IMPECT – *Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants with Poor Education and the Consequences of Migration Tests*

1. Excellence

Since the turn of the century a growing number of European countries, including Norway, have introduced obligatory language and knowledge of society (KoS) tests for migrants applying for residency and citizenship (hereafter migration tests). A claim that these requirements increase migrants' motivation for language learning and integration has been used to justify their introduction in Norway as well as in other European countries (Strik et al., 2010, regjeringen.no, 2015, 2020), yet there is little empirical evidence supporting this claim. More research into the consequences of migration tests especially for those migrants for whom the requirements represent considerable barriers such as migrants with low levels of literacy is called for (Strik et al., 2010; van Oers, 2014, Bech et al., 2017). The main objective of the IMPECT project is to address this gap in research by investigating the consequences of migration tests on low literate adult migrants (LESLLA learners[1]) in general and their motivation for language learning, in particular. Our focus on this learner group in the larger socio-political learning context responds to a call for more research in the fields of language testing and second language acquisition (SLA) alike. IMPECT aims to identify obstacles to the advancement of LESLLA learners' language learning and integration. The results will be of direct relevance to LESLLA populations of Norway and Europe and provide an improved research-base for both policy makers, language test developers and educational practitioners.

Because language learning is key to social integration and empowerment, including access to the labour market and general socio-economic advancement, IMPECT is relevant to UN's sustainable development goals *SDG1: No poverty*, and *SDG10: Reduced inequalities*. New insights into LESLLA learners' motivation may positively influence practices in adult education for *SDG4: Quality education*, and since exclusion from basic literacy education prior to migration affects women disproportionately, the advancement of LESLLA learners is in accordance with *SDG5: Gender equality* (UNESCO, 2017). From a social justice and inclusion perspective, it is imperative to investigate the impact of formal requirements marginalized groups for whom the requirements constitute a significant obstacle, *SDG16: Peace, justice and strong institutions*.

1.1. State of the art, knowledge needs and project objectives

From January 1st, 2017, immigrants who apply for Norwegian citizenship are required to demonstrate a certain level of oral proficiency in Norwegian and knowledge of society (KoS). To meet these requirements, they must pass two tests: the oral part of *Test of Norwegian for adult migrants* at level A2[2] and *the Citizenship test*, both developed by *Skills Norway*. In Norway as in most other European countries, the KoS test is a written multiple-choice test in the language of the host country. In addition to societal knowledge, passing the test therefore requires reading skills in the majority language, which disadvantages learners with poor reading skills and low levels of second language (L2) proficiency (Rocca et al., 2020). Despite this practice of a double requirement of an explicit language test and a KoS test (i.e. an implicit language test), it is not yet known which of the two tests represents the greatest barrier (Bech et al., 2017). IMPECT aims to address this knowledge gap through statistical analyses of Norwegian data (*n*=35 000) combining previously unconnected scores from both tests.

Motivation for learning and integration is explicitly used as a justification in the Norwegian coalition government's proposal for language and KoS requirements for citizenship, echoing the arguments of policy makers in Europe (Strik et al,.2010). Research into the effect of the requirements on motivation and integration, is however sparse. In a comparative study of requirements and their effect in nine EU countries, Strik et al. (2010) conclude that requirements may in fact have the opposite consequences, underlining the need for more research, especially targeting LESLLA learners (van Oers, 2014).

Low-literate learners are migrants who for reasons of poverty, war, flight, and gender oppression have had limited access to schooling, and have developed no or only basic literacy skills. UNESCO estimates that at a global level, 773 million adults, two thirds of whom are women, are unable to read or write "a short, simple

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[1] The term 'LESLLA-learners' refer to adult second language learners with little prior schooling and/or low levels of literacy, and the acronym refers to *Literacy Education and Second Language Learning in Adults*, see https://www.leslla.org/research.

[2] On April 30 2020 the Ministry of Education and Research proposed to increase the required level from A2 to B1 with possible exemptions for LESLLA-learners. If this legislation is passed, the current project is made even more relevant, as the implementation demands knowledge on LESLLA learners' investment in L2 learning. https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/prop.-98-l-20192020/id2699960/

statement on one's everyday life in any written language"[3]. LESLLA learners face particular challenges in adult language learning (Kurvers et al. 2015) and perform significantly lower on verbal tests (Kim et al., 2014), including language tests (Carlsen, 2017, Djuve et al, 2017).

LESLLA learners are an understudied population in SLA research (Tarone, 2010). Our current knowledge on SLA and motivation for language learning is for the large part based on data from educated language learners. Similarly, research on adult learners' motivation for and *investment* in language learning has mainly addressed L2 learners in a study abroad context, or investment in literacy education in the Global South (Darvin & Norton, 2015). We know little about the factors shaping low literate L2 learners' investment in language learning in the Global North. IMPECT responds to Norton's (2013:2) call for SLA theorists to investigate how power relations in the social world affect language learning. The introduction of high stakes language tests that may favour educated and literate test-takers, may further disempower and marginalize LESLLA learners, increase negative effects of unevenly distributed social capital (cf. Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) while ignoring forms of social capital valued by LESLLA learners themselves.

