



university of  
groningen

Føroyar

Føroyskt

campus fryslân

Norwegian Sea

# The Multilingualism Laboratory

Working together to sustain multilingual Europe



FRYSKE

AKADEMY

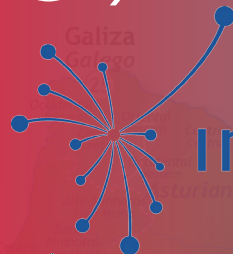


mercator

European Research Centre on  
Multilingualism and Language Learning



university of  
groningen



incas<sup>3</sup>



NHL  
Stenden

# Content

## 1.

### Introduction

Reliable knowledge on  
multilingualism 5

Goals and added value 5

## 2.

### Context: Multilingual Laboratory

Society's lab entrances 9

Learning 10

Health Care 11

Legal Settings 12

Public Space 12

## 3.

### Expertise: Research Groups

Multidisciplinarity 15

People and Society 17

Language and Cognition 19

Language and Speech

Technology 21

## 4.

### Education: Research Driven

Showing instead of telling 23

## 5.

### Organisation and organisational costs

The Multilingualism Laboratory in  
a nutshell 25

People, grants and awards 25

Scientific and societal  
collaborations 26

Organisational costs 27

## 6.

### References

# Preface

Multilingual societies have thrived in different civilizations worldwide, from the Vaupes region of the Amazons to Greco-Roman territories in Eurasia. Even today, multilingualism exists in Angola, Aruba, India and East Timor, to name but a few. But we need not look far. Even in our own backyard, we find multilingualism, to different degrees, in most European countries, including our own. Dutch Sign Language, Frisian and Limburgish are part of the multilingual cultural heritage of the Netherlands. However, globalisation, digitisation, and large intercontinental migratory waves have brought about immense changes in the way we communicate.

Now, more than ever, we need to understand these changes and how they affect society and the future of multilingualism. For this reason, the University of Groningen and its associated Campus Fryslân in particular, the Fryske Akademy and the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning, NHL University of Applied Sciences, Stenden University of Applied Sciences, and the non-profit research foundation INCAS3 have joined forces and established a multidisciplinary Multilingualism Laboratory.

The mission of the Multilingualism Laboratory is to address cutting-edge fundamental questions relating to multilingualism, catalysing applied research. Foreseen outcomes include greater insight into multilingual language acquisition, change and

variation alongside the development of innovative technologies that can handle multilingual speech/text input. Research is supported by partnering on grants. For example, a joint proposal within the context of the Gravitation programme in 2018.

The Multilingualism Laboratory comes at the ideal time to directly involve students of the University of Groningen / Campus Fryslân, providing this impulse with a surge of energy and creative ideas, giving a powerful new impulse to academic life in this region. Indeed, the Multilingualism Laboratory is well-situated to further strengthen ties between the academic and private sectors in the northeast of the Netherlands, in accordance with one of the goals of the Hoger-Onderwijsakkoord Fryslân. But the vision does not end there. The Multilingualism Laboratory has the ambition to extend its purview beyond the northeast, eventually becoming a national Multilingualism Laboratory.

The Multilingualism Laboratory enables collaboration across institutions and directly with society. By virtue of its research facilities and its renowned scientists, it will become an attractive national and international research partner, and bring the international academic world to the heart of Fryslân.

Hanno Brand (director Fryske Akademy)  
Goffe Jensma (Professor of Frisian language and culture, University of Groningen)





“Information, money, goods and people, the four elements of globalisation, have a fifth dimension: language.”



# 1. Introduction

## Reliable knowledge on multilingualism

The University of Groningen and its associated Campus Fryslân in particular, the Fryske Akademy and the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning, NHL University of Applied Sciences, Stenden University of Applied Sciences, and the non-profit research foundation INCAS3 have decided to combine their considerable resources in the areas of multilingualism, socio-linguistics, and speech, language, and hearing technology. In doing so, they wish to establish a powerful multidisciplinary Multilingualism Laboratory that will perform innovative, targeted, fundamental, and applied scientific research which is reliable, solution-oriented and has a broad social impact.

## Goals and added value

The establishment of this international Laboratory, with a unique scientific, technological, and social profile, will

1. advance the study of multilingualism and deepen our understanding of important cultural, historical, social, and biological determinants of language;
2. help develop a shared research agenda;
3. stimulate broad project cooperation with knowledge institutes, SMEs, industry, and the private sector at a regional, national, and international level;

4. target regional, national, and European financing to further the Laboratory's goals of catalyzing fundamental and applied/technological advancements; and
5. improve dissemination of scientific results and expertise through public workshops, trainings, and open access resources (databases, MOOCs, etc.).

The Multilingualism Laboratory will be one of the main legacies of the Leeuwarden European Capital of Cultural 2018. Embedded in the project 'Lân fan Taal', multilingualism is one of the leading themes of this year-long cultural event.

