

OVERVIEWS KATSAUKSET

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Finnish Literary Studies at German-speaking Universities

Literary texts are regarded as an integral part of university foreign language teaching, since whoever learns a foreign language at a sophisticated level should also experience the literature of the foreign language and foreign culture. However, the association between learning a language and studying the literature of this language is based on a broad spectrum. On the one hand, literary texts are merely used as material for language acquisition goals. On the other hand, the foreign language literature is given intrinsic value by making its aesthetic character and its function of conveying knowledge about the foreign reality the focus of learning (see Ehlers 2010: 1531). The first approach is typical of “pure” foreign language teaching, while the second approach is primarily represented in study programmes that concentrate on the academic study of the foreign language and the foreign language literature and culture. Of course, the distinctions between these two positions are fluid, if only because good language skills form an essential precondition for the academic study of foreign language literature.

Finnish as a Foreign Language and Finnish Literature

Some brief explanations of the concepts should precede the closer analysis of the relationship between “Finnish as a Foreign Language” and “Finnish literature”. In Finland, the abbreviation S2 “Suomi kakkonen” (‘Finnish two’) has become established as an umbrella term for teaching Finnish as a foreign and a second language. To clarify the different learning contexts and aims for (mostly academic) Finnish teaching outside Finland as well as school and integrative Finnish teaching in Finland, preference is given in the discussion below to the terms Finnish as a Foreign Language (FFL) and Finnish as a Second Language (FSL) (for further information on the blurred distinctions between FFL and FSL, see Latomaa and Tuomela 1993; Vaarala 2009: 89–90). When referring to Finnish literature at

least two alternatives may be implied: either literature composed in the Finnish language or literature created in Finland. In the first case, for example, Finnish-speaking literature in Sweden would be regarded as part of Finnish literature; while in the second case, among other things, the Finland Swedish and (Finland) Sámi¹ literature would be counted as Finnish literature. When adopted in language teaching one understands “Finnish literature” to mean Finnish-speaking literature, yet for instance if the study focus in academic Finnish Studies is on Finnish literature, then Finland Swedish and (Finland) Sámi literature naturally belong to “Finnish literature” as literatures emerging within the Finnish cultural space.

Teaching literature as well as methods and pedagogical approaches to teaching it are topics that have received comparatively little attention in S2 research. Two anthologies represent important milestones: in Koitto and Vehkanen (1995) Finnish lecturers working abroad compiled a report on the dissemination of Finnish literature, and in Mela and Mikkonen (2007) various aspects of teaching literature are dealt with in the FSL and FFL context. The contributions in Koitto and Vehkanen (1995) date back a while and are to be / could be regarded as records of the fact that literature “always” played an important role in Finnish teaching outside Finland (see also Vaarala 2009: 13). As Mela (2008: 130) asserts, this may be traced back to the fact that, in many countries teaching literature is seen as extremely important in native language and foreign language teaching, which is then also reflected in academic FFL teaching as well. However, literature’s role as conveying culture should not be overlooked either (see also Viinikka-Kalliala 2009: 117), in particular, in learning contexts outside Finland literature makes an important contribution to the acquisition of cultural competence.

Literary texts can be used in FFL teaching in versatile ways for the purposes of language and cultural education (see e.g. Buchholz 1996; Vaarala 2003a and 2003b). However, there is still a lack of methodic and pedagogical approaches to teaching literature that are specifically relevant for FFL. This would systematically treat the literary text as the object and medium of FFL teaching as well as define the linguistic, literary and intercultural goals of using literature in the FFL teaching. A first step in this direction could be a compendium of literary texts (and text excerpts) from original sources that are arranged according to the methods and approaches to teaching literature. On the one hand, texts could be included that would be particularly appropriate for a variety of learning contents based on different stages of language acquisition. On the other hand, original Finnish-speaking texts or even translations could be included that are allocated a special cultural and/or historical

¹ The term “(Finland) Sámi literature” refers here to literature by Sámi writers who live in Finland. However, the term is more problematic than the established term “Finland Swedish literature”, firstly because of the shared Sámi culture and literary space in the Cap of the North; and secondly, because of the linguistic and cultural differences among Finland’s Sámi population.

