

CLUNL Advisory board report

11-12 January 2021

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 of the online meetings with members of the three groups which currently make up the research centre on 11 and 12 January 2021. These meetings were organized as follows:

January 11: each group met with the board individually.

January 12: a general meeting with all CLUNL members and the board took place, followed by a meeting of the CLUNL directors with the board, and closed by a short operational board meeting.

Meeting with Group 1 (LiFE)

Group 1 includes 12 researchers with a PhD, 22 PhD students and 5 collaborators working in other institutions. Two basic orientations should be distinguished, one towards fundamental and experimental research, the other towards applied linguistics. The traditional domains of linguistic research, syntax, language acquisition and development, comparative synchronic and diachronic perspectives to language, and language processing, continue to occupy a high position on the agenda of research. The diachronic dimension is completed by the development of a corpus and a dictionary of Medieval Portuguese. The research on acquisition requires the definition of specific experimental procedures, a condition the researchers in the unit conform to scrupulously. It is a fact that much progress in the knowledge of language in recent years has been achieved via experimental studies and the use of new technologies. Successful in-depth studies of the acquisition of L1 and of L2, language impairment, monolingual and bilingual environments are provided. Second, during the last two years, in order to answer increasing demands coming from various sectors (education, clinical activity), the unit has also been particularly active in language education, developing material for SLI and for L2 learners and training L1 and L2 teachers to assess learner's language skills. The mass of results recently obtained by LiFE testifies that the researchers in this group are fully aware of the centrality of societal and applied dimensions (integration of minorities, cultural heritage) in the future development of the field.

In the rich publication file provided by the group, it is difficult to select some contributions and say nothing about the others, since all of them reach a very high level of excellence.

On the theoretical/experimental side, comparative studies between European and Brazilian Portuguese, which have proved to be so fruitful in the past, are still carried on. Comparison now focuses on microvariation between the European Portuguese dialects themselves and also on differences between Romance languages (Portuguese vs. Spanish for the resolution of anaphora). Most phenomena are

considered through the acquisition or comparative or diachronic lenses: pronominal clitics, inflected infinitives, null objects, pronominal subjects, agreement, interface phenomena, ...

On the applied linguistics side, a new field of research is being explored and new challenges taken up. For example, there is still a long way to go in the training of teachers and in the promotion of linguistic science within this training. At the same time, this new direction is priceless to linguists because it allows them to access original data which have never been studied before and to better understand the impact of the field on linguistic development, the heterogeneity of child audiences. We are confident that the energy and the talent of the researchers of LiFE will open new ways of thinking about these questions in the proximate future. It should be emphasized that only a small part of the research conducted in this area has been published for the moment, because this reorientation is relatively recent. But results will soon be accessible in print.

The unit has been rather successful in obtaining funds for projects with high societal impact, involving schools and training centers. But, though the theoretical/experimental production is of the highest possible quality, it has reduced with respect to the previous years, mainly due to the lack of funds in fundamental linguistic research. The group members participate in many international consortia and publish in high-level international journals.

Meeting with Group 2 (LLT)

The meeting with the LLT group was very informative since their presentations and discussions reinforced the impression produced by the activity report that had been previously submitted.

As reflected in its name, the research of the LLT group focuses on the following three areas: (i) Lexicology; (ii) Lexicography; and (iii) Terminology. Although the presentation of the group did not include a mission statement, the commitment of the 12 researchers, 14 PhD candidates, and 8 collaborators is evident. Their research addresses lexical, lexicographic, and terminological issues as well as to the elaboration of resources. In fact, they are currently engaged in a great deal cutting-edge research, an admirable amount of which has also fed into the very wide-ranging resources and applications that the LLT group has produced, which can be used for various purposes, such as the ontologies of Andalusian ceramics, cork, and domain-specific labels in Biomedicine, the comparable corpus on Public Art, and the collaborative COVID-19 glossary.

1. Lexicology

The group's publications in this area mostly pertain to the structure of general language. There are few 'pure' studies on lexicology since most of the papers and chapters focus on lexical and formal aspects of the specialized lexicon. The most salient work of the group mainly targets the other two research areas, Lexicography (both general and specialized) and Terminology. However, Lexicology could possibly include the various publications on language teaching and translation, which do not seem to fit easily into the other subareas areas reflected in the name of the group. In fact, Language Teaching is one the richest domains for synergies with G1 and G3, as reflected in the current research projects.

The projects in this (expanded) subarea include EXPRIMI, and GiroFLE all of which address some aspect of language teaching or language rehabilitation. They have the undeniable virtue of being extremely useful to society. Although EXPRIMI is still not funded, it has great value as an outreach project.

2. Lexicography

The group's research in Lexicography is extremely rich and varied, as reflected in the publications that are directly related to Digital Humanities and the new era of electronic dictionaries. This is evident in the special volume of *Linha d'Água on Linguistics for Digital Humanities*, which will be published in the near future. Also worth mentioning are their studies of domain labels in general language dictionaries (Salgado and Costa, 2020; Costa et al., 2020; Salgado et al. 2021).

