

Proposal for a research project: Language, Culture and Identity in Migrant Narratives

Introduction: Relevance of this project

Immigration to Norway has increased dramatically the past thirty years with migrants coming from every continent in the world. Approximately 8.3% of the total population in Norway is counted as immigrant in the country, while this percentage increases to 23% in Oslo¹ – a picture that is similar in other European countries today.² Multiculturalism and multilingualism are inevitable consequences of migration. Contact between different cultural and linguistic groups contributes to an increased need to develop symbolic expressions of identities and to the formation of identities that are hybrid and complex. Identity is ever-present in practices of multilingualism and multiculturalism. Identities both shape and are shaped by language and cultural expressions, hence an inherently reflexive relationship.

Multiculturalism and multilingualism, although often seen as problematic, are actually resources for society. They are resources for identity construction at the personal and group level, as well as resources for participating in society. The importance of the construction and perception of individual and group identities in contact is becoming increasingly salient, particularly as evidenced in current political discourse.³ A common identity is often perceived as essential for providing social cohesion in society today, yet respect for diversity is at the core of the Norwegian, and more generally, European ideal. This is a challenge for a new understanding of identity, one that takes into account the diversity, hybridity, and change in identities in contact in Norway today. In today's multilingual and plural cultural Europe, the notion of identity is central for understanding matters concerning the integration and socialization of migrants. New knowledge of identity among multilinguals in a plural society is truly necessary for political and educational decision-making.

Although the notion of identity is invoked in many studies of multiculturalism and multilingualism, a deeper understanding of the complexity of the issue is lacking. The European Science Foundation's 2003 report "The ESF Forward Look on Immigration and the Construction of Identities in Contemporary Europe"⁴ concludes on the type of research needed by stating that "the greatest lacunae are in the area of longitudinal studies and collaborative projects" (p. 11) with examples such as studies in the transformations of identities and changing metaphors of identity, attachment, reciprocity and legitimacy. The project in this application proposes to meet this challenge. The proposed interdisciplinary work aims to generate new knowledge of how identity is expressed, constructed, and negotiated in discourse, and to assess the relative roles of language and culture in this process. The focus will be on a particular type of discourse, the narrative. The term "narrative" is used in this proposal to refer to all kinds of accounts of past events (oral, written and material) including chronicles and life stories.

The proposed project from the research group SKI (Språk, **K**ultur, **I**dentitet/ "Language, Culture, Identity")⁵ addresses the issue of identity by focusing on language and culture contact, and thus building on, and further developing, the knowledge and expertise gained from the NFR-financed KUSK project (**K**ultur og språkkontakt/"Cultural and Linguistic Contact"), a multidisciplinary umbrella project involving linguistics, culture studies, music, and literature. The new project (hereafter called the SKI project) will further develop this research agenda and sharpen the focus by

¹ <http://www.ssb.no/innvandring/>

² (Sources: Migration Policy Institute, www.migrationinformation.org + EUROSTAT:

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1090,30070682,1090_33076576&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

³ Note the fact that the notion of national identity has been called into play in electoral campaigns within the discourse of immigration, notably the French election in 2007, and the establishment of a ministry of immigration and national identity.

⁴ From Workshop 3: The background and prevention of psychosocial conflicts. Copenhagen, May 22 – 23, 2003.

⁵ This group focuses on language and cultural contact: <http://www.hf.uio.no/iln/forskning/forskergrupper/kontakt/>

concentrating on the study of the construction of identity in migrant narratives, with an interdisciplinary aim.⁶

The SKI project is divided into three research focus areas, each highlighting a particular type of narrative discourse: spoken, written and material – hence oral accounts of migration, literary accounts concerning migration, and representations of the migration process in museum exhibitions.

- *The negotiation of identity in spoken migrant narrative discourse*
- *Narratives of integration and identity formation in multicultural literature*
- *Discourses of cultural diversity, and narratives of identity in museums of cultural history*

Each research focus area deals with the interplay among language, culture, and identity in ways that reflect the disciplines from which they emanate: linguistics, literary studies, and culture studies. These focus areas, assured by senior scholars (see below), will provide the research environment for the proposed research grants in this application for junior scholars (1 postdoctoral grant, 1 doctoral grant, and 3 M.A. grants). The project will have its base at the Department of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies/University of Oslo, to which three of the researchers belong (Lanza, Golden, Kongslie). Naguib is a Humanities Faculty Professor, attached to the Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages/University of Oslo. Lanza will serve as the project leader.

