

# Minutes of the meeting of the General Assembly

Friday July 25<sup>th</sup> 2008, 4 p.m.

International Seminar Room 115, International Hall

SEOUL, South Korea

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## **Present:**

Prof. D. Bradley (Australia), Prof. B. Hurch (Austria), Dr. F. Brisard (Belgium), Prof. E. Hajicova (Czech Republic), Prof. Chr. Lehmann (Germany), Prof. F. Kiefer (Hungary), Prof. Y. Tobin (Israel), Prof. E. Banfi (Italy), Prof. Y. Nagshima (Japan), Prof. Ik Hwan Lee (Korea), Prof. P. Seuren (Netherlands), Prof. A. Bamgbose (Nigeria), Prof. J. Ole Askedal (Norway), Prof. B. Lewandowska-Tomaszcyk (Poland), Prof. M. Leonetti (Spain), Patrick Studer on behalf of Prof I. Werlen (Switzerland), Prof. Henri Jungl Chang on behalf of Prof. Chu-ren Huang (Taiwan), Prof. M.S. Anwar (Egypt), Prof. S. Anderson (USA). Prof. P.G.J. van Sterkenburg, SG.

**Absent with apologies:** Prof. G. Libben (Canada), Prof. Shen Jiaxuan (China), Prof. A. Lemaréchal (France), Prof. A.S. Ozsoy (Turkey).

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## **1. Opening**

Prof. Kiefer opened the meeting with a word of welcome to Prof. Suwilai Premsrirat, to the delegates and especially to Prof. Ik-Hwan Lee, the President of CIL XVIII.

He then took a moment to commemorate Prof. Rischel (Denmark). Jørgen Rischel, Professor of Linguistics in Copenhagen, Denmark passed away on 10th May 2007. He was a Danish linguist who worked extensively in a variety of linguistic areas, especially phonetics and phonology, lexicography and documentation of endangered languages. He is best known internationally for his descriptive work on Greenlandic, his grammar of Minor Mlabri of Thailand and his analyses of Danish phonology and morphology. He also contributed a considerable body of work on historical linguistics, the history of linguistics, linguistic fieldwork, phonology and links between linguistics and culture. Jørgen Rischel represented the Danish Research Council for the Humanities in CIPL's General Assembly from 1993 and was elected a member of CIPL's Executive Committee in 2003.

Prof. Kiefer then proposed that the meeting should adjust the agenda and set the presentation of the EL Award and agenda item 7 as first in order not to burden Prof. Suwilai Premsrirat for too long with CIPL matters.

## **2. EL Award**

In Prague in 2003 the GA decided to establish an Endangered Languages Award, to be presented every five years to a linguist who had distinguished himself or herself internationally with a study in the field of languages threatened with extinction. A committee consisting of Prof. Christian Lehmann, Prof. Peter Austin, Dr. Nicolas Ostler and Dr. Doug Whalen proposed to the committee's chairman, Prof. David Bradley, that the award should be given to Prof. Suwilai Premsrirat.

Prof. Bradley indicated in the following laudatory comment why Prof. Premsrirat deserved the award. "Professor Suwilai Premsrirat receives this award of 2,500 euros for her work for language documentation and language maintenance of endangered languages in Thailand and surrounding countries.

In particular, she has published very extensive work on Khmu and Thavung, including a grammar, various dictionaries and volumes of texts such as one on medical dialogues which also support the community where she works in a practical way. She has also established, obtained funding for and fostered Language Centres for language maintenance in Gong, Chong and other villages."

Prof. Premsrirat replied as follows:

*CIPL President, CIPL Secretary- General and colleagues,*

Thank you very much for this great honour and wonderful award. I am extremely proud to be here to accept this award on behalf of all our research team, both academics and local scholars from various ethnolinguistic communities.

The concept of endangered languages has captured the imagination of many scholars, as well as the general public. The realization that a great treasure of language, culture, and wisdom is in danger of disappearing is prompting action to at least document, and, where possible, preserve and revive these languages.

However, this is not just about the languages in the abstract sense, but also the people who speak them. From my experience working on ethnic minority languages in the field and teaching linguistic field work to our students in the communities, I have witnessed the decline of the ethnic minority languages over the last two decades. I have also seen the desire and determination of community members to document or to teach their language to other people in their own way. When I had a chance to go back to work with them on their language revitalization program I found that they were very enthusiastic to work on their own language development such as orthography development so that they have a tool to write stories and record local wisdom or to produce reading materials and teaching materials in their ethnic language so that their language can be officially taught in school.

