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Mental Representation of Stimuli Austrian and Swiss Humour

Ментальна репрезентація стимулів австрійський та швейцарський гумор

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to analyse linguistic consciousness, the specificity of cross-cultural communication, the role of humour as a social product of language, and culture and a person's mentality identification, which is formed under the influence of psycholinguistic elements of perceiving the world and acquiring knowledge about it. Special attention has been given to studying the specificity of perceiving the Austrian and Swiss humour and their identification in the German-speaking space through the stimuli *Österreichischer Humor* and *Schweizer Humor*.

Research methods and techniques. The research utilises the following theoretical methods: the structural-functional analysis of lexical units and the methods of systematization and modelling. We used the word association test to study the specificity of perceiving and singling out the stimuli *Österreichischer Humor* and

Schweizer Humor in the German-speaking space in the consciousness of Ukrainian respondents.

Results. *It is proved that the stimuli under analysis are representatives of the conceptual awareness of the existence of the Austrian and Swiss humour in the German-speaking space and can be traced to the worldview of a Ukrainian linguistic personality. Due to typical and individual reactions of the respondents it was identified that the image of the Austrian and Swiss humour and its value orientations in the German-speaking space are shaped in their consciousness.*

Conclusions. *We proved that the concept of Austrian and Swiss humour was shaped in the consciousness of the non-native speakers due to their practical and educational activities, educational processes and different levels of experience. The stimuli under analysis evoked typical, non-typical and individual reactions, indicating different principles of mental representation formation, rational awareness and emotional perception of the German-speaking space and the specificity of marking the elements of the identity of humour culture by a person.*

Key words: *humour, stimulus, cross-cultural communication, linguistic-cultural analysis, psycholinguistic analysis.*

Introduction

Psycholinguistics and Cross-Cultural Communication

Psycholinguistics studies the processes of interaction between human perception of the world and language, particularly structures of linguistic knowledge embedded in human consciousness that take part in information processing and transmission (Croft, 2009). It also studies the mechanisms which provide the access to rational world perception and create the foundation to analyse the processes in human consciousness and thinking (Byram, 2012). In interaction with other disciplines, psycholinguistics joins in research into different aspects of linguistic representation from the point of cross-cultural pragmatics, understanding language as a phenomenon for transferring knowledge from one person to another (Langlotz, 2015) and cognitive linguistics, studying the role of concepts, their semantic organization in human consciousness (Skehan, 1998; Barsalou, 1999; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Linguistic representation of the world results from the interaction of cognitive thinking mechanisms, psychological perception and language reproduction. The analysis of language and language phenomena forms stereotypical structures. It categorises them in the mental paradigm of the target lingua-culture, which is concentrated and pragmatized in

cross-cultural communication. Human communication is a mechanism of interaction of linguistic, psychological, social and cultural symbols that create the foundation for understanding the linguistic environment and its rational perception, ensuring adequate cross-cultural communication. The studies of the principles of cross-cultural communication highlight that while transferring national-cultural information, a linguistic personality utilises all the spectrum of psycholinguistic markers which form the principles of their transferring, preserving national-cultural constituent.

Using language, people try to make other people understand the thoughts and feelings of the speaker, define the relations, identify themselves as part of the social group and specify the type of speech event they are involved in (Fasold, 1990). Researchers focus on the process of interaction and interpretations, which depend on social-cultural knowledge and are identified by cultural rules (Matsumoto, 1988; Seelye, 1994; Kramsh & Uryu, 2014), modelled depending on the behaviour, beliefs, attitudes, and values common for a particular society or nation (Ember & Ember, 1990).

The sources of difficulties in managing cross-cultural communication include language, emotions and cultural norms (Jain & Krieger, 2010). People try to search for differences in societies, compare themselves with others and find the things that make them different. In such a way they identify “feeling of one’s own place” (Müller, 2004).