The ultimate value of the Laboratory lies in its contribution to the sustainability of a diverse and multilingual society. Within the European context, the Laboratory will assist in finding solutions to language issues caused by the increase of global migration. It will do so by using the expertise on multilingualism gained by a long tradition of research on language attitudes and localised minorities and by focusing on new technological possibilities. The added value for Frisian society is that the Laboratory and its societal partners Afûk, Tresoar and other organisations, Frisian or non-Frisian, will help develop productive language policies and effective ways of planning.

The idea to establish the Multilingualism Laboratory

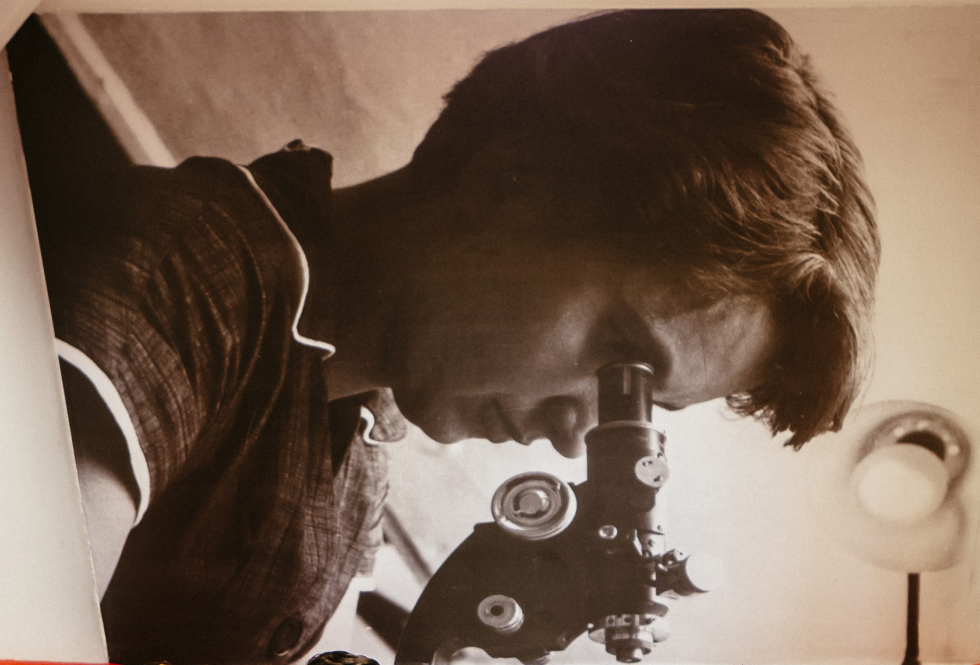
was first raised at the international conference 'Multilingualism, the Key Debates', organised in 2013 by University Campus Fryslân and the Department of Frisian Language and Culture of the University of Groningen. At this meeting, meant to celebrate the opening of a Master Programme on Multilingualism, eight world-renowned experts debated on key issues concerning multilingualism at the off-campus facility in Leeuwarden.

Locating this conference in the north of the Netherlands was a crucial decision. The region hosts a number of minority languages and forms the perfect playground for innovative research on language contact between unequal language partners. Besides Frisian these are Stellingwerfs, Low Saxon, and Bildts. The minority language Frisian is spoken by about three quarters of its inhabitants, most of whom have native proficiency in Dutch. The large and diverse group of multilinguals, ranging from early childhood bilinguals and bi- and trilingual school children to adult learners makes Fryslân an ideal place in which to base investigations of multilingual competence and its cognitive, educational, technological, political and social correlates. It also lends itself to research on issues of speech perception, intelligibility of speech, language technology, and linguistic typology. The region therefore provides a fertile basis for R&D on the first generation of digital tools for multilingual

users. These tools are more important than ever now that multilingualism is fast becoming the norm in many such regions across Europe and beyond as immigration, language contact, and the tides of history bring forth new post-nationalist multilingual identities which are highly connected to digital culture. From a comparative and scientific perspective the northeastern part of the Netherlands can be exploited as a real life laboratory for research on multilingualism in society. The provinces of Fryslân, Groningen, Drenthe, Overijssel and Gelderland themselves will profit from this in a twofold way, as will also other multilingual regions on the European territory. Working from a meta-level research agenda will help to establish new and more contemporary directions in research on multilingualism. This, in turn, will also provide the provincial administrations with well-argued and relevant advice on language policies.

Processes of globalisation have totally changed the linguistic situation, also in the northeastern periphery of the Netherlands. By focusing on the effects of globalisation on cultural and linguistic identities and the consequential transitions of locally organised communities, the Multilingualism Laboratory wants to contribute to discussions on (subnational) identity formation, especially in peripheral communities where majority/minority oppositions are determinants.









“We are working on practical, technology-driven solutions to promote and improve equal access to society”



## 2. Context: Multilingual laboratory

### Society's lab entrances for research on Multilingualism

The large intercontinental migratory waves starting in the 1960s with a substantial influx of labour migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, poses challenges to society, especially when it comes to language and communication. These are most salient and acute in a series of public domains accessed by the entire population; healthcare, educational system, legal system and also public and virtual space are domains in which every citizen may participate.