To date, LESLLA studies have mainly focused on the psycholinguistic characteristics of learners and pedagogy directed towards this group (Young-Scholten, 2018). The larger socio-political context, including the policy of requirements for residency and citizenship, has largely been ignored. To widen the scope of LESLLA research, the IMPECT project uses the Douglas Fir Group (DFG) transdisciplinary framework for SLA research (DFG, 2016). The framework covers dimensions of language learning, in this project operationalized as language test scores, from the *micro level* covering individuals' cognitive and emotional capacities, through the *meso level* of sociocultural institutions and communities, encompassing social identity and investment, to the *macro level* of large-scale, society-wide ideological structures, policy and value systems, of which language requirements form part. The IMPECT project is the first to address the specific challenges of LESLLA learners within the multifaceted framework of the DFG.

Within language testing research, the direction focusing most consistently and explicitly on the misuse and potentially harmful consequences of language tests is *critical language testing* (CLT) (Shohamy, 2001, 2017). Shohamy & McNamara (2009:1) stress the fact that even when the intended purpose of a test is positive, the unintended consequences may be detrimental. Hence, we need to consider the possibility that even if the intended purpose of requirements is to motivate learning and foster integration, the result may be the opposite (van Oers, 2014; 2010; Goodman &Wright, 2015; Bech et al., 2017). Given the commonality of this policy in Europe, it is imperative to investigate the effect such requirements have on groups of learners who we may assume will be less likely to meet them. As is the case for SLA research, the field of language testing has paid little attention to LESLLA learners to date. Our project thus moves beyond the current state of the art in validity research of language tests used for migration purposes (Carlsen, 2015a, 2017, 2017b; Carlsen & Deygers, 2019).

To sum up, **the *primary objectives* of the IMPECT project are to investigate how migration tests impacts LESLLA learners' integration and language learning and to provide an improved research base for policy makers, language test developers and educational practitioners to improve pedagogical practices in adult education**.

The *secondary objectives* are to:
1) evaluate the validity, ethics and justice of language tests for migration purposes and the suitability of the dominating validation framework (WP1)
2) identify the background variables that explain most of the test score variance (success/failure) and which of the requirements (language or KoS tests) represents the biggest barrier for LESLLA-learners (WP2)
3) map the impact of migration tests on LESLLA learners in Europe and develop an index of linguistic requirements (WP3)
4) explore the relation between requirements, investment, L2-learning and social context of LESLLA (WP4)
5) provide guidelines for LESLLA responsible research methodology and dissemination practices (WP5)

1.2 Research questions and hypotheses, theoretical approach and methodology
Given the complexity of its research objective, IMPECT applies the transdisciplinary multi-level DFG framework and a mixed-methods research design. This is structured in five WPs, which in sum provide new knowledge into LESLLA learners' test performance, and the consequences of migration tests on LESLLA learners and their investment in language learning and integration. WP1 focuses on the ideological level of policy and values (DFG macro level). WP2 provides an empirical baseline, through analyses of a large-scale data set of 35 000 test candidates' performance on the required citizenship tests in Norway, combined with

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[3] http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/literacy

learners' background variables (DFG micro level). WP3 and WP4 follow up with empirical investigations of the consequences of migration testing on LESLLA learners, partly through a European survey among LESLLA teachers in 40 Council of Europe (CoE) member states followed up by interviews in a sub-set of CoE states (WP3), and partly through in-depth interviews with LESLLA learners in Norway (WP4) (DFG micro and meso levels). WP5 focuses on the ethical and methodological challenges in working with LESLLA learners and marginalized groups. WP0 provides overall administrative tasks, including project administration, communication and dissemination.
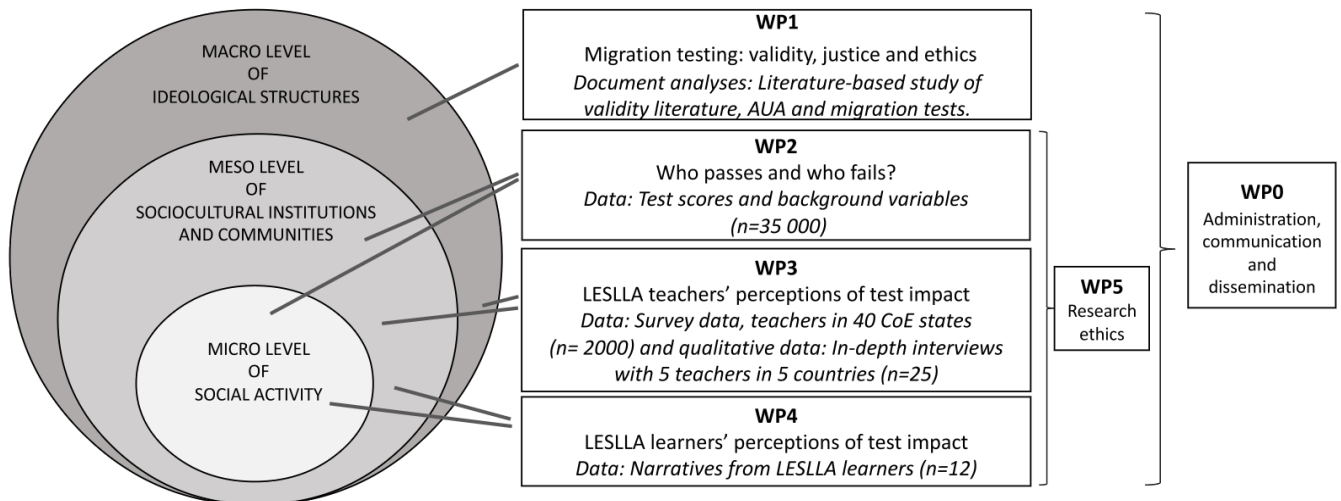