Main objectives and research questions

The main objectives of the SKI project are thus: 1) to generate new knowledge of how identity is expressed, constructed, and negotiated in multilingual and culturally diverse settings, and to assess the relative roles of language and culture in this process; and 2) to integrate and refine methodological approaches and theoretical perspectives from different disciplines (linguistics, culture studies, literary studies) in the study of identity among migrants in Norway and beyond. We aim to accomplish these goals through our focus on the study of narratives of migrants and will investigate in what ways they present new understandings of cultural diversity, including issues of integration, exclusion and discrimination.

In order to attain its main objectives, this project aims to answer the following research questions:

- How are group and individual identities shaped and influenced by language (e.g. through loan words, metaphors, linguistic competence, language use) and culture (e.g. narrative and ritual performances, and material culture)?
- How do multicultural literature and museums of cultural history represent and interpret the impact of the migrant experience in regards to integration and identity formation?
- How do group and individual identities shape and influence language and cultural expressions?

In answering these research questions, we aim to fulfill the following **sub-goals**:

- To analyze the role of language and culture contact in the negotiation of identity in narrative discourse, particularly narratives (e.g. life stories, myths, fiction, including the use of metaphors)
- To investigate how identity in contact settings is negotiated through multilingual practices (bilingual/bicultural interaction, literature)
- To investigate how identity in contact settings is expressed through material culture, specifically in national museums of cultural history.

Other subgoals include the establishment of a framework of activities in this field for the recruited scholars through seminars on theory and method and data presentation, including guest lecturers.

⁶ We use these terms in the following manner: "multi-" refers to many different disciplines involved from each one's respective scientific point of view; "inter-" means that collaboration across disciplines will be employed. Hence the project will involve multi-disciplinary as well as interdisciplinary work, although true interdisciplinary work is an aim.

Theoretical background and research focus areas

Wherever multilingualism and multiculturalism are present, questions of identity are at stake. The issue of *identity*, or rather *identities*, has figured prominently in recent years in various disciplines in poststructuralist approaches to the discussion of the self and the other. Issues of identity were particularly made salient through Said's (1978) seminal book *Orientalism* that focused on the pervasiveness of the Western perspective of viewing "the other" in a culturally imperialistic way. Literary scholarship has turned towards investigating how multicultural authors in their search for identity, or negotiation and formation of identity, "rewrite" national identities and move towards a transnational identity. Several museums of cultural history are nowadays engaged in matters pertaining to cultural diversity and the representation of others, and thus reassess ideas of uniform national identities and of boundaries that function as defenses of cultural integrity and authenticity (MacDonald 2003, Naguib 2004a,b). As for linguistics, the recent strong interest in identity may also be due to the success of this "reconstructivist turn" (supplanting "essentialist approaches") in the debate in the social sciences about *collective identities* (Mendoza-Denton 2002).

Multilinguals negotiate monolingual and bilingual identities in conversation and orchestrate their "multiplicity of selves". The social constructionist approach to identity rejects the essentialist view that proposes essential or core categories as defining the collective's members. For example, in discussions of ethnic minority groups, there has been a tendency to regard a "we-code" and a "they-code" as defining the minority and the majority culture respectively. However, as Sebba and Wootton (1998) clearly illustrate in their study of London Jamaicans, *both* London English and London Jamaican are used communicatively in interaction to negotiate identity through code-switching, the use of two or more languages in the same discourse. Postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha's (1994) notion of a "third space" serves as a metaphor for capturing the dynamics of identity negotiation. The temporal constitution of a liminal "third space" defies the fixed identities of traditional social order, and in this space, so-called hybrid identities can be performed and negotiated. This occurs in face-to-face interaction. However, it also occurs in multicultural authors' "rewriting" of national identities, and in cultural museums' conceptions of a "third space" or contact zone, an intermediate zone of coexistence in which people, who originally were geographically and historically separated, meet (Clifford 1997). Research based on constructivist approaches to the study of identity forms the basis for the proposed project.

