

## Alumni-Bericht von Matthias K.

When I enrolled at the Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen in October 2012, joining the bachelor's programme of cognitive science, I was not quite sure what I would be confronted with in the forthcoming years. In fact I was particularly naïve or blue eyed and rather was excited about getting to know what cognitive science is about instead of having a clear mind about the actual meaning of the field and subject. Thinking back, the only matter I was sure that I would learn something about was intelligence – without having a clue of what intelligence actually is, technically spoken.

Probably due to this naïvety I was initially surprised by the challenges that had to be mastered and to learn to use a tool named computer science – I have never programmed before, though I would describe myself as computer-affine. Nevertheless, I was quickly seeing the benefits of being able to program, since one can say that a process is understood entirely once it can be rebuilt. Thus, the idea of rebuilding intelligence artificially and creating an intelligent system on the basis of computer calculations struck me quite a bit.

Throughout my studies I enjoyed the interdisciplinarity of the cognitive science subject to a very high extend. Not only would I argue that focusing too deep into a particular field without connecting to other disciplines (that might try to solve similar issues) prevents experts from gaining crucial insights, it is the connectedness to different fields, the picking of elementary ideas from each discipline, the exchange between groups which yields inspiration and enables us to develop unique concepts, architectures and methods that advance people. From a student's perspective, I appreciated the versatility of the teaching material, which minimized monotony during intensive learning phases.

Many of my friends and fellow students decided to switch to studying computer science after graduating with the bachelor's degree, a frequent argument being that they wanted to deepen their knowledge in a certain field. I for myself decided completely contrary, as I wanted to stay in contact with other fields like psychology, neuroscience, linguistics and philosophy which I all learned to love. I wanted to stay in contact with the different approaches to science, wanted to learn more about the impressively precise reasoning skills of philosophers, the exact and diverse statistical methodology of psychologists, the unquestionable uniqueness and essentiality of human language and the admirable structure, architecture and functionality of our brain.

During my master's studies I increasingly focused on artificial intelligence and specialized in artificial neural networks, a field that is technically anchored in computer science, but is also generally connected to all other disciplines that fascinated me.

Recently I started my doctorate at the university of Tübingen after having written my master's thesis in a company, where I noticed how much I actually liked the university processes, the non-profit research and the researchers themselves. It would have been easy to enter directly into the world of

work though – a degree with experience in the field of machine learning opens many doors and both the current job and economical situation is definitely comfortable.

Furthermore, it is to be expected that such professions and skills will continue to be in high demand in future, especially since the trend towards autonomization is known to be strong and has the potential to completely revolutionize both industrial and social structures. An essential aspect of this process that embeds artificial intelligence increasingly into our daily life, however, is a responsible and far-sighted application, ensuring artificial intelligence not being abused for harmful purposes but instead using it to improve lives and to ensure social equality.

In my experience, studying cognitive science allows students to get to know a broad scientific field. The study programme does not have an explicit professional target group and a degree in cognitive science does not qualify to work in one particular field – but does a study programme have to? Rather, universal approaches to problems and the ability to think abstractly are developed during the course of study, with help of which all hurdles can be overcome in principle. I am glad to have had experiences in various fields where I could shape my intellect and interests, I am glad that I have had the opportunity to illuminate problems from different directions and having developed a universal tool box which, altogether, makes me feel to be an educated, self aware and conscious person. I do not regret having studied the field of cognitive science but can instead strongly recommend to join this versatile and exciting field which provides opportunities to evolve in directions that may be unknown at the beginning of any course of study.