

## SCHOOL OF LANGUAGE & LITERATURE



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In the five years of its existence, the FRIAS School of Language & Literature served as a research institution that advocated an approach to literary studies and linguistics which was both theoretically and methodologically sophisticated and interdisciplinary. In line with the main profile of subjects offered by the school at the University of Freiburg, the main emphasis of the school's projects was on the empirical research of languages and the use of language through cognitive, corpus-based and interactional linguistic methods. In literary studies, the School of Language & Literature focussed on the scientific study of world literature that was both comparative and receptive to cultural science, concentrating on issues regarding the history of knowledge, cultural semantics, aesthetics and poetics. Exploring the productive intersection between linguistics and literary science formed one of the school's main focuses.

In addition to providing fellows from all over the world with generous opportunities for developing their individual research, the school contributed significantly to uncovering the University of Freiburg's linguistic and literary potential. By proactively recruiting fellows in coordination

with the Advisory Board, it was possible to form thematic networks of international experts, early-stage researchers and colleagues in Freiburg. In linguistics, examples of this could be seen (taking into consideration European and non-European languages and varieties) in the focus areas of Geographical Variation in English, Language Contacts and Creoles, Deixis and Interactional Spaces, Interactional Grammar, and Frequency Effects in Usage-based Grammar. Meanwhile, literary studies concentrated on the topics of Representation Research, Mimesis Theory, and Inter-Arts Studies; Poetics of Knowledge, Knowledge Transfer, Literature & Science Studies; Literary Aesthetics, Hermeneutics and Cultural Sociology; as well as Interculturality, World Literature Studies and Transfer Research.

One of the school's main aims was to form productive contacts and synergies and explore epistemological bases common to both linguistics and literary studies. Significant momentum was derived from events and projects, including the international conference "Linguistics & Literary Studies: Interfaces, Encounters, Transfers" (2009), an ideas competition for innovative projects

that combined linguistic and literary methodological approaches, and tandem fellowships, which saw academics from both areas work on joint, interdisciplinary projects. Bridging the gap between disciplines in Freiburg that, up until then, were hardly linked at all, further boosted the school's profile. This included links forged by the LiLi School with disciplines such as cultural sociology and history of science, mathematics and cognitive science, psychology and clinical medicine. Particular highlights comprised the conference "Numbers, Signs, and Figures: Mathematical Inspirations in Literature and the Arts" (2008), in addition to a hearing on "The Significance of Cultural Sociology for the Humanities" (2010) and the neurological conference on "Processing along Dorsal and Ventral Streams in the Brain" (2011).

A major reason for the school's success were the equal ratios of funding invested in Internal Senior Fellows, External Senior Fellows and Junior Fellows. In total, 144 fellows (47 women) from 25 countries were recruited (48 of which received outside funding in the form of grants or sabbaticals). In addition to representatives from many European and non-European philologies, fellows from philosophy, art history, sociology, history of science, cognitive science, psychology and clinical medicine were also recruited and significantly enhanced the school's research curriculum. Thanks to the constant exchange with neighbouring university areas, it was possible to achieve a very high participation rate of Freiburg academics (including 25 Internal Senior Fellows) during competitive application processes decided exclusively by the Advisory Board.

The LiLi School demonstrated remarkable success in supporting early-stage researchers, offering an outstanding selection of young scientists the chance to drive forward their academic careers as Junior Fellows and build themselves a reputation in innovative research fields (research budgets, work groups, self-designed conferences, publications etc.). All Junior Fellows interacted closely with the university's neighbouring institutes, offered classes and dedicated themselves to their postdoctoral research projects. By mid-2013, a total of nine Junior Fellows had been appointed to or received offers for at least one professorship or similar permanent or long-term positions in Germany or abroad.

Initiatives that benefitted early-stage researchers in neighbouring disciplines at the University of Freiburg were similarly important. The school organised annual competitions on conference projects for early-stage research groups that focussed on linguistics and literature (13 in total), announced a research prize for the best linguistic and literary qualification theses in an alternating cycle (six prize winners), and provided doctoral candidates and postdocs with the opportunity to take part in all research colloquia and benefit from exchanges with leading international academics.

To present its research results, the school founded the renowned multilingual book series *linguae & litterae*, which has an anonymous peer review process and is published by the leading specialist publishing house, De Gruyter (Berlin/Boston). As of mid-2013, 20 volumes of this LiLiLibrary were available, with another 40 in preparation. In addition,

the fellows' research activities were documented by numerous publications in renowned journals and anthologies (approx. 480 articles and over 40 monographs).

Due to its close collaboration with the humanities and cultural sciences at the University of Freiburg, the school took on the role of an ideas generator and research platform. This strategy was reflected by the school's vital role in the application for three DFG grants for collaborative research centres in the humanities promoted by the active participation of internal and external LiLi fellows, as well as through intellectual, financial and logistic support and ideas.