

MULTIDIMENSIONALITY OF “EUROPÄISCHE IDENTITÄT” NOTION IN GERMAN MASS MEDIA

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Abstract

This paper uses communicative-pragmatic analysis and a corpus-based method to investigate multidimensional axiological interpretation of Europäische Identität notion as a unifying political concept. The study focuses on European identity discourse as presented in German mass media. The study shows strategic relevance of the concept and its unifying potential both within the EU framework, and in wider European domain. The analysis reveals that primary and secondary collocators actualized with the notion convey both the topicality and inconsistency of the concept. Moreover, the results show that identity and personal / collective self-determination discourse is characterized by polemic nature and various evaluations that predominantly feature the tactics of doubt and mistrust to the unifying potential of European identity concept.

Keywords: European identity, collocator, political concept, discourse construction, multidimensionality

1. Introduction

The anthropocentric vector in modern Humanities emphasizes the relevance of individual and collective self-reflections as a multidimensional communicative process in social and cultural domain. Identity as the object of linguopragmatic and sociological study correlates with such notions as *individuality*, *personality*, *self-equality*, *self* and *self-identity*. They can be interpreted as a result of individual and collective experience of studying oneself through interaction with others. The category of identity that deals with making up of personality as an individual is an integral part of many scientific fields within the Humanities domain. It defines individuals and groups as identical to themselves, relatively stable entities. Essentially, both discreteness and continuity are typical of identity as the result of a certain mental activity process due to its phenomenological peculiarities.

The issues of collective and ethno-cultural identity are of special relevance nowadays due to globalization processes typical of the European continent. The establishment and functioning of the European Union, its significant enlargement in the latest decades, integration processes in all spheres of life, elimination of state borders, simultaneous preservation and occasional reinforcement of ethno-mental barriers served the ground for lively debate about the asserted integrity of Europe, the European character, common European values and democratic

guidelines. The EU as a developing integrating concept is in permanent pursuit of a model of common European identity that could provide the base for countries, despite the differences in languages and traditions, to unite culturally, socially and economically, as well as mentally and ideologically to some extent. Such integration presupposes the establishment of collective unity of countries and, consequently, the extension of trust and solidarity borders: “Gemeinschaftsbildung zwischen den Staaten und der damit eingehenden Ausweitung von Vertrauens- und Solidaritätsgrenzen” (Eriksen 2007: 294).

Multilayered and multidimensional nature of European identity notion that is widely used in different discourse practices and has managed to form its own discourse of European mutual understanding in the latest decades proves its strategic significance as regards the enhancement of integration tendencies and overcoming the growth of inner heterogeneity in the EU. Some scholars warn of the threat of “identity crisis”, as similar to the “crisis of overproduction”, implying the inflation character of its spread, the change of meaning and axiological desemantization of the *identity* lexeme (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 3; Erikson 1968: 15). There is constant pursuit of solutions to ethnic, confessional, class, gender, status and many other challenges of international community. European identity discourse is characterized by disputable nature, however they claim its relevance and even necessity “to further unite the citizens of national states both in the EU, and as regards each other” (Lichtenstein 2014: 11). This paper aims to conduct communicative-pragmatic analysis of multidimensional and at times contradictory axiological interpretation of *Europäische Identität* notion as a unifying political concept. The focus is on construction and reflection of European identity discourse in German mass media. The data of German newspaper corpus (das Digitale Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache) served the material for the study.

2. Theoretical and methodological background

The main methodological guideline for the analysis is the theory of discourse sustaining the principles of “language in the action” study, its socio-psychological human space, “people-space” (Harré and Gillett 1994: 31), formed by communicants in certain socio-cultural conditions in line with their intentions. The theory of discourse enhances synthesis of scientific data in such fields of the Humanities as language studies, psychology, sociology, ethnography, culture studies, pragmatics and the theory of communication. It focuses on the human factor in the language as the axiological cognitive-communicative activity. Critical discourse analysis emphasizes socio-cultural aspects of language means use (Wodak and Mayer 2009; Pollack 2002), thus treating the discourse as social interaction that interprets, as well as to some extent designs socio-cultural phenomena and relations. According to the activity principle of language study, the texts within the study are viewed as speech actions with a particular pragmatic

intention. The analysis of these texts as an integral unit of media discourse is conducted with the account of certain cultural-historical and political conditions.