I would like to mention what speakers said about their language.

*"An elderly Mon lady described the Mon language situation as a fruit which is breaking off from the stem and the language revitalization program as the last breath of the speakers. A Nyah Kur village headman said that being able to develop a writing system for Nyah Kur children makes him feel the proudest thing he has ever had in his life. This is repeated by a local Malay speaker in Southern Thailand who recited a poem saying that the mother-tongue-based bilingual education programme helps to bring back their Malay identity and dignity."*

So for the people from the many ethnic groups in Thailand who are striving to rebuild their pride, confidence and honour by tapping back into their wealth of heritage, the efforts of all those concerned has come just in time and I can say confidently that the successes are growing.

That is a prize in itself, but this very special award that you confer on me will always remind me that our allies and well-wishers are to be found everywhere, especially among linguists.

So I am humbled and honoured to receive this award today, not only on my own behalf, but also on the behalf of the speakers of the endangered languages of Thailand with whom I have been privileged to work. I am grateful for the wisdom and insight that they have shared with me. I also want to express my appreciation to my colleagues and students at the Center for Documentation and Revitalization of Endangered Language, Institute of Language and Culture for Rural Development of Mahidol University, who have been valuable partners in this work. I am also grateful to Thailand Research Fund for its visionary support for my work – unique in a country that thinks of itself as being essentially monolingual.

Finally, I want to thank the General Assembly of CIPL for this award. It is my hope that the honor you have given me will help more Thais and people in SEA see the value of endangered languages and linguistic diversity. Thank you."

Prof Premsrirat then left the meeting to loud applause.

### **3. Minutes of the meeting of the General Assembly, Tuesday July 29<sup>th</sup> 2003, Prague**

The minutes were approved without change.

### **4. Elections: President, Secretary-General, Vice-Presidents and Executive Committee**

Prof. Ozsoy from Turkey has sent his ballot by mail to the SG.

Before passing on the actual elections, the SG read out Article 7, para 1 of the Statutes.

The President formulated on the basis of an interesting discussion the following statements:

1. EC members are expected to do work for CIPL, e.g. contact countries for membership, giving advice concerning CIPL-projects (bibliography, endangered languages), participating in the preparation of the congress (proposals for topics, invited speakers, topic organisers, workshops). Non-active EC members should not be re-elected.
2. EC members are expected to participate in EC meetings, which normally means one meeting in Leiden one year after the congress, and, if the need arises, one meeting preparing the forthcoming congress. EC members are also expected to actively participate in the CIPL congress. If a delegate is not present at the GA and has not sent an apology, the delegate cannot be a candidate for EC membership.
3. The election of EC members need not take into account geographical distribution. Representation of geographical areas is ensured via the GA.
4. Nor should it count how much contribution a country pays in terms of membership fees.
5. The election of EC members should follow the election of office holders. The candidates who failed to become office holders should remain on the list of candidates for EC membership.

Then Prof. Banfi proposed that other candidates, namely Eva Hajicova, Steve Anderson and Christian Lehmann be added to the list for the Vice-Presidency. The ballot allows this possibility on the dotted lines. The supporters of the proposal included Prof. Hurch, Dr. F. Brisard and also Prof. Tobin. After some discussion, Prof. Lehmann decided not to put his own name forward.

Subsequently there was discussion on matters such as the age of the delegates, the term for which members of the EC could sit, the desirability of a rota according to which officers should have to resign and any protocols required for the appropriate conduct of the elections. Arguments for and against were advanced. Then the elections were started.

Professors Hurch and Seuren were asked to act as vote counters.

The elections were held in two phases. Professor Kiefer (20 votes) was elected President, first Vice-President was Professor S. Anderson (16 votes), second Vice-President Professor Bamgbose (14 votes) and Secretary-General Professor van Sterkenburg (21 votes).

The elections for a new Executive Committee, elected for a five-year period, gave the following result: Prof. Anwar (Egypt), Prof. Banfi (Italy), Prof. Bradley (Australia), Prof. E. Hajicova (Czech Republic), Prof. Chr. Lehmann (Germany), Prof. P. Seuren (Netherlands) and Prof. Shen Jiaxuan (China). Prof. Ik-Hwan Lee is a statutory member of the EC.

