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### Language acquisition and multilingualism : The role of architecture , processing and context in a multilingual setting : Research programme of the Research Council for the Humanities of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO)

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**Publication date**  
2003

[Link to publication](#)

#### **Citation for published version (APA):**

Hulstijn, J. H., Coopmans, P., van Hout, R., & Bos, P. (2003). *Language acquisition and multilingualism : The role of architecture , processing and context in a multilingual setting : Research programme of the Research Council for the Humanities of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO)*. NWO.

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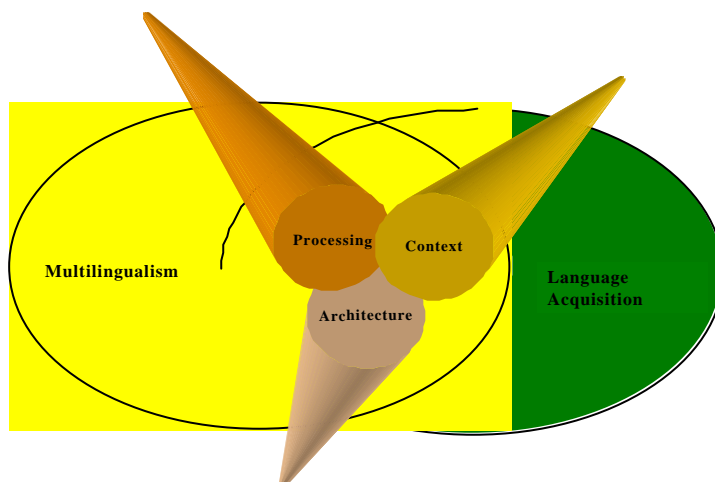
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# Language Acquisition and Multilingualism

The role of architecture, processing and context in a multilingual setting



NWO programme – September 2003  
FINAL VERSION

This is a programme by the NWO Research Council for the Humanities (GW)

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# The research programme *Language Acquisition & Multilingualism*

***Language Acquisition & Multilingualism (LA&M)* is the new linguistic research programme developed within the framework of the *NWO Humanities Strategic Plan 2002 – 2005*. The central aim of the programme is to instigate research on the intersection of the fields of language acquisition and multilingualism. The innovative power of the programme is founded in the integrated approach that combines three major aspects of the study of language acquisition and multilingualism: the role of architecture, processing and context in a multilingual setting.**

## 1. Introduction

Language acquisition and multilingualism are phenomena rooted in everyday life. As a result, modern society is constantly confronted with issues relating to multilingualism and the acquisition of a second language. Every European citizen has to deal with one or more foreign languages, either at school or elsewhere. The European Union officially adopts the policy that European citizens need to acquire a working knowledge of minimally two foreign languages. With the influx of large numbers of migrant workers and asylum seekers over the last thirty years, the societies of virtually all member states of the European Union have become truly multilingual. The picture is complicated even more by the fact that these migrant groups are linguistically integrated into European societies to varying degrees. Furthermore, as a consequence of globalisation and the transnational job-market more and more people feel the need to be fluent in languages other than their native language. Language acquisition and multilingualism in Europe raises dozens of practical issues, as the following examples illustrate:

- How can we deal with stagnation and fossilisation in the acquisition of national languages as second languages among immigrants?
- How should parents and school teachers be advised as to guiding the simultaneous acquisition of two, or even three languages by young children in bilingual homes?
- How can foreign language instruction be made more effective and efficient, given the fact that the school curriculum allows for only a few hours of foreign language instruction per week?

Fundamental research on LA&M will provide new knowledge, both about language in general and, more specifically, about the structure and process of first and second language acquisition in a variety of contexts. The research approach advocated here considers language, more expressly than has been the case so far, as a specific form of human cognition that develops under the influence of contextual factors. The new theoretical insights that result from such an approach will lead to knowledge that can be used in dealing with the social issues surrounding LA&M.

Broadly speaking, there are two ways in which language has been, and is being studied in the academic field. The first regards language as a phenomenon in human *cognition*, i.e., as an *internal* phenomenon. This phenomenon is also known as *I-language*. I-language offers us a window on the structure (or *architecture*) of the human mind (or brain), the *processing* that goes on there when we use language in listening, reading, speaking and writing, and the development of language.

