

Conference

“Diversity and Cognition. Interdisciplinary approaches in linguistics, literature and media studies.”

5.-7.2.2020, TU Dortmund University (at the „Dortmunder U“)

The research group “Diversity Studies. Cognition, Literature, Media, Language“ at TU Dortmund University has as its aim to explore the many facets of diversity from the perspectives of linguistics as well as literary and media studies. The conference on “*Diversity in Cognition*“, taking place February 5-7, 2020 at the „Dortmunder U“, will be the first of a series of conferences focusing on such interdisciplinary and multimodal approaches to *Diversity Studies*. This first conference will be dealing with the multiple links between diversity and cognition.

The concept of *Diversity Studies*, as applied in literary and media studies, is based on approaches in minority studies, postcolonial studies, gender studies, queer studies, and disability studies, which have all been developed since the 1990s. The key role that language plays for individuals and for their participation in constructive processes of understanding, of generating knowledge, and of sociopolitical recognition has always been at the center of these studies. Analytical approaches to modern discourses of sociocultural identity that aim to include aspects of hybridization, differentiation and aestheticization have increasingly taken into account the fact that identity and the issue of possible participation are always dependent on several interdependent factors. The discussion of the classic triad of *gender, race, class* eventually triggered more differentiated perspectives in recent research.

The concept of diversity not only questions *particular* presuppositions of individual, social, and academic knowledge and understanding: as a matter of fact, *diversity studies* cast doubt on the underlying *fundamental* notion of a subject-independent understanding of the world and self, and analyze how such understanding is construed in a multifactorial and polyvalent fashion. Examples include the purportedly objective naturalization of gender binarism or critical reflections on the constructive objectivity of human cognition.

Scholars in the field of linguistics (psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and applied linguistics) conduct empirical research on how linguistic, cultural and individual diversity influences cognitive processes in different domains – however, the interdisciplinary links to current discussions in cultural studies need to be explored further: If linguistic, especially grammatical structures substantially shape individual thought and thereby create sociocultural diversity, the question to be answered is how these various and interconnected factors impact cognition as well as the literary, medial and linguistic productivity of modern societies. At the same time, the concept of *super-diversity* (originally developed in social studies) takes into account the fact that, as a consequence of increasing migration and mobility as well as the globally intensifying use of communication technologies, categories of difference do not only overlap, but also diversify within the categories themselves.

The conference is divided into four panels that will discuss approaches to *diversity studies* from the perspectives of psycholinguistics, applied linguistics, media studies, and literary studies.

Panel 1: Cognition and Psycholinguistics

Possible topics:

1. Linguistic relativity: The influence of language on cognition
2. Influences of different kinds of expertise on cognition and perception
3. Topics from multilingualism research

Panel 2: Cognition and Language

Possible topics:

1. Cognitive resources and processes of multilingual speakers of English as a lingua franca
2. Language choice and management of internationally socialized, multilingual speakers
3. Meta-cognitive perspectives: *beliefs, assumptions, knowledge (BAK)* towards English as an essentially multilingual lingua franca

Panel 3: Cognition and Media

Possible topics:

1. Social conditions and interaction structures for diversity-sensitive media behavior on the micro-, meso-, and/or macro level
2. Cognitive reconstruction of normative presuppositions: teachers' *beliefs* in media education
3. Medially mediated reflection of how diversity is handled
4. *A.I.* and hidden discrimination: digital technologies and the transparency of intersectional diversity in decision processes

Panel 4: Cognition and literary text

Possible topics:

1. Requirements and effects of diversity-sensitive research on reading
2. Stereotyping and beliefs in literature-induced emotionality
3. Theory in Mind as a model of literary reception
4. Genres of poetry in models of cognitive psychology
5. Narratology from the perspective of cognitive science

The deadline for abstract submission (250 words max) is November 20, 2019. Please state your preferred panel. In case your abstract is accepted you will be notified by December 5, 2019. Registration is open from December 6, 2019.

Please submit your abstracts to diversity-cognition2020@gmx.de.

The conference proceedings will be published as part of the COGNITIO series (Peter Lang).