Postmodernists nonetheless deem the constructionist approaches to identity as insufficient although they support the antiessentialism that lies behind this approach (cf. Calhoun 1995, Fairclough 1995, Halpern and Ruano-Borbalan 2004). The dimension of power and the role of power and power relations, according to these theorists, have been underemphasized. Furthermore, the implication of individual choices needs to be studied from various perspectives. Bourdieu's (1991) notion of symbolic domination draws specifically on language as symbolic capital and provides a theoretical basis for analyzing discursive categories that are embedded within local and global relations of power. Notions of power are inevitably found in discussions about identity among migrants.

In the swing of the pendulum from essentialism to constructionism in studies of identity, however, some scholars have issued caveats. Invoking Bourdieu (1991), Joseph (2004: 13) points out that a reason for not eschewing essentialism entirely is that "... constructing an identity is in fact constructing an essence". Bourdieu examined the nature of "regional" and "ethnic" identities and critically noted that although they are categories or essentializations of divisions among people that in fact are arbitrary and hence not "real", "...the fact that, once established, they exist as mental representations means that they are every bit as real as if they were grounded in anything 'natural'" (Joseph 2004: 13). Similarly, Coupland (2001: 18) calls for a resistance in sociolinguistic theorizing of identity to "both essentialising *and de-essentialising* tendencies in their extreme form". Social identities are neither static nor given, "but neither are social identities written sociolinguistically on a *tabula rasa* in a socio-historical vacuum" (Coupland 2001: 18). Indeed Lanza and Svendsen (in

press) noted that among Filipinos in Oslo, regional identities were pointed out as important and hence existed as mental representations. Nonetheless the extent to which these identities are actually constructed and negotiated in social interaction, or in accounts and portrayals of these interactions, needs to be investigated.

A discourse unit that provides an excellent locus for investigating issues of culture and identity is the *narrative*. Brockmeier and Carbaugh (2001:1) point out “the importance of narrative as an expressive embodiment of our experience, as a mode of communication, and as a form for understanding the world and ultimately ourselves”. And as Turner (1996: 4) notes: “Narrative imagining – story – is the fundamental instrument of thought. ... It is our chief means of looking into the future, of planning, and of explaining. It is a literary capacity indispensable to human cognition generally”. Hence narratives structure our experience, our knowledge and our thoughts. Even though there are various models of narratives from various disciplines - literary, anthropological (cultural patternings of customs, beliefs, values), psychological (cognitive structures and processes used in narration), visual (narratives embodied in material culture), and sociological/sociolinguistic, cross-fertilization has indeed occurred. An excellent example is Bakhtin (1981) whose work on temporality, polyphony, and intertextuality has extended beyond literary theory, as well as positioning theory (Harré and Langenhove 1999). Migrants’ narratives provide insight into conceptions of self and the other within a cultural context. The new narratives by, and about, migrants that we find in multicultural literature are cultural representations of our changing societies, in which questions concerning identity, nationality or ethnicity, and location are placed at the forefront. In museums of cultural history, exhibition strategies are nowadays using interactive, polyphonic narrative contextual perspectives that acknowledge the constructed nature of the knowledge presented.

The theoretical perspectives outlined above will form a backdrop for the three research focus areas in this project, each with a focus on language, literature and museums respectively. In the following, each of these areas will be presented. M.A. students and doctoral and postdoctoral candidates will work within the framework of these research focus areas, with the M.A. students particularly working closely with the senior scholars on the same data.

