Oral history and (socio-)linguistics have profoundly different approaches and as a result, the textual data gained differ in many aspects. However, facing the challenge of combining sources from these two disciplines is very rewarding. Reading and hearing interviews with contemporary witnesses to historical events can sharpen the tools of discourse analysis; awareness of historical discourse can raise our understanding of how individuals deal with topics embedded in collective memory and how they encode their experiences linguistically. Furthermore, in this chapter, we illustrate the core research questions applicable to these different types of corpus: while oral history resources are designed to reconstruct the meaning and the sense attributed to historical events by different individuals and social groups, linguistic audio data allow for analysis of the details and the process of formulation (see section 1).

In order to illustrate the possibilities that such an integrated approach offers, we analyze the linguistic corpus LangAge, which is comprised of biographical interviews with French men and women aged between 70 and 94 (in 2005) concerning how the historical topic of Forced Labor is dealt with. We then compare our findings with the French section of the large oral history project Zwangsarbeit / Forced Labor 1939–1945. The French section is made up of interviews with 19 participants (aged between 81 and 86 at the time of the interviews in 2006) who were forced to work in the program Service du Travail Obligatoire, as it was called in French. We present these two resources considering the participants, the interview methods and the resulting types of interaction. We then look at the different methods of exploitation, based on the conventions of transcription, digitization, and word-audio-video alignment (see section 2).

Using the example of the historical term Forced Labor with the special meaning of the French term Service du Travail Obligatoire (hereafter sto), we show how the historical dimension, the reference to a collective discourse, and the speaker’s role as (contemporary) witness can be combined with the analysis of the context, taking the oral processing of spoken language seriously. We formulate our research question exploring how the historical term Service du Travail Obligatoire / sto is used in the interviews, and what meaning can be attributed to it in the different linguistic contexts; additionally, we compare the co-occurrences appearing in our data with key-word-in-context searches in French newspaper archives. Comparing extracts from both resources, we show how the denotation of the historical term is specified and at the same time how individual evaluations emerge in discourse (see section 3).
Portelli (1997: 6) observes that “the issue of what is private and what is public in a person’s narrative is often uncertain, especially if we are after the elusive theme of the history of private life”. We draw our conclusions suggesting that oral history sources and corpus linguistics methods, allowing for the comparison of different witnesses, can help shed new light on these uncertainties (section 4).

**Introduction: Oral History and Linguistics**

Both in oral history and in linguistics (corpus linguistics, sociolinguistics and discourse analysis), the building of archives and databases forms the basis for systematic and detailed analysis. The mutual benefit of sharing resources and experiences has recently attracted new attention (Roller 2015; for earlier approaches see Löffler 1988; Schiffrin 2003). We follow this approach and specify what we hold to be preconditions, in both theoretical and methodological perspectives. Then we focus on the semantics of historical terms in order to introduce our research question.

**Oral history meets linguistics: preliminary remarks**

The title of the Freiburg workshop, organized in 2015 by Katja Roller, one of the editors of the present volume, uses the metaphor of an encounter which, by its very definition, takes place between different sides—in a certain sense, they are opposed to each other.

The role of the interviewee in oral history is that of a witness, and the interviews are thematically-oriented, in a more or less broad sense, depending on the subject of the inquiry. Oral history focuses on meaning as it emerges in the strategies and dynamics of individuals dealing with historical experiences. The systematic and comparative evaluation of these strategies and dynamics helps to discover their regularities and patterns (“Erfahrungsgeschichte”; Niethammer 1985: 433). The shaping of theories built on oral history samples is a process of continuous control of one’s own assumptions (Thonfeld 2009: 61). Oral history is also, in a very cautious way, focused on the reconstruction of facts: this is one of the results of the Slavery and Forced Labor Project. While originally the focus was on the reconstruction of ways to deal with traumatic experiences and their long-term effects, the evaluation of testimonies’ narratives revealed the precision of remembered facts (Plato 2007: 279–280). The linguistic disposition and its properties are considered seriously in some oral history approaches, paying attention to the dialogic structure of the interviews (Bories-Sawala 1996, vol. 1: 87). In addition, the very formulation process has attracted the attention of the historian:

Between the fluid textual experiments and the frozen formulaic material, the ‘archived’ discourse breaks through and floats like a moving island, the tip of
an iceberg. In order to understand how the narrative is shaped, we must not limit ourselves to these moments of fulfilment; we need to consider also the formulaic materials, the apparently formless connecting and supporting matter, and the dialogic directive role of the historian (Portelli 1997: 5).

Still, the evaluation of these linguistic details remains, in oral history, one detail among others. On the one hand, in linguistic approaches to the data of spoken language, the formulation process and the way language is used are at the center of interest. So, the facts or the historical credibility of what is said are, generally speaking, less important. It seems not by chance that in her discussion and application of historical experiences as the subject of discourse analysis, Schiffrin (2003: 84) slightly shifts from oral history to oral histories; in this linguistic view, the strategies of storytelling are more important than the reconstruction of historical processes. In another field of discourse analysis, Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS), social/cultural issues are at the center of interest insofar as they “tend to arise in today’s social environment” (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 2007: 483). Potentially, we are at the crossroads of individual, daily communicative exchanges and the production of meaning in the larger context of communities, where the social practices allow for analyzing “conventions and ideologies of interpersonal relations” (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 2007: 483). But usually, the (re)construction of meaning is done on the basis of a small part of speech which is analyzed with a fine-grained tool set that includes universal or language-specific traits of spoken language (see Koch and Oesterreicher 2011): details such as prosodic traits (pauses, loudness, lengthening of syllables; see Morel and Danon-Boileau 1998), the way in which speakers start and stop speaking, and how communicative exchange is organized (turn taking; see Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974).