In regard to lexicographic resources, the group is elaborating a digital edition of the Orthographic Dictionary of the Portuguese language, a Dictionary of European Portuguese and Standard Arabic, a glossary of Morphology, and a glossary of Covid-19 terms.

The most important project in Lexicography is undoubtedly ELEXIS, which has led to the development of lexicography tools such as Lexonomy. The participation of the group in this European Horizon 2020 reflects the value of their research in this area. Other projects include the European-Portuguese-Standard Arabic Dictionary Research projects directly linked to Digital Humanities are MORDigital, which involves the digitalization of the *Diccionario da Lingua Portuguesa* and the VOLP-1940, the Digital Edition of the *Vocabulário Ortográfica da Lingua Portuguesa*. There are also non-funded projects, such as the Cultural Heritage Lexicon, which hopefully will receive funding in the future.

3. Terminology

Terminology is another very strong research area of the LLT group especially since much of the Terminology work is also closely linked to the group's research in Lexicography. The main publications in this area are on specialized knowledge units and their representation in a wide range of domains, ranging from Andalusian artefacts (Almeida and Costa, 2020a, 2020b) to endometriosis (Carvalho and Setúbal 2020; Carvalho et al., 2021) to renewable energy (Lino et al 2020). The topics include ontology building, corpora, text mining, multi-word terms, and the compilation of specialized glossaries. This valuable research has led to ontologies, corpora, and glossaries, all of which are publicly available.

Their funded terminology project is OrthoDef, whose goal is to increase and validate ontological and lexical resources in speech and language therapy. The COVID-19 collaborative glossary and TermVest have not as yet received funding.

Meeting with Group 3 (G&T)

Group 3, *Grammar & Text*, includes 17 Senior researchers with PhD, 13 PhD students and 18 PhD collaborators working in other institutions (from Portugal, Brazil, Spain, Argentina, Germany, Slovenia and Thailand). In the field of fundamental research, the specificity of this group is to identify and theorize the elements and modes of articulation between the properties of grammatical structures and the properties of textual organization. Their works are therefore necessarily anchored in diverse theoretical frameworks, bearing especially on morphology, semantics, discourse analysis, and historical linguistics. Theoretical research currently in progress relates: - to processes of grammaticalization, and in particular

to the diachronic evolution of certain morphological structures; - to the specific organization of certain texts genres (commentary and critical review); - to the structural properties of diverse discourse types. The group is also active in the conception, development and publication of didactic materials, especially for teaching reading.

The main current objectives of the group are to develop fundamental research in the areas of semantics, morphology, historical linguistics and text theory, and to develop new modes of disseminating knowledge:

- construction of descriptive and theoretical proposals on Portuguese, possibly comprising comparative approaches;
- preparation of an international research project with the participation of the Grammar and Text Group's researchers (PhDs and young researchers);
- development of resources and tools to support the research (e.g. glossaries of terms related to the specific domains of the project, corpora for the collection of data);
- development of activities for the community (e.g. education of specific groups, dissemination of scientific knowledge).

The group obtained several funds for their specific projects and for projects in collaboration with the two other groups of the CLUNL. During 2020, the group significantly increased its publications, in scientific journals and collective works, almost all in the Portuguese language. Its members have also made oral presentations in some twenty scientific events. Besides, team dynamics is also evidenced in the number of ongoing PhDs (19) and the integration of young researchers in their activities and projects.

The *Grammar & Text* unit has particularly demonstrated creativity and efficiency in the organization of courses sessions and conferences, with the *Workshops on grammar and text* (the 20th in 2020) and especially the conferences GRATO (*International Conference on Grammar and Text* – the 7th in 2021) who have acquired a strong European reputation.

Meeting with the CLNUL researchers

One of the issues that arose regards the use of English and the venue chosen for the publication of the group research output. All three groups have a very high number of publications in Portuguese. The issue was largely discussed during the general meeting in order to brainstorm on the possibilities to improve the international visibility and funding track record of CLUNL. While CLUNL members do understand the urge to make their work available to the global linguistic community, they are also aware of the importance of keeping Portuguese as a language of science. Furthermore, many societal partners and other Portuguese-speaking stakeholders would not be able to benefit from the insights provided by CLUNL research, were these only presented in English.

Another issue that arose during this meeting was the fact that many PhD students (more than 30 out of 50, i.e. around 60%) of the actual PhD students do not have financial support. This, together with the heavy workload and the chronic lack of structural funds gives cause for great concern and puts the sustainability of the whole center at risk.

Meeting with the researchers in charge/board of directors

After the meeting with the research groups and with the whole CLUNL, the directors (Professors Costa, Amaro and Correia) explained the situation of the CLUNL within the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences (FCHS). The discussion revolved around the main problem of the Center, namely the scarcity of funds, and the various strategies that are being developed to cope with it. Because of the presence of three new board members, a good part of the conversation was devoted to the discussion of the changes with respect to the previous situation. The researchers were very proud to outline the new collaborative developments between the three groups, mainly aimed at obtaining joint research projects and the efforts of the newly hired ECRs is having a very positive impact on the general atmosphere as well as the research profile of the institute as a whole.