The negotiation of identity in spoken migrant narrative discourse

Migrant narratives are replete with indicators of identity, as narrators affirm aspects of their own identity and of the identity of others via the presentation and evaluation of behaviors (De Fina 2003). Moreover, linguistic choices, at all levels of organization, are a resource for the narrator in the construction of identity in conversational discourse, including the use of metaphors. The data to be used include 100 interviews in Norwegian with Pakistani and Turkish migrants from the documentation project *Norsk i går, i dag og i morgen?* in which the main objective was to collect accounts of the experiences of the first migrants to Norway in modern time. These data are already collected and roughly transcribed at the Folk Museum. Permission has been obtained for use. New data from the same group of migrants as well as from highly educated migrants, including doctors, will also be collected. Another source of data comes from the KUSK project “Language choice and social network among Filipinos in Oslo” (cf. Hvenekilde and Lanza 2001, Lanza and Svendsen, in press). A side product of that project is a rich set of narratives of the migrant experience that deserves further analysis. The KUSK project focused on the content of the speakers’ narratives relating to language choice and social networks, while the present focus will be to more carefully examine the negotiation of identities in these interviews, including a gender perspective.

The tools of conversation analysis (cf. Hutchy and Wooffitt 1998) will be employed for situating the narratives within the speaker’s negotiation of meaning and identities in conversation. In the relevant literature concerning multilingualism, “negotiation” refers to the ongoing construction and performance of identities in multilingual contexts (cf. Auer 1998). Pavlenko and Blackledge

(2004:20), however, reserve the term “negotiation” for the negotiation of identities that occur “only when certain identities are contested”, that is, when a power dimension is involved. Although the term “negotiation” is used in this project in the more generic sense, issues of power will also be addressed. The analysis will be two-fold: the analysis of the narrative as text and as discourse practice. In the first analysis, Labov’s sociolinguistic model will be employed as a point of departure (Labov 1972, 1997). Despite the shortcomings and criticism of this model, it has many merits and is still widely employed. Of special interest is the “evaluation” of the narrative as implicitly demonstrated in linguistic choices, e.g. lexical choice. The more detailed second analysis will examine narrative as discourse practice in which narrators position themselves in relation to others through, e.g., pronominal choice, identification and categorization strategies, agency, topic, and more generally language choice (cf. Schiffrin 1996, De Fina 2003).

The analysis will also take into account the figurative language – in particular, metaphorical expressions – used by first generation migrants with a focus on the way they speak about their encounters with the Norwegian language and culture. Metaphors, traditionally viewed as merely a literary device, pervade our daily life. In cognitive linguistics, metaphors are seen as a cognitive instrument, as a means to structure our thoughts (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999, Gibbs 1994). The use of metaphors in communication has been investigated in this paradigm as a tool to reveal both how we think about abstract, complex phenomena and how we think, or are led to think, in a particular situation. Metaphorical speech is therefore part of an individual’s lexical register: sometimes the best way to convey an idea that is hard to express otherwise, sometimes a deliberate way of reaching a fixed goal (cf. Golden 2005). The use of metaphor analysis in discourse has been successfully adapted by Cameron (in press) in a study of reconciliation talk, in which she emphasizes the excellent tool metaphors provide as a connection between language and thought. Hence metaphors can provide a means to portray the mental representation one has of one’s own and others’ identities.

Narratives of integration and identity formation in multicultural literature

This research will study migrant narratives to investigate 1) how authors of a migrant background in Europe today are writing new identities into, and against, the old national narratives; 2) how these new voices in contemporary Nordic literature express what it means to be Nordic when they search for identity and position themselves in a new land; and 3) how they may change the literary canon. The new research builds directly on the KUSK project (Kongslien 2005, 2007). With Anderson’s (1983/1991) concept of “imagined communities” as a backdrop, the analysis will move on to examine the new narratives by, and about, migrants and second generation representatives as cultural representations of our changing societies. Western modern societies - urban centers in particular - are being challenged by migration that provides cultural and linguistic diversity. Migrant narratives are textualizations of departures, journeys, and reestablishment, most often with a focus implying a double perspective or consciousness. According to Homi Bhabha (1994), the modern nation is being rewritten by these migrants.