The second way of viewing language regards language as an *external* phenomenon, i.e., outside humans. This is also known as *E-language*. E-language plays an important role in

communication between people. It includes the product of human language use in past and present times and is in part laid down in written documents, recorded on sound carriers, and archived in libraries or multimedia centres. E-language shows the influence of the *social context* on language. The way language is used – in a kindergarten, in a law court, in church, on the football field, in an old peoples' home, in a mathematics class or in a tabloid newspaper, for instance – varies under the influence of a range of social, ecological and other contextual factors.

In the scientific study of language we can distinguish three different dimensions. Many linguists (perhaps most) study language as an independent system (*architecture*), describing and showing the interaction between the various parts of that system (phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon, semantics). Linguistics in this form provides an essential contribution to our insight into human cognition. Other researchers are mainly concerned with different aspects of the processes of listening, reading, speaking and writing (here referred to collectively as *processing*). A third group of researchers are mainly involved with E-language, studying the use of language in situations that differ in social, historical, geographical and other respects (i.e., *context*).

Of course, researchers studying language acquisition and multilingualism are aware that there is more than just architecture, processing or context. However, few linguists actually study language acquisition and multilingualism with the explicit goal of combining these three dimensions. The field of language acquisition and multilingualism offers a unique opportunity to study the interaction between language as cognition (I-language) and language as social behaviour (E-language), as will be sketched in the following section. An integrated approach to language acquisition and multilingualism as it is proposed in this programme will form a basis for solutions to a variety of practical problems.

## **2. Research on language acquisition and multilingualism**

The central aim of the NWO research programme *Language Acquisition & Multilingualism* is to instigate integrated research in the field of language acquisition and multilingualism. In delineating this research programme, two decisions were made. The first decision relates to the terms 'language acquisition' and 'multilingualism'. The conjunction *and* is to be interpreted conjunctively, as denoting the intersection of these two topics. Therefore, research projects are stimulated that focus on the *combination* of language acquisition and multilingualism. Research projects into native language acquisition (unrelated to bilingualism) fall outside this delineation, and so does demographic research on the use of several languages or language varieties in certain regions or communicative situations, at least if such research were limited to external language (E-language) and excluded the involvement of internal language (I-language). The second decision central to this research programme concerns the preference for an approach that combines the three dimensions of architecture, processing and context, as outlined in more detail in section 2.1.

Stimulating cross-disciplinary research teams is one of the central aims of the LA&M programme. Due to the multidisciplinary nature of the programme (combining multilingualism and language acquisition as well as architecture, processing and context), the linguists involved in the programme will have to work together with psycholinguists and experts in the field of language teaching.

### **2.1 Language acquisition**

How come that the process of acquiring a second language is usually not as successful as the process of acquiring a first language? Theories about the acquisition of a first language (L1)

and a second or foreign language (L2) normally take the issue of learnability of language as their point of departure.<sup>1</sup> How can we explain why L1 acquisition, under normal circumstances, is successful even though the language input is somewhat impoverished? After all, the language input does not seem to provide L1 learners with enough information to determine whether language forms and structures that are logically possible actually occur in the language. Almost all theories assume that all L1 learners have a special language-acquisition *capacity*. However, opinions vary on the nature of that capacity and on whether this capacity is already fully present at birth or develops only later.<sup>2</sup> The issue of learnability, implicitly or explicitly, also underlies most theories of L2 acquisition. However, in the case of L2 acquisition, the learnability issue takes on an extra dimension, because we need to explain why L2 acquisition is generally less successful than L1 acquisition (as shown by research on fossilisation, ultimate attainment, and native and near-native proficiency). Explanations for this effect appeal to various factors, which differ depending on the theoretical dimension adopted:

*Within the architecture dimension:*

- The relevant principles and parameters of the innate language system and the question of whether such principles and parameters can atrophy. (These issues figure prominently in the generative linguistics approach.)
- The nature of the linguistic contrast between L1 and L2 (phonetic-phonological, lexical-semantic-pragmatic, morphosyntactic, or discourse-level).

*Within the processing dimension:*

- The limitations in information processing since the mind/brain is already occupied by (or 'committed to') L1 cognition. (This factor figures explicitly in the approach of some connectionists.)
- The attitudes, motivation, learning style, intelligence, etc., of the language learner.

*Within the context dimension:*

- The relative quantity and quality of the language input, compared both within and between the languages involved.
- The socio-economic and socio-cultural context of the L2 learner.