In the gathering of sociolinguistic data, the subject matter is mostly of minor interest, as it is simply a vehicle to make the interlocutor talk in the most spontaneous way possible. The aim is to create a relaxed atmosphere where the speaker is involved, with the result that no “attention [is] paid to speech” (according to the classical definition of “style” provided in Labov 1972: 188).

**Forced Labor / STO as a historical term**

Taking the example of Forced Labor, French travail forcé, in the special context of STO, we are dealing with a linguistic sign representing, in public discourse, Vichy France under German occupation and the totalitarian structures affecting private life in a systematic way.

The first group of French men forced to replace the workforce in industrial production (including military production, against the Geneva Convention), agriculture and handcraft and to fill the gap left by Germans serving as soldiers in the war, was comprised of about 1.5 million prisoners of war (Bories-Sawala 1996: 215–244). Start-
ing in June 1942, French prisoners of war were repatriated, after negotiations between Fritz Sauckel and Pierre Laval, in an exchange of one prisoner for three civilian ‘volunteers’. This program was called ‘relief’, in French la relève (Bories-Sawala 1996: 265; Durand 2011: chapter 2.1). The negotiated exchange rate, however, was not upheld by the Germans, as fewer prisoners were sent home than was promised and those with higher qualifications were made to stay in Germany (Paxton 1997: 423).

The German recruitment offices for French civilians opened in 1940; intensive propagandistic activity accompanied the efforts to “invite” qualified specialists, craftsmen and technicians to work in Germany and to contribute to the relève ‘relief’. Placed on colorful posters, slogans addressed national solidarity (‘You have the keys to the camps, French workers, you will free the prisoners—working in Germany!’ Vous avez la clé des camps / travailleurs français / vous libérez les prisonniers / en travaillant en Allemagne) or promised personal benefit (‘Hard days are over, Daddy earns money in Germany’, Finis les mauvais jours! Papa / gagne de l’argent / en Allemagne!). In the France of 1942/1943, the historic hostility towards its adversary Germany was counterbalanced by the possibility of earning money and, at the same time, liberating French prisoners of war and thus fulfilling a patriotic service. At the same time, the negative connotation of (obligatory) service for the enemy was mitigated by the use of slogans in active voice, and the complex compound was put into terms of common usage. One example is the verb phrase travailler en Allemagne ‘work in Germany’ (Figure 1; cf. Savoie Archives, chapter 10).

As the number of volunteers recruited was not sufficient to fill the huge gaps in the German Labor market, the Forced Labor program was launched in 1942 by the Council of Ministers (Conseil des ministres), named Service Obligatoire du Travail (Le Petit Parisien, February 16th 1943, p. 1). This name would have

Fig. 1
‘If you want to earn more money… come and work in Germany!’ Propaganda of Vichy regime, undated (Affiche de propagande en faveur de la Relève, 1941/1942, André Deran, Musée Carnavalet Paris).
been morphologically more convincing, as it is an ‘Obligatory Service’ of work, not a service of ‘Obligatory Work’. But the related acronym S.O.T. evoked the French adjective *sot* ‘stupid’, and therefore the name *Service du Travail Obligatoire* and the acronym *sto* were chosen (Bories-Sawala 1996: n. 286; Harbulot 2003: 269). This law, issued in February 1943 by the Vichy government, required young men older than 20 (age groups 1940, 1941, 1942) to take part in Forced Labor for two years (*Journal Officiel, Loi du 16 février 1943 Portant institution du Service du Travail Obligatoire*). The French Resistance, the *Maquis*, established networks to hide and organize the ‘rejectionists’, in French *réfractaires*, who refused to perform *sto* (Paxton 1997: 425). But the risk of non-participation did not only concern individuals; if conscripted young men did not participate, members of their families were held responsible.

On the level of the lexicon, *Service du Travail Obligatoire, sto*, ‘Forced Labor’ is a term with a precise definition, referring to the historical period in which it was valid, the legal responsibilities, the labor to be done in Germany, the age groups of the young French men concerned, and so on. The double mention of ‘duty’ (*service, obligatoire*) and the acronym *sto* fitted well into Nazi terminology, where acronyms played an important role (one of the first observations made concerning LTI; see Klemperer 1949: 15 who coined the sarcastic abbreviation for *Lingua Tertii Imperii*, the ‘Language of the Third Reich’). More or less morphologically transparent, they could then enter into common usage (determinologization, Fraas 1997: 437).

The official propaganda with its euphemistic slogans may have contributed to the complex reasons why people forced to participate in *sto* had a hard time when they returned to France. Only in the 1980s did a revision of the Vichy regime and related topics—like *sto*—begin (Bories-Sawala 1996: 245). Still, related conflicts were visible until fairly recently, especially during the *querelle du titre*, which was the debate on what to call the forced laborers and if they could be called *déportés* ‘deportees’. This debate put into sharp contrast the members of the national organization of deportees, i.e. the former members of *sto*, with the survivors of concentration camps (Spina 2012: 19). Witnesses in oral history projects report that they were confronted with serious doubts concerning the forced character of *sto* (Thonfeld 2014: 77). The experience from the French oral history collection documented in *Forced Labor* shows that the number of refusals from potential participants was “far greater than in other projects”; the initiators observed “a memory tainted by shame, a memory of guilt and, finally, a painful memory”:

> the collective memory of that period in history has overlooked it, placing it on the dark side of the anti-heroes, or at best of those who had made (or been forced into?) the wrong choice or, more precisely, had failed to choose the right path (Granet-Abisset 2010: 115; 122).
In recent Paris demonstrations (23 June 2016), the slogan *Bientôt le STO* was used, meant to draw public attention to the pejoration of conditions of employment (Blog LSP). In this use, one could recognize a feeling of solidarity with the victims of the historical *sto*, but at the same time a cynical belittlement. In any case, the slogan manifests the presence of the term in public discourse.

