INTRODUCTION TO THE COARA WG ON MULTILINGUALISM

4 April
Multilingualism in Research and Assessment in Higher Education seminar

Janne Pölönen
PRESENTATION

1. CoARA – Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment

2. CoARA WG on Multilingualism and Language Biases

3. Practical Example: scholarly communication
1. COARA — COALITION FOR ADVANCING RESEARCH ASSESSMENT
THE AGREEMENT

CoARA’s Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment, published on 20 July 2022, establishes a common direction for research assessment reform, while respecting organisations’ autonomy. It is based on

- 10 overarching principles,
- 10 commitments: 4 core and 6 supporting
- timeframe for reforms: 1 and 5 years after signing

Signature of the Agreement is open to all organisations involved in research assessment. Signatory organisations can then apply to become members of the Coalition and join a community to facilitate the implementation of their own reform and enable systemic change.

692 signatory organisations
as of February 2024
RESEARCH ASSESSMENT

UNITS OF ASSESSMENT

- research performing organisations and research units
- Research projects
- Individual researchers and research teams

PURPOSES OF ASSESSMENT

- Allocating funding
- Making prize and award decisions

- informing project management and future research funding decisions
- informing research priorities and improving research strategies
- public investment accountability
- recruitment and hiring promotion
- professional development review
CORE COMMITMENTS

1. Recognise the diversity of contributions to, and careers in, research in accordance with the needs and nature of the research

2. Base research assessment primarily on qualitative evaluation for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators

3. Abandon inappropriate uses in research assessment of journal- and publication-based metrics, in particular inappropriate uses of Journal Impact Factor (JIF) and h-index

4. Avoid the use of rankings of research organisations in research assessment
THE COALITION

• **The Coalition offers a space for its members to learn from others’ experiences**, to advance the process of research assessment reform in Europe and beyond.

• **Signatory organisations**, having subscribed to the Guiding Principles and Code of Conduct, are invited to become members of the coalition and actively involved in advancing reform.

• The Coalition is governed by its **General Assembly of Members** and **Steering Board** and supported by a **Secretariat** hosted by the European Science Foundation (ESF)-Science Connect.

• Coalition members are invited to be involved in **National Chapters** and **Working Groups** and other Coalition activities.

610 member organisations
as of February 2024
13 WORKING GROUPS

- Towards Open Infrastructures for Responsible Research Assessment
- TIER – Towards an Inclusive Evaluation of Research
- Multilingualism and language biases in research assessment
- Experiments in Assessment – Idea generation, co-creation, and piloting
- Early-and-mid-Career Researchers (EMCRs) – Assessment and Research Culture
- Responsible metrics and indicators
- Towards Transformations: Transdisciplinarity, Applied/Practice-Based Research, and Impacts
- Improving practices in the assessment of research proposals

- Reforming Academic Career Assessment
- Global framework for research evaluation in the social sciences and the humanities (SSH)
- Recognizing and Rewarding Peer Review
- Supporting the alignment of research assessment systems with CoARA in biomedical disciplines through administrative reforms and governance
2. COARA WG ON MULTILINGUALISM AND LANGUAGE BIASES
WG PARTNERS

- **17 Universities**: Coimbra group, AMU, Hanken, Sorbonne, TAU, TOUR4EU, UMI, UHR, UAntwerp, LEI, UNIMIB, UTU, Nanterre, SU, JYU, Lusófona, UAB
- **5 Research centres and infrastructures**: OPERAS, CNR, CSIC, CNRS, NIFU
- **6 Academies, societies and association of researchers**: TSV, MCAA, ECSPM, Eurodoc, EuroScience, ENRESSH
- **4 Public or private research funding organisations**: AKA, ANR, FWO, cOAlition S
- **1 Evaluation authorities/agencies**: ANVUR
- **2 Not-for-profit organisations**: EASSH, ISE
- **3 Organisations outside Europe**: CLACSO–FOLEC (Argentina), translatE (Australia), UNESCO Chair on Open Science (Canada)

**CO-CHAIRS**
- Emanuel Kulczycki (Adam Mickiewicz University Poznan)
- Monica Dietl (ISE)
- Gian Maria Greco (MCAA)

**COORDINATION**
- Janne Pölönen (TSV)

39 member organisations / 71 experts
as of March 2024
WG MISSION

• By addressing language diversity and biases in assessment, WG supports the EU (and other) institutions in fulfilling their duty to enhance, promote and uphold linguistic equity, diversity and non-discrimination in Europe and globally.

