elke naweek in ons boomhuis [tree house].

aaklig  adjektief
(aaklige; aakliger, die aakligste)
Wanneer iets aaklig is, is dit sleg of lelik. ⇒ My broer lyk aaklig [terrible] met die sny aan sy voorkop. ⇒ My beursie is gister gesteel. Dit was ’n aaklige [awful] ervaring. ⇒ Sommige mense dink rook is ’n aaklige [nasty] gewoonte.

bord  naamwoord
(borde, bordjie)
• ’n Bord is ’n plat voorwerp waaruit ’n mens eet. ⇒ As ek die tafel dek, moet ek ’n mes en vurk langs elke bord [plate] neersit. ⇒ My ma sorg altyd dat daar groente op my bord [plate] is sodat ek gesond kan eet.
• ’n Bord is ’n plat voorwerp waarop ’n mens iets kan skryf of verf. ⇒ Die onderwyser skryf al die huiswerk op die bord [board]. ⇒ Langs die hoofpad is daar ’n bord [boardsign] wat sê hoe ver dit tot by die volgende dorp is.
• ’n Bord is ook ’n plat voorwerp waarop speletjies gespeel word. ⇒ ’n Mens het ’n bord [board] met swart en wit blokke nodig om skaak te speel. ⇒ As ’n mens “Monopoly” speel, begin jy aan die een kant van die bord [board] en beweeg tot by die ander kant.

Figure 7: Word formation

3.4.3 Definitions

Semantic commentary in the form of definitions is the most important data type most often needed by learners. The lexicographer has the task of formulating complex definitions in a restricted vocabulary. Furthermore, every word used in the definition should be explained elsewhere in the dictionary. All the definitions in the dictionary are full sentences. The learner is confronted with natural language and the language context within which the word functions.

bord  naamwoord
(borde, bordjie)
• ’n Bord is ’n plat voorwerp waaruit ’n mens eet. ⇒ As ek die tafel dek, moet ek ’n mes en vurk langs elke bord [plate] neersit. ⇒ My ma sorg altyd dat daar groente op my bord [plate] is sodat ek gesond kan eet.
• ’n Bord is ’n plat voorwerp waarop ’n mens iets kan skryf of verf. ⇒ Die onderwyser skryf al die huiswerk op die bord [board]. ⇒ Langs die hoofpad is daar ’n bord [boardsign] wat sê hoe ver dit tot by die volgende dorp is.
• ’n Bord is ook ’n plat voorwerp waarop speletjies gespeel word. ⇒ ’n Mens het ’n bord [board] met swart en wit blokke nodig om skaak te speel. ⇒ As ’n mens “Monopoly” speel, begin jy aan die een kant van die bord [board] en beweeg tot by die ander kant.

Figure 8: Definitions
Words presenting similar concepts, for instance colours, are defined in a similar way. The systematic presentation informs the learner that a word belongs to a specific semantic field.

### 3.4.4 Semantic relations

The identification and learning of words with semantic relations form an essential part of language acquisition. Learners should therefore be made aware of the relations between words. These relations should be marked explicitly. The indication of semantic relations in NWSG is done in a systematic and consistent way. Synonyms and antonyms are presented and marked by typographical markers. These word pairs are also defined and presented in a similar way.

![Example material](http://lexikos.journals.ac.za)

### 3.4.5 Example material

A crucial element of learner's dictionaries designed for text production is the inclusion and presentation of example material. Definitions must be supported by example sentences. According to Tarp and Gouws (2004: 292), learners must be able to see how words function in a typical usage situation. In order to achieve a successful transfer of knowledge the content and presentation of example material must be user-friendly and accessible. The lexicographers of NWSG used authentic examples to explicate the usage and contexts of the lemma.

![Example material](http://lexikos.journals.ac.za)
An integrated microstructure, where example material is placed directly after the definitions, is applied in NWSG. In the case of a polysemous lemma, example material has a direct bearing on the specific polyseme.

In the case of verbs, with specific reference to particle verbs, example sentences were chosen to illustrate the different usages of the verb.

**Figure 11:** Particle verbs

Once again text production is encouraged through access to the different functions of the verb.

### 3.4.6 Illustrations

Quite a few definitions and example sentences are supported by illustrations. An illustration enhances the direct transfer of information because of its explicitness. It is an instrument which should be used in all learner's dictionaries. In some cases, illustrations are used to explicate and illustrate the difference between polysemes of a lemma.

**Figure 12:** Illustrations of "vlerk"
3.4.7 Usage notes

An important instrument to convey pragmatic information is usage notes. Special blocked usage notes are employed in NWSG, aiming to warn the user against typical mistakes. The presentation of the usage notes follows the theme of the textbooks and is marked with a bee or a tortoise.

### aanmekaar

- **Adjektief**
- **en bywoord**

1. Wanneer iets aanmekaar is, is dit vas.
   - Worde wat sinne aanmekaar [join] las, noem ons voegwoorde. As ek sinne aanmekaar [join] skryf, moet ek leestekens gebruik.
2. Dit beteken om nie op te hou met iets nie.  
   - My broer praat aanmekaar [continuously] en gee my nie 'n kans om iets te sé nie.