Figure: IMPECT's Work packages 0–5, as related to the DFG framework for SLA research

WP0: ADMINISTRATION, COMMUNICATION, AND DISSEMINATION

Leader: Edit Bugge (HVL), *Core participants:* Cecilie H. Carlsen (HVL), *Others:* all project members

WP0 performs management, handles administrative tasks and coordinates communication. This includes the following tasks: (1) project-external communication (Research council, media, stakeholders, see section 2.4), (2) financial management, (3) manage project website (in cooperation with WP5), (4) organize international visits, (5) support events and workshops, (6) data management, (7) risk assessment and management (see section 1.2.1), and (8) annual reports to NFR. **Milestones:** (M0.1) two-day kick-off event, (M0.2) Mid-way seminar with stakeholders and network group (M0.3) Mid-way seminar with SAB, M0.4) Final conference.

WP1: MIGRATION TESTING IN A VALIDITY, JUSTICE AND ETHICS PERSPECTIVE

Leader: Cecilie Hamnes Carlsen (HVL), *Core participants:* Ricky van Oers (Radboud University), PhD1, PhD1, PhD3, *National collaborators:* Ingun Westlund (Skills Norway), *International collaborators:* SAB-members Tim McNamara (University of Melbourne), Elana Shohamy (Tel Aviv University)

The core research questions in WP1 is the following:

RQ1) Can the use of migration tests be justified ethically and professionally, and is the dominating *assessment use argument framework* adequate to validate the use such tests?

WP1 focuses on the validity, ethics and justice of language tests for migration and citizenship purposes and critically examines the suitability of the *assessment use argument* (AUA) framework for validation studies of this use of language tests. WP1 serves as a theoretical platform for the other WPs, especially WP2 and WP3.

The recent proliferation of migration tests actualizes the need to investigate test impact on those subject to them (Extra et al., 2009; Rocca et al., 2020). Social consequences are embedded in the definition of validity on which professional language testing is based and questions of test consequences can therefore not be ignored in language test research (Messick, 1989; McNamara, McNamara & Ryan, 2011). Messick's definition of validity dominates the assessment field, but several scholars have argued that it is difficult to put into practice (Bachman & Palmer, 2010). This has led to the development of different frameworks for practical test validation. One such framework that has become particularly influential in language testing is Bachman & Palmer's *Assessment Use Argument* (AUA) framework (2010), building on Kane's *argument-based approach* to validation (Kane, 2002). The premise underlying the AUA framework is that language tests are introduced

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to bring about beneficial consequences. An AUA is developed to justify the use of the test and to investigate whether the intended beneficial consequences come about (Bachman & Palmer, 2010: 95). Several researchers have pointed to a potential problem with migration tests being that their role is symbolic rather than functional, and that their introduction may be to control migration rather than to support learning and integration (Rocca et al., 2020). Also, research has pointed to the potential non-beneficial effect of such requirements (van Oers, 2014). Given the central position of the AUA framework, it is vital for the ethics and justice dimension of language testing as an academic field to examine to what extent this framework is able to detect and demonstrate the potential lack of validity of language tests used as requirements for residency and citizenship in general and for the LESLLA population in particular. Language tests used for migration purposes are surprisingly enough hardly mentioned in Bachman & Palmer (2010) or Kane's extensive writings, and there is a striking lack of validity studies of migration tests applying the AUA-framework (Puchon-Berger & Lenz, 2014). This strengthens a hypothesis that the AUA framework is unsuited to validate such tests. WP1 entails a theoretical and principled discussion of validity theory, test ethics and the suitability of the AUA-framework in detecting and reporting the validity, or the lack of such, in using language tests for residency and citizenship purposes. Based on an extensive validity literature review and empirical results provided in WP2, 3 and 4, RQ1 examines the adequacy of the AUA framework in validating migration tests, using the Norwegian language test for citizenship as the case in point. The IMPECT project is the first to critically examine the suitability of the AUA framework in validating language tests as requirements for residency and citizenship and will contribute with new perspectives to the theoretical discussion of validity and its investigation in the field of language testing.

WP1 Milestones: (M1.1) Build literature base, (M1.2) Presentation at conferences (M1.3) Draft papers,
WP1 Deliverables: (D1.1) Scientific paper (D1.2) Conference papers (D1.3) Popularized papers.

WP2: WHO PASSES, WHO FAILS? THE EFFECT OF BACKGROUND VARIABLES ON TEST SCORES

Leader: Edit Bugge (HVL), *Core participants:* Cecilie H. Carlsen, PhD1, statistician, *National collaborators*: Ingun Westlund (*Skills Norway*).

Key research questions in WP2 include the following:
> RQ2) Which background variables give the highest contribution to the variance in test scores, and which learner groups are most likely to fail the language and/or KoS requirement for citizenship?
> RQ3) Which of the two tests required for citizenship (i.e. language and KoS test), represents the biggest barrier for LESLLA learners?