Psycholinguistics and Cross-Cultural Competence

Psycholinguistics is a science which studies not only the formation of linguistic consciousness but also mechanisms of linguistic consciousness transformation in the process of perceiving the world and acquiring experience in the systems of language, culture, and psychology of the target lingua-culture, that shapes cross-cultural competence and influences communicants and the process of communication. From the perspective of psycholinguistics, language competence formation is explained by the need of a person to understand the language and thought structures of the target lingua-culture, which contain national-cultural elements and reflect value orientations in language, culture and human psychology, as well as to adequately realise them in cross-cultural communication.

Cross-cultural interaction contributes to revealing identification features with the help of cultural signs (Gutjahr, 2002). It is a process of information coding or decoding in a cross-cultural context, which

presupposes mutual respect among others (Dorjee, 2017). Competent cross-cultural communication begins with interpersonal communication, conscious monitoring of one's reactions and defensive emotions, ethnocentric attitude to misunderstandings in the intercultural plane (Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2019).

Cross-cultural competence is recognized as a unique ability to form the process of cross-cultural interaction to avoid misunderstandings, at the same time creating opportunities to settle the misunderstanding in a way acceptable and productive for all the participants (Thomas et al., 2010); as an ability to establish contact within the cross-cultural context appropriately and create conditions to express one's thoughts freely and to effectively share thoughts for everybody involved in the communication to achieve common goals (Schöhuth, 2005). Cross-cultural competence is most effectively measured with the individual level of personal development to identify discrete commonalities (Wierlacher, 2003). An essential function of cross-cultural competence is the ability to effectively interact with people of various cultures different from your own (Guilherme, 2000). Cross-cultural competence is also treated as effective interaction management among people who, to some extent, explicate different affective, cognitive and behavioural orientations in the world (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). It is impossible to study cross-cultural competence without focusing on existing knowledge and attitude to it, on interpretation and communication skills, on skills of discovery and interaction, as well as processes of critical cultural understanding, which linguistic personality has to develop in the process of cross-cultural competence formation (Byram, 1997). To master cross-cultural competence, three strategies are singled out, which consist in building relations or social contact for the sake of normalising cultural behaviour and appropriate attitudes to communicants, which may be achieved through mechanisms of interaction, asking, clarification or explanation, as well as ensuring the process of mastering cultural knowledge (Henderson et al., 2016).

Psycholinguistics and Humour

Psycholinguistics outlines accurate and clear boundaries between language, human beings and thinking, emphasizing their close interaction. The process of human thinking formation, namely, conceptual, generalizing and abstracting, takes place only through natural language mediation. On the other hand, thinking is considered

a source of origin, as a functioning process in the development of language, concepts of which function as the means of human thought formation and transmission (Fantini, 2010).

Language system is a significant factor which identifies what is considered funny, humorous and playful in society, what is worth laughing at and what identifies humour (Hertzler, 1970), as a particular humour culture consists of a set of comic situations, roles and specific comic topics identifications, acceptable in a group or society (Berger, 1998). Humour is a way of thinking formation of which depends on psycholinguistic factors, such as the emotional and psychological condition of a linguistic personality, mechanisms of collective worldview and experience of rational understanding of the world formation. As a psychological constituent of language diplomacy or diplomacy of language communication, humour can create preconditions for mediation processes, where, through language and speech, it determines the reflection of the worldview in the centre of which is linguistic personality and their cognitive activity.