Multilingualism Laboratory, in which we are working on practical, technology-driven solutions with the goal to promote and improve equal access to all inhabitants of our own region in particular, but also on a global scale. Our working method requires forming consortia with societal partners in these fields: hospitals, judicial institutions, schools and media. This allows us to do groundbreaking research on the basis of empirical data collections.

### **Multilingualism and Learning**

*How can language learning and multilingualism in the classroom contribute to the creation of stable and sustainable societies?*

### **Multilingualism and Healthcare**

*Which language policies and communicational strategies add best to an equal access to healthcare?*

### **Multilingualism and Legal Settings**

*How can inequalities and discrimination, caused by multilingualism, be avoided within our legal system?*

### **Multilingualism and Public Space**

*How do local and global speech and print communities benefit best from multilingualism?*

We take these four fields as our 'entrances' to the



## Multilingualism and Learning

*How can language learning and multilingualism in the classroom contribute to the creation of stable and sustainable societies?*

Multilingual education refers to the use of multiple languages as medium of instruction. In a recent position paper, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation argues that children should be raised in a multilingual environment from the earliest years of schooling because of the many cognitive and social benefits.

Fryslân has a long and rich research tradition in this area. Most of the work of the Fryske Akademy and its Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning is devoted to the study of minority languages in Europe; Frisian, spoken by three-quarters of the Frisian population, being one such language.

As part of its language policy, the province stimulates the use of both Frisian and Dutch in primary and secondary schools. Since 1980 primary schools have taught Frisian as a subject for all children while 20% have used the language as a

medium of instruction (Ytsma, Riemersma and de Jong, 2007). In 1996 the Dutch government ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Council of Europe, 1992) with respect to Frisian. The ratification involved 48 measures from part III of the charter. The Low Saxon regional languages that are spoken in the northeastern Netherlands and Limburgish in the southeast were recognized under part II of the charter, which is more global and less stringent than part III (Herweijer and Jans, 2009).

The most recent development within this context is the introduction of trilingual schooling in 1997 (Gorter, 2005). Within that model, Frisian and Dutch are both taught as subjects and are both the medium of instruction in all grades of primary school. In grades 7 and 8, English is added, both as a subject that is taught and as medium of instruction. The number of participating schools is 50.

Given the myriads of questions concerning which pedagogical approach benefits children most, the Multilingualism Laboratory will actively engage in relevant research projects and help strengthen the position of Mercator, bilingual child care, and of migrants from other regions in the Netherlands as well as from abroad.





## Multilingualism and Healthcare

*Which language policies and communicational strategies add best to an equal access to healthcare?*

In many countries around the world, healthcare must be provided to a multicultural and multilingual population. A fast growing segment of this population consists of speakers who have limited proficiency in the language of healthcare providers or social service agents. Such patients are vulnerable to disparities in healthcare quality because effective communication is critical to the delivery of safe, high-quality care.

Although any language barrier can impede patient-provider communication, research on the link between limited language proficiency and patient safety is still scarce, especially in Europe. A pilot study by Divi et al. (2007) shows that language barriers between patients and providers are a common cause of adverse events in healthcare settings. The inability to effectively communicate with a provider can result in misunderstandings, problems with informed consent, inadequate comprehension of diagnoses and treatment,

preventable morbidity and mortality, and disparities in prescriptions, test ordering and diagnostic evaluations.

Other studies showed adverse events associated with language barriers in specific domains of hospital care. For example, Wasserman et al. (2014) found that medication errors represented a larger share of adverse events for those patients who had limited proficiency compared to those who did not. A recent Dutch study by van Rosse et al. (2016) likewise showed safety risks for patients with inadequate language proficiency in daily hospital care situations like fluid balance management and pain control.

Language barriers can also inhibit a clinician's ability to elicit patient symptoms, increasing the chances of inappropriate treatment and diagnostic errors. Limited proficiency likewise affects communication among clinicians and nurses in a multilingual setting.

The Multilingualism Laboratory seeks to extend our knowledge of multilingualism in healthcare settings and overcome potentially harmful language barriers. It will do so by invoking available resources in the area of multilingual communication and modern language technology. The Joint Commission International Accreditation Standards

for Hospitals (JCIA) provides guidelines that hospitals should meet to bridge lack of adequate language proficiency. The quality system for healthcare in the Netherlands (NIAZ) contains no such guideline.



## Multilingualism and Legal Settings

*How can inequalities and discrimination, caused by multilingualism, be avoided within our legal system?*

Research on multilingualism in legal contexts has shown that language is a powerful tool in classifying social conduct. Most of the published studies conclude that the courtroom is a site of linguistic inequality, creating language barriers where none should or need be present. When it comes to defending their rights, many immigrants have only limited access to language assistance in the civil court system (Maryns, 2012). Because of the monolingual character of courtroom procedures, speakers of minority languages are persistently at a disadvantage in procedural contexts, be they asylum cases, criminal cases, or otherwise.

As part of its ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the Dutch government has implemented article 9 of part III

of the charter with respect to Frisian. Accordingly, the use of Frisian is permitted in legal settings in Fryslân, important legal concepts have been translated into Frisian, and Frisian courses are available to judicial authorities (Van der Goot, 2007). Herweijer and Jans (2009) argue that for the Low Saxon regional languages, spoken in the northeastern Netherlands, a lower level of ambition is sufficient. Suspects should have the right to use their regional language in criminal cases and parties involved in a civil or administrative case should be allowed to use their regional language without having to pay additional costs.