The purpose of WP2 is to build and analyse a data set containing data from all citizenship applicants since the introduction of the requirements on January 1st, 2017 (approximately 35 000 candidates). The data set includes test scores from the KoS and language tests, and candidate background variables (age, gender, first language, previous schooling, time of residency, number of attempts to pass the KoS test). Language proficiency is operationalized in the IMPECT project as language test scores of the oral part of the *Test of Norwegian for adult migrants,* which measures *communicative competence* (Bachman, 1990), as described in the proficiency level descriptors of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR, CoE, 2001). Agreements with *Skills Norway* and *Statistics Norway* are in place to retrieve the data as this application is written, including necessary legal requirements and *Data Protection Impact Assessment* by the *Norwegian Centre for Data research* and HVL. The large-scale data set is also unique in an international context, and the results are thus of great interest to test developers and policy makers internationally as well as nationally. WP2 focuses on requirements for Norwegian citizenship and disregards requirements for permanent residency. This methodological choice is made as language and KoS requirements for citizenship represents a real obstacle for applicants in Norway, while the requirements for permanent residency are lenient enough to be within reach for most adult migrants (A1 oral production and KoS test in 29 minority languages) (Skills Norway, 2020).

RQ2 is answered through multivariate analyses and models of applicants' scores and background data. This RQ represents an essential first step of the IMPECT project, as it reveals which learner groups face obstacles in meeting the requirements. This will, in turn, be relevant for WP4 and the question of the tests' perceived achievability and to which extent they foster motivation for learning and integration. RQ3 will be answered through a comparison of pass probabilities of the KoS and language test, providing knowledge on whether it is the same candidates that fail to pass both tests, or if some candidate groups are more likely to pass

one test type, but not the other. Studies in cognitive psychology have shown that LESLLA learners perform significantly lower on tests in general and language tests in particular, than test takers with more schooling (Kim et al., 2014). The analyses in WP2 will provide an empirical base for insights to the interplay between literacy, educational background, test experience and test scores, and consequently, the question of which migrant groups that have lesser possibility of meeting the requirements to obtain Norwegian citizenship. These questions are theoretically linked to WP1 and form a necessary empirical background for WP3 and WP4.

WP2 Milestones: (M2.1) Complete data preparation and combination, (M2.2) Preliminary statistical analyses, (M2.3) Presentation of preliminary results (M2.4) Complete statistical analyses. **WP2 Deliverables:** (D2.1) 2 scientific papers (D2.2) Thesis and dissertation of PhD1 (D3.3) Conference papers (D3.4) Popularized papers.

WP3: THE IMPACT OF MIGRATION TESTS ON LESSLA LEARNERS IN 40 COUNCIL OF EUROPE MEMBER STATES – TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS
Leaders: Cecilie H. Carlsen (HVL) & Lorenzo Rocca (University of Perugia), *Core participants:* Bart Deygers (Ghent Uni.), Ricky van Oers (Radboud Uni.), PhD2, *National collaborators:* Vigdis Lahaug (Skills Norway), *International collaborators:* Sara W. Goodman (Uni. of California) ALTE LAMI group, CoE LIAM group

Core research questions in WP3 include the following:
   RQ4) How do language requirements for residency and citizenship impact LESLLA-learners in CoE member states, according to their teachers?
   RQ5) To what extent do LESLLA teachers' perceptions reflect the relative severity of language requirements in different countries?

The purpose of WP3 is to map the impact of language and KoS requirements for residency and citizenship on LESLLA learners in in 40 Council of Europe member states, responding to calls for research into the consequences of migration tests on LESLLA learners (Strik et al., 2010; van Oers, 2014). Prior studies into the impact of migration tests have included up to nine countries (Strik et al., 2010), but no prior studies have set out to investigate the impact of such tests across Europe including Southern and Eastern Europe. WP3 represents a continuation of the 2018 CoE/ALTE survey, as test impact will be linked to the information about the severity of requirements in 40 CoE states gathered in that survey. In WP3, the researchers responsible for the CoE/ALTE survey (Rocca, Carlsen & Deygers, 2020) will use these data to develop a *language requirement index (LangReqIndex)* building on the work of Goodman (2010) but specifying language requirements further.

To investigate RQ4, WP3 collects data through an electronic survey (SurveyExact) targeting in-service LESLLA teachers. LESLLA teachers are a particularly valuable group of informants as they have daily contact with LESLLA learners. The questionnaire maps teachers' perceptions about the impact of language and KoS requirements on LESLLA learners. Teachers' opinions about the ethicality and justifiability of the requirements as well as to what extent they perceive that their role has changed with the introduction of the requirements, will also be collected. The questionnaire will be made available in different languages and distributed in collaboration with ALTE LAMI and the Council of Europe to a minimum of 50 LESLLA teachers in each of the 40 CoE member states covered in the CoE/ALTE survey (*n* = 2000). Basic descriptive statistics will be used. To supplement the survey-data, in-depth interviews will be carried out with 5 teachers from 5 countries representing radically distinct requirement policies These key informants will be carefully selected to represent pre-defined categories. The interview data will be transcribed and analysed with NVivo.