Functional-pragmatic approach that presupposes the study of the language as a dynamic system, a human (his / her consciousness) and reality as a particular human environment appears to be efficient as far as it concerns corpus linguistics methods revealing ambivalent multidimensionality of self-identification discourse or “Selbstverständigungsdiskurs” (Lichtenstein 2014: 13). The latter is actualized in German mass media and reflects the contradiction and complexity accompanying the process of European identity construction as a politically, ideologically and morally significant pan-European concept. The scholars note various, at times general and non-differentiated use of the identity notion as a “theoretic construct” (“unterschiedlichen und oft verallgemeinernden, undifferenzierten Gebrauch” des Begriffs “Identität” als “theoretisches Konstrukt” festgestellt) (Thiel 2011: 29). The employment of different methodological approaches, namely “methodology selection and methodology combination” (Mingers and Brockelsby 1997: 491), provides a multidimensional axiological analysis of European identity notion in a wider socio-cultural context following well-defined research steps that reflect the basic tasks of the study (Bryman 2008: 624).

The principles of empirically oriented corpus linguistics provide a wide scope of study and appropriate representation of discourse notions and phenomena under consideration (Stubbs 1996; Sinclair 2004; Bubenhofer 2009). The object in question, namely the European identity notion and functional pragmatic aspects of its analysis, preconditioned the use of corpus linguistics methods: quantitative discourse analysis based on German newspaper e-corpus (DWDS.de) is employed as the starting point for pragmatic interpretation of European identity notion as it is actualized in the above-mentioned corpus (Bubenhofer 2013). The study presupposes several consecutive research stages: 1) identification of *Identität* lexeme; 2) the study of semantically related words; 3) analysis of frequent collocations with *identity* as the key word; 4) identification of lexical-grammatical means and pragmatic contexts of *European identity* notion; 5) interpretation of axiological features characteristic of European identity notion. The record and the quantitative analysis of primary and secondary collocations allows to specify the contexts typical of the word combination under consideration, reveal the composition and conceptual relevance of primary and secondary collocators that reflect different aspects of the defined word-combination (Bubenhofer 2013: 114) and conduct an evaluative-hermeneutic analysis. The study takes account of such discourse-analysis parameters as communicants, social and political conditions, content, socio-interactive and emotional constituents (Fairclough 2003; Dijk 2007).

Thus, communicative pragmatic analysis of language means and specification of their discourse “behavior” allow determining the axiological level of reflection

and interpretation of European identity notion in national and pan-European space of culture, society and politics.

3. Definition of identity in multidisciplinary domain of the Humanities

A long history of identity studies falls into several research directions that could be traced back from postcolonial, post-modern to antiquity studies. The *identity* notion, being closely related to the notion of the “individual one” enjoyed wide spread and popularity in social sciences with the focus on the attitude of an individual to the society and, consequently, social conditionality of identity. E.H. Erikson, the author of “self-psychology” conception who introduced the term “identity crisis”, is a recognized authority in the research field of identity. According to Erikson, personal identity rests on two points: “perception of the selfsameness and continuity of one’s existence in time and space and the perception of the fact that others recognize one’s sameness and continuity” (Erikson 1968: 50). The scholar refers to the term “ego-identity” and defines it as a “subjective sense of continuous self-identity”, a kind of “creative polarity of self-perception and perception of a person by others” that charges psychic energy to a person (Erikson 1968: 50). In his view, “ego-identity” correlates not so much with the fact of existence, rather than with the quality of existence being ensured by the “ego”. Erikson attributed identity to an individual who experiences him / herself as a whole over entire lifetime, to the sense of one’s inner equality with oneself and personal emotional experience.