The material comprises novels and short stories with analytical perspectives employed from postcolonial theories. Said’s (1978) concept of *orientalism*, a way of viewing “the other”, has given us perspectives on hierarchy and hegemony important when analyzing literary texts of postcolonial and migrant representations. Homi Bhabha’s (1994) deconstructionist approach to the ideas of national identities, identifying them as complex, heterogeneous and postmodern, is essential in dealing with texts that express both opposition to traditional concepts of nationality as well as negotiation of new forms of national identities. Moreover, his concepts of “hybridity”, “liminality” and “the third space” are particularly useful. Spivak (1985) combines influences from deconstructionist theories with Marxist elements, and inflects postcolonial theory with feminist approaches. She stresses the aspects of race, class and gender in her work, perspectives that are

essential in studying the female narratives and discourses, migrant voices poised between patriarchy and modernity.

These multicultural texts bring in new themes and fields of reference, and since these authors choose to write in the majority language of each of their new homelands, their minority discourse is set against the majority discourse. In the analyses of these texts, the concept of rewriting (cf. Bhabha) will be in focus (cf. Muller's 1999 comment on bicultural writers' "rewriting what it means to be American"). A comparison with other contemporary European migrant writings will be made (cf. Brinker-Gabler and Smith 1997, Ireland and Proulx 2001, Ponzanesi and Merola 2005) for context, noting that German and Dutch literatures are similar to the Nordic ones (migrants and change of language), while French and British differ (colonized and the same language). These writers' bilingual and bicultural points of departure are in focus, and themes of exile and double consciousness, of identity formation and life in multicultural societies, are abundant. In these narratives of shifting, culturally diverse populations, the forces of fragmentation and possible integration are dialectically connected or interdependent forces, central in forming our contemporary modern or postmodern societies. In their search for identity, or negotiation and formation of identity, the authors of a migrant background "rewrite" national identities and move them towards a transnational one.

Discourses of cultural diversity, and narratives of identity in museums of cultural history

The goal of this proposed research is to explore the interplay between discourses of cultural diversity and narratives of identity and the ways these are negotiated in museums of cultural history in Norway and some Western European countries. The following are the museums that have been selected so far: the Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo; The Norwegian Museum of Cultural History and the new Hovedstadsmuseum in Oslo; Statens museer för världskultur, Göteborg; Musée du Quai Branly and the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration; Musée des civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée in Marseilles. The goal is to investigate the representations of minorities of migrant origin and diasporas in museums of cultural history and how their life stories and histories affect the shared past of plural societies. Globalization has changed the notion of frontiers and citizenship. In Western Europe territorial borders seem to be fading away and are being replaced by mental ones that do not always correspond to geographic areas. The fluctuation of frontiers has had its repercussions on museums of cultural history and their representations of otherness. It has prompted a number of them to engage in matters related to cultural diversity, and to reassess ideas of uniform national identities and of boundaries that function as defenses of cultural integrity and authenticity. As a starting point the research posits that in today's plural societies, museums of cultural history act as interfaces between Grand Narratives of homogeneous nation-states and the polyphonic stories of their inhabitants. The narratives and life stories of minorities, both indigenous and of migrant origin are, in this view, setting their mark on representations of nation-states and giving new connotations to the notion of citizenship. One of the main aims of this research is to study how this transformation is visualized and communicated in museums of cultural history.

All immigration, whether voluntary or forced, is tied to life stories and to narratives of journeys, departures, arrivals and processes of settling down. In museums these narratives are often structured according to the collective and individual memories of the various migrant communities and diasporas. They disclose group identities and rely on written or oral texts, visual and performative arts, crafts and skills and also material objects which are considered as records and witnesses of historical, cultural, political, sociological, economic and religious realities. The stories these objects tell convey a many-layered meaning to the notion of belongingness as well as disclose various strategies of integration and exclusion. Taking the gender and generational aspects of the narratives and objects into consideration and following what is called an "intersecting gaze perspective" (Naguib 2004a,b), the research shall examine the insights narratives of women and men, young and

old, give us about processes of integration and notions of citizenship. Doing this requires reflections on the ethics of museums' collecting policies as well as addressing issues pertaining to the past and who has a right to it. At the outset two types of interdependent analytical challenges are envisaged. The first one deals with the dialectics between identity and representation. The second analytical query concerns exhibition strategies in plural societies and is tied to the notion of museums as contact zones. Contact zones are intermediate zones of coexistence where homogeneity and heterogeneity, the local and the global, exist side by side. Most of all, they are zones of dialogues that open for avenues of inquiries going beyond the binary oppositions and classifications such as Us and the Other (Clifford 1997, Naguib 2004a,b).