relevance.² Of course, compiling such a “didactic canon” is fraught with numerous problems, since on the one hand literary texts for foreign language learning are often regarded as “too difficult, too long and too remote from the requirements of everyday communication” (Ehlers 2010: 1530). On the other hand, endless debates can ensue about the choice of literary texts, which are not too complicated and extensive, and could be particularly highlighted as “culturally relevant” (see also Groenewold 2010). Another challenge is the arrangement of texts based on didactical methods for the purposes of academic FFL teaching, since the (still relatively minimal) method-oriented or didactic approaches to teaching literature, which have been developed for FSL teaching, cannot be used without their further adaptation on the grounds of the contrasting learning environments and conditions (cf. Ehlers 2010: 1532). This naturally also applies for method-oriented or didactic approaches, which have been developed for native-language Finnish teaching (see Ahvenjärvi and Kirstinä 2013: 111–162), or for teaching German as a foreign language (see e.g. the contributions in Altmayer et al. 2014). Arranging literary texts according to didactical methods does not mean that they are degraded as a “practice field for language exercises and the processes of formal and content text analysis” (Ehlers 2010: 1532), or would be reduced to “their function as a medium of cultural education” (Ewert 2010: 1562). Nor does the reliance on didactical methods mean instrumentalizing literary texts as a mere vehicle for language acquisition and cultural education, but rather the spotlight should be on literature itself and “furthermore, by preserving its character as art” (Ewert 2010: 1562).

Finnish Studies abroad and Finnish Literature (Studies)

The umbrella term Finnish language and culture is often used to refer to academic FFL teaching and Finnish Studies abroad, and this implies a broad concept of culture that naturally also incorporates literature. Thus, a basic position of literary studies is implied that can be described as literary studies from the perspective of cultural studies (see further e.g. Nünning and Sommer 2004). With regard to the treatment of Finnish literature from an external perspective this is also a reasonable approach, even if it also seems worth striving for a curricular separation of cultural and literary studies, not least because of the expansion of research approaches in cultural studies in the sense of “cultural turns” (see Bachmann-Medick 2014). Finnish studies abroad may then be understood as an umbrella term for language, literature and cultural studies approaches that focus on the Finnish language, literature and culture from outside Finland. In the Finnish studies abroad context, the academic study of Finnish literature would – to concur with Ehlich (2007: 29) – then be understood as “literary studies for/from the FFL position”.

² There are individual lists of recommended texts for FFL teaching (e.g. Jokinen 1995), yet these are more based on – largely valuable – experiences provided by FFL lecturers and not based on ideas about methods and approaches to teaching literature.

Two paradigms have emerged as particularly productive in foreign-language literary studies (see Riedner 2010: 1544–1545): the first model is “the literary communication model of reception aesthetics” that has proven its worth as a “foundation of scholarly reflection” with regard to foreign language literature. The other paradigm is formed by the various approaches arising from “cultural foreignness as a basic category”. An important task for a theory of teaching literature of a foreign language and culture would then be to research the conditions of the reception and specific cultural aspects of the respective literature and to clarify “how distances between the own and the foreign can be bridged by educational work” (Ehlers 2010: 1534).

The dissertation by Heidi Vaarala (2009) is the first (and until now the only) more extensive study where questions concerning literary studies, mainly text reception and interpretation, were discussed from the FFL viewpoint. Vaarala examines the question of how academic Finnish learners (in Finland) understand a Finnish-speaking literary text and how they discuss it. Her starting hypothesis is that knowledge of Finnish forms the necessary, yet by no means sufficient condition for reception; a considerably high level of cultural competence is needed, too. Thus, cultural foreignness is a basic category for the understanding of the foreign language and culture of the literature – even the Finnish language and culture (cf. Ehlich 2007: 29 with regard to German literature).³