According to symbolic interactionism theory, identity is not an immanent feature; it is acquired in the process of different types of interaction with other individuals of the respective group. As G.H. Mead rightly points out, the development of identity is a social process that cannot be actualized in isolation, and invariably requires a group and the feeling of being a member of this group (Mead 1968: 207). In other words, the self in Mead’s view is rather a collective social phenomenon than an individual one: “The self, as that which can be an object to itself, is essentially a social structure, and it arises in social experience” (Mead 1968: 140).

European philosophic tradition prioritizes individual or personal identity that presupposes modelling of one’s self, rather than ethnic, national or cultural identity. Moreover, the individuality feels itself as such in inter-subject dialog communication. M. Heidegger introduces the notion “Man-selbst” as “das Selbst des alltäglichen Daseins” (Heidegger 1967: 129), emphasizing the existential character of selfness and the historical nature of presence in the world: “Das Sein des Daseins besagt: Sich-vorweg-schon-sein-in-(der-Welt) als Sein-bei (innerweltlich begenendem Seienden)” (Heidegger 1967: 192). J. Habermas implies the process of one’s individualizing in socio-historical context by the notion of identity. The scholar defines it as a conception of one’s self as an autonomously acting and individualized being, whose stability comes from the

recognition of the surrounding, the relevant pragmatic experience in space and time: “Der idealen Kommunikationsgemeinschaft entspricht eine Ich-Identität, die Selbstverwirklichung auf der Grundlage autonomen Handelns ermöglicht. Sie bewährt sich in der Fähigkeit der eigenen Lebensgeschichte Kontinuität zu geben” (Habermas 1981: 150).

In modern European context, identity is treated as individualization through socialization in certain socio-historical conditions that influence self-reflection of an individuality. The fact that identity structure falls into individual and social levels proves its complex variable multilayer nature. According to New Dictionary of the History of Ideas (2005), “being and behavior did not always reflect a fixed or individual self, but that self-definition varies with social context, becoming defined at the group level in intergroup contexts”.

4. European Identity as a Political Concept

Integration processes in Europe and the reinforcement of the idea of pan-European unity as the goal of European consolidation could be considered the starting point of European identity construction. It promoted the idea of a universal character of the European culture, common cultural and historical heritage, possible unification of relevant national ideas into an integrated European model. Nevertheless, it does not presuppose rejection or denial of the original character of cultural traditions and ethno-mental peculiarities of each single people. The contradictions within the EU have not been tackled yet and one can note the relevance of collective East-West opposition, the presence of “inner other” (“internes Andere” – Derrida 1992: 56; cf. Sedmak 2010: 14) that negatively affects consolidation, stabilization and promotion of European identity. As observed, the interaction between Europe as the idea and European identity as the goal of common European policy represents a concept that undergoes development and dynamics and is still in pursuit of lucrative common guidelines. At the same time, this concept is “designed anew” or filled with new content at every new period (Delanty 1995: 1), and has acquired political significance during the EU enlargement.

Obviously, European identity in all its discourse realizations is a conceptual notion differentiating Europeans from non-Europeans in such aspects as world outlook, culture, law, social benefits, economic potential and democracy values. European identity advocates seek this notion to be superstructured over ethno-national identity as, according to them, it can result in decrease in inner community heterogeneity at micro and macro levels (Lichtenstein 2014: 14), strengthening of united Europe at the international level.

To a certain extent, political, economic, cultural, religious and many other factors characteristic of the European continent contribute to consolidation of people regardless of the residence country and the language as the means of communication, construction of a unifying world outlook and a similar world-

view, tackling skeptical attitude of residents from different countries to the project. With the enlargement of the EU one can note the reinforcement of stabilizing function of the European identity as it turns to be in demand in economic crisis: “In this case the identity serves as a significant source of moral values and power necessary to overcome the crisis” (Sedmak 2010: 9).

