

## **GLOBAL REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH UNITS ON LINGUISTICS**

This report presents the main aspects of the conclusions of the Evaluation Committee for the Portuguese Research in the Area of Linguistics, as compiled by the coordinator of the Evaluation Committee.

The structure of the Evaluation Committee and its method of work are presented in the first two sections of the report. The third section overviews general results of the evaluation, addressing strengths and weaknesses detected by the Committee and leading to the recommendations that are formalized in the fourth (and last) section.

### **1 EVALUATION COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

#### **1.1 Coordinator**

Francisco Lacerda

Dept of Linguistics, Stockholm University, Sweden

#### **1.2 Evaluation Committee 1.2.1 Selection criteria**

Three selection criteria were applied in selecting the members of the Evaluation Committee:

1. Scientific competence on one of the areas to be evaluated
2. Enough ability to understand written and spoken Portuguese to be able to read the materials submitted by the Units
3. Availability to carry out the evaluation work and the site visit within the time-window negotiated between FCT, the Units and the Evaluation Committee

#### **1.2.2 Members and areas of main responsibility**

- Carol Stoel-Gammon, Dept of Speech and Hearing, University of Washington, Seattle, USA, Clinical linguistics, Phonetics, Phonology, Psycholinguistics
- Francisco Lacerda, Dept of Linguistics, Stockholm University, Stockholm, Sweden Clinical linguistics, Natural language processing, Phonetics
- Isabel Trancoso, INESC, Lisboa, Portugal Computational linguistics, Natural language processing
- Jan Terje Faarlund, Dept of Scandinavian Studies and Comparative Literature, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway. Grammar, Historical linguistics, Syntax

- Jens Allwood, Dept of Linguistics, Gothenburg University, Sweden, Computational linguistics, Conversational analysis, Corpora analysis, Culture, Discourse analysis, General linguistics, Natural language processing, Pragmatics, Semantics
- Lars-Erik Edlund, Dept of Contemporary Literature and Nordic Languages, Umeå University, Umeå, Sweden, Socio-dialectal and historical variation, Sociolinguistics
- Santiago Alcoba, Departament de Filologia Espanyola, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain, Lexicography, Lexicology, Morphology, Morpho-syntax

## **2 OVERALL ORGANIZATION OF THE EVALUATION WORK 2.1 PRELIMINARY WORK**

Prior to the site visits the members of the Evaluation Committee studied the elements provided by each of the Units and available through the FCT's database. Particular attention was paid to elements that might characterize each of the Units, namely the scientific production and its theoretical profile, the Unit's efforts to achieve national and international projection as well as the Units overall scientific and administrative structure.

The information in the database provided, in most cases, a good description of the Units structure, its research projects, facilities and staff but the descriptions often fail to provide a future oriented characterization of the Unit's potential role as a source of new theoretical approaches that might influence Linguistic science in general. Also, instead of presenting their (five) most relevant publications, some Units had entered unrealistic long lists of publications in the database that can easily be interpreted as a sign of lack of focus or reflection over the Units main theoretical lines. Finally, the Units seem to have been inconsistent in their reporting of publications in international journals with referees, as in some cases there are clear mismatches between the data reported under B.3, "Team's Scientific Production", and the publication data that is available under C, regarding each of the members of the research team.

The members of the Evaluation Committee made their preliminary evaluations independently. Each of the Units was rated in terms of the parameters defined by FCT and specific comments and aspects to be addressed during the site visits were registered by each of the members of the Evaluation Committee.

### **2.2 Site visits**

The site visits were conducted according to the schedule listed below, organized by the FCT representative, Dra. Maria José Camecelha de Abreu, and the coordinator of the Evaluation Committee. The coordinators of the Units were also consulted to make sure that the final schedule would be adequately adjusted to the needs of fitting both the schedule constraints of

the most representative elements of each of the Units and the logistics of the Evaluation Committee.