Thorough analyses of the language-based discrimination of linguistic minority participants in legal contexts have developed only recently. The Multilingualism Laboratory seeks to extend our knowledge in this area and explore the uses of modern language assistance technology.



## Multilingualism and Public Space

*How do local and global speech and print communities benefit best from multilingualism?*

Globalisation and digitisation processes have brought about immense changes in the way people

communicate. Ever more information, stored in publicly accessible spaces online, can be reached worldwide. A diversity of social media outlets facilitate communication on a local and global level.

From the perspective of multilingualism studies this transition results in a host of questions, pivotal not only to the field itself but also to modern society and its governance. This twofold turn - from analogue to virtual and from local to global - has a direct consequence for the way we perceive and use language.

Empirical research shows that it undermines the strong position of written language and tends to lead to destandardisation of individual languages and dehierarchisation of its speech and print communities. In the Post-Gutenberg era the internalization of language norms no longer seems to take place in the domain of written and printed languages. This new instrumentality of languages goes along with other communication strategies of which translanguaging, code-switching and receptive multilingualism are but a few.

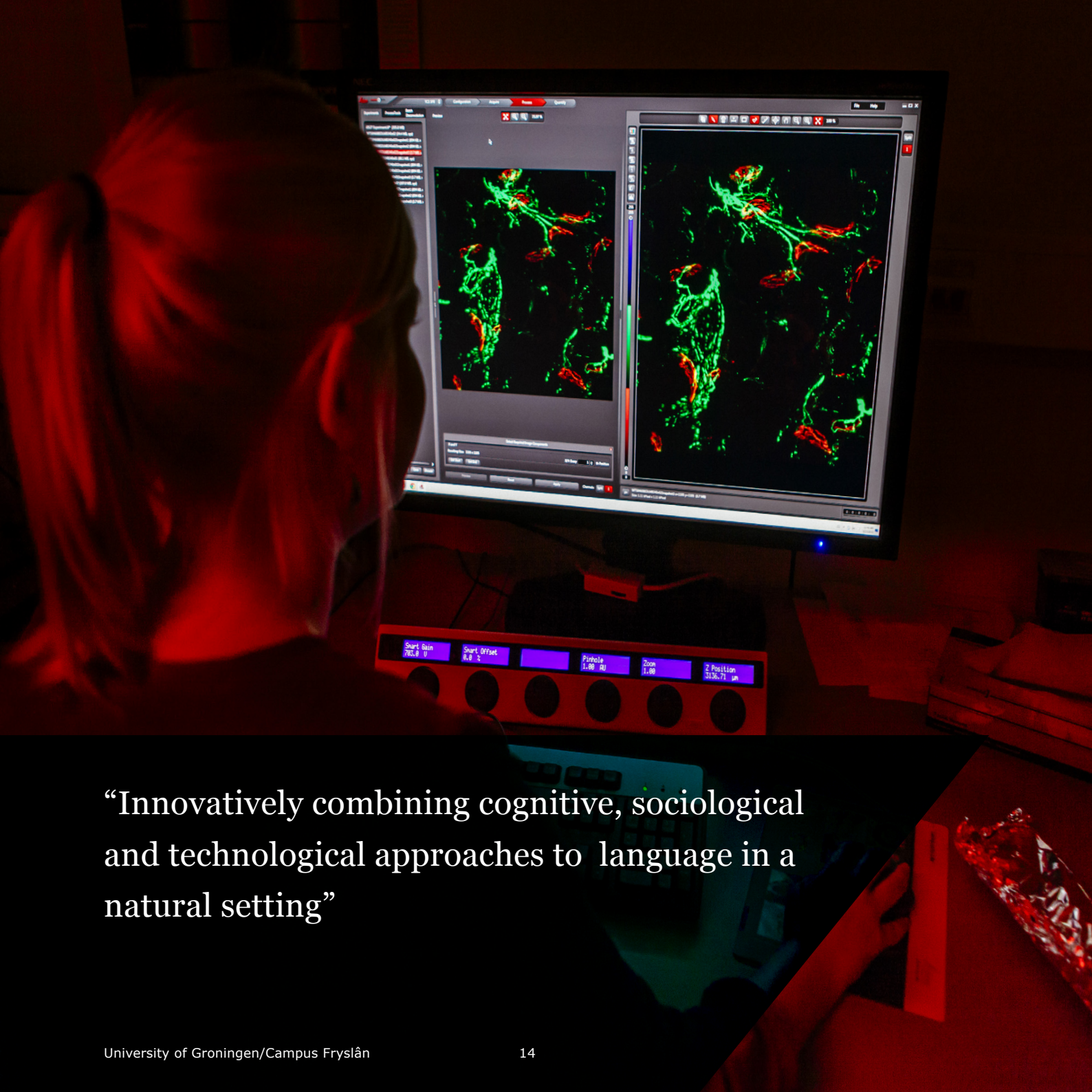
In this lab entrance on 'physical and virtual public space' our interest is in how local and global speech communities interact and how the reciprocal language contacts influence language as such, as well as the communicational strategies and modes

among individual citizens, speech communities and governments. (How) can a standardised language survive without having a written standard to go by?