To investigate RQ5, teachers' perceptions are correlated with the *language requirement index (LangReqIndex)* based on data from the CoE/ALTE survey. Developing an index for measuring the severity of linguistic requirements will be one central outcome of WP3. The index will take into account *language proficiency* and *language skills* necessary to pass the language and KoS tests, the number of *language requirement points* in the integration journey (pre-entry, residency, citizenship), the *learning opportunities,* and the *exemptions* from requirements for LESLLA learners. To quantify the relationship between teachers' perceptions and the relative severity of language requirements (as measured by the *LangReqIndex*) we will apply a mixed effects linear regression model, which will allow us to gauge the interaction between the severity of language requirement and teacher perceptions of the consequences of migration tests on LESLLA learners.

WP3 Milestones: (M3.1) Collect survey data, (M3.2) Collect interviews data (M3.3) Transcribe interviews (M3.4) Draft papers. **WP3 Deliverables:** (D3.1) A minimum of 2 scientific papers (D3.2) PhD thesis and dissertation of PhD2. (D3.3) Conference papers, (D3.4) Popularized papers.

WP4: THE IMPACT OF MIGRATION TESTS ON LESSLA LEARNERS IN NORWAY – LESLLA LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS
Leader: Marte Nordanger (HiNN), *Core participants:* Edit Bugge (HVL), PhD2, PhD3, research assistant. RA and one of the PhDs are recruited from Norwegian minority populations, with L1s and lived experience relevant for data analyses. *International collaborators:* SAB member Jeanne Kurvers (Tilburg University). *Partners:* Nygård vo (Bergen municipality).

Key research questions in WP4 include the following:
> RQ6) What characterizes LESLLA learners' lived experience of language learning and their investment in the language learning process?
> RQ7) How do language and KoS requirements affect LESLLA learners' investment in language learning?

WP4 explores the relation between motivation, language learning and social context of LESLLA learners. In line with Norton (1995, 2013), WP4 applies the concept of *investment* to learners' engagement with and commitment to second language learning. Norton's investment concept builds on Bourdieu & Passeron's (1977) economic metaphor of forms of unevenly distributed *capital*. Norton argues that learners invest in language "with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital" (1995, p. 17). Learners' investment in, and motivation for participating in the practices of the L2 classroom, is dependent on the extent to which those practices are regarded as helpful in obtaining desired future subject positions, *imagined identity* or access to *imagined communities* (cf. Anderson, 1991). LESLLA learners are rational adults and their willingness to invest could be assumed to depend on their expectations of outcome, for which the perception of the *achievability* of a goal is a relevant factor. A relevant question of WP4 is to investigate to what extent becoming a citizen is an important aspiration for migrants, motivating for language learning, or whether the requirements are considered a hindrance on their path to citizenship, which may lead to demotivation and lack of investment. WP4 records LESLLA learners' subjective voices on their language learning process and experiences of citizenship requirements.

In order to answer RQ6 and RQ7, WP4 collects two data sets: The first is narratives on language learning and testing, collected through oral in-depth interviews with 12 LESLLA learners (conducted with authorized interpreters, and with participants selected through *Nygård vo*). The second data set will be from a survey on perceptions of and subjective experiences with citizenship requirements. The survey design is developed by WP5. While RQ6 focuses on narratives and survey response that directly target *citizenship requirements*, RQ7 places the requirements in a broader perspective. Language investment theory highlights the dynamic and social nature of learners' relationship to the L2, contrary to an individualized notion of motivation as a dichotomous concept. Investment is thus connected to learners' *identities* understood as a person's "relationship to the world, how that relationship is structured across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (Norton, 2013, p. 45). Drawing on Yosso's (2005) critical race theory critique of traditional interpretations of cultural capital, RQ6 thus explores citizenship within the wider set of participants' perceived gains, identities and imagined futures.

WP4 Milestones: (M4.1) Interview guide and pilot interviews, (M4.2) Data collection interviews, (M4.3) Transcription (M4.4) Draft papers. **WP4 deliverables:** (D4.1) 2 scientific papers on language, motivation, investment theory and LESLLA learners (D4.2) Thesis and dissertation of PhD 3. (D4.3) Conference papers (D4.4) Edited volume including contributions from junior members of WP4 and practitioners.

WP5: RESEARCH ETHICS. LESLLA RESPONSIBLE RESEARCH DESIGN COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION
Leader: Edit Bugge (HVL), PhD 3, research assistant.

Research question: RQ8) Which factors facilitate LESLLA responsible research design?

IMPECT focuses on rational and resourceful adults with rich life experiences, but with low levels of literacy, limited language skills in Norwegian and limited experience with participating in research as respondents. These population characteristics pose specific methodological challenges, which require careful

considerations to ensure informed consent, design appropriate interview guides and questionnaires, and ensure successful dissemination of results to the LESLLA participants. WP5 aids the remaining four WPs by providing guidelines for research methodology and guidelines for LESLLA responsible language and dissemination practices. These guidelines will be of relevance and use to future research projects that include low-literate or other marginalized adult participants. Through RQ8, WP5 aims to identify obstacles and guidelines to ensure informed consent from LESLLA participants in both the legal and ethical sense. This process includes a review of relevant national personal data protection legislation, a review of current practices at the project host institution HVL and current practices and guidelines at NSD. WP5 will further provide guidelines for LESLLA responsible language, through the development of consent forms, interview guides, and the design of a LESLLA responsible website with project information. This also includes guidelines for interview practices for WP4.

WP5 Milestones: (M5.1) Complete LESLLA responsible consent form, online survey and interview guide, (M5.2) Construction of a LESLLA responsible website with project information, (M5.3) Complete guidelines, (M5.4) Conference with dissemination of results for LESLLA participants.