Date	UNIT	RESEARCH UNIT	PhD n.	HOME INSTITUTION	UNIT COORDINATOR	LOCAL and TIME		
Monday 3 Nov 2003	145	Onset - Centro de Estudos da Linguagem	11	Faculdade de Letras da UL	Isabel Hub Faria	FCT - Lisboa	09:00	10:00
Monday 3 Nov 2003	624	Centro de Estudos Humanísticos	9	Faculdade de Filosofia da Universidade Católica Portuguesa	Mário Rosa da Silva Garcia	FCT - Lisboa	10:15	11:15
Monday 3 Nov 2003	101	Centro de Estudos em Letras	11	Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro	Carlos Costa Assunção	FCT - Lisboa	11:30	12:30
Monday 3 Nov 2003	214	Centro de Linguística da UL -CLUL	23	Fundação da UL	Maria do Céu Viana	Lisboa	14:00	16:00
Monday 3 Nov 2003	3213	Centro de Linguística da UNL	17	Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da UNL	Maria Teresa Rijo da Fonseca Lino	Lisboa	16:30	18:30
Tuesday 4 Nov 2003	281	Centro de Estudos de Linguística	7	Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra	Ana Cristina Macário Lopes	Coimbra	10:30	12:30
Tuesday 4 Nov 2003	22	Centro de Linguística da UP	11	Faculdade de Letras da UP	Fernanda Irene Araújo Barros Fonseca	Porto	16:30	18:30
Wednesday 5 Nov 2003	128	Centro de Línguas e Culturas (CLC)	29	Universidade de Aveiro	João Manuel Nunes Torrão	Aveiro	10:00	12:00
Wednesday 5 Nov 2003	146	Instituto de Linguística Teórica e Computacional	3	Instituto de Linguística Teórica e Computacional	Maria Helena F. G. Mira Mateus	Lisboa	16:30	18:30

## 2.2.1 Work method

The outline of the structure of the site visits were defined in the first meeting Evaluation Committee, on Sunday the 2<sup>nd</sup> November. The Committee had a thorough discussion of the goals of the evaluation, with particular focus on the issues raised by the application of international standards to the evaluation of Portuguese research in the area of Linguistics, on the strategy to assess the research climate and on the evaluation strategy to be used during the site visits.

### 2.2.1.1 International standards

The analysis of the materials submitted to the Committee suggested that the Portuguese Linguistic community's overwhelming scientific production was restricted to publications in Portuguese with very limited impact outside the Portuguese or Spanish speaking scientific community. In this scenario, the application of strict international standards to the evaluation of the Portuguese research in the area of Linguistics becomes quite problematic because typical international standards take into consideration not only the quality of the work per se, but also its diffusion in international peer-reviewed journals and the significance of the

published work expressed by, for instance, the number of citations by the international scientific community. The direct application of these criteria to the Portuguese research in Linguistics would result into many cases to paradoxical discrepancies between high ranks, if the appreciation is solely based on the quality of the work, and rather poor ranks, if the number of international peer-reviewed publications and their impact on the international community is considered. Thus, recognizing the present inadequacy of the strict application of such international standards, the Evaluation Committee adopted a broader concept of international standards than what is usually assumed by that.

### **2.2.1.2 Research climate**

The Committee attempted to assess the research climate of the Units by getting a sense of:

- the composition of the research teams
- the distribution of the research tasks between senior researchers and graduate students
- the extent of scientific, practical and material support (including office space) that the Unit provided its graduate students
- the Units involvement in the organization of national and international scientific meetings
- the extent to which such events offered actual contact possibilities for the Unit's graduate students
- the proportion of teaching and research hours for Unit's individual researchers
- the Unit's interaction with national and international Unit's

### **2.2.1.3 Evaluation strategy for the site visits**

The evaluation process was planed in a constructive and friendly interaction climate. Each Unit or Candidate Unit was requested to make an assessment of its strengths, its weaknesses and the potential risks that it faced. The Units were asked to define their theoretical stand points and to profile their research in relation to other national and international research groups, as also encouraged to account for their strategies to improve the international impact of their research. Candidate Units were requested to plead for their own cases, clarifying how the creation of the Unit in question would be beneficial for the Portuguese research climate in the area of Linguistics.

