The Research Unit (RU) came into existence in 1998, initially as the Focus Area Communication in South Africa: Language, Literature and Media. In 2003 it obtained Unit status under its current name. The first director was Prof. DP Wissing (1998-2001) followed by Prof AM de Lange and succeeded by Prof. HM Viljoen at the beginning of 2008. Prof. Viljoen’s term expired at the end of 2010 and Prof. WAM Carstens officiated as acting director of the RU till May 2011 when Prof JC Roux was appointed to this position.

Research within the Unit focuses on

- **Linguistics and literature** within the subject groups of Afrikaans and Dutch, English, German, French and Setswana;

- **Applied linguistics** incorporating activities within the Centre for Academic and Professional Practice;

- **Language technology** which includes research and development in the Centre for Text Technology (CTeX®).

**Highlights of the year**

A number of **projects** made significant progress during this period:

- Prof. Heilna du Plooy’s project *Vers en verhaal (Stanza and story)* is a classical example of excellent teamwork. Workshop papers emanating from 2009 were processed and submitted for publication to *Stilet* and *Literator*; a total of 18 articles were eventually published. This includes articles by quite a number of colleagues from the Netherlands as well as two internationally acclaimed literators, namely Peter Hühn and Brian McHale. (Professor du Plooy was honoured as the most productive researcher at the NWU in 2009.)

- A special highlight was the exhibitions of artists’ books made within the ambit of Prof. Franci Greyling and Mr Ian Marley’s project *Oor die einders van die bladsy (Beyond the horizon of the page)*. The exhibitions were presented at the Word Festival in Stellenbosch, at the die NWU and also at the University of Johannesburg.

- Within the ambit of the *Grensprojek (Boundaries project)* of Prof Hein Viljoen, a very successful joint video-link workshop was organised with the Border Poetics Group in Tromso, Norway. The discussion was lively and valuable theoretical insights were exchanged. Work is underway on a collection of essays on boundaries in literature.

- The active participation of post-graduate students with members of staff at national conferences bodes well for future research; a total of 17 papers were presented at meetings
of the Linguistic Society of Southern Africa (LSSA), the Southern African Applied Linguistics Association (SAALA) and the South African Association for Language Teachers (SAALT) and at the Afrikaans Literary Association (ALV).

- **CTeXT** made very good progress with a new language resource development project for the Department of Arts and Culture. A beta version of *MarkWrite* (a semi-automated software system for assessing written tasks) was introduced, while an electronic, interactive version of Pharos’s *Multilingual Illustrated Dictionary* was completed and published. The name *CTeXT* was approved as a trademark.

- At the prestige event for research on 29 October 2010, members of the RU received two special awards. Profs John Gouws and Justus Roux received awards in recognition of their NRF ratings. Prof. Roux also received a special award for leadership in international research, among others for his involvement in international scientific committees. CTeXT was honoured as the foremost technological innovator at the NWU.

As in the past, members of the unit were very active on the international scene as well.

- Prof. Franci Greyling was a research fellow at the International Children’s and Youth Library in München, Germany for three months (November 2009 to January 2010).

- Prof. Justus Roux served in a number of international committees mainly related to language technologies. These include committees of the International Standards Organisation (ISO) and various international associations, committees and boards for human language technology. He also served in the appointed evaluation panel of the EU which evaluated the Dutch-Flemish project STEVIN.

- Prof. Betsie van der Westhuizen presented a module, *Die Afrikaans letterkunde: ruimtes, roetes en (her-)ontdekkings* (Afrikaans literature: spaces, routes and (re-)discoveries), at the University of Antwerp from 21 September to 12 November. She also made two public presentations: on the possibilities of comparative research between Afrikaans and Dutch youth literature at a meeting of IBBY Belgium (International Board on Books for Young People) on 13 October; and on narrative energy in children’s and youth literature at a faculty seminar at the University of Cambridge on 27 October.

- A large delegation of CTeXT members participated in the LREC 2010 workshop for Language Technologies for African Languages, AflaT 2010, held in Malta in May 2010. Prof Roux presented the invited plenary lecture which was followed by presentations of Prof Gerhard van Huyssteen and Mr Groenewald and other collaborators.

- Prof. GB van Huyssteen also participated in various international congresses and workshops. On 6 June, he participated in the workshop of the 6th North American Chapter of the North American Association for Computer Linguistics (NAACL) on Extracting and Using Constructions in Computational Linguistics in Los Angeles. He also presented a paper at the AAAI symposium on Artificial Intelligence for Development, at Stanford University, 23-24 March 2010.
• The good cooperation with the University of Antwerp was continued. Prof. Wannie Carstens and Prof. Kris van de Poel from Antwerp worked together on an important publication, *Tekstredaksie (Text editing)*. A number of our postgraduate students (Carla van den Heever, Adri Breed and Althea Kotze) studied in Antwerp for short periods. Adri Breed is studying under an Antwerp promoter, Prof. Frank Brisard.

• Prof. Heilna du Plooy visited the prestigious Interdisciplinary Center for Narratology in Hamburg in October 2010 and established a foundation for good cooperation in the future.

• Prof. Hein Viljoen acted as an academic advisor for a Fulbright research group of the Ohio Northern University. The project yielded valuable insights in the problem of broader areas for the project on boundaries and literature. This cooperation with the NWU will be continued in the future.

**Participation in congresses within the country**

Members of the unit also actively participated in the academic discourse locally and presented a total of nine papers in literature and 21 in linguistics at various congresses and workshops. In addition, the RU organised two colloquium days during which researchers presented papers on their work and participated in fruitful discussions.

**3.1 Research outputs 2010**

**3.1 Publications**

The following number of publications may be listed:

- Accredited national academic journals: 13 (plus 11 additional papers accepted)
- Accredited international academic journals: 6 (plus 1 additional paper accepted)
- Chapters in academic books: 8 (plus 1 additional chapter accepted)
- Academic books: 2 (plus 1 in Creative Writing)
- Conference proceedings: 11

**3.2 Masters and doctoral students**

In 2010 a total of 19 MA students were enrolled of whom 3 completed their respective studies whilst 2 of a total of 19 doctoral students likewise completed their studies.