ESF Exploratory Workshop on

Language and origin: the role of language in European asylum procedures

Wassenaar, Netherlands
21-24 April 2010

Convened by:
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Co-sponsored by

Radboud University Nijmegen
The European Science Foundation (ESF) is an association of 79 Member Organisations devoted to scientific research in 30 European countries. The Mission of ESF is to provide a common platform for its Member Organisations in order to advance European research and to explore new directions for research at the European level. Through its activities, the ESF serves the needs of the European research community in a global context.

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The Exploratory Workshops scheme is one of the key instruments of the Science Strategy “pillar”. Each year, ESF supports approximately 50 Exploratory Workshops across all scientific domains. The focus of the scheme is on workshops aiming to explore an emerging and/or innovative field of research or research infrastructure, also of interdisciplinary character. Workshops are expected to open up new directions in research or new domains. It is expected that a workshop will conclude with plans for specific follow-up research activities and/or collaborative actions or other specific outputs either within the frame of ESF (e.g. prepare the ground to develop a Forward Look, a Research Networking Programme or a EUROCORES proposal; publication of a Policy Briefing…) or for submission to the EU 7th Framework Programme or to other European or international funding organisations.

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Main Objectives of the Workshop:

In recent years, language has been used as evidence in assessing asylum seekers’ claims. Do they come from the country that they claim to originate from? Although this would seem quite simple, reliable assessments are hard to achieve. Many factors intervene: high variability, multilingualism, extended stays in refugee camps, lack of systematic knowledge about the languages, mixed ancestry. European countries have developed various techniques, but experts often disagree about these, and the validity of the results. This workshop brings together an interdisciplinary group of experts from different European countries to explore the different techniques and work towards improving them.

Workshop Agenda

The output of our exploratory workshop would be:

- Draft research proposal
- Collection of papers and workshop documents
- Prioritisation of topics for further research
- Planning of possible further meetings on specific subthemes

Participants have all been asked to contribute, with a brief presentation or additional comments, to one of the thematic sessions of the workshop

Report publication and dissemination

We envisage the distribution of workshop documents and discussion results.
PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME

Wednesday 21 April 2010
Afternoon  Arrival
Evening  Dinner at NIAS

Thursday 22 April 2010
09.00-09.35  Tea and coffee, getting acquainted, paperwork travel reimbursements
09.35-09.50  Presentation of the European Science Foundation (ESF) - Eva Hoogland Standing Committee for the Humanities (SCH)
09.50-11.00  Introduction to LADO with native speakers – Tina Cambier-Langeveld (Netherlands)
                 Introduction to LADO with specialized linguists – Eric Baltisberger (LINGUA)
                 Guidelines from linguists for LADO – Diana Eades (Australia)
11.00-11.10  Tea and Coffee
11.10-12.10  The use of language analysis in the national asylum procedures - Silvia Morgades (Spain), Dirk Vanheule (Belgium), Gregor Noll (Sweden), Julia Duchrow (Germany)
12.10-13.00  Views from forensic linguistics and phonetics - Ton Broeders (Netherlands)
                Validity issues in language testing - Tim McNamara (Australia)
13.00-14.20  Lunch
14.20-15.30  Language Variation – Peter Patrick (UK)
                Multilingualism – Pieter Muysken (Netherlands)
                Phonetics and speechtechnology – Dirk van Compernolle (Belgium)
15.30-15.50  Tea and Coffee
15.50-17.00  Discussion of Case 1: East Africa: introduction and discussion – Vincent de Rooij (Netherlands), Maaike Verrips (Netherlands)
17.00-18.30  Informal discussion and the showing of video ‘Well-founded fear’
18.30      Drinks
19.00      Dinner at NIAS
Friday 23 April 2010

9.00-10.10  *The need to harmonise the use of language analysis? (eg in the EU Procedures Directive) – LADO in the Dutch courts* – Jens Vedsted Hansen (Denmark), Blanche Tax (Belgium), Martin Skamla (Slovakia), Karin Zwaan (Netherlands)

10.10-11.00  *Institutional interactions* – Melissa Moyer (Spain), Katrijn Maryns (Belgium)

11.00-11-15  *Tea and Coffee*

11.15-12.30  *Discussion of Case 2: Iraq and the Middle East – introductions and discussion* – Judith Rosenhouse (Israel), Enam El Wer (UK)

12.30-13.00  *Discussion of research opportunities and plans 1* – Karin Zwaan (Netherlands), Pieter Muysken (Netherlands)

13.00-14.00  *Lunch*

14.00-14.30  *Discussion of research opportunities and plans 2* – Karin Zwaan (Netherlands), Pieter Muysken (Netherlands)

14.30-14.45  *Tea and Coffee*

14.45-17.00  *Open Meeting*

  *Conclusions by convenor*

  *Public discussion*

Saturday 24 April 2010

8.00  *Breakfast at NIAS*

9.00  *Departure*
Objectives of the ESF Standing Committee for the Humanities (SCH)

The main tasks of the ESF Standing Committee for the Humanities (SCH) are:

- to encourage interdisciplinary work through the independent evaluation of collaborative research proposals emanating from the scholarly community;
- to identify priority research areas and to play an integrative and co-ordinating role by creating links between research communities which in the Humanities are often small and fragmented.
- to contribute to the development of the ESF science policy agenda and to provide expert advice on science policy actions at the European level in the field of its responsibilities.

The Committee is well aware that the ESF is the only European Agency where the Humanities have a place next to the other sciences and where European projects are reviewed, developed and subsequently operated.

The Committee considers it all the more important to be heard as the voice of the Human Sciences in Europe and to continue pleading for a more prominent place for the Humanities in the European landscape.

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