The typical structure of a site visit consisted of a general presentation of the Unit and its main lines of research, followed by a clarification period during which the members of the Evaluation

Committee asked specific questions raised by the analysis of the data that the Unit had reported to the database. Thereafter a general discussion of the aspects mentioned above was initiated. The last part of the site visit was dedicated to actual visits to the office and lab facilities of the Unit, along with separate interviews with the different research teams. Furthermore, the members of the Evaluation Committee attempted to identify particular profiles among the senior researchers and graduate students in order to conduct, whenever possible, specific interviews with:

- (a) senior researchers with significant scientific production
- (b) senior researchers with little scientific production
- (c) graduate students with some scientific production and
- (d) graduate students recently involved in the Unit.

Individual notes from each of the Evaluation Committee members were briefly discussed immediately after the site visits or presentations and formalized later on by entries in the FCT evaluation database.

Two hours were allocated to each of the site visits and one hour to the presentations by the Candidate Units.

Two of the members of Committee had prior commitments that did not allow them to participate on all the site visits. The visits were therefore scheduled so that those two members could be present during the site visits to Units with research lines within their specific areas of expertise. The general views of those two members were however represented throughout the whole program of site visits. Their points of view or issues that they wished further clarifications were conveyed by the coordinator of the Committee.

The Committee's specific composition during each of the site visits was as indicated in the table.

DATE	UNIT	RESEARCH UNIT	LOCATION	EVALUATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT
3 Nov 2003	745	Onset - Centro de Estudos da Linguagem	FCT - Lisboa	All members
3 Nov 2003	624	Centro de Estudos Humanísticos	FCT - Lisboa	All members
3 Nov 2003	707	Centro de Estudos em Letras	FCT - Lisboa	AH members
3 Nov 2003	214	Centro de Linguística da UL -CLUL	Lisboa	All members
3 Nov 2003	3213	Centro de Linguística da UNL	Lisboa	All members
4 Nov 2003	287	Centro de Estudos de Linguística Geral e Aplicada	Coimbra	<i>Lars-Erik Edlund absent</i>
4 Nov 2003	22	Centro de Linguística da UP	Porto	<i>Lars-Erik Edlund absent</i>
5 Nov 2003	128	Centro de Línguas e Culturas (CLC)	Aveiro	<i>Lars-Erik Edlund absent Jan Terje Faarlund absent</i>
5 Nov 2003	146	Instituto de Linguística Teórica e Computacional	Lisboa	<i>Lars-Erik Edlund absent Jan Terje Faarlund absent</i>

After concluding the site visits the Committee had a final meeting to summarize and discuss the impressions from the visits and to get a consensus regarding the its conclusions and recommendations for the future of the Portuguese research in the area of Linguistics. The Committee's work was however not concluded until about eight weeks after the final meeting in Lisboa. This post-visit work was carried out via e-mail exchanges and was essentially focused on the careful editing and readjustments of the individual evaluations of the Units.

### **3 Overall evaluation results**

This report addresses primarily the general aspects of the evaluation process. Specific evaluations were provided for each of the Units.

A Standard of two hours per Unit was not always adequate. The Committee worked in parallel when assessing individual projects but it would have been better if more time had been allocated for the evaluation of the Units with larger number of ongoing projects.

The Committee's preliminary evaluation using the materials available in the database suggested that there was a very low number of internationally published work and that there were dramatic differences in the individual productivity of the researchers, even within the same unit.

The Committee had the opportunity to see demonstrations of the work in progress and engage in short but intensive discussions of its content. These discussions were very giving and confirmed the Committee's previous notions about the Portuguese research in Linguistics. It is carried out by very competent teams and it is generally of good quality. The theoretical frames of the research are well defined but in some cases the research seems to be conducted in a somewhat defensive tone, i.e. the work is well executed but has a conservative, descriptive coloring instead of a addressing the issues in terms of future-oriented innovative and challenging perspectives. This good but rather timid approach may be a consequence of the Portuguese linguists' relatively little experience of exposure in international arena. To unleash the scientific potential of the Portuguese research in Linguistics, the Committee strongly suggests efforts to promote the international visibility of the work produced by the Portuguese linguists.

