ESF Exploratory Workshop on

Exploring the roots of linguistic diversity:
Biolinguistic perspectives

Bellaterra (Spain), 20-23 September 2010

Convened by:

Cedric Boeckx

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Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 08193 Bellaterra (Spain))
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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Main Objectives of the Workshop:

The proposed workshop intends to bring different perspectives to bear on the issue of linguistic variation in the context of biolinguistics (an emerging interdisciplinary approach to the study of human language and its biological foundations). The aim is to develop a new theoretical framework to understand the nature and limits of language variation, and explore ways of testing it empirically. The need for such a workshop reflects recent theoretical changes in linguistics (the result of increased interdisciplinarity), as well as empirical findings that cast doubt on the standard account of language variation known within theoretical linguistics as the ‘Principles-and-Parameters’ approach.

Additional information:

The workshop intends to bring to the attention of linguists (and other scientists interested in the nature of linguistic diversity) new sets of phenomena, methods, hypotheses, and ideas that will lead to a better integration of linguistic theory with other fields trying to uncover the biological basis of language (“biolinguistics” in a broad sense). The hope is for this workshop to provide the beginning of an attempt towards a more fruitful integration (a more productive kind of interdisciplinarity).
PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME

Monday 20 September 2010

Arrival day

Informal get-together (time/place: TBA (somewhere close to the hotel, downtown Barcelona) - Dinner

Tuesday 21 September 2010

09.00-09.20 Welcome by Convenor
 Cedric Boeckx (ICREA/UAB)

09.20-09.40 Presentation of the European Science Foundation (ESF)
 Hanne Ruus (Copenhagen University, ESF Standing Committee for the Humanities (SCH))

09.40-14.00 Morning Session

09.40-10.40 Developmental plasticity and linguistic variation
 Guillermo Lorenzo (U. Oviedo)

10.40-11.40 The Acquisition of Linguistic Variation: Parameters vs. Micro-cues
 Marit Westergaard (U. Tromsoe)

11.40-12.00 Coffee / Tea Break

12.00-13.00 Variation (and change) are lexical: the reality of the lexicon
 M. Rita Manzini (U. Florence)

13.00-14.00 Micro-variability in the linguistic expression of thought and affect: Some evidence from Dutch
 Norbert Corver (U. Utrecht)

14.00-15.30 Lunch

15.30-20.00 Afternoon Session

15.30-16.30 Unity & Diversity in Human Language: A Biological Perspective
 Tecumseh Fitch (U. Vienna)

16.30-17.30 Grammars, genes, and history
 Guiseppe Longobardi (U. Trieste)

17.30-18.00 Coffee / tea break

18.00-19.00 Explaining Diversity in Geminate Consonant Inventories:
 An Evolutionary Approach
 Juliette Blevins (Max Planck, Leipzig)

19.00-20.00 Neural representation and processing of linguistic variation
 Itziar Laka (U. Basque Country)

21.00 Dinner
Wednesday 22 September 2010

09.40-14.00  **Morning Session**

09.40-10.40  **The fixing problem**  
**Marc Richards** (U. Leipzig)

10.40-11.40  **On materialization**  
**Halldor Sigurdsson** (U. Lund)

11.40-12.00  **Coffee / Tea Break**

12.00-13.00  **Reconciling Macro- and Microparametric Variation**  
**Ian Roberts** (U. Cambridge)

13.00-14.00  **Case and Universal Grammar**  
**Artemis Alexiadou** (U. Stuttgart)

14.00-15.30  **Lunch**

15.30-20.00  **Afternoon Session**

15.30-16.30  **Choice, chance and necessity: variation and stability in grammar**  
**David Adger** (Queen Mary, U. London)

16.30-17.30  **The Socio-Syntax of Development: A View from the Gen-CHILD Project**  
**Kleanthes K. Grohmann** (U. Cyprus)

17.30-18.00  **Coffee / tea break**

18.00-19.00  **On the informativeness of agrammatism for linguistic variation**  
**Silvia Martinez Ferreiro** (UAB)

19.00-20.00  **Presentation 8: Where to go from here**  
Discussion on follow-up activities/networking/collaboration monitored by **Carme Picallo** (UAB)

21.00  **Dinner**

Thursday 23 September 2010

**Morning**  **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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ESF SCH Exploratory Workshop:  
Exploring The Roots Of Linguistic Diversity: Biolinguistic Perspectives  
Bellaterra (Spain), September 20-22, 2010

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Provisional List of Participants

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