**Research question: historical terms at the crossroads**

Being a legal term, the denotational meaning and the legal impact of *sto* are clearly defined. On the level of connotation, the picture is less clear. Speaker connotations can express a position between two extremely different poles: on the one hand, the concepts of cooperation or even collaboration with Germans can be evoked, with the idea of distance and betrayal, or, on the other hand, the meaning of ‘victim’, or even ‘deportee’, with the idea of solidarity and empathy.

When individuals talk about *sto*, they have to deal with the challenge of making sense of this difficult term. Fragments of historical knowledge, the experiences of family members, public discourse and current debates are activated in many different ways. So, as Stubbs (2001: 147) states, “[s]peakers usually do not express themselves ‘in their own words’ but in words which are endlessly recycled in their speech community”. On the other hand, in a single communicative situation and regarding individuals with their very own points of view, meaning and evaluations are emerging in current discourse, and denotations as well as connotations are specified in the individual interaction (Gerstenberg 2009: 155).

In the following, we propose an approach which, in our view, can help to bridge the gap illustrated above between the more holistic oral history approach to linguistic data and the very detailed, local and interactional perspective that dominates in linguistic research on spoken language. We will have a closer look at the use of *sto* as a historical term. This lexical item has a precise propositional meaning and is found in numerous encyclopedia entries. Following Blank (1997: 29), terms or keywords (German *Begriffe*) are not part of the “normal lexicon” with its usage-based evolutions. The observation that *sto* is not part of the “normal lexicon” is confirmed by the simple fact that it has no entry in the standard dictionaries of contemporary French. The term *sto* is mentioned in the French definition of *réfractaire*: ‘participant of resistance movement who refused to perform Forced Labor’ (“Résistant (1941–1944) qui refusait le travail obligatoire en Allemagne pendant l’Occupation”, PRob s.v. *réfractaire*).

In the case of non-terminological words, unconscious and collective dynamics shape new meanings (Burkhardt 1991: 16–17). In contrast, individual texts and authors as well as highly intentional directions of semantic change must be taken into consideration in order to reconstruct the different meanings of cultural and political terms in the course of history (Gerstenberg 2010). The linguistic domain of research on historical keywords focuses, in different traditions, on socio-historical contexts,
mentalities or on the performative aspect of political language (“Begriffsgeschichte”, Bödeker 2002).

We hold that there is a continuum between the widespread use of historically loaded words and intellectual debates on the precise, legally relevant understanding of the very same words. Taking the case of sto, we see that people talked about it with families and friends, in everyday discourse, when relating to wartime experiences (while not necessarily reporting details about sto, see above), but this term was also the subject of ardent academic and journalistic debates on the subject of sto being a deportation. In this continuum, we see the LANGAGE corpus nearer to the common usage than the French texts found in the FORCED LABOR archive.

Data

In the LANGAGE corpus, wartime witnesses tell their life stories and occasionally report episodes of sto; only one case was based on personal experiencing sto. In FORCED LABOR, participants are invited as witnesses, as experts, to talk about their own experiences, to reveal their own points of view, and to report on dates and facts, conditions and responsibilities. Some of them are members of associations of former sto and make explicit reference to the debates and terminological discussions mentioned above.

Transcription standards differ between oral history, where the main target is to give and facilitate access to the propositional meaning, and linguistics, where the form and the linear process of formulation are significant as well, and the transcription includes repetitions, interruptions, interjections and pauses, without using punctuation. Still, in both databases, aligned audio (video) files are available.

LANGAGE corpus

The data from the LANGAGE corpus stem from a collection of interviews put together in order to perform research on the sociolinguistics of later life. The first series of data for LANGAGE was collected in 2005 from French speakers in Orléans (and surrounding area). Interviews were conducted and recorded on audio tape; the mean length of these interviews is 45 minutes. The data were orthographically transcribed and aligned to the digital audio tapes (for further information, see LANGAGE). The French regional center of Orléans, some 100 km south of Paris, is the site of a major sociolinguistic project (Orléans-Corpus, Étude Sociolinguistique à Orléans/eslo: Baude and Dugua 2011), an advantage for research in age-related issues.

The interview style took the form of an open questionnaire comprising biographical topics such as family, school, experiences in wartime and under the German occupation of Orléans 1940–1944, professional activity, May 1968—and some points
concerning lifestyle and opinions in their current life stage. The interview technique is based on the principles of narrative interview (Schütze 1983), encouraging the interlocutors to use a monologue form of free, self-directed, spontaneous and personal speech; the interviewer’s role was to suggest topics and listen attentively. Participants were contacted with the explicit mention of oral history topics, so they took part with the motivation of sharing historical experiences with the German interviewer. The 48 older participants of LANGAGE 2005 were born between 1911 and 1935. In some cases, personal experiences with sto, either interviewees’ own episodes or narratives of family members, were reported.