The work pressure is very high and very often the amount of research freedom granted to students entering a PhD has the consequence of scattered output. One of the strategies that are being considered is to have students work at a project from the start, so that the joint efforts can be channeled towards a more uniform output and the supervisors do not risk having to supervise many different topics.

Evaluation criteria were also discussed, and the necessity and importance to keep a balance between transparent and quantifiable criteria on the one hand and research freedom on the other.

Appreciation

The members of the Advisory board were all very favorably impressed by the quality and quantity of output of the three groups. Outreach and societal impact are evident.

Recommendations

In what follows, we outline recommendations for each of the groups and then for the CLUNL as a whole.

Recommendations for Group 1 (LiFE)

It is obviously a huge challenge to keep the balance between applied and fundamental research. Researchers in LiFE have managed to do so up to now. This double channel orientation is very promising and should be maintained at all costs. LiFE's commitment to both applied and experimental linguistics opens very stimulating and promising perspectives.

The experimental dimension could be further extended and other aspects of linguistic research considered. For example Portuguese sign language is still a relatively uncharted territory and potentially has an obvious societal impact.

A further observation should be made. Things would be much easier if the team was more robust, if grants and contracts were more liberally awarded, if more funding was available. What LiFE received in recent years, especially in 2020, certainly doesn't match what the breadth and the originality of its project and the wealth of its results deserve, in spite of the stimulating and innovative research proposals that were submitted.

Recommendations for Group 2 (LLT)

The Lexicology/Lexicography/Terminology group is extremely dynamic, participating in a wide variety of research projects and networks. Many of these programs have a social commitment and/or a pronounced cultural and heritage dimension, which is praiseworthy in the context of higher education. There is a risk however that taking part in too many programs, especially those that are not funded, may lead to dispersal, in particular when so many of the members of the team have pressing lecturing and administrative commitments. It would therefore be advisable to concentrate firstly on joint projects with the two other groups, thereby reinforcing a welcome tendency noted in the present report and, secondly, on sectors where synergies are possible, both within and outside the university, such as health, electronic resources and artificial intelligence. This does not imply any fundamental change in research orientation, quite to the contrary, but rather reinforcing existing strong points.

Recommendations for Group 3 (G&T)

The *Grammar & Text* group was a pioneer in the field of the relations between grammar and text (topic that has since developed in some countries), and obviously we can only recommend that the unit continue and develop its fundamental research ; especially focusing on the identification and conceptualization of interdependent relationships between linguistic phenomena usually considered as independent, and focusing on the analysis of the specific “grammatical” properties of the various text-genres. On these general themes, it would be necessary that the unit publish more papers or books in English, and also in other European languages.

We are satisfied to note that, as it had been recommended in the previous report, the group has developed many forms of interaction and collaboration inside of the CLUNL, with the LIFE group in particular. As far as possible, it would be interesting to develop these collaborations in the field of applications to language teaching. Another way to consolidate such interaction and amplify transdisciplinary approaches could be the choice of a common subject that would set a thematic focus for the team.

General recommendations

While appreciating the dedication of many CLNUL and their very hard work, the committee expresses some concerns on the sustainability of this excellent research program. The chronic lack of structural funds cannot be matched with personal sacrifice, therefore the committee urges the University to address

the need to hire more staff and to provide more direct research funds according to the needs expressed by the Center as a whole.

Regarding the language policy, the committee suggests to draft a language policy document to be adopted by the CLUNL and perhaps shared with other institutions, where the use of Portuguese as a language of research is stated clearly; this document can constitute the basis for a general discussion on language policy for scientific research in the country, as well as start an important reflection on the need of linguistic plurality and inclusion, especially in view of the fact that a large part of the scientific community in Brazil does not use English as their working language. This document can be referred to in international applications in order to ensure the correct evaluation of the research output of the group members.

February 1, 2021

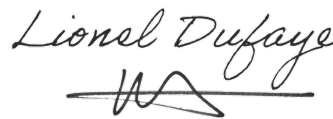
Jean-Paul Bronckart

Handwritten signature of Jean-Paul Bronckart in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'JPB' followed by a horizontal line.

Roberta d'Alessandro

Handwritten signature of Roberta d'Alessandro in blue ink, featuring a stylized 'RdA' followed by a horizontal line.

Lionel Dufaye

Handwritten signature of Lionel Dufaye in black ink, with the name written in cursive above a horizontal line.

Pamela Faber

John Humbley

Handwritten signature of John Humbley in blue ink, consisting of a complex, abstract scribble.

Alain Rouveret

Handwritten signature of Alain Rouveret in blue ink, with the name written in cursive above a horizontal line.