The selection of suitable texts is a pragmatic way to overcome the linguistic challenges of literary texts in language teaching. Yet, linguistic challenges represent a much more fundamental problem for the academic study of Finnish literature. The literary texts themselves present the initial difficulty. As by no means all texts that are defined as “the literary canon” (e.g. Joel Lehtonens *Putkinotko* or L. Onervas *Mirdja*)⁴ are available in translation, and as they are linguistically very sophisticated they can only be considered at a very advanced phase of the Finnish Studies course. However, if they have to be ignored due to the language barrier the overall picture of Finnish literature remains restricted.⁵ The second challenge is presented by scholarly papers and essays in Finnish-speaking literary studies. For FFL learners the special language in Finnish literary studies presents at least two difficulties: firstly, due to the aesthetic use of language; and secondly, because of the terminology (cf. further Gardt 1998). Literary studies texts are less formulaic than, for instance, linguistic texts and the language is often full of surprises because of the stylistic flair. As far as specialist terms are concerned, the lack of international, Latin-based terminology (e.g. in comparison to linguistics) makes reading more difficult, particularly since the specialist terms are often the results

³ To create an interpretive framework for the foreign cultural space, Ehlich (2007: 29) adopts the concept of “hermeneutics of foreignness”, Ehlers (2010: 1533) the concept of “hermeneutics of the culturally foreign”.

⁴ Without going into further detail about the problems of forming the literary canon, here the idea of “defining the canon” should be understood quite pragmatically; the reading lists of Finnish Studies programmes offering literary studies could provide initial orientation.

⁵ The language barrier might also be one reason why Finnish literature has scarcely been given any attention in comparative studies outside Finland.

of highly complex word formations – one need only think of derivations like *kirjailija* ‘author’ > *kirjailijuus* ‘authorship’ or *kirjallisuus* ‘literature’ > *kirjallisuudellisuus* ‘literariness’. Welcome reference tools are the literary studies dictionary by Yrjö Hosiaisuoma (2003, although this is now out of print), as well as the open collaborative database Bank of Finnish Terminology in Arts and Sciences, in which the expert community has been very proactively involved in for the literary studies part of the project.⁶

Finnish Literature and Finnish Literature Studies at German (-speaking) Universities – Preliminary Thoughts

Finnish is taught at German-speaking universities in various combinations and on the basis of different curricular requirements.⁷ These can be broadly divided into three categories:

1) Finnish as an optional foreign language: responsible for the language courses are often language centres of the universities (e.g. in Bielefeld) or related disciplines (e.g. Scandinavian Studies in Kiel or Baltic Sea Region Studies in Münster).

2) Finnish as a major language option in Finno-Ugric and Northern European Studies: in the German-speaking context, Finno-Ugric Studies are available in Göttingen, Hamburg, Munich and Vienna (only the Master’s programme). In all these locations Finnish can be chosen as a major language option. As part of regional studies degree programmes in Northern European Studies in Mainz and Berlin (Humboldt University), Finnish is available as a special language option. Depending on the study course, the curricular importance of Finnish literature varies from “only part of language teaching” to optional lectures up to compulsory introductory seminars.

3) Finnish teaching as an integral part of Finnish Studies: the universities of Greifswald, Cologne and Vienna (only Bachelor’s programme) offer Finnish Studies as a major subject, however with quite different curricula conditions.

Finnish literature can be integrated into language teaching for all of these three combinations. Introductory lectures on literary history and literary studies courses as well as advanced reading courses are possible in the Finnish Studies and Finno-Ugric Studies programmes as well as at the Department of Northern European Studies in Berlin (the study programme in Mainz “Northern European and Baltic Languages and Cultures” has no literary studies components). Literary studies learning contents that go beyond this are a compulsory part of the curriculum only in Finnish Studies programmes.

Which basic competencies in literary studies should be made available as the curriculum content for Finnish Studies abroad? There is surely no correct answer to this question, though at least the following three areas should be included in basic training both in literature and literary studies outside Finland: key aspects of Finnish literary history, knowledge of the most important works of Finnish (and not only just

⁶ <http://tieteentermipankki.fi/wiki/Luokka:Kirjallisuudentutkimus>

⁷ For more details on study programmes and syllabus outlines, see Pantermöller 2013a.