From what has been said above, it is clear that the LANGAGE interviews are oral history data in a very broad sense; the thematic focus is much larger than in interview settings originating from historical surveys.

The Forced Labor project

Under the label of Zwangsarbeit Archiv, a huge collection of oral history data has been put together at Freie Universität Berlin (see Pagenstecher and Tausendfreund 2013; Pagenstecher 2017). French interviews originate from the French project AAM-RDI Grenoble (Granet-Abisset 2010: 115). Some witnesses told interviewers that prior to the interview they had not talked about their experiences and had not even shown their families the diaries they kept during the sto (Granet-Abisset 2010: 116).

The interviews were conducted in 2006 by two French historians; all are more than one hour in duration (1h20–4h46, mean length 2h26) and are thematically centered on the interviewees’ experiences of sto in Germany. The 18 men and one woman were born between 1920 and 1925, most were in the 1921/1922 age groups, and most were lower middle or working class. The oral history interviews of the Forced Labor project are video- and/or audiotaped and aligned to the video-/ or audio-files. They are prepared for historical research with thematic annotation, normalized orthographic transcriptions and German translations.

What kind of interaction is reflected in oral history interview data?

In his discussion of “interview as text vs. interview as interaction”, Deppermann (2013: [6]) summarizes criticism concerning the “non-naturalness” and the low “ecological validity” of interview data which distinguishes situational factors from everyday routines and behavior. Ecological validity is restricted not only because of the non-occurrence of interviews outside of the elicited research context, but also because of the communicative exchange’s organization: in everyday talk, the length of statements is restricted; biographical background, in everyday life, is never revealed to strangers without explicit feedback, Deppermann argues (2013: [6]). He proposes an analytic approach based on the precise sequences of answers and the questions or
utterances of the interviewer, and of the fine structure of the utterances, the phonetic realizations, potentially meaningful in terms of regional identity, and the formulation process with its hesitations, pauses and false starts (Deppermann 2013: [25]; see also Mondada 2001). In what follows, this view on interview as interaction will be the starting point. In the analysis of data extracts, different levels will be examined: the wider context, the interactional dimension, and the oral realization with a closer look on the linguistic traits. But at the same time we want to underline the observation that the pure fact that interviews do not happen in the participants’ daily lives does not make them less natural. Following our observations of the interview situations, most of the interviewees seemed to show a certain familiarity and a natural attitude in telling their life stories.

The oral telling of life stories is a very human trait, and biographical storytelling, even in the form of a monologue, without feedback, is not as rare as one might think—as everyday experiences on trains or in doctors’ waiting rooms reveal. The preparing of inner stories or of “endophasic” discourse (without an interlocutor, without phonic realization; Bergounioux 2004: 28) can emerge silently as a more or less urgent need develops to explain one’s own point of view. These silent activities can include writing diaries, keeping secret notebooks, and explaining a complex situation to somebody who is not there. Furthermore, listening to other people’s stories evokes one’s own experiences and makes new stories come into existence (“A particular telling inspires distinct and only partially overlapping narratives, as interlocutors link the telling to their particular lived and imagined involvements in the world”, Ochs and Capps 1996: 21).

Sketching these elements of inner monologues, we want to argue that the monologues stimulated in oral history interviews may never have been told before, but are still nothing less than natural or authentic. The opportunity to relate a life story without restricting oneself to the snippets that family and friends happen to endure is, in terms of ecology (see above and Mühlhäusler 2010), a kind of habitat for highly sensitive material.

**Historical Terms in Context: STO**

In the *LANGAGE* questionnaire, no question directly concerned Forced Labor. When participants talked about it, it was in the context of related topics like resistance or military service, or memories of friends and siblings. Consequently, the topic was self-introduced and spontaneously developed.

In the statistical analysis, we used the indicator of keyness\(^1\) in order to compare

\(^1\) Keyness was measured using Log-likelihood. *ANTCONC*, Laurence Anthony, <www.laurence-anthony.net/software.html>. For lexical statistics, we used the transcripts of only the witnesses, a corpus of more than 13500 types in about 322500 tokens. The statistical keyword analysis
the content of both textual resources. The keyness analysis identifies lexical items which show significant differences between the different linguistic corpora taken into consideration. In our case, it turned out that together with some function words, the nouns camp ‘camp’ (443 vs. 45), russes ‘Russians’ (308 vs. 15), usine ‘factory’ (348 vs. 53), and prisonniers ‘prisoners’ (292 vs. 38) show the greatest keyness difference between Forced Labor and a LANGAge sample of equal size. The term sto (83 vs.12) is less frequent than these nouns and did not appear in the upper ranks of most the important keyness items.

Even it’s less frequent, the usage of sto is worth to have a closer look at: in the French texts of Forced Labor, there is one form not present in LANGAge, that is, the use of sto designating ‘a person doing Forced Labor’. In these occurrences, the plural form and the indefinite article are used: (nous,) les STO (15), des STO (5), un STO (1). This use of sto is a regular process of word formation and a regular process of semantic change, and more specifically of metonymic change: where a noun designating an institution is used to refer to the person working there. The semantic trait human ([+HUM]) allows for new morphosyntactic features. While sto ‘institution’ is exclusively used with the definite article, and has no plural form, the new form which has the semantic trait [+HUM] allows for indefinite use and plural forms: ‘a/the person; (the) persons doing Forced Labor’. This usage is not attested in LANGAge.

