

CLUNL Advisory board report

13-14 December 2019

Preliminary note. This report was written on the basis of the documents provided to the Advisory Board by those in charge of the Centre of Linguistics of the University NOVA of Lisbon (CLUNL) and on the face-to-face meetings with members of the four groups which currently make up the research centre.

Preparatory meeting with the researchers in charge/board of directors

Before the face-to-face meetings with the research groups, the directors (Professors Costa, Amaro and Gonçalves) explained the situation of the CLUNL within the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences (FCHS) and its relationship with the Linguistics Department. They presented an analysis of the tasks that the members of the CLUNL perform, drawing attention to the activities above and beyond those strictly linked to research, which are often highly time-consuming, in particular lecturing, administrative duties and thesis supervision. The directors commented on the report on the research centre from the Foundation for Science and Technology (Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia or FCT), focusing on the five orientations which are considered the most important and insisting on the importance of work with a social impact and on the international dimension of a large part of the research carried out by the CLUNL. The problem associated with group 4 (CLCM) was raised. A number of the members of this group left the university, leaving only one researcher and some collaborators. A further complication is that the researcher in question is not a titular member of the University Nova. This is a situation which should not be allowed to continue and the advisory board and the directors are working together with a view to a solution.

Meeting with Group 1 (LiFE)

The Group LiFE started off by presenting the main aims of their fundamental research, which are directed at the universal and variable properties of human language, at the process of acquisition and language change taken in a comparative perspective and at the interaction between the faculty of language and the other components of the mind.

This group's recent research has put emphasis on various applications of linguistic theory, in particular in designing tools to evaluate the levels of acquisition of speech capacity and in building instruments to be used in language therapy. In addition, the group has continued to invest heavily in elaborating materials for the creation of dictionaries. One of these, a long-term project, is a dictionary of Medieval Portuguese, nearing completion.

The advisory board notes the large number of financed programs: four projects have received external funding in 2018/2019 and three other projects are currently being screened for funding. In addition, members of this group are taking part in external research projects concerning the resolution of anaphora and a diachronic approach to clitics in Romance languages. They are also participating in international research networks, such as the *Heritage Language Consortium*.

Meeting with group 2 (LLT)

This group presented their work under three headings: lexicography, terminology and computational linguistics.

In lexicography there is a transversal focus on describing varieties of Portuguese, with a further focus on the effects brought about on these varieties by substrates, in particular African substrates. The group has devoted itself to producing at least three types of dictionary: a wine dictionary (thereby participating in the currently promising research field of sensory terminology), a digital edition of the Orthographic Dictionary of the Portuguese language and a Dictionary of European Portuguese and Standard Arabic, this last-mentioned involving collaboration at the European level.

Work on terminology is carried out in the framework of a dozen different projects ranging from a contribution to ELEXIS, the European Lexicographic Infrastructure, to the creation of a terminology on research and an application to industry.

In computational linguistics and the lexicon, special mention should be made of a European project *Distant Reading for European Literary History* and a study of the role of metaphor in semantic neology in Portuguese based on the analysis of texts taken from the contemporary Portuguese press.

All these projects give rise to the production of various types of resources, including many concrete applications.

Meeting with Group 3 (G&T)

This group started its presentation in the form of a diagram showing the relationship between the research projects currently pursued before going on to focus on the study on the status of textual genres and types of discourse in particular in the perspective of the relevance of these concepts for analysing literary texts.

The researchers then went on to present analyses of the various components of what might be termed 'grammar', ranging from morphological to syntagmatic analysis, as well as research centred on the various forms of interaction between the grammatical level and the level of textuality. It should be pointed out at this point that this research group puts much effort into didactics, in particular in creating tools for teaching and learning about textual genres.

Several transversal themes should also be mentioned here, notably the contrastive analysis work carried out in various theoretical frameworks with regard to text and discourse, a number of both synchronic and diachronic research projects on the elements which go to make up the organisation of a text, and finally research on the social and linguistic status of certain textual genres, in particular that of the commentary. On another level, much interest was shown in a research project on literacy as scientific knowledge constructed in and by texts.

Meeting with Group 4 (CLCM)

Only Professor Batoréo was able to make a presentation for Group 4. She outlined the awkward situation of the group within the CLUNL and went on to present a number of works which she produced with some collaborators in the field of interaction between linguistics and cognition.

Appreciation

The members of the Advisory board were most favorably impressed by the scope of the research carried out within the CLUNL, on at least three counts: the intrinsic quality of the research undertaken, the insistence on social implication and the active participation in international research initiatives and structures.

The CLUNL carries out fundamental research in the fields covered by the first three groups. Their theoretical orientations and methodologies are completely consonant with mainstream preoccupations in language sciences today.

One of the specific and extremely positive features of the work carried out within the CUNL is the large number of research projects combining a synchronic with a diachronic approach. A second important feature is the focus of many of the projects on social usefulness, whether this is part of didactic works or collaboration to produce tools such as dictionaries. Moreover, the advisors were struck by the quality and quantity of the works presented, by the dynamism and enthusiasm of the very many young co-workers in the three research groups.

They also indicated their satisfaction that the suggestions made by the board in previous assessments have been scrupulously taken into account.

Recommendations

In presenting the research activities of each of the three groups, care should be taken to avoid generalizations and statements of principle, which can lead to repetition from one group to another. It would be advisable to adopt a common structure which distinguishes clearly between three levels:

- the epistemological and theoretical orientations of the group,
- the particular fields of research adopted with the framework of the orientations mentioned above,
- those methodologies effectively put into practice in the work of the group.

From the point of view of the administrative structure, it seems evident that the first three groups should continue to operate according to their current *modus operandi*. The fourth group, on the other hand, is no longer justified in its present form. It would be advisable for it to be turned into a 'transitional group' whose structure and precise title remain to be agreed on, in order to provide a temporary structure for those collaborators whose research orientation is still in the process of being defined or do not fall within the scope of the first three groups.

One final recommendation would be to encourage still more interaction between the three groups. Two lines of action are suggested.

- In the description of the activities planned for 2018-2020, four research orientations are mentioned (KORE, KARE, ATTRACT and KORE). To give added credibility to the collaboration between the teams within these orientations, it would be highly recommended to start off with a general presentation recapitulating the common properties and objectives of the orientations before going into the (logical) detail on what each group is to contribute.

- Even though basic theoretical research options are necessarily specific to each group, it would be desirable for there to be interaction and collaboration in the very many projects which imply research applications. Typical of these are projects implicating various forms of didactics and more generally vocational training.

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