*'Future research might therefore be in the areas of multilingual and multicultural identities to enable individuals to navigate language, identity and culture in a world of an increasing migration of populations.'*

David Evans, Language and identity, 230.





“Innovatively combining cognitive, sociological and technological approaches to language in a natural setting”

# 3. Expertise: Research groups

## Multidisciplinarity

Fryslân and the other northern provinces offer an excellent natural setting for conducting ground-breaking multidisciplinary research on multilingualism. Fryslân has been a multilingual area for centuries, in which closely related endogenous languages and language varieties co-exist (Frisian, Dutch, Low-Saxon, and contact varieties like Bildts and Stadsfries), with exogenous varieties like English and German. Since the 1960s many immigrant languages, mainly belonging to different language families, were added to this repertoire. We believe that multidisciplinarity is the only answer to the many questions with which multilingualism confronts us. That is why our research groups are encouraged to closely collaborate and inspire each other, fueling innovative solutions, recommendations, and policy advice. By combining approaches from different backgrounds, (fundamental) research on multilingualism becomes truly innovative, able to combine societal needs with scientific questions. The research on multilingualism is grouped around three areas:

## People and Society

Investigating the complex relationships of globalisation, migration and expressions of linguistic and cultural identity in multilingual contexts to ensure an open, democratic, and fair society.

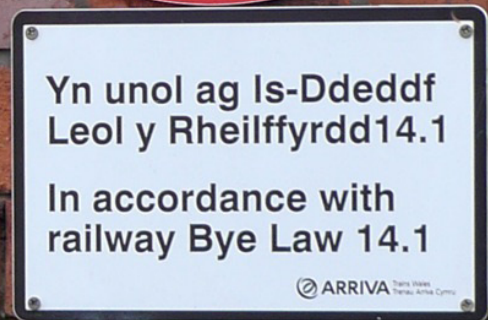
## Language and Cognition

Investigating language processing in the individual's brain in combination with language variation in a multilingual society, and its consequences for language change and language learning, with the intention to develop new techniques to facilitate language learning.

## Language and Speech Technology

Developing language and speech technologies to support a diversity of natural, multilingual interactions between people and the devices that surround them. The aim is to be involved in R&D on projects relating to multilingual text analysis, multilingual language recognition/disambiguation, and more.





“We investigate the complex relationships of globalisation, migration and expressions of linguistic and cultural identity in a multilingual context”



## People and Society

Due to processes of globalisation and migration the EU-legislation and policies on cultural and linguistic diversity have a different dimension nowadays. The influx of migrants into the European territory has rapidly become one of the most important challenges on every level of European societies: communal, regional, national and supranational.

Our research group aims at studying these long term processes on every level, but with a special interest in the relation between diversity and integration on a regional and communal scale. Comparative research into local communities comprising 'old' and 'new' Europeans and also comprising national and migrant minority members in terms of cultural, political, societal and of course also legal aspects might give an answer to the question how and to what extent globalisation is changing the way Europeans think on diversity.

Social benefit of studying these processes, is that they can teach us things on long term processes of integration which might help us to also gain a better understanding of processes of groupism among new Europeans.

Obviously, we are dealing here with much more dynamic, unpredictable and complex situations which have not (yet) been established and

crystalised to the same extent as those of the 'old' European minority groups. A number of complex questions about the types of minority groups studied are brought forward in our work.

## Key questions

- Why do newly formed minority groups - immigrants or gender minorities - engage in the creation of new languages? Is this done to also create more stable group boundaries and to create durable group identities?
- How could a language revitalisation/ maintenance programme for diasporic minorities look like?
- How can migrant minority integration policies benefit from best practices on multilingualism among localised minorities?





“We explore undiscovered parts of language theory, focusing on language processing in the individual’s brain combined with language variation in a multilingual society, and its impact on language change and language learning”

## Language and Cognition

Scientific questions that need tackling are how languages change when their speakers come into contact with other speech and print communities, how specific languages can be maintained (or for that matter, how they may disappear), whether the impact of multilingualism is bigger on regional languages than on national varieties, how brains of individual speakers are influenced by the use of more than one language and, how language is expressed and processed differently due to biological and learned (cultural) variations between individuals' brains. By looking at multilinguals' speech production and speech processing and combining neurolinguistic and psycholinguistic approaches with sociolinguistic approaches we enter a territory which is unexplored.

One unique aspect of the Multilingualism Laboratory is its research focus on sociolinguistic cognition and the relationship between socially meaningful linguistic variation, on the one hand, and language processing in a multilingual context, on the other. The Laboratory combines cognitive and cultural aspects of language to gain insight into the forces that determine language diversity and language change. Its goal is a better understanding of the relationship between 'social, communal and personal motives' (Labov, 2010) and our cognitive abilities. A considerable amount of work involves

experimental work in socio-phonetics, in particular the link between intelligibility (spoken word recognition) and positive or negative language attitudes. This approach is exploratory and supportive to innovative technological solutions. An important result is (Gooskens et al., 2015).