In order to have more evidence for this observation, we searched for more discourse contexts. In the catalogue of the French National Library (BnF), six books, published between 1991 and 2013, use un STO ‘a man having done Forced Labor’ on the cover, and three books published between 2007 and 2014 have les STO in the title. All of them take the perspective of the young men and their painful experiences. This quite recent perspective is confirmed by the rare occurrences of un/des/les STO when searching the sites of the biggest French newspapers, including blogs and discussion forums: only 11 examples with sto meaning ‘a person who was obliged to do Forced Labor’ could be found, as opposed to nearly four hundred occurrences of sto with the meaning ‘the institution of Forced Labor’.2

A difficult term

In LANGAge, the very term sto and the full compound Service du Travail Obligatoire seem to be, for some participants, quite hard to find. So, in interview extract A018m76 (4), the participant first looks for the right word and then builds the pleonastic noun

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2 We used the six biggest (by outreach) daily newspapers, according to ACPM: Le Figaro, Le Monde, Les Échos, La Croix, La Libération, not taking into account newspapers without any occurrence of STO (L’Équipe Édition Générale, Aujourd’hui en France). As all of the websites of all six newspapers were searched, forums and blogs were also included. The dozens of hits for le STO (‘the STO’) make it clear that there is still ongoing discussion about related subjects.
phrase *STO* obligatoire. This is an indicator that the content of the acronym is bleached, i.e., the *O* is no longer transparent as the short form of *obligatoire*. As we have seen above (1.2), the noun phrase *service obligatoire* would have been more logical; so one of the participants somewhat corrects the use, first speaking of *service obligatoire*, then actively remembering the correct term and quoting it (A015f78, 4)—or not recalling it (A009m80, 5; A013f83, 4). Even in *FORCED LABOR*3, whose participants are former members of *STO*, the logically more adequate variant *Service Obligatoire* is sometimes used: ‘we heard about it in in the small newspapers that were published at the time, about *forced labor*’ (*on en entendait parler dans les petits journaux qui parlaient à l’époque, du service obligatoire du travail; za074*).

The fact that the compound is morphologically not very convincing may contribute to the use of a paraphrase, with the verb phrase ‘work in Germany’, *travailler en Allemagne* (A009m80, 4; A045m80, 3; A013f83, 4; A025f84, 3; *travailler dans les usines allemandes* ‘work in German factories’: A031m85).

In *FORCED LABOR*, the verb phrase *travailler en Allemagne* is often used as a citation, in order to underline the offensive atmosphere where *forced labor* was understood as a voluntary service. This usage is critically mentioned by the participants: ‘no, but in my case, the integration [repatriation] was fine, but well there were always people criticizing me for having gone to work in Germany’ (*non mais moi l’intégration s’est assez bien faite mais enfin il y en a toujours qui ont critiqué parce que l’on est allé travailler en Allemagne, za077*; see other similar occurrences of *travailler en Allemagne* *FORCED LABOR*, in za074, and also by the interviewer M. B.).

**Semantics**

The extracts from *LANGAGE* also shed some light on the semantic field that is made up of different groups of young men under the German occupation as partisans, prisoners of war, and people fulfilling the *STO*. For some of the participants, no difference is made between *STO* and prisoners (A015f78, 3); as the enumeration of ‘those put on a train, conscripted, brought away’ (A014m83) shows, the different kinds of obligation (deportation, forced labor) are all placed at the same level. By contrast, concerning the destiny of men in *STO* vs. prisoners of war, the difference is clearly marked by one participant who makes clear that ‘those people’ (*ceux-là*), creating a deictic distance, usually came back; they were held apart from the battlefields of World War II (A024f84, 10). In many different contexts, also in *FORCED LABOR*, a clear difference is made between ‘deportees’ and men participating in *STO*—and sometimes, the dif-

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3 Quoting from *FORCED LABOR*, we use the ID in the form za000 as indicated in the interview metadata. For full text research and access to more indications of identity, the quoted extracts can, after registration, easily be retrieved at the website indicated below. We use the transcriptions of *FORCED LABOR*, and the audio files, completing and adapting the transcription according to the standards presented in appendix 5.3.
ference is negotiated: Witness: ‘there was only us, the deportees’. Guest: ‘you weren’t deportees’. Witness: ‘we were not political deportees, STO, that’s all’ (témoin: on était les seuls autant dire à être déporté. Participant: vous étiez pas déportés […] témoin: on était pas déporté politique / STO c’est tout, za080). So, while the participant first spontaneously expresses the idea of being deported, he immediately accepts that he was “only” obliged to participate in Forced Labor.

In another interview, the researcher makes clear that there is a difference between STO and (political) deportees: AMGA (interviewer): ‘no, this was in other in other se() in other geographic places where there really were political deportees they came to work but not as in your case’ (AMGA (interviewer): non c’est dans d’autres dans d’autres se() dans d’autres endroits géographiques où il y avait vraiment des déportés politiques qui venaient travailler mais c’était pas votre cas, za091).

The use of active vs. passive voice and the related semantic roles seem to be an indicator of the extent of empathy with the young men doing their STO. In LANGAGE, the active voice is compatible with the idea of choice: when a person leaves (A018m76, 4; A024f84), one can suppose a certain responsibility for this act. In contrast, the awareness that the young men were forced to participate in STO is expressed in the passive voice; so when the brother of one participant or the participant himself ‘was recruited’ or a husband ‘was called’, this is reported in the passive voice (A045m80: 3; A004m83: 3; A013f83, 4). The semantic role of patient, i.e., the direct object of the action, is also attributed in the case where the STO forces young men to do it (A031m85, 8: ‘the Forced Labor who summoned young French to work in German factories’). This participant, a priest, reports a strong sense of compassion for the young men threatened by recruitment for Forced Labor.