Humour is a universal phenomenon which uses the whole world as a means of everyday communication and social interaction (Raskin, 1985; Attardo, 2020; Martin & Ford, 2018); the principal constituent of social communication (Wyers & Collins, 1992), which also has “cultural colouring” (Jiang et al., 2019). Humour is considered a universal trait, human reaction on behaviour, skills or competencies, important social and psychological manifestations of *homo sapiens* (Raskin, 1985). There is an assumption that an increased sense of humour helps people positively cope with various life circumstances and situations (Kuiper et al., 1995). Humour may be used as a means to discover or create new interpersonal relations, it may be an essential source of getting pleasure and positive impressions (Ziv, 2010). Notably, humour is recognized as an important tool for identity demonstration, as a joking, playful statement renders speakers’ knowledge, social adequacy, and person’s intentions (Long & Graesser, 1988). It may have an impact on forming impressions of other people (Wyers & Collins, 1992). It may serve as an instrument of interaction in its numerous manifestations, including its usage and influence on interpersonal relations of communicants.

Psycholinguistics and Colour

Language is a social phenomenon whose function is to transfer not only information about the world, but to form categories of the world

in human consciousness, particularly forms of the category of colour (Kay & Regier, 2009). Studies of the influence of colour and reactions to colour impacting memory and shaping human consciousness (Adams & Osgood, 1973) are effectively used in psycholinguistic research with the linguistic personality in the main focus. Linguistic personality is a complex multi-level system combining levels of language fluency (language competence), proficiency in means of language interaction (communicative competence), and knowledge of the world (thesaurus) (Lingenfelter, 1990).

Research confirms that colour has a certain impact on human mentality and contributes to forming positive and negative reactions. The emergence of an association as a result of the influence of colours (both chromatic and achromatic) on the consciousness and mentality of a person provokes emotional colour reactions of a person to objects, things and value orientations in society (Xin et al., 2004; Kaya, 2004; Smith, 2007; Ahmad et al., 2015). Colour reactions can form national-cultural orientations of a particular society in human consciousness and outline their symbolic meaning to construct national consciousness of linguistic personality (Gao et al., 2007).

In the consciousness of linguistic personality, colour is associated with positive or negative emotions or the state of emotional tension. It may cause mental disorders, act as a stimulus of contrastive features or induce changes in a person's internal state (joy, laughter, sadness, frustration, depression, etc.) and affect language, speech and flow of communication. The influence of colour on a person is visible (explicitly or implicitly) while expressing or demonstrating emotions in the process of communication, reflection, interpretation or observation, which provides an insight into the operations of focusing attention and thinking, attitudes to representatives of a particular society and identification with it. Colour can induce associations and provoke reactions, which influence the formation of language units' volume and their selection to express thoughts and maintain communication.

Methods

The research aims to conduct word association test among Ukrainian students and identify the influence of stimuli-representatives

of German-speaking space *Österreichischer Humor* and *Schweizer Humor* on the formation of profiled (typical), non-typical and individual reactions. This will enable us to define mechanisms of thinking, specificity of perception and understanding of lingua-culture, information transmission and construction of mutual relations in cross-cultural interaction. The reactions identified will predict the conditions and depth of language proficiency, particularly gestalt formation. The concept of gestalt is understood as a constant integral constituent of consciousness which exists in the form of figures, structures, and images and is formed through striving to structuring the field of perception (Selivanova, 2010). It has a clear structure and acts as a means of categorizing objects in the world. It is a language embodiment of the psycho-mental image of the world, which consists of certain hierarchically constructed parts, forms integrities and cultural associations and serves as the foundation of all processes of human activity (Lakoff, 1987) and their conceptual understanding. It also embraces thoughts, perceptions, emotions, processes of cognition and awareness, behaviour and speech.

Word association test is effective in achieving the goal set as it contributes to the reproduction of representations that reflect a person's individual experience. The experiment results allow building association fields, singling out semantic volume, and constructing fragments of cognitive activity (Horoshko, 2001). Investigations of such type open access to the archetypal or ethnic worldview of a particular society, testify the respondents' attitude and recognition of a target lingua-culture and develop the skills of understanding the elements of language, culture and psychology of linguistic personality.