So far, most research on L2 acquisition has been carried out within one of the above-mentioned dimensions; the mutual interaction of factors from several dimensions has rarely been the subject of attention. L2 acquisition is such a complex phenomenon, however, that more attention should be given precisely to that interaction. In fact, there is a need for research that combines the dimensions of *architecture*, *processing* and *context* to a greater extent than before. It is quite likely that the relative weight of the above-mentioned factors varies depending upon specific circumstances. For example, we will need to take account of the age at which the L2 learner starts (i.e., as child or adult) and, in the case of a child L2 learner, of whether L2 is learned simultaneously with L1 or whether L1 and L2 are learned consecutively. Examples of *possible* research topics are given in section 3.

## **2.2 Multilingualism**

It could be said that almost every human can call upon a system that already comprises a number of different linguistic knowledge and skill components. Speakers of a language demonstrate this 'multi-competence', or 'multilingualism' in their command of their mother tongue in being able to cope with dialects, sociolects and other group languages. Language skills can also be regarded as a system of subskills (or modules) relating to the reception and

production, in speech and in writing, of sounds, vocabulary, sentences and whole texts. In short, what we normally call 'knowledge of a language', 'command of a language' or 'language proficiency' is actually a highly differentiated system of forms of knowledge and skills.

Over the past forty years, sociolinguists, psycholinguists and education specialists have studied the composition of linguistic knowledge from a static/synchronic perspective and from a dynamic/diachronic perspective, both within and between several languages (considering monolingual and bilingual speakers).<sup>3</sup> Thanks to the development of techniques for the online registration (in milliseconds) of the processing of linguistic information, psycholinguists and other cognitive scientists are now able to work out detailed computational models of both the representation and the use of linguistic information.

Within this fast-growing field, work is also being carried out on models of the mental lexicon of monolinguals and bilinguals.

In addition to this psycholinguistic work, other researchers in the field of language testing have been studying the relationship between subskills both within and between languages. This research has been prompted by demands from society, and since 1980, theory formation within this field has taken on an important and pioneering role. As a result, phenomena of multi-competence or multilingualism are now no longer explained in static/synchronic terms alone, but also in dynamic/diachronic terms (the growth of subskills in L1 and L2).

Other researchers point to the importance of subskills becoming automatic.

Current insight into the forms of multilingualism mentioned in this section can be fundamentally deepened by adopting a research approach that explicitly incorporates factors from (at least two of) the three dimensions of architecture, processing and context. Examples of *possible* research topics are given in section 3.

### **3. Examples of possible research topics**

In sections 2.1 and 2.2 it was argued that there is a need for more research on the interaction of the dimensions of architecture, processing and context. In this section, some examples of possible research topics are provided that show the added value of such an approach; they should not, however, be taken to exhaust the possibilities. All examples are interesting from both a theoretical and a social point of view, but they are included here for different reasons. Two examples (4 and 7) deal with recent developments in theory formation that could have significant social implications, while the other examples (1, 2, 3, 5 and 6) derive from social issues and - thanks to the multidimensional approach argued for here - could contribute to both theory formation and the improvement of practical applications.

#### *Example 1 – Simultaneous and consecutive bilingualism in young children*

Many children in the Netherlands (and indeed in the world) grow up in a multilingual environment. In the literature, a distinction is often made between simultaneous bilingualism (also called bilingual first language acquisition) and consecutive bilingualism. Parents with different native languages are often uncertain about whether it would be better for their children if they (the parents) used only one of the two languages at home during the first few years, or whether they should confront their children with two languages from the start. There is at present no clear-cut answer to this question. We do know, however, that the acquisition of two languages, whether simultaneously or consecutively, is in some cases relatively effortless and successful, whereas in other cases it is rather difficult and relatively unsuccessful; but we know too little of why that should be the case. We do not know enough about how the child's development of aural receptive and oral productive skills in various linguistic domains (sound, vocabulary, sentences, discourse) in the two languages is affected

by (a) the quantity and nature of the input in each of the two (or more) languages, (b) the linguistic similarities and differences between the languages, (c) the age from which the child is exposed to linguistic input in the languages.