In FORCED LABOR, a similar understanding is realized when the interviewer corrects herself in order to avoid the active voice when asking a question: J. M. (interviewer): ‘no, the fact that you uhm the fact that you had to go to Germany, I think …’ (J. M. (interviewer): on le hum le fait que vous partiez que vous deviez partir en Allemagne […] j’imagine …, za085). This is an adaptation to the content of the witnesses’ reports, all of them making clear that it was not by choice that they participated in the Forced Labor.

Interaction

In LANGAGE, the level of interaction between French participants and the German interviewer is explicitly present when participants comment on the term STO, highlighting its historical character (à l’époque ‘at that time’) or on appelait ça ‘it was called’ (A013f83, 3), ce qu’on appelait ‘what was called’ (A31m85; A35f87). This diachronic marker can be combined with an attempt to make sure that the interviewer knew it (A009m80, 5; A013f83, 2). The additional use of the German term Zwangsarbeiter (he pronounces the compound as Zwangarbeiter, without the epenthetic -s-), together
with a question tag, creates a common ground for the German interviewer and the interviewee (A004m83: 3); in this case, the use of the historical term becomes explicitly a resource of interaction. Such comments or “diachronic glossings” on a term that is, in the eye of the speaker, outdated, are quite frequent in the interviews of LANGAGE. They have several functions (Gerstenberg 2011: 138–147): they are clearly hearer-orientated, implemented to solve potential problems of understanding for the German interviewer. At the same time, the speaker positions him/herself as one who is familiar with the historical term and its signification, maybe forgotten today; he is “being a witness”, an activity of membership categorization in the sense of Schegloff (2007).

In FORCED LABOR, the participants make similar diachronic remarks. With ce qu’on appelait ‘what was called’, one witness introduces words that, in his view, are worth being explicated. In this way, he highlights the historical character of ‘small vehicles’ (camionnettes), the ‘prohibited zone’ established by the German occupiers (zone interdite), ‘internal networks’ (groupes d’entraide), and the ‘basic school degree’ (le certificat de premier ordre, all from za074). The interviewee R. C. uses the expression twice: with ‘Pétain parcels’, filled with tinned food, cigarettes and books (colis Pétain), and with a ‘Catholic Club’ (cercle catholique, za076). Six more occurrences of ce qu’on appelait are used in FORCED LABOR by the interviewee R. S. (za089), each time glossing institutions for young people of the Vichy regime, but also of civilian formation: the ‘school of prefecture’ (école de la préfecture, twice), a higher degree preparing future teachers (brevet supérieur), professional schools (les écoles professionnelles), an institution where future craftsmen were formed (artisanat), additional classes (cours complémentaires), the Youth Workcamps (Chantiers de Jeunesse, Pécout 2012), and another time when searching for a term he ultimately does not recall.

In FORCED LABOR, not only the participants but also the interviewer J. M. use the phrase ce qu’on appelait to introduce historical terms. Some functions are shared by the interviewer and interviewees; for example in an interviewer’s search for the French equivalent of the German bunker, the following was recorded: ‘these were the bunkers which was ca() the bunkers which was called uhm [pau] the shelters’ (c’était les bunkers ce qu’on appelait les abris les bunkers, za089). Similarly, she looks for ‘and what relationships did you have with the the mh the deportees what were the political deportees called?’ (et quels rapports vous aviez avec les les mh les déportés ce qu’on appelait les déportés politiques?, za090).

The marking of the phrase ‘black market’ is more specific for her role as interviewer; in this case, there is a double marker: ce qu’on appelle entre guillemets le marché noir (za089). The interviewer uses the present tense, and adds ‘in quotation marks’. Another case with the double marking of a historical term is ‘were you aware of what was called la Relève, that is …’ (est-ce que vous étiez au courant euh de ce qu’on appelait la Relève c’est-à-dire …, za076). This use is different from what the interviewees do; the interviewer avoids the historical term, reducing the own statement of historical
knowledge and thus letting the interviewee take on the role of expert. In this case, the diachronic marker can be considered a politeness strategy (Brown and Levinson 1987: 146).

**Concluding Remarks**

The linguistic details of spoken language and the features of a term in context indicate on what levels oral history data can be used to show how different facets of meaning emerge and how they are used as a resource in the interaction of interviewee and interviewer. The examples cited also illustrate the crucial role of the details of formulations reflected in a detailed transcription and/or in the aligned audio/video files.

Comparing the 19 participants of Forced Labor, invited to specifically talk about Forced Labor, and 11 from LANGAGE, talking spontaneously and in other biographic contexts, about Forced Labor, we found differences suggesting that the use of the term sto differs in many ways depending on individual personal experiences.

The details of linguistic use are, in this regard, significant, as the euphemism *travailler en Allemagne* 'work in Germany' was used by the majority of former stos as a quotation, while the co-occurrence was automatic and spontaneous in LANGAGE. This euphemistic paraphrase for sto was originally a propaganda slogan. No participant in LANGAGE commented on this fact when using it, while participants in Forced Labor made critical remarks on missing the connotation of obligation expressed in this term.

Both groups have difficulties pronouncing the full compound *Service du Travail Obligatoire*; this can be due to the morphologically odd formation (see 3.1), unconsciously corrected by the speakers. When using verbs for ‘go to sto’, the semantic roles of patient (passive voice or direct object) were used by the speakers who had experienced sto (‘I was recruited’) and interviewees sharing their point of view, while the active voice ‘leave for sto’ was used by contemporaneous speakers without their own direct experiences.