Finnish-speaking) literature as well as basic knowledge of literary studies concepts and analytical methods (with emphasis on the fundamental difference between linguistic and literary text analysis; contrast with Mela 2006: 66 and 2008: 132). This basic academic grounding should sufficiently equip students to attend seminars on specific themes of Finnish literature in order to graduate from their study programme with a Bachelor's or Master's thesis in literary studies, and with the aspiration of pursuing a career as a communicator of Finnish-German literary relations.

Unlike in German-speaking Scandinavian Studies, for instance, literary studies and related course contents in German-speaking Finnish Studies abroad manifest a more marginal tradition. There are certainly several reasons for this, although only two factors are briefly mentioned here. Firstly, Finnish Studies abroad – as it is understood today – is a relatively new and innovative combination that has only established itself in its own right and with its own specialist profile in parallel to the establishment and professionalization of FFL teaching as well as the development of FSL teaching in Finland. In addition, there is the close interrelation of Finnish teaching and the specialist content of Finnish Studies with Finno-Ugric Studies that is grounded on linguistic scholarship.⁸ A further reason for the comparatively weak presence of literary studies in Finnish Studies abroad is the specialist understanding of Finnish Studies per se. As Hakulinen and Leino (2006: 12) asserted, Finnish Studies never actually considered itself to be a philological, but rather a linguistic discipline. This is also reflected in the history of the subject: in 1908 when the first Chair for Folk Poetry and in 1913 the first Chair for Finnish literature were founded, this led to a clear separation of Folklore Studies, Finnish literature and (linguistic oriented) Finnish Studies. This kind of distinction cannot be maintained in Finnish Studies abroad, as already implied by the conventional label of Finnish Studies abroad as Finnish Language and Culture. Alongside sophisticated language training based on linguistic principles, Finnish Studies abroad naturally includes comprehensive knowledge of Finnish literature and culture and all three specialist disciplines should also be represented in the curricula. Language acquisition, a necessary condition for reading Finnish-speaking literature, involves most of the learning content at the start of the course; moreover, traditionally, linguistic studies are granted much more space in the syllabuses than literature and culture, not to mention the literary and cultural studies.

Finnish Literature and Finnish Literature Studies at German (-speaking) Universities – An Overview

The Bologna Process, which was implemented rather slowly in German universities, involved multiple changes that have also had an impact and fundamentally modified Finnish Studies and Finno-Ugric study

⁸ Of course, this does not exclude the scholarly analysis of literatures of the Finno-Ugric languages or peoples (see e.g. Domokos and Laakso 2012).

programmes. The implementation of the two-tier structure of Bachelor's and Master's degrees and the modularization of study programmes have together led to a certain "school-like approach" to studying and a changed study culture. However, the changes were by no means merely structural, but due to the efforts to pursue more specialization and to accentuate the profile of the individual study programmes they partly led to significant modifications of course contents. These developments are also evident in Finnish and Finno-Ugric degree programmes and also concern the course content in literature and literary studies. Given that the Bologna Process led to a diversity of curricular profiles that is almost impossible to oversee, here it is only possible to give an outline overview of the importance of Finnish literature and literary studies in Finno-Ugric, Finnish and Northern European Studies.⁹

Curricular Anchoring of Finnish Literature and Literary Studies

The *Finno-Ugric* Bachelor's programmes in Göttingen and Munich incorporate a compulsory introductory seminar on Estonian, Finnish and Hungarian literature (Göttingen) or Finno-Ugric literature (Munich); in Hamburg, literature seminars can be chosen as options in two cultural studies modules. In the Finno-Ugric Master's programmes literary studies course contents can only be chosen as options. Depending on the study location and study programme, however, the options vary greatly for incorporating literary studies course contents into the individual syllabus. In general, however, students have the opportunity to expand their core skills in literary studies through the choice of their second subject, for example, German Studies or English Studies.