One hundred respondents (twelve males, eighty-four females, one diverse, three did not answer), non-native speakers, who are/were students of the faculty of foreign philology of one of the universities in Ukraine, aged 18–34, took part in the experiment. All participants study/studied German as their first or second foreign language. The level of German can be defined as B1–C1. The experiment was carried out using Google Forms and in writing, as 37 respondents wished to join in the test in writing, being unwilling to use technical means.

The research was aimed to analyse the level of association capability and creativity of respondents – non-native speakers to the stimuli which, in our opinion, were unexpected for them and to study the specificity of understanding and perception of humour as a strategy

of realizing the identity of humour culture of the target language, in particular, German. Comparing profiles of reactions to the stimuli *Österreichischer Humor* and *Schweizer Humor*, we aimed to receive answers to the following questions of our research:

(1) To what extent do the participants – non-native speakers react to the stimuli under analysis, and what features of their identity and self-presentation in the target lingua-culture do they reveal?

(2) To what extent do typical reactions form the participants' ideas about the means of expressing Austrian and Swiss humour within German-speaking space?

(3) To what extent do typical, non-typical and individual reactions actualize the national and cultural identity of humour culture in Austrian and Swiss spaces?

(4) To what extent does colour form preconditions for actualizing or enhancing symbolic meaning imprinted in the consciousness of linguistic personality in German-speaking space?

(5) To what extent do constituents of idiomatic structures and idiomatic structures themselves influence the emergence of reactions, which indicates explicit markers of humour culture self-expression in German-speaking space on conscious and subconscious levels?

(6) To what extent do respondents, non-native speakers, express cognitive constituents of the meaning of Austrian and Swiss humour as independent or self-established elements of humour culture in German-speaking space?

The experiment consisted of *five stages*. At *stage one*, we collected information about noun, adjective and verb reactions to the stimuli *Österreichischer Humor* and *Schweizer Humor* to identify the lexical volume and form synonymic chains, which shape a paradigm of semantic gestalts in humour culture in Austrian and Swiss lingua-cultures. Categorical relations between stimuli and reactions reflect the macrostructure of lexical fields and interrelations and interconnections between these fields. At *stage two*, we obtained information about idiomatic expressions containing conceptual features of the target lingua-cultural space, as well as outlining idiographic categories of its representation in the consciousness of non-native speakers. Notably, we managed to identify reactions to nominating realia which explicitly marked Austrian and Swiss humour space and understanding the role of women, blondes in particular, in forming comic effect in comic texts of

small form. Special attention was devoted to identifying the cognitive level of association fields and reflecting the level of respondents' proficiency in the target lingua-culture. At *stage three*, we found the information on respondents' attitudes to the stimuli *Österreichischer Humor* and *Schweizer Humor* and tendencies of perception and attitudes to Austrian and Swiss humour. We find it interesting to identify the emotional component in reactions to the stimuli that latently anticipate and predict a conscious connection to German humour. This indicates an understanding of the coexistence of three humour cultures within the unified German-speaking space. At *stage four*, the reaction to colour was recorded, which was evoked by the reactions to the stimuli *Österreichischer Humor* and *Schweizer Humor* and served as confirmation of these colours' symbolic meaning relevance in the German lingua-culture. At the same time, we happen to record "colour reactions", which we explain by people's desire to retreat from universal colour symbolism and identify lingua-culture through "unexpected or surprising" colour nominations as a way to show oneself or to assert oneself and prove one's own level of intellectual experience. At *stage five*, we defined the relevance and expediency of the experiment and found out the attitude of respondents to it. Typical, non-typical and individual reactions identified were provided by the respondents in words, phrases, short comments, or sentences. In the respondents' reactions, prospects on future research vectors into humour culture of the German-speaking space were implicitly outlined.

