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**Berichte**

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# **Exploring Interconnectedness: Constructions of European and National Identities in Educational Media**

## **Report of the third meeting of the EurEd-network**

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How are European and national identities, among them Germany and Denmark, constructed through language? Which stereotypical attributes, which narratives and which linguistic patterns are evident? How do different constructions of the European, German and respective national identities relate to each other, compete and interact? These and other major questions are addressed by the EurEd-network aiming to develop an innovative interdisciplinary research framework to detect, analyse and compare the interconnectedness of discursive constructions of European and national identities in educational media.

After a kick-off at the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in Braunschweig in April 2018 and a second meeting at the University of Copenhagen in November 2018, the third meeting of the network took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of May at Christian-Albrechts-University of Kiel, Germany. The workshop brought together international researchers from Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Poland and Switzerland with expertise in areas such as identity studies, textbook research, Danish–German relations, history didactics, didactics of the German language, social studies education, corpus linguistics and discourse linguistics<sup>1</sup>, also drawing on the interdisciplinary expertise of the international research group IDROS<sup>2</sup> and SMiK<sup>3</sup>.

As a result of the previous workshops and the papers presented at the Kiel workshop, several interdisciplinary working groups have been established. The groups focus on different research interests such as:

- Lexically and semantically bound European concepts in educational media and in learners' knowledge

- Multimodal and multiconodal representations of the concepts of Europe in educational media
- Comparative perspectives on content construction concepts of Europe in educational media
- Corpus linguistic reconstruction of the concepts of Europe in educational media

The workshop was framed by a plenary lecture of Prof. Anna Sandberg (University of Copenhagen) in which she outlined the historical construction of national identities in 19<sup>th</sup> century Denmark and the role of language, literature and art as zones of conflict. Her contribution inspired the ensuing work in the working groups in which the participants had the opportunity to come together and discuss the current state of work. They presented first results of pre-studies, explored further interfaces and obtained theoretical and practical clarifications on the terms and concepts from an interdisciplinary perspective. In order to gather further expertise, three 'critical friends' from external projects and universities were invited to share insights into their research projects. So did Dr. Esther Ademmer (Institute for World Economy, Kiel) who presented her investigations on the politicisation of Europe by analysing comments in social media debates on migration. Martina Ide (Christian-Albrechts-University of Kiel) outlined the relation between semantically complex pictures and language and demonstrated its effects on the construction and perception of reality. Finally, Corinna Krämer (Christian-Albrechts-University of Kiel) provided insights into the empirical investigation of mentally represented concepts of Europe using Concept Maps as a survey method.

On the second day, a lively discussion about the respective disciplinary definition of relevant terms and concepts, such as *identity*, *stereotype* and *narrative*, aimed to obtain theoretical and practical clarifications and a mutual agreement on the network's working definitions. Furthermore, ways of bringing the work of the working groups together were discussed. For example,

<sup>1</sup> For a list of all participants, please follow this link: <https://projects.au.dk/interconnectedness/participants/>, last viewed 26.8.2019.

<sup>2</sup> <http://forschungsperspektivensymposium.com/>, last viewed 26.8.2019.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.stereotypenprojekt.eu/>, last viewed 26.8.2019.

linking data collected from concept maps and data extracted from textbooks can provide deeper insights into the construction of Europe in educational media and its perception by young learners.

One future goal of the network is to publish an anthology in which theoretical approaches, promising methods and research results are presented and critically evaluated. The publication will contain articles focussing on different approaches to explore the construction of different European and national identities in educational media which range from corpus linguistic and multimodal/multicodal analyses of textbooks from different countries and school curricula of different subjects to films, quizzes and games on digital learning platforms. Moreover, mentally represented concepts of Europe and nation of young learners will be investigated using Concept Maps and an explorative eye-tracking study will analyse the receptive behaviour of young learners. The contributions from the network members will show which results different linguistic and discourse analyti-

cal methods can yield when analysing textual and figurative manifestations of identities in educational media from a cross-cultural perspective. The combination of different methods and their interdisciplinary and innovative implementation will contribute to develop current understandings of the intersection of sociocultural, cognitive, didactic and linguistic aspects of identity construction and will offer valuable insights in the construction of concepts of Europe and nation of young learners with regard to different forms of educational media.

The upcoming and final conference of the network will take place in Aarhus, Denmark, from 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2019. Here, the working groups will present results of the work in the EurEd-network, discuss further plans, new international projects and interdisciplinary co-operations.