In the Bachelor's degree programmes in *Finnish Studies* in Greifswald, Cologne and Vienna, literary studies course contents are a fixed part of the curriculum. In Greifswald, the module "Introduction to Finnish Literary History" includes an introductory lecture, a seminar for advanced study and an extensive literature workload; the *viva voce* for the Bachelor's degree is divided equally into linguistics and literature sections. In Cologne, Finnish Studies at Bachelor's level is closely interrelated with Scandinavian Studies and in joint courses, e.g. in theoretical and methodological introductory seminars on literature and cultural studies, Finnish literature and culture are treated as an integral part of the North European literature and cultural landscape. The advanced module in the literary studies comprises a lecture and an advanced seminar on alternating themes as well as an accompanying tutorial on reading literary texts. The content of the lecture and seminar is often related to Scandinavian Studies, though if possible courses are also offered with purely Finnish Studies content (see below). Students can choose between linguistic and literary studies topics for the Bachelor's *viva* examination. In Vienna, a literary studies lecture and introductions to literary studies and Finnish literary history are integrated into the

⁹ More detailed information can be found on the website of the respective institute.

Bachelor's curriculum. After the compulsory courses the students can choose between a linguistic or literary studies specialism – the latter option involves a project or internship, a more extensive literary studies course and a tutorial. The Master's degree programmes in Finnish Studies in Greifswald and Cologne offer the students more freedom to choose and therefore also the opportunity to put emphasis on literary studies course contents; in both locations Finland Swedish literature is regarded as a natural part of the programme.

At the Department of Northern European Studies in Berlin, Finnish literature and culture is taken into account in lectures and seminars within the discipline of Scandinavian Studies/*Northern European Studies*. Students without any knowledge of Finnish can read Finnish literature in translations and for those who have chosen Finnish as an elective language there is a reading course in Finnish-speaking literature.

Generally, among the students there is lively interest in Finnish literature and questions relating to literary studies. However, demand can only be approximately satisfied because staff resources are so pressured that it is not possible to offer an equal choice of linguistics, literary and cultural studies course options. Furthermore, all staff positions in Finno-Ugric studies and almost all the posts in Finnish Studies are currently filled by lecturers whose specialist expertise is more in the field of linguistics. For this reason, "external assistance" is required to teach literary studies courses. A proven and popular source of assistance is sessional lecturers funded by the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO). In recent years in German-speaking regions, applications have been submitted (and approved) primarily to complement the range of literary studies courses.¹⁰ These short-term or sessional lectureships make it possible to offer students an insight into current Finnish research in literary studies and to deal with specific thematic areas. Alongside guest lectureships on modern or contemporary Finnish prose literature over the past few years topics such as postmodernism or ecocriticism have proved popular. In Vienna, until recently the CIMO regularly made available pro-rata funding for a guest professorship in literary studies. However, this source of assistance is no longer guaranteed due to restructuring of the funding programmes. This jeopardizes the entire literary studies in Vienna because they were covered by the guest professorship. On the other hand, Cologne has profited from the restructuring by earmarking pro-rata funding from CIMO to set up half an assistantship post for two years with special emphasis on literary studies. During the period 2010–2013, Cologne's Finnish Studies also succeeded in applying for substantial funding from the STAR (= Strengthening and Development of Regional Studies) programme offered by the German Academic Exchange (DAAD) to enhance literary and cultural content in Finnish Studies. Guest lecturers and guest researchers could be invited to Cologne to strengthen the institution's own teaching and research. Four

¹⁰ ERASMUS sessional lectureships are also taken up, although due to the low teaching workload they can generally only be integrated into the existing teaching syllabus.

Spring Schools were also organized¹¹ and scholarships were awarded for Finland, so that students of other universities could benefit from the funding assistance as well.

Final Theses and Dissertations

By examining Bachelor's and Master's theses, we can gain an initial overview of students' interest in Finnish literature. Since the students have a relatively free choice of topics, and because until now it has been possible in principle to submit Bachelor's and Master's theses on a literary subject in all locations, the share of literary studies topics already gives an insight into students' interests. Taking into account the period 2010–2014 (for the period 1980–2012 see Pantermöller 2013b), in Finnish, Finno-Ugric and Northern European Studies in Germany¹² approximately 65 Bachelor's and 55 Master's theses were completed with a focus on the Finnish language, literature and culture. The share of literary studies topics is about 30 per cent for the Bachelor's theses and about 25 per cent for the Master's theses. However, there are significant differences among the universities both with regard to the overall number of theses as well as the number of final theses on literary studies topics. In line with expectations, the share of literary studies theses in the Finno-Ugric study programmes is rather minimal; during the review period most Bachelor's theses in Finnish Studies with a focus on literary studies were completed in Greifswald, while most Master's theses were submitted in Cologne. The content of the theses reveals a wide range of topics covering more traditional subjects,¹³ minority literatures¹⁴ and current theoretical and thematic problems,¹⁵ just to mention a few topic areas.