### aanhalingsteken

- **Naamwoord**

(aanhalingskens, aanhalingskentjie)

Wanneer 'n mens die woorde wat iemand sê, wil neerskryf, gebruik jy 'n aanhalingsteken aan die begin en einde van die woorde, byvoorbeeld “……”.

- Daar is geen aanhalingstekens [quotation marks] in die indirekte rede nie.

**Nomathembu sê: “Ek wil ook 'n woordeboek hê.”**

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**Figure 13: Usage notes**

The following typical problems of second and third language speakers are addressed in the usage notes:

(a) function switching, for instance in the case of **hulp** and **help**,

(b) meanings of words easily confused, for example **herken** and **erken**, **verveeld** and **vervelig**.

### vervelle
d

- **Adjektief**

(verveelde; vervelde, die vervelde)

As 'n mens vervelle is, stel jy nie in iets belang nie.  
- As die onderwyser maklike werk doen, is die meeste kinders vervelle [bored].  
- Die onderwyser sukkel om die vervelle [bored] leerders wakker te hou.

kyk by vervelig

### vervelig

- **Adjektief**

(vervelige; verveliger, die verveligeste)

As iets vervelig is, is dit nie interessant nie en stel jy nie daarin belang nie.

- Die les was so vervelig [boring] dat ek amper aan die slaap geraak het.  
- Die lewe op ons dorpie is nooit vervelig [boring] nie.

Daar gebeur elke dag iets opwindends.
Pasop vir die verskil tussen vervelle en vervelig:
iemand is vervelled, iets is vervelig. 'n Mens gebruik vervelle vir iemand wat nie in iets belangstel nie,
byvoorbeeld: Die slim student is vervelled, want die werk is oninteressant.
'n Mens gebruik vervelig vir iets waarin hy nie belangstel nie en wat hy nie boei nie,
byvoorbeeld: Die slim student hou nie van vervelige lesse nie.

Figure 14: Usage note addressing confusing words
(c) direct translations between English and Afrikaans, for example hard en moeilik,
(d) word pairs often confused and used incorrectly, for example ken and weet, and
(e) word order problems, especially concerning conjunctions, want and sodat.

Pasop vir die volgorde van sodat: Verbind die volgende twee sinne met sodat: Die meisie oefen hard sodat sy kan goed speel.
Die werkwoorde van die tweede sin skui van die einde van die saamgevoegde sin.

Pasop vir die volgorde van want: Verbind die volgende twee sinne met want: Ek wil nou eet. Ek is honger.
Ons gebruik 'n komma (,) voor want. Verbind die volgende twee sinne met want: Ek wil nou eet, want ek is honger.

Figure 15: Usage notes addressing word order problems
The lexicographers attempted to enhance and facilitate text reception and text production by including the above-mentioned data types. Another important principle that should be applied in any learner's dictionary is accessibility to
the presented data. In other words, an inaccessible presentation of data can handicap or wreck the communication process of the learner. This brings us to the micro-architecture of dictionary articles.

3.5 The micro-architecture of NWSG

The micro-architecture of dictionary articles should contribute to an accessible and user-friendly presentation. This refers to the form of the article, the coherence between the different article zones and the typographical conventions. In a learner's dictionary for school children where the users have limited dictionary skills, it is especially important to keep the structure of the articles as simple as possible. The micro-architecture of NWSG makes provision for different polysemes that are numbered and blocked under one another. Some structural markers are used to differentiate between different data categories and search zones in order to make them more identifiable. Synonyms and antonyms are marked with different circles, example sentences are preceded by arrows (→) and parts of speech are shifted to the right of the article and marked with a black square (●). The search route of the learner is accelerated by the use of these access markers. Homonyms are presented in different articles and numbered. This systematic presentation informs the learner that there is no meaning correlation between the different homonyms. All the information about the structure and presentation in the dictionary is explained in the front text ‘How to use your dictionary’. The learner can use this text for any inquiries about the central word list, as well as other texts included in the dictionary.

3.6 Frame structure

The frame structure is another structure lexicographers can apply in a learner's dictionary to enhance the access and improve the data distribution of the dictionary. Dictionaries are text type carriers containing different types of texts. Many dictionaries focus only on the central text and ignore the possibility of presenting data in other venues. In NWSG, good use of the frame structure has been made and a number of other texts have been added.

3.6.1 Front matter

In the front matter, user guidelines that are functional and user-friendly have been added. These guidelines include an analysis of a number of articles from the central text and show the user what types of data are presented and how they can find exactly what they are looking for. The way homonyms and polysemes are treated is also explained. The front matter further includes a table of contents.
3.6.2 Back matter

In the back matter, the user will find a number of useful lists, including the list of translation equivalents, as well as listings of the days of the week, the months of the year, the South African provinces and their capitals and a list of numerals.

4. Conclusion

Nuwe Woordeboek sonder Grense functions as a bridge between different typological classes within the family of learner's dictionaries. The aim of this dictionary is to assist the inexperienced user during the dictionary consultation procedure. In order to achieve this goal, special attention was given to macro- and microstructural innovations. Being integrated within a textbook and workbook series, the dictionary can be used as an optimal communication instrument in the classroom.

References