The strength of an inter- and multidisciplinary approach

The proposed project will contribute with research combining linguistics, literary studies and cultural studies in the investigation of migration and identity. Each research focus area will have its own disciplinary approach, hence a multidisciplinary approach to the study of identity in contact situations. However, the focus on narratives will allow us to work together towards an interdisciplinary approach to an understanding of the issues involved. This is truly the strength of the proposed project. Through regular seminars, we will discuss and integrate our methodological and theoretical perspectives and findings. International research in this field of study has recognized the need for an interdisciplinary approach to the study of identity in contact situations. This approach to the study of migration and identity is also unique in Norway.

Investigating identity among real migrants and fictional migrants in literature written about migration and migrants' encounters with new societies can indeed contribute to the study of identity. As Joseph (2004: 4) points out, "the identities of real and fictional individuals are actually not all that easy to distinguish" and "... the reciprocal tension between individual and group identities gives the overall concept of identity much of its power" (p. 5). What is particularly interesting about the identity of the successful literary character is that it embodies a *group* identity in the form of a plausible individual, for example, the modern woman as Nora in Ibsen's *A Doll House*. Novels involving a plausible individual migrant can likewise construct a group identity of migrants to a particular country or indeed more generally to any new society. Moreover, metaphor as a literary device may be compared to metaphor in everyday experience. Hence a comparison of fiction portraying migrants and migration and of actual accounts and life stories of real migrants can shed light on how identity is perceived, constructed and expressed. A parallel may be drawn with material culture that provides insight into both individual and group identity in museums of cultural history. Thus a comparative approach can contribute to a new understanding of the complexity of identities in contact situations.

The research team, project plan, and recruitment of researchers

Four senior scholars are involved in this project. **Lanza**, who will have the overall responsibility for coordinating the research activities, is a sociolinguist who has worked on code-switching and language socialization in bilingualism, as well as on methodology in bilingual research. She will contribute to the SKI project with her expertise in conversational discourse analysis of bilingual interactions. **Golden** is a linguist with a strong competence in issues concerning second language users' linguistic comprehension and production. She will contribute to the SKI project with her expertise in metaphor theory and in second language acquisition research. Both Lanza and Golden will be responsible for the language focus area. **Kongslien**, responsible for the literature focus area, brings to the project expertise in literary theory that will be invaluable to the study of narratives. Her earlier research has been on Scandinavian-American literature and culture, and her KUSK project was a pioneering work with Norwegian multicultural fiction. **Naguib**, who will be responsible for the museum focus area, works in culture studies and the history of religion. Her fields of expertise include the interpretation of texts, both written and oral, visual arts and material culture from different periods and geographic areas.

This project prioritizes the recruitment of researchers. Within our budget we have included salaries for one postdoctoral and one doctoral candidate as well as three M.A. grants. There are several highly qualified and relevant postdoctoral candidates. There are also prospective candidates for the doctoral grant. The postdoctoral scholar will work closely with the research team on a topic related to the language focus area, with the doctoral candidate to be involved in either the literature or museum focus area. The three M.A. grants will stimulate motivated students to become involved in the study of language, culture and identity. In order to create a stimulating environment for research, regular working seminars will be organized where all participants will present work in progress. The research team will meet regularly to discuss their work and work collaboratively. The grantees will be involved in these seminars and meetings. Each seminar will have a particular theme, for example, various approaches to the study of narratives, the negotiation of identity, and metaphors in identity construction. Each participant will present ongoing work. There will also be an opening conference, yearly seminars, as well as a closing conference, to which guest lecturers will be invited. They will hold guest lectures, open to everyone, and also function as commentators and resource persons at the seminars for project participants. The senior researchers have an extensive international network of relevant scholars who are willing to come to Oslo for this purpose.