#### *Example 2 – Fossilisation and language attrition*

Unlike L1 acquisition, L2 acquisition is often relatively unsuccessful. The L2 acquisition of the grammatical system seems to come to a standstill for certain individuals, even though they hear L2 around them on an almost daily basis. Why doesn't L2 acquisition develop any further? The vast majority of adult L2 learners comes to a 'steady, non-native' endstate grammar. A 'near-native' endstate grammar is a much less frequent, but still a possible outcome for some adult L2 learners.

Research on this phenomenon, called fossilisation, has failed to yield many satisfactory insights, because so far, only isolated aspects of it have been studied (e.g., the linguistic differences between the two languages, or the social contacts of L2 learners suffering from fossilisation). The question arises of whether the residual problems found at the stage of a 'steady, non-native' endstate grammar are representational (i.e. related to the architecture of knowledge) or computational (i.e. related to processing abilities) in nature.

A better understanding of the causes of fossilisation might be achieved if we were to approach the phenomenon more broadly, investigating the *interaction* of factors from the dimensions of architecture, processing and context. For example, when studying progress or fossilisation in receptive L2 acquisition compared to productive L2 acquisition, we could take account of several factors such as (a) the quantity and nature of L2 input; (b) linguistic differences between L1 and L2; (c) the age at which the learner started learning L2; (d) the duration of the learner's exposure to L2; (e) relevant physical and intellectual capacities of the learner, and (f) the learner's command of L1 and L2 in the various linguistic domains (sound, vocabulary, sentences, discourse).

Related to the issue of fossilisation is the problem of language attrition: What effect has a prolonged exposure and the use of a second language on the first language? There is some evidence that L1 attrition is selective, and that it is more likely to affect certain aspects of the L1 grammar, perhaps the same aspects that are not completely acquired in L2 acquisition. Here, too, the question arises whether L1 attrition is a representational or a computational phenomenon.

#### *Example 3 – L2 learners with specific physical or mental deficits*

The past few decades have seen a strong increase of research on sign language and aphasia. One reason for linguists' interest in sign language is that, by comparing spoken language with sign language, they hope to gain more knowledge about which properties of language are universal (important for our understanding of the mind/brain) and which are specific to language in a certain modality. The research interest into aphasia and other physical and/or mental deficits is due to the fact that linguists want to find out whether certain areas of the brain are specifically reserved for certain language functions and to what extent other parts of the brain could take over the functions of damaged parts. A number of researchers are currently studying aphasia, memory loss and dementia among bilinguals. Their research investigates the extent to which the disorder has a differential effect on patients' command of L1 and L2, and whether specific treatments (medication, language training) have a differential effect on the recovery of command of the two languages. This relatively recent research should be extended to include the possible interaction of factors from the dimensions of architecture, processing and context (e.g., those factors also mentioned example 2, on fossilisation and attrition).



*Example 4 – L2 acquisition as an interaction between language as cognition and language as social behaviour*

Relatively recently, a number of cognitive scientists (e.g., MacWhinney, Elman and Tomasello) have started a new school of thought they call 'Emergentism'.<sup>4</sup> This approach regards the development of humans and animals (and therefore also the 'growth' of language in humans) in both the ontogenetic and phylogenetic senses as the result of a synergy between internal biological processes and external environmental processes. Tomasello and his colleagues have now worked this out further for L1 acquisition/L1 development: in their view, children learn their L1 not so much by building up a system of rules, but by collecting constructions which, when offered in sufficient quantity, take on prototypical characteristics and start functioning as a 'hook' for constructing linguistic utterances. The language of the environment (E-language) plays a crucial role in this. This functional-cognitive perspective on the 'origin' of language (whenever a human being learns a language) studies language as cognition (I-language) in interaction with language as social behaviour (E-language). This approach could also be fruitful for the study of L2 acquisition, both in the case of L2 acquisition 'controlled' by language training and in the case of 'uncontrolled' L2 acquisition.

*Example 5 - Second and foreign language teaching*

Government and companies spend billions of euros each year on second-language and foreign-language teaching. The economic importance of good language training and of ever-improving teaching methods is generally recognised. Primary, secondary, tertiary and adult education are currently experimenting with new methods to teach Dutch to non-native speakers in ways other than the traditional ones; for example, by giving them task-oriented training (see WRR report *Nieuwe kansen voor taalonderwijs aan anderstaligen* ('New chances for language teaching to non-Dutch speakers') by Emmelot et al., 2001). Experiments with alternative programmes are also being conducted in foreign-language training (French, German, English, Spanish, etc.), for example, by teaching non-language subjects such as history or biology in a foreign language, or by means of study-abroad periods in the foreign-language country. Not only is the content of teaching programmes changing, but new teaching media are also being introduced. Significant changes are taking place in language teaching as a result of the use of multimedia computers and the Internet.