Whereas in neo-functionalism with its utility and appropriateness the identity is subdominant (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009: 5), after Maastricht treaty the problem of identity is the object of wide attention. The latest decade witnesses even greater intensity of discussion. The current stage is characterized by multidimensionality of discourse-specific interpretations of European identity notion and the peculiarities of its construction. The scholars of different research areas have concluded that currently there is a consensus on “the significance of identity factor” (Risse 2005: 295) as a pan-European unifying concept. In this case, the emphasis is on complex perception of the world that features contradictory manifestations of enthusiasm and reticence, trust and fear, intellectual versatility and exaggerated reverence of ancestors’ traditions. The studies note there are doubts and reasonable skepticism about European unity in all its manifestations both in Europe in general and in particular countries. They specify “elementary stable heterogeneity of segment integrated communities” (Saxer 2006: 73).

The ideas about European identity – historical, political, social, legal, and individual – are actualized in different discourse practices that express some specific character of its comprehension and evaluation in a particular linguoculture and form the identity narrative. D. Lichtenstein conducted a comparative study of self-understanding discourse (Selbstverständigungsdiskurs) in public media of eastern and western European EU member-countries at the stage of its transformation and significant expansion. The title of the monograph – “Europäische Identitäten. Eine vergleichende Untersuchung der Medienöffentlichkeiten ost- und westeuropäischer EU-Länder” – foreshadows the range of issues to be considered, namely not one, unified, but a variety of European identities, peculiarities of its construction and comprehension in western and eastern Europe countries (new EU members), interpretation of the issues under consideration in European mass media. Noteworthy, the scholar treats European identity as a political concept and the main goal of European integration policy, as a prerequisite for legitimacy of European administering and, finally, as an indicator of successful functioning of pan-European political system (Lichtenstein 2014: 18). European identity is viewed as a final product of self-consciousness and self-identification of Europeans, inner and outer perception of Europe as regards itself and the rest of the world. Thus, at political and ideological levels there is a vector of supranatural character of European identity in current EU borders.

Identification discourses manifest the logic of national priorities in their basic features and it allows the author to conclude on “national segmentation of

European identification discourse”, yet it is dominated by basic concepts correlating with multidimensional identification processes (Lichtenstein 2014: 333-334). Along with political significance of identity for integration processes and cooperation, one can note insufficient feeling of commitment of citizens from different countries to a pan-European project (Lichtenstein 2014: 19), a kind of “closeness-deficit” (Krzyżanowski, Triandafyllidou and Wodak 2009: 2). The conclusion about ambivalent evaluation of European identity concept in the countries within the unity under construction is of special interest for the study.

According to the analysis conducted by D. Lichtenstein, currently there is no unified construct of European identity, the EU membership is only a delusive consensus, whereas distinct evaluation differences as regards identity components can be traced in two groups of countries following the west-east line (Lichtenstein 2014: 335), marking “inner-European borders” between them (Sedmak 2010: 13).

5. Communicative-pragmatic analysis of *European identity* notion

One can claim that in the latest decades the focus of attention of European media space rests on two contrary tendencies – globalization and localization – that determine polemic character of collective European identity discourse and special-purpose unity of European countries different in their traditions and mentality. The hermeneutic analysis of distributions typical of the key word *identity* and word-combination *European identity* in German media has been specified multidimensional evaluation of the notion.

The topicality of *European identity* concept for the EU is proved by quantitative data of the German language search engine (DWDS.de) containing dictionaries of the German language, as well as newspaper corpora. The dictionaries give two key meanings of *Identität* lexeme: 1) *Gleichheit, völlige Übereinstimmung, Wesenseinheit*, and their semantics expands through synonyms *Gleichförmigkeit, Egalität, Kongruenz, Parität, Nämlichkeit*; 2) *derjenige, der man ist – Selbst, Selbstdefinition, Selbstverständnis, Selbstübereinstimmung*.