## Key Questions

- How does the linguistic system deal with sociolinguistic knowledge and how do speakers and listeners control this knowledge?
- What is the impact of linguistic differences and language attitudes on the intelligibility of spoken language?
- What are the consequences for the linguistic situation and for the language varieties spoken and written in Fryslân? How can these be translated to other multilingual areas?

The direct implications for our lab entrances by the work done in this research group ultimately includes improved healthcare solutions for people who suffer loss of linguistic competence (from brain traumas or neurodegenerative disease), upgraded teaching materials and methodologies for the multicultural classrooms of the future, advanced speaker recognition and determination of origin tools for use in forensic investigations and courtrooms, as well as an improved understanding for policy makers of the effects of their work on the





“We develop the technologies to support a diversity of natural, multilingual interactions between humans and the devices that surround them.”

forms and functions of language systems.

## Language and Speech Technology

The goal of this research group is to foster research on language and speech technology for low-resource languages that can be used to build applications that can intelligently handle multilingual input. By developing core technologies and resources for low-resource languages, the development of language technology for these languages will become feasible, practical, and profitable for industrial partners. We foresee that language and speech applications that handle multilingual input robustly will be essential for applications in healthcare, smart homes, text-to-speech/speech-to-text, and more.

Frisian serves as an ideal test-case, as this language is used extensively in multilingual settings, leading to technological challenges concurrent with ubiquitous code-switching.

Language technology increasingly relies on “big data”: large samples of (typically monolingual) data used for training statistical models for lexical, morphological, and syntactic analysis, and for training robust speech recognizers. For low-resource languages, especially those which may not be so present on the web, and which may be used more in spoken contexts, the amount of available

data is always going to be a fraction of what is available for more dominant languages. Moreover, there are very few sizeable corpora of multilingual discourse. Low-resource languages, however, are rarely used in isolation. For example, speakers of Frisian speak Dutch (and often English) as well, and this influences their use of their maternal language.

## Key questions

- What are best practices to develop digital tools for low-resource languages in multilingual contexts?
- How can we benefit from tools and data (including corpora) developed for closely related languages (especially in the case where one language is a majority language and the other is not, as is the case for Dutch and Frisian)?
- What role can technology have in supporting multilingual societies and individuals?
- How can multilingual language tools aid those who require special assistance?



A young man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a blue and yellow plaid shirt, is smiling and looking at a laptop. A young woman with long brown hair is leaning in from the left, looking at the laptop screen. They are both working together on a laptop. The background is a bright, modern interior with a tiled wall.

“Students are invited to participate as junior researchers in real research programmes so that they learn or actually do contribute to science”

## 4. Education: Research Driven

### Showing instead of telling

Our philosophy is that education should be research driven. The quality and results of educational programmes benefit when students learn to find their way as researchers in real life situations. This is the case with our PhDs working on subjects related to multilingualism. Besides that the Multilingualism Laboratory also includes the Master Programme on Multilingualism (as it has been taught since 2013/14 at the University of Groningen Campus Leeuwarden/Faculty of Arts of Groningen University). Students are invited to participate as junior researchers in real research programmes and with this they learn to contribute to science. The same holds, to a lesser extent, for the undergraduate programme in Minorities and Multilingualism of the Frisian Department at the University of Groningen, a programme that already cherishes a practice-oriented local lab orientation in the fields of cultural heritage studies and linguistics. Finally, by setting up MOOCs (Massive Online Open Courses) the Multilingualism Laboratory also involves the larger audience in its work.





“How can science and technology best support the unique and changing needs of multilingual societies and how can multilingualism fuel novel scientific and technological advancement?”



# 5. Organisation and organisational costs

## The Multilingualism Laboratory in a nutshell

The Multilingualism Laboratory is a joint initiative of the University of Groningen and its associated Campus Fryslân in particular, the Fryske Akademy and the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning, NHL University of Applied Sciences, Stenden University of Applied Sciences, and the non-profit research foundation INCAS3. At the request of the University of Groningen/Campus Fryslân, the participating institutions have developed a comprehensive framework for scientific collaboration. The aim is to conduct research on multilingualism that will be essential in solving language-related problems in various sectors of society. The Laboratory does so on the basis of a joint agenda that is part of the scientific activities of the University of Groningen/Campus Fryslân. The overarching research question that encompasses the scientific identity of the Laboratory is: How can science and technology best support the unique and changing needs of multilingual societies and, conversely, how can multilingualism fuel novel scientific and technological advancement?

## People, grants and awards

Founding members of the Multilingualism Laboratory are Nanna Haug Hilton (University of Groningen, Department of Frisian Language and

Culture), Hans Van de Velde (Fryske Akademy), Cor van der Meer (Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning), Goffe Jensma (University of Groningen, Department of Frisian Language and Culture), Gosse Bouma (University of Groningen, Department of Information Science), Alex Riemersma (NHL University of Applied Sciences), and Matt Coler (INCAS3 and University of Groningen/Campus Fryslân).