• This requires fostering an academic culture that values diverse competencies, interactions and communications in all languages without exclusions or priorities.

The United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights article 27 states that “everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits”, and this according to Article 2 “without distinction of any kind, such as... language”

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU also places an obligation on the Union to respect linguistic diversity (Article 22) and prohibits discrimination on grounds of language (Article 21).
EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR RESEARCHERS

Recommendation on a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in europe

• Approved 18th of December 2023

• NON-DISCRIMINATION: Employers and funders of researchers should not discriminate against researchers in any way based on gender, age, ethnic, national or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion, social or economic condition.
MULTILINGUALISM IN COARA

• **1st core commitment**: “Recognize valuable contributions that researchers make to science and for the benefit of society, including diverse outputs beyond journal publications and *irrespective of the language in which they are communicated*”.

• **3rd core commitment**: Inappropriate uses include assessing outputs based on metrics relating to publication venue, format or *language*.

• **Toolkit**: Value diverse outputs (FAIR data sets, replication studies, registered reports, pre-prints) in different languages *in accordance with the Helsinki initiative*

3. Promote language diversity in research assessment, evaluation, and funding systems.

Make sure that in the process of **expert-based evaluation**, high quality research is valued regardless of the publishing language or publication channel.

Make sure that when **metrics-based systems** are utilized, journal and book publications in all languages are adequately taken into account.
WG MAIN OBJECTIVES

1. to raise awareness across all fields about the importance of “multilingualism in practice of science, in scientific publications and in academic communications” (UNESCO)

2. to provide institutions with guidelines, toolbox and implementation proposal for recognizing, rewarding and incentivizing research carried out and communicated in all languages, and for addressing language biases in metrics, expert-assessment and rankings

Task Forces (TF)
1. TF1: Coordination
2. TF2: Landscape analysis
3. TF3: Policy advice and implementation
4. TF4: Communication

Interest Groups (IG)
1. Early career researchers
2. Civil society
3. Intersectionality
4. Language learning and skills
5. Open Scholarly communication
| Task-Forces (TF) and Interest Groups (IG) | Activities (A) and Deliverables (D) | M1 2023 | M2 2023 | M3 2024 | M4 2024 | M5 2024 | M6 2024 | M7 2024 | M8 2024 | M9 2024 | M10 2024 | M11 2024 | M12 2024 | M13 2024 | M14 2024 | M15 2025 | M16 2025 | M17 2025 | M18 2025 | M19 2025 | M20 2025 | M21 2025 | M22 2025 | M23 2025 | M24 2025 |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| TF 1: Coordination                     | A1: Drafting an Action Plan         |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|                                        | A8: Development of an implementation proposal for CoARA on language aware assessments |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|                                        | D6: Implementation proposal         |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| TF 2: Landscape Analysis               | A4: Landscape analysis on the current state of multilingualism |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|                                        | - A4.1 Literature review            |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|                                        | - A4.2 Survey to researchers        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|                                        | - A4.3 Case-studies                 |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|                                        | - A4.4 Bibliometric analyses        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|                                        | D1: Landscape report on the current state of multilingualism |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|                                        | A5: Landscape analysis on best practices |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|                                        | - A5.1 Literature review            |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|                                        | - A5.2 Survey to organisations     |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|                                        | D2 Landscape report on best practices in language-aware assessment |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|                                        | D3: White Paper on the importance and issues of multilingualism in relation to assessment reform |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| TF 3: Policy Advice and Implementation | A6: Development of Language policy advice |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|                                        | D4: Policy advice to (a) HEI and RPO and (b) RFO and Evaluation agencies |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|                                        | A7+A8 Devising and testing tools, guidelines and models for recognizing, monitoring and supporting multilingual work |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|                                        | D5: Toolbox for language aware-assessments |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| TF 4: Communication                    | A2+A3 Drafting a Communication and Interaction Plan |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|                                        | A10: Activities to communicate and disseminate the WG early, mid-term and final results |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|                                        | D7: Workshops and webinars recordings |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|                                        | D8: Position paper on multilingualism in research assessment |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|                                        | D9: Different language versions of D4-8 |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
HOW TO CONTRIBUTE