The newspaper corpus features high functionality of *Identität* lexeme (21621 contexts); the most frequent attribute collocators are *national* (3979), *eigen* (3350), *kulturell* (2537), *europäisch* (1316), *judisch* (860), *wahr* (742), *kollektiv* (541), *falsch* (403), *sexuell* (387), *regional* (348), *religios* (312), *ethnisch* (290), *ostdeutsch* (155), *verloren* (121), *unverwechselbar* (108), *sprachlich* (105); the most significant verbs marking the ambivalence of identity construction processes are *bewahren* (414), *preisgeben* (370), *stiften* (303), *feststellen* (295), *aufgeben* (248), *annehmen* (237), *klären* (232), *wahren* (173), *wechseln* (160), *verschleiern* (122), *definieren* (115), *überprüfen* (107), *ermitteln* (102). The intention to form *Identität* concept is also expressed by means of such prepositional combinations as *Suche nach...* (1011), *Frage nach...* (531), *Zweifel an...* (151), *Hinweis auf...* (141), quite frequent and pragmatically relevant is the predicative *unklar* (161), as well as the use of *Identität* with *Herkunft* (141), *Tradition* (118), *Heimat* (99),

Differenz (92). The given collocation words reveal a complex and ambiguous process of *Identität* notion construction in pan-European communication context, its multilayer and multidimensional nature. The observation is proved by high frequency and evaluative multidimensionality of this lexeme as an element of compound words. *Identität* actualizes as the defining root in 4578 compound words, whereas the contexts featuring this element as the determining one in compound words are less frequent (949 contexts). Semantics analysis of compounds with *Identität* prove the claim about a wide evaluative range of the concept under consideration, its ambiguity and the dynamic character of its discourse in German media space.

The newspaper corpus has also revealed high frequency of *europäische Identität* notion as an attribute combination – 433 context, notably its use can be traced as far back as 1972-1974. The materials indicate the initial state of forming European identity concept (*die sich abzeichnende europäische Identität*), its political relevance to define the Atlantic unity (*Neuformulierung des atlantischen Verhältnisses*), significance for stabilizing Europe-US partnership (*Stabilisierung des transatlantischen Verhältnisses*). The official documents of the above-mentioned period, namely, *Document on the European Identity by the Nine Foreign Ministers* (Copenhagen, 14 December 1973) stresses that commitment to the common values, principles and interests “gives the European Identity its originality and its own dynamism” (Document 1973). The official discourse of European identity manifests positive evaluation up to the present time and emphasizes vital necessity of its strengthening in order to provide greater consolidation and unity of the EU.

It should be noted that the necessity to form European identity was preconditioned by transatlantic dialog in the beginning of 1980s when the unified position of European countries acquired certain relevance. The original contexts verbalizing the concept in German newspaper political discourse can be traced by the use of such graphic means as inverted commas, capital letters and the indefinite article.

The tendency to distinguish Europeans from non-Europeans, from the US and Russia in the first place, continues in different areas – political, economic, sociocultural – up to the present time:

- (1) Example 1
Oft nehmen wir unsere Identität durch die Unterscheidung gegenüber anderen wahr (Gauck 2013).

There is certain emphasis on the significance of forming European identity not only in the heads but also in the hearts of Europeans, and without opposing Europe to some outside enemy. So the article with a representative title *Wo liegst du, Europa?* expresses the hope for further development of European unity in the above-mentioned way:

- (2) Example 2
Insgesamt ist die Hoffnung berechtigt, dass sich europäische Identität und europäische Union zukünftig ohne den großen äußeren Feind vorantreiben lassen, ohne Krieg und ohne den Zusammenstoß der Zivilisationen (Kocka 2002).