Doctoral theses, professorial theses (*Habilitation*) and other academic papers about Finnish literature are a rarity in the German-speaking context. In the 1970s and 1980s, in the former GDR, only two dissertations and a professorial thesis were completed: in 1977, Kurt

¹¹ A broad range of subjects were offered by the Spring Schools: in 2010 Realism and Naturalism in the Finnish Literature & Finnish Short Stories; in 2011, Eco- and Societal Criticism in the Finnish Literature; in 2012, Sámi Literature, Culture and Language and in 2013 Contemporary Finnish Poetry and Prose.

¹² In Vienna, the students submit two Bachelor's theses of approximately 20 pages in length. Thus they are not directly comparable to Bachelor's theses at German universities (appr. 40 pages) and are not included for the purposes of this analysis. In the Finnish Studies programme one of two Bachelor's theses can be submitted on a literary studies topic and this is also a popular choice.

¹³ E.g. *Ein Vergleich der drei Hauptfiguren in Leena Landers Roman "Die Unbeugsame"* (Hamburg), *L. Onervas "Mirdja" – auf der Suche nach einer neuen Identität* (Cologne).

¹⁴ E.g. *Tod und Depression in der nordfinnischen Literatur* (Greifswald), *Die Darstellung der Tornedalfinnen in ausgewählter Literatur von Mikael Niemi, Åsa Larsson und Tove Alsterdal* (Berlin), *Zur Konstruktion der samischen Identität am Beispiel von Kirsti Palttos "Zeichen der Zeit"* (Cologne), *Helsingfors/Helsinki – Stadtbilder in ausgewählten Romanen von Kjell Westö* (Cologne), *Die "Memesa"-Trilogie von Kiba Lumberg* (Cologne).

¹⁵ E.g. *Zur Bewertung einiger postkolonialer Aspekte in Rosa Liksoms Roman "Crazeland"* (Greifswald), *Ökokritische Ansätze in samischer Lyrik* (Cologne), *Zur literarischen Auseinandersetzung mit gesellschaftlichen und persönlichen Traumata in Sofi Oksanens historischen Roman "Stalinin lehmät"* (Greifswald).

Schmidt completed his professorial thesis (*Habilitation*) in Greifswald on the basic positions of Finnish poetry and prose during the 1930s and 1940s; in 1980 in (East)-Berlin, Richard Semrau finished his dissertation on the representation of comics in Puntilla interpretations by Hella Wuolijoki and Bertolt Brecht (Semrau 1981), and in 1986 in Greifswald Christiane Menger submitted her dissertation on the literary appropriation of life in Finnish drama with reference to Minna Canth and Hella Wuolijoki. Presently, I am only aware of one literary studies dissertation project in German-speaking Finnish Studies, namely by Thekla Musäus (Greifswald) on the image of the Karelian people in Finnish and Russian fiction between 1920 and 1955. In German-speaking Scandinavian Studies academic dissertations are occasionally completed on Finland Swedish literature – an important milestone is the dissertation by Judith Meurer-Bongardt on utopian thinking in the works of Hagar Olsson (Meurer-Bongardt 2011).

