

**Workshop on Language Dynamics Across the Lifespan**  
**9-10. April 2018**  
**FRIAS (Freiburg Institute for Advances Studies)**  
**University of Freiburg**

**Workshop topic**

Over the last years, cognitive aging has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention, partly due to the global demographic trend towards aging populations and the economic, medical and social challenges this poses. While cognitive aging research has mostly focused on age-related deficits, it has also been acknowledged that certain cognitive functions might be preserved or even improve as a function of age. A possible candidate for a cognitive ability that might remain largely intact across the life span is language comprehension. Efficient language comprehension is essential for successful social interactions for both young and older adults. The acquisition and maintenance of linguistic skills is, however, strongly modulated by cognitive and perceptual factors. Moreover, linguistic skills and cognitive abilities change over the life span. The aim of this workshop is to explore the dynamics of language comprehension across the life span, starting with adolescents and up to older adults.

By its very nature, cognitive aging research is fragmented across multiple disciplines (psychology, neurology, linguistics, cognitive sciences, among others), making it hard to arrive at an integrated understanding of the dynamics of language comprehension across the life span. As a result, many questions around the presumed resilience of language comprehension to aging still await interdisciplinary treatment: Are all aspects of language comprehension (phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic levels of processing) equally spared across the (adult) life span? Does broadly similar behavioral performance between age groups in comprehension tasks result from similar neuro-functional processes, or does the performance of elderly people rest on compensatory reorganization of the language comprehension system? How do the dynamics between language and other cognitive functions (executive control, working memory) develop with age? How do sensory deficits affect language comprehension? How do typical experimental tasks (e.g., button-press tasks under time pressure, tasks with high working memory load) affect, and maybe even bias, the outcome of cognitive experiments in general comparing younger and older subjects? And finally, how does age interact with other demographic variables such as gender and socio-economic background? Our research objective is to gain a more systematic and comprehensive understanding of these issues, with a special focus on differentiating the effects of age on different levels of language processing.

Organizers: JProf.Dr. Adriana Hanulíková, Dr. Alice Blumenthal-Dramé, Prof.Dr. Evelyn Ferstl

## Programme

Monday, 09.04.2018

---

9:00-9:30	Registration
9:30-10:00	<b>Welcome</b>
10:00-11:00	<b>Michele T. Diaz (Pennsylvania State University)</b> Effects of task difficulty on semantic and phonological aspects of language comprehension and production in younger and older adults
11:00-11:20	Coffee break
11:20-12:20	<b>Katinka Dijkstra (Erasmus University Rotterdam)</b> Situation model updating in younger and older adults
12:20-13:00	<b>Evie Malaia (FRIAS and Purdue University)</b> Interaction of language comprehension and working memory: Cross-sectional analysis
<b>13:00-14:00</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>
14:00-15:00	<b>Deniz Bařkent (University of Groningen)</b> Perception of voice and speaking styles in cochlear-implant users: a case study of individual differences
15:00-15:30	<b>Adriana Hanulíková (University of Freiburg and University of Konstanz)</b> Advantage accented? How talker identity affects speech processing across the life span
15:30-16:00	Coffee break
16:00-17:00	<b>Antje Heinrich (University of Manchester)</b> On the role of cognition for speech intelligibility in younger and older listeners in a range of listening situations
<b>18:30</b>	<b>WORKSHOP DINNER</b>

---

Tuesday, 10.04.2018

---

9:30-10:30	<b>Fermín Moscoso del Prado Martín</b> <b>(University of California, Santa Barbara)</b> The potential of corpus analyses for studying language in aging.
10:30-11:15	<b>Catherine McBride (FRIAS and Chinese University of Hong Kong)</b> Speed matters for higher order literacy skills
<b>11:15-11:45</b>	Coffee break
11:45-12:45	<b>Joana Acha (University of the Basque Country UPV/EHU)</b> Cognitive markers of language development in primary school children
<b>12:45-13:45</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>
13:45-14:15	<b>Evelyn C. Ferstl (University of Freiburg)</b> Comprehension of pragmatic language in older adults: The case of verbal humour
14:15-15:15	<b>Debra Titone (McGill University)</b> How does bilingual experience over the lifespan impact natural reading and enduring changes in cognition?
<b>15:15-15:45</b>	Coffee break
15.45-16:30	<b>Final Discussion: Challenges and future of lifespan and aging studies</b>
<b>18:00</b>	<b>WORKSHOP DINNER</b>

---