Of course, the effectiveness of these new forms of second-language and foreign-language teaching needs to be studied by comparing learning achievements quantified in terms of generally accepted measures of language skills. However, no comparison of methods will reveal the underlying factors that give rise to the observed effects of particular methods. In this regard, fundamental research on the combined influence of factors from the dimensions of architecture, processing and context is urgently needed. For instance, we know too little about how the quantity and nature of the language input in different contexts and in different modalities affect L2 development. What constitutes ideal oral and written language input in the domains of sound/writing, vocabulary, morphosyntax and text? Of course, the frequency with which language input is presented is important, but how variable is this input and how is it distributed across time? How do we reach a stage at which the listening and reading process is automatic? How can we promote fluency in speaking? These questions relate to factors from the dimensions of architecture, processing and context. Of course, not all these factors can be studied in one and the same research project. But it is perfectly possible to conduct fundamental research on controlled L2 acquisition (i.e., in learning situations within schools vs. outside the school) that investigates, more extensively than has hitherto been the case, the interaction of factors from more than just one of the three dimensions.

#### *Example 6 - Assessment of language proficiency in the Common European Framework*

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Strasbourg, 1998) contains proposals for formulating functional learning targets for foreign language teaching. These will have a great effect on foreign language teaching throughout Europe, including the Netherlands.<sup>5</sup> This European framework splits language skills up into many different subskills, depending on the communicative situation, the modality of language use (oral, written), and other factors. Furthermore, six levels of command are distinguished within each main skill (listening and speaking in dialogue situations, listening and speaking in non-dialogue situations, reading, writing, command of vocabulary and command of grammar and pronunciation/prosody).

The European Framework not only provides guidelines for formulating learning targets, but it also serves as a reference model for the development of language tests. In an EU context, and with EU funding, large numbers of language tests are being developed to measure learners' command of each 'cell' in this extensive framework. For example, there is a test of spoken English that can be taken on the Internet 24 hours a day, with the computer giving the assignments, scoring the responses, computing the scores and reporting the results. These are promising developments, and in principle to be welcomed. However, the results of such assessments can have enormous consequences for the careers of the individuals tested. It is therefore of great importance that the assessment is fair and reliable. In their eagerness to participate in such new developments, centres developing these language tests (almost all of them commercial companies) rarely get around to doing proper research on the scientific bases of the framework or into how it could be improved. However, the European Framework raises concrete questions about which combinations of skills or subskills are possible and which are not, and which skills or subskills are dependent on each other. For example, could people of different educational levels (e.g., a journalist, a trained car mechanic, a cleaner with no professional certificates) all in principle achieve the highest native speaker score (level 6) in listening and speaking skills in conversations in their native language? What exactly is native competence, and what is near-native competence? It is precisely when we ask these kinds of questions that the dimensions of architecture (the language system with its components), processing (influenced by individual differences in verbal and non-verbal capacities) and context (the characteristics of the communicative situation) come together. Fundamental research on language assessment that takes these dimensions into account is therefore urgently needed.

#### *Example 7 - Code mixing*

'Code mixing' is the mixed use of two or more languages in communicative situations involving bilingual speakers. Some research on code mixing has been limited to a purely linguistic approach, in which the grammatical context before and after the moment of the language switch has received the most attention. Other research has focused on the social and pragmatic characteristics of discussions between native and non-native speakers when code mixing and code switching takes place (e.g., in communicative situations between Dutch social service staff and non-native recipients of help, in conversations between Dutch and non-native colleagues on the work floor, or in conversations between bilingual Moroccan youngsters). Research on code mixing and code switching in language learners could be deepened, however, if it took account of more dimensions, such as combinations of architectural relationships, the processing of the languages in question, and contextual factors that can trigger and direct mixing and switching.

#### **4. International collaboration**

Multilingualism is characteristic for modern society in general and for the European Union in particular. With its 15 member states (and possibly 13 more in the future) the European Union comprises a diversity of languages and social contexts that offers an excellent opportunity for European collaboration on scientific research on LA&M. International collaboration in the domain of language acquisition and multilingualism offers a surplus value with respect to a number of factors.