Since the discussion, in which practically all the delegates participated, made clear that the Statutes left many questions unanswered, it was decided to revise the Statutes. Because CIPL is legally incorporated in the Netherlands, any revision of the Statutes must be tested against Dutch law. The SG will ask a notary to bring the Statutes up to date. Also a check will be made to see if there are any other rules that guide the operations of our Association. Prof. Bamgbose noted that the Constitution should remain as general as possible. That means that it should state the aims and objectives of the organisation, the composition and functions of the constituent organs (such as the EC and GA), standing committees and provision for ad hoc committees, officers and their functions (stated in general terms). There could also be byelaws spelling out in greater detail how organs and committees should function. Such byelaws are also known as Rules of Procedure. They determine such matters as quorum at meetings, frequency of meetings, procedures for election of officers, and more detailed statements on the functions and responsibilities of officers. And, third, there are Conventions (generally accepted, but unwritten). In this category fall such practices as rotation, geographical spread of members of the EC, representation of larger donating countries on the EC, and the requirement that the SG should come from the Netherlands.

Before sending the revised Statutes to the GA the SG will send the first draft to the President, the two Vice-Presidents and to one member of the EC (Chr. Lehmann, who has a great deal of experience with regard to statutes of international organizations). The SG will send their comments and possible amendments to the notary to decide whether they can be incorporated according to Dutch law.

## **5. Nominating Committee**

While waiting for the revised statutes, Professors Tobin (Chair) and Leonetti are prepared to remain members of the NC. The SG will ask Prof. Garry Libben to join as third member. The President presented the following for the meeting's consideration with regard to procedure:

1. The members and the chair of the NC are proposed by the Secretary-General in co-operation with the President and approved by the GA.
2. The NC proposes candidates for the offices (president, two vice-presidents and secretary-general) and for EC membership. The candidates should be asked whether they accept to be proposed.
3. Candidates not present at the GA and who have not sent an apology cease to be candidates.

## **6. Bibliographie Linguistique**

The National Library of the Netherlands decided to concentrate its future activities exclusively on its 'core business', namely the history, language and culture of the Netherlands, no longer deploying activities that do not fully fit into this restricted area.

The SG entered into consultation with the board of the Institute of Dutch Lexicology (INL) and with the management of publishers Brill about a possible home for BL's bibliographers. The BL-ers could transfer to INL from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007.

However at the end of 2007 the Director of the INL found it necessary to inform the SG of CIPL that the BL did not fit into the policy of the INL's subsidiser, the Nederlandse Taalunie. He was asked to find another legal home for the bibliographers.

At the same time the publishers of the BL, Springer, made it known that they were not prepared to make fundamental investments in the BL online.

The SG contacted publishers Brill, and they expressed serious interest in taking over the BL on condition that (a) the Dutch Minister of Education would continue to pay the bibliographers, (b) the book would remain as published and (c) a new electronic concept should be made of the BL online.

In discussions with the subsidiser it became clear that the Minister would continue to make indexed payments for the BL provided that a Stichting Bibliographie Linguistique were to be established which would assume payment of the bibliographers.

By 31-12-2007 the Director of the INL was informed that a solution had been found for the legal position of the bibliographers and that as from 1-1-2008 they would be in service at publishers Brill. This meant that the BL had been saved. CIPL retains ownership of the concept.

There is no objection to the BL Foundation board's decision to continue to publish the printed version of the BL in addition to the online version, provided that the publication has no financial consequences for CIPL in the form of extra costs. The meeting reacted with satisfaction to the announcement by the SG that, in fact, CIPL will benefit financially from a publication of this kind thanks to the agreed percentage of royalties. Nonetheless the GA continues to regard the realisation of a dynamic electronic version of the BL as by far the most important option.

## **7. Next Congress**

The GA is happy with the application made by the LSA. The interest shown by Australia must – according to David Bradley – be taken *cum grano salis*. Bremen was rejected because Europe organised the CIL in 1997 and 2003. The definitive choice

for San Francisco Bay (Berkeley) will be taken during the next meeting of the EC in Leiden in September 2009. Any delegates considering organising a congress in their own country are urgently requested to show evidence of their interest as soon as possible.

## **8. Any other business**

Prof. Lewandowska drew the attention of the delegates to the Summer Institute Languages and Cultures in Contact (SILCC 2009, 7-12 September 2009, Zakopane, Poland [www.silcc.pl](http://www.silcc.pl)).

The meeting of the EC to be held immediately after the closing session of CIL XVIII is postponed until next year. The first meeting of the EC will take place in Leiden in the second half of September 2009.

## **9. Closing**

The President thanked all the delegates, and especially Prof. Ik-Hwan Lee for the organisation of an excellent congress in Seoul. The meeting closed at 5.30 p.m.