WP5 Deliverables: (D5.1) A minimum of 1 scientific paper on research ethical considerations in LESLLA research. (D5.4) Guidelines for consent and research practices in LESLLA research (D5.5) Guidelines for LESLLA responsible language, (D5.6) Dissemination of project results to LESLLA learners.

1.2.1 Risk assessment
The following table summarizes risks associated with the project and their mitigation measures.

Possible risk	Mitigation measures
Delay in the recruitment and lack of PhD candidates with the required skill levels.	Early public announcement of the vacancies will be undertaken. The network of partners will be actively used.
Continuing travel bans due to Covid-19, affecting i) internal meetings, ii) conference participation, iii) data collection for WP4	i) digital meetings as a standard for internal meetings, ii) participation in online conferences, iii) data collection in our geographic proximity, and with few participants in interviews.
Project dropout in WP4 (see description below)	Guidelines for information prior to participation consent

Low-literate adult migrants usually lack experience with the process of research, particularly beyond the point of data collection. The informed consent of the 12 participants in WP4 therefore depends on their experiences and reflections *during* participation, and the question of consent must therefore be repeated *after* the interview is completed. This increases the risk of project dropout, with (however limited) financial consequences for the project. We address this risk through thorough information prior to the interviews in line with guidelines established by WP5 and in cooperation with the network reference group.

1.3 Novelty and ambition
IMPECT is interdisciplinary in its approach, connecting the fields of language testing and second language acquisition, as suggested by Bachman & Cohen (1998). The learning group in focus are adult migrants with low levels of literacy, an understudied population in both research fields (Tarone, 2010, Carlsen, 2015a, 2017). The project sets out to fill significant gaps in empirical research as well as in theory development in both fields. The project will contribute with novel empirical knowledge into LESLLA learners' test performance and the effect of migration tests on this most vulnerable group, and the AUA framework for test validation will be applied in a new socio-political context and with a new group of learners. A further novel element of IMPECT is the attention to test ethics and the development of guidelines for research practices when working with low-literate adult migrants.

IMPECT will contribute with significant **theoretical gains:** The use of language tests to regulate migration and integration challenges the dominating framework for *test validation,* the *Assessment Use Argument* framework (Kane, 2002; Bachman & Palmer, 2010). Given the position of this framework in the field, it is relevant to question the extent to which the framework is adequate to detect and report potential lack of validity of tests used for residency and citizenship purposes (Carlsen, 2019e), hence one theoretical aim of the project is to discuss the appropriacy of the AUA framework from a validity, justice and ethics perspective (WP1). The overarching *SLA theory* for the project draws on the *Douglas Fir Group framework* (2016) presenting a transdisciplinary approach to SLA research combining theories focusing on learner-internal, cognitive factors (micro level), social/interactionalist theories occupied with language learning through social interaction, social identity and investment theory (meso level), to the ideological level of policy and values (macro level). The IMPECT project thus applies a framework not yet used in LESLLA research, and widens the perspective in LESLLA research by including the macro level of politics, values and language and KoS

requirements, while contributing to the SLA field with research on an understudied population (WP1, WP2, WP3, and WP4).

In addition, the current project has several **empirical gains**: One objective of the IMPECT project is to analyse *the effect of test candidates' background* variables on test performance of both the language and the KoS test based on a large data set (WP2). This will also provide novel insights into whether the language tests or the KoS tests pose the greatest barriers for LESLLA learners. The project will be the first of its kind in approaching a large number of CoE member states with the purpose of mapping *the impact of migration tests on LESLLA learners and their motivation for learning across Europe* (WP3). The project will also map the correlation between teachers' perceptions and the *relative severity* of the requirements in the respective countries measured by the *LangReqIndex*, developed as part of the IMPECT project and available as a tool for future research (WP3). A further novelty in the project is insights into the *social context for language learning, motivation and integration*, from interviews and narratives on LESLLA learners' lived experiences (WP4).

2. Impact
2.1 *Potential for academic impact of the research project*
The IMPECT project will have a considerable academic impact in language testing as well as SLA research. The project goes further than any other prior studies in investigating the impact of high-stake tests on LESLLA learners and their investment in learning. Through our multi-level approach combining large quantitative data, broad mapping of the impact of migration tests in 40 CoE-member states and in-depth qualitative studies of LESLLA learners' experiences, the project pushes the international research front forwards in SLA, language testing and adult literacy research alike. Our explicit focus on the impact of migration tests on LESLLA learners and their investment in learning, responds to calls for research in several prior studies (Djuve et al.; van Oers et al., 2010; Bech et al., 2017). The application of the DFG framework on LESLLA learners is the first of its kind and widens the scope in LESLLA research, from the current focus mainly limited to the psycholinguistic effects of the lack of literacy in a learning situations (micro level) and descriptions of pedagogical practice (meso level) (Young-Scholten, 2018), to including research and theory development at the macro level of politics and values affecting LESLLA learners. By invoking the concept of investment, the project permits a close investigation of how macro- and meso-level factors such as social situation and ideologies, shape LESLLA learner motivation. In the academic field of language testing, current definitions of validity encompass the use and consequences of language tests for those subject to them. Given the substantial use of language tests as gatekeepers to residency and citizenship, it is of great importance to use a model for test validation that is suitable to detect and report potential lack of validity in this use of language tests.