Extra-curricular Literary Activities

Alongside the manifold literary interests that can be covered within the curricular framework, in German-speaking Finnish Studies and Finno-Ugric Studies there are many extra-curricular literary activities, several of which merit special mention here. Every May for the past 20 years, the Greifswald Festival *Nordischer Klang* ('Nordic Sound') has presented music, performing arts, exhibitions, readings, films, children's programme and lectures from Nordic countries and other countries bordering the Baltic Sea. Greifswald's Finnish Studies programme is substantially involved in the organization, and readings with Finnish writers are a regular feature of the festival programme. Another institution, which has now become an established tradition, and actively involves Greifswald's Finnish Studies in the planning, implementation and documentation is the congress *Junge Literatur in Europa* (*Young Literature in Europe*) that has been held annually since 2000. Thanks to financial support from the Hans Werner Richter-Stiftung, young writers are invited to Greifswald to an international writers' meeting. So far, 14 Finnish writers have already attended the congress. Since many of the foreign guests are newcomers on the German literature market, Greifswald students translate their texts for the readings into German. Some of these translations have been published since 2005 in the series *Neue nordische Novellen* (*New Nordic Short Stories*). The extensive fourth volume *Auf dem Weg – Neue Nordische Novellen IV* (*On the Way – New Nordic Short Stories IV*) (Bindrim 2014) also documents a research learning project where students take the initiative to make contact with writers and publishers, to select appropriate texts and translate them. The anthology was published in time for the Frankfurt Book Fair 2014 and – as for all previous editions – also benefits from interesting short literary contributions from Finland.

The anthology *Invasion Paradies* (*Invasion Paradise*) (Domokos 2014) is also related to an extensive and mainly student translation project where more than one hundred degree students, PhD students, lecturers and assistants at Bielefeld University – known as the "Gruppe Bielefeld"

(‘Group Bielefel’) – translated and edited novel excerpts, factual texts, poems and newspaper articles on the topic of multicultural Finland. This book was also published to coincide with the Frankfurt Book Fair 2014 with Finland being the Guest of Honour of the Fair.

Although the Frankfurt Book Fair 2014 was a notable highlight for Finnish literature in the German-speaking context, the literary activities are intended to promote continuity. This not only applies for the *Nordischer Klang* and the *Junge Literatur in Europa*, but for all attempts to raise the profile of Finnish literature and to make it more accessible to students.¹⁶ An important role play readings by Finnish writers, which are often organized by Finnish lecturers in cooperation and with the financial support of the Finnish Literature Exchange (FILI), the Finnish Institute in Berlin (FinD) and German-Finnish societies. To bolster the cultural studies approach to Finnish literature, as part of the STAR project in Cologne two Finnish Studies conferences were organized on literary studies. In May 2010, at an international symposium the literature of minorities and migrants in the Northern part of Europe were discussed. In October 2013, German-Finnish-German literary relations were the focus of the conference that brought together translators and literary scholars (see Järventausta et al. 2015). In association with the Cologne Children’s and Youth Book Weeks that promoted Finland in June 2014, 13 Finnish children’s book writers, accompanied and translated by students at Cologne’s Finnish Studies programme, gave numerous readings in Cologne’s schools and libraries – an academic conference was also held on current perspectives on Finnish and Finland Swedish children’s and young adult literature.

Conclusion

When considering the different combinations of Finnish literature studies in the German-speaking context there are numerous intersections between course content, which is based on literary studies, and those courses primarily aimed at language learning. Through the close ties of both study areas, despite the compact curricular framework, it is though particularly in Finnish Studies study programmes possible to convey to the students specialist expertise in the field of Finnish literature and literary studies.

If the aim is further to reinforce the role of Finnish literature in FFL teaching and in Finnish Studies abroad, in my view it would be important to further develop both method-oriented and pedagogical approaches to teaching literature as well as literary studies approaches with regard to FFL teaching and literary studies. The method-oriented and pedagogical approaches to teaching literature are meant to embed the literary text into the foreign language teaching and learning context and to analyze

¹⁶ For this purpose, already ten years ago an anthology (Järventausta and Kjellberg 2004) was published presenting Finnish contemporary writers. Leena Krohn, Juha Seppälä, Sirkka Turkka and Kjell Westö gave their own view of their literary output in their contributions that are supplemented by an external literary studies perspective.

and evaluate its level of difficulty, its composition and contents with regard to teaching and learning goals and objectives (Ehlers 2010: 1532). The analytical framework is different for literary studies. The Finnish Studies abroad approach to literary studies should of course be taught in close alignment with Finnish research. At the same time, its special role lies in the external perspective – whether it is down to the perspective of ‘otherness’ or due to German-speaking research approaches that it can be seen as an enrichment of research on Finnish literature.

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