The linguistic diversity as well as the social diversity allows research on the basis of a very broad empirical (and methodological) basis, since bilingual speaker with a variety of language pairings in different national language contexts can be studied. Additionally, projects jointly conducted in various countries can bring about a co-ordination in research effort that surpasses isolated small-scale projects. Expertise in the scientific study of various themes in the domain of language acquisition and multilingualism is not evenly distributed over countries in Europe. International workshops can serve to pass on knowledge and skills in research methodologies from experts in some countries to novices in other countries. Finally, also the accessibility to research databases can be improved by international collaboration.

#### **Research potential in Europe**

The research proposed in this programme can call upon a European research potential of substantial size and breadth when brought together. Although the fields of specialisation differ per country, the disciplines relevant to the proposed programme are all well represented. The quality of the research potential is reflected in the prominent presence of European research in international journals and of European researchers at international conferences.

NWO's aim is to acquire further funding that makes international research collaboration at a larger scale possible in the future.

For more information about European coordination and collaboration and an overview of the European research centres on LA&M please check the downloadable documents on the homepage of the LA&M programme [www.nwo.nl/TenM](http://www.nwo.nl/TenM).

#### **5. Organisation of the Programme**

The programme will officially start on September 1, 2003. The duration of the programme is 5 years with a total budget of 2,3 million Euro. Concerning the organisation, the evaluation, and the administration of the programme the general rules of NWO apply. A programme committee is responsible for the management of the programme. It also supervises the overall scientific quality of the programme and the balance of the topics within it.

#### **Procedure and Funding**

The goal of the LA&M programme is to stimulate and support research groups with a promising, multidisciplinary research plan. Therefore so called SMALL PROGRAMMES will form the heart of the research programme. The maximal budget for a SMALL PROGRAMME is k€ 400.

SMALL PROGRAMMES comprise at least one post-doc and one other research position. Researchers can apply for either full or partial funding. In case of full funding, at least one post-doc and one other research position are funded by NWO. Partial NWO funding of only one post-doc *or* one PhD position is only possible if the university or the research institute provides matching funds such that the whole active research team forms a SMALL

PROGRAMME. Already existing research positions are not considered matching funds. It is not possible to apply for an individual post-doc or PhD position if these positions are **not** part of a SMALL PROGRAMME. Within a SMALL PROGRAMME it is also possible to apply for replacement funding for a senior researcher (this means that a senior researcher is exempt from teaching duties in order to write one (or more) international publication(s) within the framework of the SMALL PROGRAMME. For that time a junior researcher is funded to take over the teaching duties). For more detail please see the Call for Proposals.

Only one Call for Proposals is envisaged for the programme, opening in September 2003. A second Call for Proposals focussing on the international dimension and international collaboration might be opened later on in the course of the programme if further fund-raising is successful.

### **Application**

Senior researchers working at Dutch universities or research institutions are invited to submit preliminary proposals (pre-proposals) that fit into the LA&M programme description. Only researchers who have submitted a pre-proposal are allowed to submit a full proposal. Researchers from abroad who are not associated with a Dutch university/research institute can only submit a research proposal together with a Dutch researcher. Positions abroad are not funded.

Research proposals submitted in the framework of the LA&M programme must be in the field of language acquisition and multilingualism as specified in the programme description in section 2. The examples listed in section 3 should be interpreted as examples of possible research topics; other topics are of course possible as well. Researchers should explicitly specify in which way and to what extent they intend to combine (at least two of) the three dimensions defined in the programme description, *architecture*, *processing* and *context*. With regard to the international dimensions, researchers are asked to sketch out the possibilities for an international collaboration. The quality and the desirability of the international cooperation form a separate evaluation criterion. In the research proposals, possible international activities such as exchange of scholars, work visits, workshops etc. directly related to the research project should be indicated.

### **Evaluation Process**

#### *I. Evaluation of the preliminary proposals*

The programme committee will evaluate the submitted preliminary proposals with respect to a number of evaluation criteria:

- Does the proposed project meet the goals and objectives of the LA&M programme?
- Are the two areas language acquisition and multilingualism covered?
- Does the proposed project choose an integrative approach combining (at least two of) the three dimensions *architecture*, *processing*, and *context*?
- Does the proposed project promise sufficient scientific quality?
- Are there plans for an international collaboration?