As an early career researcher, the PI (Bugge) will benefit from the project as it adds to her experience from project management and PhD-supervision and strengthens her international network beyond the Nordic countries. This improves a base for her developing potential future research projects, including larger EU funded projects. The project will further be beneficial for the academic career and progress of the project members, including the three PhD candidates, the RA and involved MA students. In the recruitment of RA and PhDs, emphasis will be placed on including talents with minority and refugee background.

2.2 *Potential for societal impact of the research project*
The identification of obstacles to the advancement of LESLLA learners' conditions is central for the achievement of UN's sustainable development goals (particularly *SDG1: No poverty*, *SDG4: Quality education*, *SDG5: Gender equality*, *SDG10: Reduced inequalities*, *SDG16: Peace, justice and strong institutions*). As prior studies indicate that low literate migrants may be at risk when language and KoS requirements are imposed, it is particularly important from a social justice and inclusion perspective to investigate the impact of such requirements on persons for whom the requirements constitute a considerable barrier (Strik et al, 2010; Van Oers, 2014; Bech et al, 2017). The results from IMPECT will be of relevance to policy makers as well as for teacher education and pedagogical practices in adult education (see also section 2.3). Collaboration with Skills Norway, ALTE LIAM and CoE LAMI has been established and will further enhance societal impact of the project both nationally and internationally. The establishment of guidelines for clear and LESLLA-inclusive communication (WP5) can make public information more available and aid the implementation of *clear language policy* (klarspråk) needed for efficient and successful communication of information to all members of society. This is a key to democracy, and to national security in national crises.

2.3 Measures for communication and exploitation
The research results from IMPECT are relevant for **scientific communities** in SLA, literacy research, test research and for practitioners in adult education. They are also relevant for policy makers in a national and

European context, for implementation and evaluation of integration policies for adult migrants. The academic community is reached through conference participation and papers in peer-reviewed journals. These goals, including relevant publication channels and conferences, are further specified in the WP descriptions. Efforts will be made to ensure that publications are Open Access. Through its WPs, IMPECT aims to deliver at least 8 scientific papers, 3 PhD dissertations, conference presentations and one anthology with chapters from network collaborators and stakeholders. Relevant publication channels are *Language Assessment Quarterly* (WP1), *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *Language testing* (WP2), *Applied Linguistics*, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (WP3), *Modern Language Journal*, *Adult education quarterly* (WP4 and WP5). Relevant conferences include ILTA, ALTE, EALTA, and the LESLLA symposium.

As IMPECT is hosted by the Faculty of teacher education at HVL, the project is closely linked to **teacher education**, both to general teacher training and continuing education for in-service teachers. IMPECT will include MA students at HVL and partner institutions. As the Norwegian government in 2019 proposed a requirement of 30 ects in SLA for adult education teachers, demands for HE courses and literature has increased. HVL, HiNN and University of Perugia share a long-standing focus on literacy and SLA and the development of such material. IMPECT contributes to strengthen this expertise in teacher education.

Knowledge-based contribution to public debate and **the wider public** has been a priority for both the PI of IMPECT (Bugge) and other core members (notably Carlsen, Rocca and Deygers). IMPECT aims to publish at least two popularized texts per year. Relevant channels are newspapers or far-reaching blogs (such as *Språkprat* and *Språk i utdanning* at forskning.no). The project information and results are available to **low literate readers** through the project website, with information in LESLLA responsible design, with audio files and in translation to relevant languages. Participation in public debate is to reach **policy makers** in an indirect manner, but results will also be communicated to policy makers through more direct lines. Three of the project group members (Carlsen, Rocca and Deygers) have expert roles in assignments initiated by the Council of Europe, and four members (Bugge, Carlsen, Rocca and Deygers) are included in tasks (providing expert statements, advisory boards a.o.) assigned from national governing bodies. The project group members and the SAB members hold central positions in national and international networks. Our aim is that IMPECT will provide knowledge that allows us to give more research-based advice on LESLLA learners to policy makers. The project network group includes two representatives from Skills Norway, i.e. the directorate responsible for adult education and citizenship testing under the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research. The project is formally supported by the Council of Europe (Education department), see attached formal statement.

3. Implementation
3.1. Project manager and project group

The project group is constructed to ensure an interdisciplinary approach with central researchers from the fields of language testing, second language acquisition, LESLLA-research, sociolinguistics, research ethics and law, and with a solid international collaboration. IMPECT will be managed by **Professor Edit Bugge** (b. 1983) (HVL). Bugge brings to the project expertise in sociolinguistics, and research experience from studies of the social and societal conditions for language acquisition, for linguistic practices, and for language change (see CV). Bugge leads the research group *Language and society* (Språk og Samfunn) in which the IMPECT project is based. She is also the leader of *SONE* (The national sociolinguistic network for Norwegian HE institutions) and is the national coordinator for the HE-network for *Regional strategy for competence development in ECEC* (financed by The Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training). Bugge heads WP0, WP2 and WP5 and will be the main supervisor for PhD 1 and co-supervisor for PhD3. **Professor Cecilie Hamnes Carlsen** (HVL) worked in the development of standardized language tests for adult migrants from 1997 to 2017, leading the work between 2011 and 2017. Her research interest is test ethics and test misuse (Carlsen, 2009, 2014, 2018, Carlsen & Moe, 2019) and the specific challenges of LESLLA learners in a learning and testing context (Carlsen, 2015a, 2017; Carlsen & Tammelin-Laine, T., 2017; Carlsen & Kurvers, 2018). She is an expert member of ALTE, elected member of the Standing Committee and as co-chair of the LAMI special interest group (*Language Assessment for Migration and Integration*) with project member Lorenzo Rocca. She is based in the research group *Language and society* at HVL. Carlsen will lead WP1 and co-lead WP3 and will be main supervisor for PhD3 and co-supervisor for PhD student 1. **Associate professor Marte Nordanger** (HiNN) leads WP4 and will be the co-supervisor of PhD3. Nordanger holds a Ph.D. in adult second language learning (Nordanger, 2017), and is currently engaged in research on the