#### ***3.1 Internationalization perspective***

The Committee's overall assessment of the quality of the Portuguese research in Linguistics conveyed a complex picture of the scientific activity in the area. Whereas the quality and relevance of much of the research being carried out meets international standards, the international projection of the Portuguese research in Linguistics is practically inexistent when

measured in terms of publications in well established international journals and citations by scientists outside the Portuguese linguistic community. This discrepancy is rather puzzling and suggests a culture of inbreeding and self sufficiency that must be adequately addressed in order to give Portuguese research in Linguistics the international visibility it deserves. Portuguese researchers have an impressive production of work in books (both monographs and collections of chapters), often of very good scientific content and remarkably exclusive graphic quality, but that production seems to be nearly exclusively aimed at the Portuguese speaking community and has extremely low international impact. To be sure, the very nature of some of that research makes it most suitable for publication in book form (and even primarily in Portuguese), but such publications must be supported by articles published in refereed international journals capable of drawing the attention of the international scientific community towards the important work carried out in Portuguese Linguistics. To increase the international visibility of the Portuguese research in Linguistics, the Committee specifically recommends the creation of a temporary program of rewards for publications in international peer-reviewed journals. Such a program is likely to become an effective investment and a necessary one to encourage Portuguese Linguists to break the barriers of language and publication culture that preclude their international visibility.

Obviously any internationalization initiatives that may already have been taken by the Units aiming at participation in international events and contributions to proceedings should be strongly encouraged, provided those international events have the adequate scope and dimension. It is therefore recommended that research Units carefully consider their annual priorities of the participation in international events. Large international conferences and workshops serve different purposes and should be adequately explored in order to obtain maximal effect of international projection of the Units research and/or as a source of information of what is happening on the international scene, information that should be subsequently shared with the rest of the research team upon return to the Unit.

Efforts to explore the possibilities of deep and long-term scientific exchange with foreign researchers must also be supported, in particular if the exchange involves different cultures and scientific traditions. Existing European programs for exchange of teachers and students should be explored to broaden the Portuguese linguists international research and teaching experience and to also to attract foreign linguists to do research and teaching in Portugal.

### **3.2 Research methods**

Appreciable differences were detected in the effectiveness of the research methods used by

different groups, both within and across Units. These differences in effectiveness seem to result from a combination of research traditions and availability of adequate equipment. In the area of Lexicology, for instance, rather inefficient manual input methods the originals dictionaries are being adopted instead of using high-quality scanners for digitalization of the documents that can be subsequently commented by the investigators and effectively distributed through the Internet. This is type of approach that was adopted by the Spanish Royal Academy (RAE), to give an example. A collection of dictionaries published between 1737 and 1992 was scanned and organized in a database indexed by lexicologists and is now easily available to the public at <http://www.rae.es>, "Diccionarios académicos".

It is strongly recommended that the infrastructure currently available in Portugal for this type of work is urgently upgraded through a national programmatic investment aimed at accelerating the Portuguese work on Lexicology and to make it easily available to the international scientific community.

### **3.3 Structural aspects**

The Committee attempted to assess the Units' internal cohesion, their critical masses and their ability to integrate young researchers and graduate students. The intention was to detect possible differences between Units that might consist of loosely integrated groups pursuing unrelated lines of research and well formed Units where different lines of research were articulated to achieve synergistic effects capable of promoting the Unit as a whole. The same criteria were applied to the evaluation of the Candidate Units. Admittedly, synergistic effects may emerge as a result of the very creation of a Unit, but the Evaluation Committee reasoned that even in Candidate Units should have initial critic mass of coherent research lines and well formulated theoretical approaches in order to be viable.

All the established Units appeared to have good enough internal cohesion but the overall articulation of the lines of research proposed by two of the Candidate Units was somewhat unclear.