On the level of interaction, the roles of witness and interviewee are activated in many details; we had a closer look at the use of historical terms and the different functions of the marker ‘what it’s called’ introducing them.

Comparing the two corpora gives one the opportunity to compare witnesses and other contemporaries whose speech patterns reflect collective usage. As the number of available speakers is limited, we looked for more evidence in online press archives, including their blogs and discussion forums. It turned out that the observed usage pattern of Forced Labor, i.e. sto designating a person and not just the institution, was indeed a highly exclusive pattern of the witnesses of Forced Labor. In conclusion, the semantic trait human on sto appears when we listen to those who experienced it.
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**Transcripts**

The transcription is orthographic and reflects the traits of spoken language, for example interjections, repetitions, uncompleted sentences or words. No punctuation is added, with the exception of ‘?’ for raising intonation in questions without a question word.

If possible, segmentation uses syntactic units. When cited in the text, we mark new lines with a slash. Other conventions include:

- (word) reconstructed, incomprehensible
- wo() interrupted
- [pau] event such as pau ‘pause’

**A018m76**

1 j’avais comme voisins et amis des des garçons beaucoup plus âgés que moi qui étaient euh fils d’un professeur du du collège et qui était vraiment euh un grand ami

2 bon ils sont morts tous les trois (enfin) les deux fils et le père

---

4 Codes refer to *LANGAGE* speaker anonymization as applied in Gerstenberg 2011, see the appendix there for additional metadata. The LangAge transcription guide is used, see *LANGAGE*. 
I had as neighbours and friends some guys much older than me who were the sons of a college professor and who was really a great friend.

Well they all died all three of them the two sons and the father.

And one of them went well one of them left was left for Forced Labor [he uses the acronym, A.G.] forced.

And he left for an aviation factory near Vienna.

And he came back sick with a joint disease and was repatriated by the occupier.

And then he lived somewhat slower.

And the brother well we took care of hiding him first in the Morvan region.

[à l’arrivée des Américains, A.G.] un grand soulagement on faisait pas la fête parce que un grand soulagement.

Mais Paris n’était pas encore libéré.

Et puis tous nos prisonniers étaient encore là-bas tous les hommes qui travaillaient le service obligatoire du travail obligatoire.

Donc on pouvait pas rire encore.

C’était euh un soulagement énorme.

Mais c’était pas euh je peux pas dire que c’était complet hein.
[When the US soldiers arrived, A.G.] a big relief
not yet a party but a big relief
10 but Paris was not yet liberated
11 and then all our prisoners were still down there all
the men working in the Forced Labor the Service of
Forced Labor
12 but we were not able to laugh
13 it was an enormous relief
14 but it was not uhm I cannot say that it was over

the age-group of 45 was exempted from military ser-
vice
2 it was the this was the end of, well, the war was
over, so
3 but there were these young men
4 (you know), yes, I was called to the office of – at
that time – the German recruitment office, to work in
Germany
5 you have heard talking about Forced Labor uhm work
in Germany at that time
6 and many young men left they had been called or
somewhat recruited to work down there
7 it was what was called the STO Forced Labor
8 so I was called
9 but I was not taken, I was a baker
10 so I did not I didn’t go there

A045m80

1 dans ma famille il y avait pas de résistants [pau] non
2 ben ma famille était assez réduite puisque je
3 n’avais qu’un mon frère qui avait trois ans plus que
4 moi qui était qui était lui instituteur aussi [tou]
5 [pau] et qui était déjà instituteur lui
6 il était [pau] et il a été réquisitionné pour aller
7 travailler en Allemagne Service du Travail Obliga-
8 toire
9 et il se saurait sans doute caché pour ne pas y aller
10 mais il savait que si lui il n’y allait pas c’est
11 moi qui allais être pris à sa place [pau] puisque
12 j’avais vingt ans
13 j’avais dix-neuf ans en quarante-quatre
14 donc euh il a préféré y aller
15 il a passé euh depuis deux ans je crois en Allemagne
16 il a écrit ses mémoires d’ailleurs [tss] de [pau] de
17 Service de Travail Obligatoire
18 in my family there were no partisans, no
19 well, my family was quite small because I had only
20 my brother who was three years older than me and who
21 was who was also a teacher he was already a teacher
22 he was and he was recruited to go and work in Ger-
23 many Forced Labor
24 and without any doubt he would have hidden himself
25 in order not to go there
26 but he knew that if he didn’t go there, I would have
27 been taken in his place, [pau] because I was twenty
28 years
29 I was nineteen years old in 44
30 so uhm he preferred to go there
31 he stayed there two years, I think, in Germany
32 by the way, he has written a diary of Forced Labor
1 et on même on a eu chez nous euh un certain temps un un policier qui habitait Paris qui était justement réfractaire euh qui était résistant
2 et re() on appelait ça aussi je sais pas si vous savez le STO
3 réfractaire euh service euh obligatoire S-T-O service comment que c’était [ins] STO service obligatoire en Allemagne ça voulait dire ça hein
4 mon mari d’ailleurs euh a été aussi appelé pour aller travailler en Allemagne
5 mais c’est pareil il n’y est pas allé
6 il s’est sauvé dans la dans la forêt lui
7 il habitait dans la Marne
1 and we had for a while a a policeman who lived in Paris who had actually escaped uhm who was partisan
2 and this was called I don’t know if you know that STO
3 rejectionist uhm labor uhm forced STO labor how was it [ins] STO Forced Labour in Germany, that’s what it meant, you see
4 and also my husband was called to work in Germany
5 but the same thing, he didn’t go there
6 he saved himself in the forest
7 he lived in the Marne region