• **Experts** from CoARA member organisations are welcome to join the WG
  - Send email to coordinator Janne Pölönen ([janne.polonen@tsv.fi](mailto:janne.polonen@tsv.fi)) and indicate willingness to contribute to specific WG activities and deliverables

• **CoARA member organisations** will be invited to
  - Contribute data, respond to and distribute surveys and participate in case studies
  - Test and develop toolbox
  - Comment through open consultations on each core WG output

• **Interested experts and organisations** can benefit of
  - Online workshops and webinars to share, present and discuss WG outputs (aim to translate key outputs to several languages)
  - In-person workshops can be held within events organised by WG members

[CoARA logo]
3. PRACTICAL EXAMPLE: SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION
MULTILINGUALISM ACROSS FIELDS

• While English has become the lingua franca of global science, it has been well-established that especially in the social sciences and humanities (SSH), communication of original research results in multiple languages is an ongoing practice (Kulczycki et al., 2020).

• It is often taken for granted that researchers in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) have almost completely abandoned publishing research results in languages other than English (Ammon, 2012).

• Are STEM fields entirely dominated by English language communication?


INFORMATION SOURCES

• Standard publication and citation databases, notably Web of Science and Scopus, predominantly index peer-reviewed articles published in international English language journals.
  
  o Peer-reviewed research published in languages other than English remains invisible.
  
  o Databases ignore science communication, which is specifically targeted to professional and general audiences outside academia.

• Poland and Finland have comprehensive publication data integrated from local Current Research Information Systems (CRIS) of universities (Šile et al., 2018).

2b. How large share of the peer-reviewed publication output of Finnish and Polish universities is in different languages?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Finland (N=91,262)</th>
<th>Poland (N=1,030,289)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering and Technology</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical and Health Sciences</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Sciences</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All fields</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. How large share of the non-peer-reviewed publication output of the Finnish universities is in different languages?

### Professional audiences (N=13443)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Finnish</th>
<th>Swedish</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences</td>
<td></td>
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<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engineering and Technology</td>
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<td>95%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>82%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
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<td>66%</td>
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<tr>
<td>All fields</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>77%</td>
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</table>

### General audiences (N=7282)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Finnish</th>
<th>Swedish</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering and Technology</td>
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<td>79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical and Health Sciences</td>
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<td>73%</td>
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<td>Social Sciences</td>
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<td>79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
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<td>72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>All fields</td>
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<td>77%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Large share of SSH researchers across 7 European countries published in 2013–15 peer-reviewed journal articles in the local language(s) of their country:
  - 88% in Poland
  - 29% in Flanders
- Web of Science and Scopus covered only 3%–8% of 94,000 peer-reviewed journal articles published in the local languages of 7 European countries

DISADVANTAGES – INSTITUTIONS

- **University Rankings** are biased towards universities in the United States or English-speaking universities by using a subset of mostly English journals to measure research performance.
- Universities in English-speaking countries rank ahead of universities from other language regions in reputation and research performance.

Amano et al. (2023) have shown that compared to fluent/native speakers, 2nd language speakers with low or moderate fluency need more time and effort in reading, writing and revising publications and presentations.
QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

• A narrative CV is a type of CV format that provides structured written descriptions of academics’ or researchers’ contributions and achievements that reflect a broad range of relevant skills, experiences and outputs and contributions regardless of language.

• Narrative CV’s inherent emphasis on language use may introduce bias and noise into the evaluation process.

• Gendered language and self-promotion tactics may also result in biased evaluations.

• Importantly, funding organizations also need to consider and account for how narrative formats disadvantage non-native language researchers.

LANGUAGE PRIORITIES IN ASSESSMENT

• Ideally, assessment of researchers and research is evaluated based on quality and impact – in practice, criteria and methods are far from language neutral

• Policy-makers, evaluators and funders – even researchers – still think that research of any value to science and society is published in international English language journals.

• Excellence is typically identified as articles published in English language journals indexed in the Web of Science or Scopus, or having Journal Impact Factor.

• Intended or unintentional language priorities in research assessment may
  o Result in systemic undervaluation of SSH research compared to STEM fields in assessments and funding (but also applied/practice oriented vs basic research, etc)
  o Compromise equal opportunities for individual researchers and institutions
  o Endanger epistemic diversity, locally relevant research and knowledge transfer beyond academia
Thank you for your attention!

Questions – Comments?