On the basis of the evaluation process, the programme committee will recommend to the Council for the Humanities which research groups should be advised to submit a full proposal.

#### *II. Evaluation of the full proposals*

Full proposals will be reviewed by at least three preferably international experts. The programme committee evaluates and ranks the proposals and then passes them on to the

Council for the Humanities, which will take the final decision about which projects are to be funded.

Applications are subject to the following evaluation criteria:

### ***I. Value for the LA&M programme as a whole***

- *Adequacy* with respect to the goals and objectives of the LA&M programme;
- *Relevance* to the two areas language acquisition and multilingualism;
- *Combination* of (at least two of) the three dimensions architecture, processing, and context;
- *Contribution* to diversity and balance in a broad spectrum of themes within the programme as a whole;
- *Coherence* of the proposal, and the inter-relationship between the formulated projects.

### ***II. Scientific quality***

- *Originality* in research question and/or methodology;
- *Scientific relevance* or impact of the proposed research;
- *Clarity* in problem definition/hypotheses;
- *International co-operation*, including level of collaboration with research partners outside the Netherlands and/or within an international research programme;
- *Adequacy / effectiveness* of the research design and methodology;
- *Feasibility* of the research, including quality of the research group, infrastructure and work plan;
- *Organisation* of the programme.

### ***III. Societal impact/relevance***

- *Transfer of knowledge* (such as planned workshops, conferences etc.);
- Societal, cultural, or technical *relevance* or *utilisation* (if applicable).

### **Time schedule**

The global time schedule for the Call is as follows:

- September 1, 2003: opening *Call for Proposals*;
- Thursday, October 30, 2003: deadline for submitting preliminary proposals;
- End December 2003: informing the applicants about whether or not they are advised to submit a full proposal;
- Wednesday, March 17, 2004: deadline for submitting full proposals;
- July 2004: announcement of the decision on funding.

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Detailed information about deadlines and the format of applications will be given in the Call for Proposals.

### **The Programme Committee**

- Professor Wiecher Zwanenburg, emeritus Utrecht University, The Netherlands (chair)
- Professor Melissa Bowerman, Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen, The Netherlands
- Dr Ineke van de Craats, University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands
- Professor Antonella Sorace, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom
- Professor Rosemarie Tracy, University of Mannheim, Germany

### **Programme office**

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### **Call for Proposals**

This brochure came to you with a Call for Proposals, separately included. If unfortunately the Call for Proposals is not enclosed, please contact the programme office.

NWO September 2003  
Ontwerp  
Druk

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> L1 stands for mother tongue or native language; L2 here means both foreign language and second language. Foreign language acquisition refers to the learning of a non-native language outside the environment in which that language is the official language (e.g., the learning of French by residents of the Netherlands). Second language acquisition refers to the learning of a non-native language in the environment in which that language is the official language (e.g., a person with a different L1 learning Dutch in the Netherlands). No distinction is made here between the terms 'learning' and 'acquisition'.

<sup>2</sup> Generative linguistics for example adopts as a working hypothesis that children at the outset of language acquisition possess knowledge of properties of natural language and that linguistic knowledge has its own relatively independent position within human cognition (modular view of language specificity). Other approaches (for example connectionism and 'emergentism') assume that language is learnable without a priori language-specific knowledge; they do not share the assumption that linguistic knowledge is a relatively independent module of human cognition.

<sup>3</sup> Well-known research topics from this period are 'elaborated' vs. 'restricted' codes and 'basic interpersonal communicative skills' vs. 'cognitive and academic linguistic proficiency' (Labov, Gumpertz, Hymes, Cummins); 'diglossia' (Ferguson, Fishman); 'compound' vs. 'coordinated' bilingualism and 'additive' vs. 'subtractive' bilingualism (Weinreich, Ervin & Osgood, Carroll).

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, B. MacWhinney (ed.), *The Emergence of Language*, Erlbaum, 1999; M. Tomasello (ed.), *The New Psychology of Language*, Erlbaum, 1998; M. Tomasello, *Constructing a Language*, Harvard Press, 2003.

<sup>5</sup> With the introduction of the Bachelor/Master system at Dutch universities, language-proficiency learning goals will be formulated with reference to this European framework.