Regarding the critical mass of researchers and the involvement (or prospect of involvement) of young researchers, there appear to be differences cutting across both established and Candidate Units. With two exceptions, all the established Units seem to have enough critical mass of researchers. In the one of the smaller Units a large investment on graduate students has been made and that investment is only now going to start producing visible results; the other small Unit with low number of PhD researchers has a special area of applied research that is nevertheless satisfactorily covered by the existing research team.



Interviews with a large number of graduate students from every established Unit also indicated good research climate and a positive feeling among the students in all the Units. In spite of the clearly insufficient or inexistent office space available for students, they feel well taken care of, that their work is appreciated and supported and that the Units make an effort to provide economic support for their participation in conferences and other events. The enthusiasm and dedication of the graduate students is a critical resource for the future of scientific research that must be carefully administrated.

In terms of computer infrastructures, the Units visited in Lisboa and Aveiro appeared to have acceptable resources, at the moment, whereas the Units in both Coimbra (CELGA) and Porto (CLUP) there seemed to be only one computer available within the Units' premises. Notably however, all the visited Units have made significant efforts to be accessible via the Internet. Most of the Units have also created very useful interactive home pages allowing interactive searches of project materials or bibliographic searches of the Units' libraries (unfortunately, lack of funding seem to have forced the interruption of this work, at least in the case of CLUL). The Portuguese linguists' efficient and intelligent use of the available computational resources must be praised and deserves continued support. However, and as pointed out above, the research in Lexicology, Medieval texts and Atlases has apparently not yet started to explore up-to-date digitalization techniques that most certainly would increase the efficiency of the research work and greatly facilitate its availability through specialized databases.

#### **4 Programmatic funding**

The Evaluation Committee's assessment of the current status of the Portuguese research in the area of Linguistics led to the following recommendations of strategic funding, in order of priority:

- Temporary program of incentives to publication in international peer-reviewed journals
- Upgrading of the technical infrastructures in the area of lexicology, medieval texts and geographic linguistics
- Support of international exposure of Portuguese researchers

##### ***4.1 Temporary program to improve international visibility***

To increase the international visibility of Portuguese research in Linguistics, the Evaluation Committee suggests a significant incentive to publications in high profile international journals. This is a temporary, relatively low-cost but potentially effective program of incentives. The Committee envisages the following possible goals for a programmatic funding dedicated to promotion of the international visibility of the Portuguese research in Linguistics:

1. Full refund of the Units translation or editing costs associated with the preparation of papers to be submitted to international peer-reviewed journals. Publication bonus (e.g. 1.000 €) to be shared by the authors of each actually published paper in a peer-reviewed Journal. Such bonus could be transferred to a special account administrated by the research Unit but used discretionally by the authors for research-related purposes.

Such a bonus system could be implemented over an experimental period of 3 years after which it should be evaluated and extended for 2 additional years, in case of satisfactory results yield during the first period.

An initial goal for the senior researchers might be about one article per year, published in a refereed international Journal. At a later stage, evaluation criteria like the international impact of the work might be also used.

2. An alternative solution for the internationalization issue might be the creation of an International Journal of Portuguese Linguistics, with international peer-reviewers and published in English. Such a Journal would enable Portuguese researcher to define the priorities of areas to be addressed and yet provide an international outlet that would enable the visibility of the Portuguese work beyond the Portuguese speaking community itself.

#### ***4.2 Infrastructure upgrading***

The Committee recommends the acquisition of high-quality scanners and computer facilities for effective work in Lexicology, Medieval Texts and Atlases. Scanning facilities should be viewed as basic research tools to be used by the teams working in those areas but the digitalized work might be finally assembled and structured by some entity, or Unit, that would be responsible for its diffusion and public accessibility.

The Evaluation Committee believes this would be a cost-effective investment.

#### ***4.3 Support to international exchange of researchers***

This recommendation is intended as a complement to the existing European exchange programs. The Units should be encouraged to explore the already existing exchange programs but additional dedicated funds should be offered to cover the particular needs of the Portuguese Research in Linguistics that cannot be accommodated in the existing EU programs.