Internationalization, more local networks, and strategic plans

Internationalization will be assured through the contacts and involvement in international networks for each of the four senior scholars, by the invitation of relevant international scholars to Oslo as guest lecturers, and by the project scholars' invitations to give guest lectures abroad, as well as through publications, conference presentations, etc. This project will have close contact with the University of Oslo's strategic research project Cultural Complexity in the New Norway (CULCOM) and the project manager Professor Thomas Hylland Eriksen. Two members of our project are on CULCOM's Board (Naguib is the chair and Kongslien an alternate for the Humanities Faculty). The SKI team covers expertise in several fields, and each scholar is involved in complementary as well as overlapping networks. They have a base in both national and international networks of scholars dealing with relevant work. Their research also follows up on the Department of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies' proposed strategic plan as well as that of the Humanities Faculty, University of Oslo, concerning language and culture contact.

The work of the SKI group figures prominently in an application for funding of a collaborative project (ICON) under EU's 7th Framework Programme for which Lanza is the Scientific Coordinator.⁷ The application's consortium comprises 20 researchers from 13 academic institutions located in 10 countries. As the proposed EU project is a small to medium-focused project, the request for funding was concentrated on infrastructure and dissemination. The proposed SKI project in this application for NFR funding stands on its own basis, and the request for funding is for recruitment and partial funding of research time for the senior researchers involved. Should ICON receive EU funding, an NFR funding of the present SKI project would complement the funding for ICON. This EU endeavor, which includes the University of Tromsø as a partner, shows that the SKI group is involved in a network of prominent international scholars in relevant fields for this project.

Dissemination

Dissemination of the research results will be in the form of guest lectures, seminars, conference papers, and publications. These will aim to have an impact on integration policy in Norway. CULCOM has an agreement with the University press to publish books in their series, and we have

⁷ The project is ICON: Multiculturalism and Multilingualism as Resources for Emancipation and Social Cohesion. The call for proposals was SSH-2007-3.3.1 Cultural interactions and multiculturalism in European societies. The application deadline was May 10, 2007.

been invited to publish some of our work in this series. Otherwise, our goal will be to publish articles in refereed international journals. In addition to presentations of ongoing work on the project at local and national seminars, each senior researcher will have as a goal to present yearly at least at one relevant international conference. Presentation of ongoing work will, furthermore, also be included in the courses we teach. We will also present our work in non-academic fora, such as in lectures in continuing education for teachers. The doctoral and M.A. candidates will each present a thesis by the end of their grant period. Feedback will also be given to communities involved in our research (see below). At the end of the funding period, we plan to publish a book, a collection of articles on language, culture and identity in migrant narratives.

Usefulness and relevance for society

The project will address issues of cultural complexity and the politics of identity, cultural diversity, integration and new visions of national identity and citizenship. Knowledge and competence in these areas are vital in contemporary society, as a basis for national policy regarding issues pertaining to our plural society and for enhancing people's awareness of issues of cultural complexity.

Environment, ethics and equal opportunity

Environmental perspectives are considered, particularly in regards to recruitment among minority groups. Ethical considerations will be followed, according to the requirements of the Data Inspectorate (*Datatilsynet*). Identity is a sensitive issue and the identity of any and all participants in our project will remain anonymous, unless the individual wishes otherwise. Indeed the researcher's responsibility to the community is a burning issue, particularly in sociolinguistic research. Cameron *et al.* (1992) point out that research in the social sciences is often about power relationships; they discuss the potential for developing a research process through which both the researcher and the researched can benefit. The ethical issues raised here should be an integral part of any work on the study of language, culture and identity, and will be an important issue in our project. Feedback to minority communities will be a goal for our project. Moreover, funds are set up in the budget for assistance from the relevant minority groups for various steps in the research process. In this way our projected research is in line with what Cameron *et al.* (1992) point out is the research process through which both the researcher and the researched can benefit: "research *on, for* and *with* social subjects". The proposed project seriously addresses the issue of equal opportunity and the gender perspective. Moreover, with identity on the research agenda, gender identity is a highly relevant aspect in the proposed research on language and culture contact.

Time framework

The project will expand over four years. This will allow us the necessary time to announce the various research grants and select the candidates who will have the 3-year grants. A detailed overview of main activities and milestones of the project is included in the application form.

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