Results

Defining the identity of a specific society within one language-cultural space by non-native speakers is considered more relevant due to the following factors: non-native speakers do not always have a full range of information about social and national-cultural values and psychological markers of linguistic personality. Therefore, they attempt to identify them primarily due to ethical considerations carefully; non-native speakers feel a particular academic responsibility in identifying elements of identity in language, culture, and psychology of the target lingua-culture. Therefore, they strive to conduct a deep analysis of their perception of the world, accumulation of experience, and motivation for

its preservation; non-native speakers consciously study the linguistic and cognitive apparatus of individuals within a specific lingua-culture and master their communicative strategies aiming to apply this knowledge and skills in cross-cultural communication rationally.

Associative connections in a person's consciousness depend on their thinking and the stimuli that provoke typical, non-typical, and individual reactions. Reactions to the stimulus given allow us to trace the dynamics of associative connections in respondents' consciousness and define the foundation and the ways for society identification with the help of language signs, symbols or cliches. Establishing semantic relationships among the mentioned elements of the language paradigm defines not only the type of person's thinking but also a semantic dominant of profiled (typical) reactions.

Stage one. Respondents clearly outlined profiles of noun reactions nominating humour product for the stimuli *Österreichischer Humor* and *Schweizer Humor* (*Anekdoten, Scherze, Witze, Papi-Mami-/ Kinder-/ Bauernregel-/ Ant-/ Blondinnen-/ Sicker-/ Finanzwitze, Mems, Komödien, Stand-up-/ Stegreif-/ Improvisationskomödien/ Comedy-Sendungen, Karikatur, Calembourg* 32,6%/11,4%), its function (*Lachen/ Lächeln/ Gelächter, Lebensfreude, Heiterkeit, Fröhlichkeit, Spaß* 16,2%/18,2%), means of its verbalization (*Ironie/ Selbstironie, Parodie, Sarkasmus, Satire* 34,9%/52,2%) and performers (*Humoristen, Komiker, Komödianten, Spaßmacher, Satiriker* 4,7%/6,8%). In individual respondents' reactions we noticed singling out of cultural elements of humour directly identifying *Österreichischer Humor* (*Kabarett, Kabarettkultur*) 18, *Wiener Schmäh* (*wienerische Art des Humors in der Kommunikation*) 6, *Charme* 3, *Unterhaltung* 3, *Zufriedenheit* 3, *Identität* 2, *Kunst* 2, *Spannung* 2, *Spott* 2, *Atmosphäre* 1, *Denkweise* 1, *Hohn* 1, *Intelligenz* 1, *Kalauer* 1, *Obszönität* 1, *Parodie* 1, *Spektakel* 1, *Spielart* 1, *Stimmung* 1, *Verspottung* 1) та *Schweizer Humor* (*Switzerland-Witzeland* 6, *Humor* 3, *die Schweiz* 3, *Schweizer* 3, *Schweizer Volk* 2, *Diskretion* 1, *Grimasse* 1, *Kultur* 1, *Kreativität* 1, *Kuhschweizer* 1, *Lachanfall* 1, *Lachflasch* 1, *Nachahmung* 1, *Schabernack* 1, *Schweizer Neutralität* 1, *Sinn* 1, *Streich* 1, *Vergnügen* 1, *Ulk* 1). 11,6% of the respondents did not provide any reactions to the stimulus *Österreichischer Humor*, 11,4% of the respondents – to the stimulus *Schweizer Humor*.

Adjective reactions allowed establishing association chains of the stimuli *Österreichischer Humor* and *Schweizer Humor* (*ironisch*