The significance of reconstruction, revision and reassessment of the identity notion as pan-European concept is stressed as well. Obviously, it concerns the demand for a new concept that corresponds to the current political and economic context:

- (3) Example 3
Was Europa derzeit fehlt, ist ein neuer Identitätsbegriff. Bislang haben wir unsere europäische Identität in erster Linie über Abgrenzung konstruiert... Statt sich zu einer Identität zu bekennen, haben sich Europäer nur gegen andere Nationen, Kulturen und zum Teil auch pauschal gegen nicht-christliche Religionen gerichtet (Dückers 2015).

Among primary collocators of the basic word combination that expand and specify the vision of European identity in German newspaper discourse and its topical character one can mention *kulturell, national, gemeinsam, unser, schwach, wahr, neu, stark, Suche, transnational, stärken, Verlust, klarer, künftig* that convey predominantly positive evaluation. Neutral and negative evaluation prevails among secondary collocators: *abstrakt, künstlich, virtuell, Vision, verwebt, postrassistisch, postkolonial, postnational, doppelt, neuentdeckt, zweifach, keine, allgemeinverbreitet, allgemeinverbindlich, pragmatisch, elastisch, vielbeschworen, echt, hehr, ganz anders, spezifisch, heutig, inhaltsleer, verkrampft* and other. The linguopragmatic analysis of European identity discourse and typical collocators in German newspaper discourse proves, first, the topicality and relevance of the concept for the EU as an indicator of unity. Multiple dimensionality of its evaluation interpretations manifest ambiguity and vagueness of the notion. The discussions about its significance are actualized in newspaper materials at different levels – from high rank EU officials, certain member-countries, European intellectuals and journalists, to ordinary people providing their comments in the net. The analysis has shown that identity discourse and personal / collective self-identification is characterized by polemic nature and multi-vector evaluation with prevalence of tactics of doubt and mistrust to the uniting potential of the given concept.

In this respect triple frequency of *nationale Identität* concept occurrence (1501 contexts) in German newspaper discourse is quite representative. Multi-layer and contradictory character of the European concept under construction can be metaphorically defined as *ein Sandwich-Modell*. The main components of such model are regional, national, European and other types of identities that come in layers. The following characteristics of the notion are actualized in coordination relations: *nationale und europäische; transnationale und Herkunftsidentität; neue übernationale und europäische; deutsche und europäische Identität, europäische Identität und europäische Union*. One can track that European identity is one of a

kind; they do not exclude one another and do not have any common denominator (*keine Summe von nationalen Stereotypen*), still interweaving they form double identity (*doppelte, zweifache Identität*).

Some critical materials manifest inconsistency of the popularized *Sowohl-als-auch* (both-and) principle for pan-European unifying processes:

- (4) Example 4
Diese Union brillierte in der Kunst des Sowohl-als-auch. Das wurde ihre liebste Beschwichtigungsformel. Mit ihr beruhigte sie Euroskeptiker und beflügelte Europafans. Das alte Sowohl-als-auch-Prinzip wirkt nicht länger. Es kann nicht mehr überkleistern, was vor aller Augen auseinander strebt. Es ist die Lebenslüge der Union (Fritz-Vannahme and Pinzler 2003).

As early as 2013 the German President Joachim Gauck upheld his statement full of optimism *So viel Europa war nie!*, while characterizing the contemporary state of the European unity and marking multidimensionality of *europäische Identität* concept as its positive feature:

- (5) Example 5
Wir sehen dabei, wie vielschichtig Identität sein kann. Und wir begreifen: Europäische Identität löscht weder regionale noch nationale Identität, sie existiert neben diesen (Gauck 2013).

At the same time, he noted the absence of significant and recognized narrative (*die große identitätsstiftende Erzählung*) capable of forming pan-European identity, European self-consciousness, and not without regret admitted that one can hardly speak about both European identity and the united European people or European nation:

- (6) Example 6
Die eine europäische Identität gibt es genauso wenig wie den europäischen Demos, ein europäisches Staatsvolk oder eine europäische Nation (Gauck 2013).