Among the other participating scientists are Charlotte Gooskens (former VIDI-laureate), Petra Hendriks (former VICI-laureate, member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Royal Holland Society of Sciences and Humanities), Angeliek van Hout (former postdoctoral fellow at the University of Pennsylvania, former Fulbright scholar at Smith College and the University of Massachusetts, Amherst), Eva Juarros-Dausà, Merel Keijzer (member of the Young Academy, Rosalind Franklin Fellow), Anja Schüppert, Kees de Bot (professor emeritus), Cees de Glopper, Bart Hollebrandse, Carel Jansen, Wolfgang Kehrein, Remco Knooihuizen, Tom Koole, Wander Lowie, Gertjan van Noord, Willem Visser, and Martijn Wieling (VENI-laureate, member of the Young Academy, recipient of the European Young Researchers Award 2016), all of them belonging to the Centre for Language

and Cognition of the University of Groningen. Additional participants from the University of Groningen are Hanny Elzinga (Faculty of Law, dean of the University of Groningen Honours College) and Roel Bosker (academic director of the Graduate School of Behavioural and Social Sciences).

The Fryske Akademy has a strong track record in the field of multilingualism and should continue to strengthen it according to the international research assessment that took place in 2015. The number of scientists who are involved is considerable, including Jelske Dijkstra, Marjoleine Sloos (VENI-laureate), Pieter Duijff, Siebren Dyk, Eric Hoekstra, Edwin Klinkenberg, Frits van der Kuip, Cor van der Meer, Han Nijdam, Hindrik Sijens, Hans Van de Velde, and Willem Visser (part-time University of Groningen).

The current research capacity of the Multilingualism Laboratory is significant, comprising 23 scientists from the University of Groningen, 12 from the Fryske Akademy, and 1 from NHL University of Applied Sciences/Stenden University of Applied Sciences. In terms of full-time research equivalents this amounts to a net effort of 11 fte. In addition, the Laboratory supports a number of doctoral dissertation projects.

## Scientific and societal collaborations

Among the international partners of the Multilingualism Laboratory are the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), the Mercator network, the Digital Language Diversity Project (Erasmus +), the European Network of Electronic Lexicography (COST), Multiling, the Centre for Multilingualism in Society across the Lifespan at the University of Oslo, the European Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity, the European Centre for Minority Issues in Flensburg, the Phonetics Laboratory at the University of Lancaster, the Laboratoire de Phonétique et de Phonologie of the Université Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3, the Université de Toulouse, in particular CNRS UMR 2563 - CLLE-LTC, Cognition, Langues, Langage, Ergonomie - Laboratoire Travail et Cognition, University Medical Centre Toulouse, and the University of the Basque Country EHU/UPV. Societal partners include Tresoar and Afûk.

Durk Gorter, research professor at Ikerbasque, the Basque Foundation of Science, and his collaborators play a key role in the collaboration with the University of the Basque Country. The Office of Groninger Language and Culture has also been invited to join the scientific network. Together with the Wadden Academy it will organise an international conference on 'Multilingualism along the southern North Sea coast: Immaterial cultural heritage or working capital?', to be held in 2017 or 2018.



Until 2018 the Multilingualism Laboratory will be part of Leeuwarden European Capital of Culture 2018's project 'Lân fan Taal', which will undertake a number of activities that focus on multilingual Fryslân and cater for a broad public. One of the projects at the scientific core of Leeuwarden European Capital of Culture 2018 is the project 'Stimmen fan Fryslân', led by Nanna Hilton (Department of Frisian Language and Culture, University of Groningen). As an attempt to bundle scientific and societal agendas under the umbrella of research and valorisation of multilingualism, the Laboratory will be part of the heritage of Leeuwarden European Capital of Culture 2018.

### Organisational costs

The Laboratory will target regional, national, and European financing to further its goals of catalyzing fundamental and applied/technological advancements. In particular, we will investigate whether it can be extended to become a national Multilingualism Laboratory and explore the possibility of a joint proposal within the competitive context of NWO's Gravitation programme in 2018. To pave the way for such a proposal, the Laboratory will need additional funding of 2.5 million euro for each of its four lab entrances, 1.5 million euro for each of its three research groups, 2.5 million euro for experimental lab facilities and technical support staff, 0.5 million euro for managerial

assistance to the academic director, and 0.5 million euro to make the initiative widely known. The establishment of a real digital language laboratory in Leeuwarden, devoted to the analysis of massive linguistic data and generation of corresponding metadata, requires urgent attention. Such a facility requires experimental rooms, equipment, a recording studio, offices, and support staff and could be housed in the vacant space of the Fryske Akademy. Continuation of the lectorate Frisian and Multilingualism in Education and Upbringing at NHL University of Applied Sciences and Stenden University of Applied Sciences is another important matter.