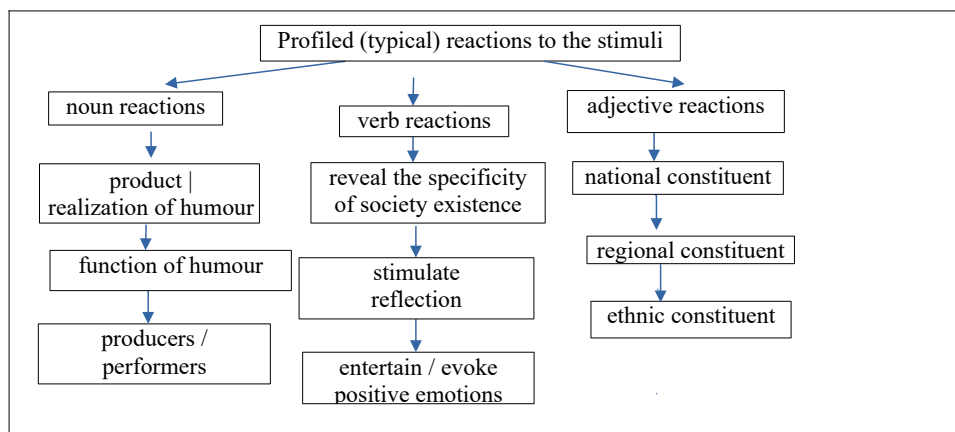
25%/30,2%, *lustig* 18,2%/18,6%, *komisch* 13,6%/16,3%, *sarkastisch* 13,6%/16,3%, *witzig* 18,2%/9,3%). In individual reactions we noticed adjective reactions to the stimulus *Österreichischer Humor* (*schwarz* 9, *selbstironisch* 6, *amüsant* 4, *bitter* 4, *hochwertig* 4, *makaber* 3, *philosophisch* 3, *positiv* 3, *sozialkritisch* 3, *subtil* 3, *derb* 2, *eindeutig* 2, *unterhaltsam* 2, *österreichisch* 2, *bissig* 1, *geschickt* 1, *grausam* 1, *intelligent* 1, *lakonisch* 1, *lokal* 1, *scharfsinnig* 1, *scherzhaft* 1, *verwirrt* 1, *ulkig* 1) and *Schweizer Humor* (*geistreich* 5, *absurd* 2, *böse* 2, *ethnisch* 2, *feinsinnig* 2, *grimmig* 2, *grotesk* 2, *regional/kantonal* 2, *schweizerisch* 2, *tolerant* 2, *aberwitzig* 1, *eigentümlich* 1, *ernst* 1, *hämmisch* 1, *humorneutral* 1, *kämpferisch* 1, *komödiantisch* 1, *kulturspezifisch* 1, *landesspezifisch* 1, *landestypisch* 1, *trottelig* 1, *tüddelig* 1, *urkomisch* 1, *zweideutig* 1), which point at the cognitive marker hidden in respondents' consciousness, which may signal about preconditions of passive formation of separate association fields space. Of interest, in our view, are the recorded adjective reactions to both stimuli (*humorvoll* 7/5, *humorlos* 2/6, *politisch* 2/5, *satirisch* 4/3, *zynisch* 3/3, *unterhaltsam* 2/2, *staubtrockner* 1/1, *bissigscharf* 1/1, *vollkstämmlich* 1/1), which mark the identity and integrity of German humour culture. 11,4% of respondents did not provide adjective reactions on the stimulus *Österreichischer Humor*; 9,3% of the respondents – on the stimulus *Schweizer Humor*.

In verb reactions we found an emotional constituent for the stimulus *Österreichischer Humor* (*tot lachen*, *krümelig lachen*,) and for the stimulus *Schweizer Humor* (*kaputt lachen*, *krank lachen*, *schief lachen*, *herzerfrischend lachen*), which are markers of their functional peculiarity as a means of provoking “saturated” positive emotions. Typical verb reactions formed synonymic chains for the stimuli *Österreichischer Humor* and *Schweizer Humor* (*lachen/ lächeln/ auslachen/ verlachen/ belächeln* 29,5%/20,5%, *sich amüsieren/ belustigen/ erheitern* 25%/18,2%, *spotten/ verspotten* 20,5%/15,9%, *scherzen* 13,6%/15,9%, *albern* 0/13,6%). Individual reactions for *Österreichischer Humor* (*feixen* 3, *ironisieren* 3, *kommentieren* 2, *ätzen* 1, *sich belustigen*, 1, *glucksen* 1, *jubeln* 1, *keckern* 1, *kritisieren* 1, *sich mokieren* 1, *neckern* 1, *spaßen* 1, *verkneifen* 1) and *Schweizer Humor* (*erfinden* 2, *motivieren* 2, *verhöhnen* 2, *würzen* 2, *abspielen* 1, *ironisieren* 1, *loben* 1, *spicken* 1, *vergleichen* 1), which point at volumes of probable synonymic fields. The recorded reactions to both stimuli (*kichern* 6/1, *grinsen* 4/1, *witzeln* 2/2,