The speaker considers traditional European values to be a priority for the future of Europe (*einen im Wesen zeitlosen Wertekanon*), as well as expresses conviction that European identity should be developed by Europeans themselves, citizens of different countries that share European values and are ready to become an integral part of Europe while preserving its ethnic and cultural diversity:

- (7) Example 7
Europäische Identität wächst mit dem Miteinander und der Überzeugung der Menschen, die sagen: Wir wollen Teil dieser Gemeinschaft sein, weil wir die gemeinsamen Werte teilen. Mehr Europa heißt: mehr gelebte und geeinte Vielfalt. (Gauck 2013)

In the latest decade, the newspaper political discourse features parallel coexistence of different types of identity at different levels in line with the above-mentioned

European identity – in the European Union, in a particular state, community and at the personal level – the one of a European, a citizen of a particular country, a native language speaker. Corpus text materials show that nowadays the given category has not become a common European characteristic and a recognized pan-European value. The articles under analysis manifest wide evaluative multidimensionality of *Europäische Identität* concept. It comprises a number of aspects: a positive one as a significant condition of the future of Europe; a skeptical one reflecting doubts that it has been formed and is capable of certain uniting potential and the necessity of the concept in general. The latter is mostly preconditioned by such contrary tendencies as globalization and localization.

General economic and finance policy, common cultural roots and the EU values are interpreted in a positive way, at the same time the relevance of strengthening European identity and developing collective pan-European consciousness (*Wir-Gefühl*) are stressed. The combinations *Identität stärken, bewahren, vertiefen, behalten, entwickeln, aufbauen, kultivieren* are conceptually relevant.

On the other hand, the materials under analysis show that European identity is underestimated due to not only its multidimensionality and ambiguity but the absoluteness of its existence as well:

- (8) Example 8
Die europäische Identität ist nur eine von mehreren – und nicht gerade die stärkste... Vielleicht wird die europäische Identität auch nur unterschätzt, weil sie so selbstverständlich ist, dass man sie kaum wahrnimmt (Wie europäisch ist Europa? 2012).

A characteristic feature of German mass media discourse is the strategy of doubt as to the existence of European identity as a uniting concept, and quite often to its necessity, as well as complete negation of its existence. Largely it calls forth the polemic character of European identity political narrative.

Negative evaluation is actualized in such characteristic features as *Vision, Utopie, gewagte Sicht, gemeinsame Ambition, erfolglose Suche*, as well as attributive collocators *virtuell, verweht, schwach, verkrampft, künstlich, inhaltsleer, peripher* and other. The article *Wie die Partei, so die Europa-Vision* with a pragmatically relevant subtitle *Die Vereinigten Staaten von Europa oder stärkere Nationalparlamente? Deutsche Politiker entwickeln unterschiedliche Ideen, wie es mit der EU weitergehen soll* conveys the opinions of German politicians about the future of the EU and regretfully notes that in case European identity is viewed as the result of common financial and foreign policy, it is a utopia.

- (9) Example 9
Europäische Identität, findet Dehm, entstehe sowieso nicht durch eine gemeinsame Finanz- und Außenpolitik. Bisher sei das europäische Wir-Gefühl doch leider eine Utopie (Caspari 2011).

Illusionary and abstract character of European identity is highlighted in many newspaper materials, the headlines often question if it really exists at all. The data on the polls given in the materials prove an ambiguous and virtual character of the concept, the complexity of its definition that could satisfy all EU member-countries:

- (10) Example 10
Die Mitgliedsländer der EU sind so verschieden, dass es sehr schwer ist, eine gemeinsame europäische Identität zu definieren (Pressestimmen 2004).