## 6. References

- Androutsopoulos, J. (2011). Language change and digital media: A review of conceptions and evidence. *Standard Languages and Language Standards in a Changing Europe*. Novus, Oslo.
- Britain, D. (2010). Supralocal regional dialect levelling. In: Llamas, C. and D. Watt (eds.), *Language and identities*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 193-204.
- Collins, J. P., S. Slembrouck, M. Baynham (2009). *Globalization and language in contact scale, migration and communicative practices*. London and New York: Continuum.
- Coulmas, F. (2013). *Writing and society: An introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Key Topics in Sociolinguistics)
- Council of Europe (1992). *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*. Strasbourg. (European Treaty Series; Série des Traités Européens 148)
- Danet, B. and S. C. Herring (eds.) (2007). *The multilingual internet: Language, culture, and communication online*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Divi, C., R.G. Koss, S.P. Schmaltz, J.M. Loeb (2007). Language proficiency and adverse events in US hospitals: A pilot study. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care* 19, 60-67.
- Evans, D. (ed.) (2015). *Language and identity: Discourse in the world*. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Gooskens, C., A. Schüppert, N. Haug Hilton (eds.) (2015). Experimental approaches to the mutual intelligibility between closely related languages. *Linguistics* 53 (2), Special issue.
- Goot, A. van der (2007). Third periodical report on the measures taken by the Netherlands, Part III. The Hague: Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations.
- Gorter, D. (2005). Three languages of instruction in Fryslân. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 171, 57-73.
- Graaf, T. de, and C. van der Meer (2013). Multilingualism and language teaching in Europe: The case of Frisian and the work of the Mercator European Research Centre. In: E. Kasten and T. de Graaf (eds.), *Sustaining indigenous knowledge: Learning tools and community initiatives for preserving endangered languages and local cultural heritage*. Fürstenberg/Havel: Kulturstiftung Sibirien.
- Herweijer, M. and J.H. Jans (2009). *Nedersaksisch waar het kan: een pragmatische uitwerking van deel III Europees Handvest voor regionale talen of talen van minderheden ten aanzien van het Gronings, Drents, Stellingwerfs, Twents, Sallands, IJssellands, Veluws en Achterhoeks*. Groningen: Vakgroep Bestuursrecht & Bestuurskunde.

- Labov, W (2010). Principles of linguistic change, Volume 3: Cognitive and cultural factors. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Maryns, K (2012). Multilingualism in legal settings. In: M. Martin-Jones, A. Blackledge and A. Creese (eds.), The Routledge Handbook of Multilingualism. London and New York: Routledge.
- Millar, R. M. (2010). Authority and identity: A sociolinguistic history of Europe before the Modern Age. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Poe, M. (2011). A history of communications: Media and society from the evolution of speech to the internet. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Riemersma, A.M.J. (2013). Trilingual education in Friesland: Why, what, how and results. Dublin: Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity.
- Rosse, F. van, M. de Bruijne, J. Suurmond, M.L. Essink-Bot, C. Wagner (2016). Language barriers and patient safety risks in hospital care: A mixed methods study. International Journal of Nursing Studies 54, 45-53.
- Seza Doğruöz, Á. and S. T. Gries (2014). Spread of on-going changes in an immigrant language: Turkish in the Netherlands. In: M. Pütz (ed), Cognitive sociolinguistics: Social and cultural variation in cognition and language use. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 161-179. (Benjamins Current Topics 59)
- Stichting Kulturele Haadstêd. Bid book: Leeuwarden-Ljouwert's application for European capital of culture 2018. <http://www.2018.nl/download/bidbook>
- UNESCO (2014). Multilingual education: Why is it important? How to implement it?
- Wasserman, M., M.R. Renfrew, A.R. Green, L. Lopez, A. Tan-McGrory, C. Brach, J.R. Betancourt (2014). Identifying and preventing medical errors in patients with limited English proficiency: Key findings and tools for the field. Journal for Healthcare Quality 36 (3), 5-16.
- Ytsma, J., A. Riemersma and S. de Jong (2007). Frisian: The Frisian language in education in the Netherlands. 4th edition. Fryske Akademy: Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning. (Regional dossiers series)



## Colofon

### **Edition**

RUG/Campus Fryslân  
The Multilingualism Laboratory  
2017

### **Text**

Gosse Bouma, Matt Coler,  
Nanna Haug Hilton, Goffe Jensma,  
Elske Kroondijk, Cor van der Meer,  
Hans Van de Velde, Frans Zwarts

### **Photography**

Peter van der Sijde, Michel de Groot  
Erik en Petra Hesmerg

### **Layout**

Elske Kroondijk

### **Template Design**

David-Imre Kanselaar

### **Printed by**

Caparis

This brochure is printed on FSC paper  
using biodegradable ink.  
Caparis cares for employees with  
labor market restrictions.

### **Visitors address**

Rijksuniversiteit Groningen/Campus Fryslân  
Sophialaan 1  
8911 AE Leeuwarden  
E-mail: [campusfryslan@rug.nl](mailto:campusfryslan@rug.nl)  
Telephone: 058 288 2132  
[www.rug.nl/cf](http://www.rug.nl/cf)





university of  
 groningen

campus fryslân

“Multilingualism is a lifetime passport to new  
and unexpected opportunities”

*Frans Zwarts*