

Research Success Stories



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How language influences how we think of gender – and vice versa

“Our new boss arrives tomorrow. Make sure you are around while she is here.” Did you hesitate when you read “she” because you first had a man in mind? Yes? No? Why? Such questions are investigated by the project ITN LCG regarding several countries and languages.

What we think may influence language and language may influence what we think, that much is clear. What is not so clear is how this exactly happens and how certain features of languages and language use influence gender equality in societies, social behavior towards the sexes, and how gender equality can be promoted through gender-fair language use. These are the areas that the researchers in the Marie Curie



Prof. Dr. Sabine Sczesny
Coordinator ITN-LCG

programme”, says Sabine Sczesny, coordinator of the project.

Don't just wait for calls

The advantage of the Initial Training programme is its “bottom-up approach”: researchers can propose research projects without having to wait for a specific call asking for a specific kind of research topic. It also promotes international and interdisciplinary collaboration and mobility of early-career

“The networking effects are extremely valuable to us.”

researchers: the ten partners of the project have to each employ researchers from outside their own country. The project attracted early-career researchers not only from Europe but from other continents as well.

Action - ITN LCG project investigate. And they do so across several languages, cultures and countries: “Lisa von Stockhausen and me had the idea to launch an interdisciplinary and international project in this field; we asked Euresearch about funding possibilities and together found the ‘Networks for Initial Training’

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Marie Curie Initial Training Network “Language, Cognition, and Gender” (ITN-LCG) investigates the various relationships between language and gender representations. Does, for example, Basque have certain linguistic features that lead to different gender-related representations than, for example, English does? How are language use and language policies related to socio-economic rankings of gender-equality of different countries? How do language, individual attitudes and social behavior influence each other (for example, is a “Technikerin” (a female technician) considered less capable than a “Techniker” (a male technician)? And how are issues of gender-fair language dealt with, for example, in textbooks or communications from governments?

High risk, high reward

The odds of successful application under the Initial Training programme are somewhat intimidating: about 10 percent.

However, the rewards of being successful are considerable: “The funding has enabled us to set up a truly international project with professional management. This allows us to focus on research and training”, says Sabine Sczesny.

And the final advantage of this kind of project: “The networking effects are extremely valuable to us. Even if we had not been successful with the application, we would have been satisfied because of all the good contacts we established with other researchers within and outside of Europe.” So, what are you waiting for?

FACTS AND FIGURES

Project Name:	Initial Training Network – Language, Cognition, and Gender (ITN-LCG)
Coordinating Institution:	University of Bern
Coordinator:	Prof. Dr. Sabine Sczesny
Training supervisor:	Prof. Dr. Lisa von Stockhausen, Uni of Duisburg-Essen
Project Manager:	Dr. Rachel Jossen, University of Bern
Number of Partners:	10
Start Date – End Date:	01.10.2009 – 30.09.2013 (48 months)
Project Cost:	4,106,379 €
Contract Type:	Marie Curie Actions: Initial Training Network (ITN)

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