A014m83

1 j’étais dans une classe euh j() d’un âge où on a eu euh [pau] beaucoup euh de de problèmes de euh de du Service du Travail Obligatoire de comment dirais-je de de réquisition à
2 c’est ce que je disais toujours
3 on avait une définition
4 à mon âge on savait jamais le soir si on couchait dans notre lit hein
5 on pouvait être embarqués
6 on pouvait être réquisitionnés
7 on pouvait être emmenés
8 y a beaucoup qui ont été obligés d’aller travailler sur les côtes de euh de l’Atlantique le mur de l’
Atlantique vous en entendu parler les murs de l’Atlantique hein
1 I was the age-group that had many problems with Forced Labor, with forced recruitment
2 I used to say
3 we had a definition
4 when I was young, we never knew if, in the evening,
   we would sleep in our own bed
5 we could have been put on a train
6 we could have been conscripted
7 we could have been taken away
8 many of us were forced to work at the Atlantic Coast
   the Atlantic Wall you have heard about that the Atlantic Wall

A004m83
1 et puis j’ai commencé d’es études de droit
2 et puis il y a eu la guerre
3 et étant donné que j’étais (né) en mille-neuf-cent-vingt-deux j’ai donc été euh euh requis pour le service du travail obligatoire Zwangarbeiter [uses the German word, A.G.]
   [INT: mhm]
4 voyez bon
1 and then I started to study law
2 and then the war began
3 and as I was [born] in 1922, I was recruited for Forced Labor Zwangarbeiter [sic, German]
4 you see, ok

A024f84
1 il y en a [de prisonniers, A.G.] qui se sont évadés
2 il y en a d’autres qui ont fait tout le temps
3 par contre j’ai un ami qui était qui était tué était tué il faut le dire comme ça
4 parce que il était il faisait il était pas prisonnier lui
5 il était parti au titre du STO savez ce que c’est
6 et puis ils avaient des permissions
[INT: mhm mhm]
7 et puis il y en a un de leur groupe qui n’est pas reparti alors bon
8 il a fallu qu’il se paie fallu qu’il y ait quelqu’un qui paie pour lui quoi
9 ça c’était pas très bien de la part de celui qui était pas reparti hein
10 parce que ils étaient détenus X la guerre
11 mais ceux-là en principe ils revenaient
12 parce que ils étaient pour le travail [pau]
13 à part ça les prisonniers ben il y en a qui sont restés il y en a qui [pau]
1 some of them [of the prisoners, A.G.] escaped
2 some of them stayed there all the time
3 and then I had a friend who has who was killed must call it like that
4 because he was he made he was not a prisoner
5 he had left with STO you know what it means
6 and then they had permissions/holidays XXX
7 and then one of their group did not return, well
8 and this must be paid someone had to pay for him
9 this was not nice on the part of the person who did not come back
10 because they did not have to go to war
11 but generally these men they came back
12 because it was for work
13 after that from the prisoners, some of them stayed, some of them ...

A025f84

1 non non non non il y a pas eu de de fait de résistance du moins dans ma famille hein
2 si mon beau-père
3 mon mon mari mon mari qui était parti qui a qui a pas voulu faire le STO qui a passé la ligne de démarcation justement pour pouvoir fuir hein fuir le le STO tra() travailler en Allemagne
4 il n’a pas voulu y aller puisqu’il est mon beau-père était militaire
5 il a passé la zone libre et s’est retrouvé dans le
centre de la France
1 no, no, no, no, there was no fact of resistance at least in my family, you see
2 oh yes, my father-in-law
3 my my husband who had left who did not want to do the STO who had crossed the demarcation line, indeed in order to have the possibility to escape, you see, to escape the STO, working in Germany
4 he didn’t want to go there because he is my father-in-law was a military man
5 he crossed the free zone and found himself in the centre of France

And then obviously I stayed in different places during the war time
because I had become a priest
and I was what was called Youth Workcamp
and I was a priest for the young people
during one year
This was for me a time quite rich in experiences because the young men were distressed due to the war under the threat of what was called STO that is, the Forced Labor who summoned young French to work in German factories so, the young men were quite distressed and they had a huge confidence in the priest and at this point I had many friendships, certainly

ah non aucun aucun [résistant en famille, A.G.]
euh il y a un de mes frères mon frère prêtre juste-ment qui aurait pu partir au ce au ce qu’on appelait le STO le Service euh Travail Obligatoire et alors lui il a été dans le Sud de la France faire des ce qu’on appelait des Chantiers de Jeunesse et alors c’était pour s’occuper des jeunes et quand il est revenu après la guerre en quarante-cinq il a vu le pont de la Loire et le pont de la Loire qui était effondré par enfin qui était par terre quoi alors ça lui a fait un drôle d’effet oh no, nobody [was partisan, A.G.]
one of my brothers could have gone with what was called the STO uhm Service Forced Labor [the prepo-sition du “of the” is missing, A.G.] and then he was in southern France in order to do what they called the Youth Workcamp and this was to take care of the younger ones and when he came back after the war in 45, he saw the Loire bridge and the Loire bridge was destroyed by well it fell down and this had a strange effect on him