The above-mentioned statement is still valid, and its pessimistic and gloomy assessment of European unity after the EU expansion in 2004 finds its confirmation even nowadays. In the article with a metaphoric title *Geht's nicht auch eine Nummer kleiner?* the authors Joachim Fritz-Vannahme and Petra Pinzler ironically dub the historic for the EU year 2004 *Annus mirabilis*. They note that it makes Europeans feel concerned rather than pleased with the consequences of such challenging extension and fundamental delusions of both parties. The authors come to the following discouraging conclusion:

- (11) Example 11
Die hehre "europäische Identität" wirkt schwächlich neben der alten, längst geschrumpften "nationalen Souveränität", die zäher denn je verteidigt wird, und das nicht nur von den neuen Mitgliedern. (Fritz-Vannahme and Pinzler 2003).

Along with common European interests and officially proclaimed unity of views on many economic and political issues, the EU pursues the policy of prioritizing national interests. A different principle of uniting Europe is proposed and reasoned by Ulrike Guérot, Professor for European Policy in Danube University Krems, Austria (*Professorin für Europapolitik an der Universität Krems in Österreich*) in her studies. According to the author, the new Europe is a post national union, European federation of regional subjects (*eine europäische Föderation regionaler Einheiten*) as a reflection of modern renationalization tendencies (*Renationalisierungstendenzen*), the key characters (Akteure) are the regions that manifest certain political activity and seek for self-determination. The proclaimed European identity is characterized by the author as *verkrampft* and *künstlich*. Thus, national and regional values are opposed:

- (12) Example 12
Das Nationale ist meist nur eine Erzählung, das Regionale, das ist die Sprache, die Küche, die Kultur. Würde man die Regionen im politischen System einer Europäischen Republik aufwerten, bekäme man genau jene "Einheit in Vielheit", ohne eine verkrampfte und künstliche europäische Identität schaffen und ohne die Flucht ins Nationale antreten zu müssen (Guérot 2017).

Functional activity and pragmatically predetermined frequency of occurrence of *europäische Identität* notion prove evaluative multidimensionality of the phenomenon as the unifying political concept. Integration processes in Europe and promotion of the idea of common European unity actualize the issue of forming and strengthening of European identity. It finds its reflection in European identity narrative in a polemic way and with a wide range of evaluation – from unconditional recognition of its unifying potential to negation of its existence and the necessity in general.

6. Concluding remarks

The analysis of European identity discourse in German mass media shows conceptual strategic relevance and the unifying potential of the notion both within the EU framework, and in wider European domain. Primary and secondary collocators, specified and analyzed by means of quantitative and qualitative-hermeneutic procedures, show both the topicality and relevance of the concept for the EU as the indicator of unity, and multidimensional, often contradictory process of discourse construction of European identity and its multidimensional evaluation. The analysis has revealed that identity and personal / collective self-determination discourse is characterized by polemic nature and various evaluation predominantly featuring the tactics of doubt and mistrust to the unifying potential of *European identity* concept.

Discourse correlation of European identity – national identity notions, multilayer nature of European identity concept and *Sowohl-als-auch* principle as the model of its actualization, lack of stimulating development as regards European identity narrative in Europe are the reasons for its ambiguity and, consequently, the challenge of a common definition.

The articles under analysis show quite wide evaluative multidimensionality of the *Europäische Identität* concept. It features the following characteristics: a positive one as a significant condition of the future of Europe, a skeptical one as it reflects the doubts in its established nature and the unifying potential and a negative one as regards the real existence and the necessity of the concept that is generally preconditioned by contrary tendencies of globalization and localization.

In conclusion, it appears valid to say that statistically relevant frequency (Frequenz), hermeneutic interpretation of the specified primary and secondary collocators that actualize multidimensional interpretation of European identity notion in German mass media, prove both pragmatically preconditioned multidimensional evaluation (Evaluierung) of *Europäische Identität* notion and its conceptual relevance and certain unifying potential.

A comparative study of selected peculiarities of the presentation of European identity notion in different types of discourse—the official, media and everyday ones with the emphasis on advantages and disadvantages in terms of forming

common European identity and collective European self-consciousness—is evidently prospective for further research.

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