individual language learning trajectories of adult learners, and the relationship between the cognitive and the social dimension in additional language learning. She has co-authored work on implicit and explicit processes in SLA (Nordanger & Tonne, 2018) and the application of usage-based linguistics in SLA (Nistov & Nordanger, 2018). **Dr. Ricky van Oers** (Radboud University) is involved in WP1 and WP3. She is a lawyer with a specialization in citizenship requirements and has investigated the impact of citizenship requirements on different groups of migrants (van Oers, 2014; van Oers et al., 2010). **Lorenzo Rocca** (University for Foreigners of Perugia) will co-lead WP3. Rocca is responsible for the language examinations for migrants at his university, and has worked to promote social justice for refugees and low-literate migrants, both through his work as a chair of LAMI in ALTE, through his participation in the CoE LIAM (*Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants*) group, and through his central role in the development of guidelines and toolkits for policy makers and teachers on behalf of the CoE. He is involved as one of the authors of a new language and literacy CoE framework for LESLLA learners. Language test researcher **Professor Bart Deygers** (Ghent University), is involved in WP3. Deygers brings to the project invaluable psychometric and statistical competence. Deygers is currently conducting research on LESLLA learners and migration tests in Flanders, Belgium, and has published extensively on topics relevant for the IMPECT project, such as his work on test justice (see CV). The project group will include **three PhD-students** and **one research assistant**. PhD student 1 will work on the test data in WP2 and analyses of test validity and ethics in WP1. PhD2 will work on the European teacher survey (WP3) and LESLLA interviews (WP4). Each WP will aim to include MA students.

National and international cooperation forms an integral part of IMPECT. In addition to its international core participants, IMPECT benefits from a **Scientific Advisory Board** consisting of four of the most prominent researchers within the fields relevant to the project: **Professor Elana Shohamy** (Tel Aviv University) and **Professor emeritus Tim McNamara** (University of Melbourne) are the most recognized scholars within critical language testing, focusing on the power of tests as political tools and their potentially harming consequences for individuals and society (Shohamy 2001, 2005; Shohamy & McNamara 2005; McNamara & Ryan, 2011). Psycholinguist **Dr. Jeanne Kurvers** (Tilburg University) has specialized on beginning literacy in adults and written extensively on how lack of literacy impacts the acquisition of a new language in adults (Kurvers et al., 2008, Kurvers et al., 2015). She is one of the founders of the international LESLLA network. **Dr. Sara W. Goodman** (UCI) is a political scientist specializing in the shaping of political identity through immigrant integration. Core participants of IMPECT and SAB-members have a considerable network of international researchers, test developers and LESLLA teachers that will be valuable in the data collection and dissemination of IMPECT. Finally, IMPECT has established a **National Network Group** consisting of five teachers with extensive experience from LESLLA teaching (**Jonas Svendsen**, **Einar A. Kartveit**, **Live Grinden** (Nygård vo), **Hege Forfod** (Oslo vo, Helsfyr) and **Jannecke Hofset** (Ålesund vo), **Hasti Hamidi,** administrative leader of Salam (NGO for LQBTQ with Muslim background) with experience working against racism and compound discrimination, and representatives from *Skills Norway,* **Vigdis Lahaug** and **Ingun Westlund**. Participation costs for Nygård vo members are funded by Bergen municipality, *Skills Norway* cover expenses for their representatives. This stakeholder group contributes to WP4 and WP5.

3.2. Project organisation and management
The project group situated in Bergen (Bugge, Carlsen, 3 PhD students, RA, MA students) will meet once per month. Core project participants have digital meetings twice per semester. SAB meetings are digital. For descriptions of **milestones** included in table: see WP descriptions.

	2021	2022		2023		2024		2025
	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
WP0	M0.1			M0.2		M0.3		M0.4
WP1		M1.1		M1.2		M.1.3		
WP2	M2.1	M2.2	M2.3		M2.4			
WP3	Preparation	M3.1	M3.2, M3.3			M3.4		
WP4	Preparation M4.1	M4.2	M4.3			M4.4		
WP5	M5.1, M5.2				M5.3			M5.4
PhD1(WP1, WP2)	Preparation	Data analysis	Completion			Defence		
PhD2 (WP3, WP4)	Preparation	Collection	Data analysis			Completion		Defence
PhD3 (WP4, WP5)	Preparation	Collection	Data analysis		Completion	Defence		

For Bugge, Carlsen, Deygers, Nordanger & Rocca's references – see project members' respective CVs

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