schrägen 1/1) emphasize the specificity of people understanding of both spaces and simultaneous separating them through their semantic scope. We found reactions provided by the respondents in forms of verb combinations for the stimulus *Österreichischer Humor* (*Charme und Unfreundlichkeit vereinen, Schmeichelei mit Spott vermischen, sich über einen Tod lustig machen, einen Lacher ausstoßen, Jux machen*) and for the stimulus *Schweizer Humor* (*Aggression vermeiden, zum Lachen in den Keller gehen, lachen/grinsen wie ein Honigpferd, die Lachnerven kitzeln, von Herzen lachen, übers ganze Gesicht strahlen*), to be rather specific. They specify or categorize the functional non-identity of the stimuli identifying their national cultural specificity at the same time. 11,4% of the respondents did not provide verb reactions to the stimulus *Österreichischer Humor* and 15,9% of respondents – to the stimulus *Schweizer Humor*.

We consider the reactions recorded at *Stage One* to be the result of verbal communication functioning and a means of understanding humour as a communicative construct, which is tightly related to the ability and need of the respondents to interpret, compare and specify language units in relation to other signs of the language system. Establishing relations of equivalence and synonymity creates new shades of sense for recoding the cognitive level of language and acts as a means of learning the world (see Table 1).

Table 1
Formation of the Communicative Dimension of Humour



Stage Two. Associative reactions allow us to touch not only the spiritual-cultural space of the target lingua-culture, but also to outline aspects of nationally marked space which identifies the belonging of the stimuli *Österreichischer Humor* and *Schweizer Humor* to the German-speaking space and defines its value orientations. Stimuli *Österreichischer Humor* and *Schweizer Humor* evoked the reactions to depict family life (*Alltag/Familienleben* 34,1%/31,8%, *Kinder* 11,4%/6,9%), political life and the role of politics in the life of society (*Politik* 20,5%/25%), nationality belonging (*eigene Nationalität* 11,4%/13,6%). One should not underestimate the significance of the reaction to females and a special attitude towards them, in particular, to the role of blondes in forming comic effect in the texts of small form, which are evoked by the stimuli *Österreichischer Humor* and *Schweizer Humor* (*Blondinnen* 2,1%/6,8%). Individual reactions to the stimulus *Österreichischer Humor* were recorded as well (*dass ich nicht gestorben bin, sondern geschlafen habe*) 9, *Deutsche (Antigermanismus)* 7, *Kabarettkultur* 5 (*als Spiegel der österreichischen Seele/ Schauspielkunst mit Gesang und Publikumsinteraktion*), *Essen* 2, *Missgeschicke von Erwachsenen* 2, *berühmte Persönlichkeiten/ Schriftsteller* 2, *Sozialkritik* 2, *Bürgertum* 1, *Mentalität* 1, *Österreichische Grenze* 1, *Urlaub am Neusiedler See* 1) and for stimulus *Schweizer Humor* (*Finanzen/Geld* 12, *Schweizer Gesellschaft* 9, *Schweizer Neutralität* 8, *Marotten über die Launen von Ehefrauen und Ehemännern* 8, *Schweizer Banken* 7, *Spott über die Launen* 5, *Schweizer (regional/kantonal)* 3, *Sprache/ Aussprache* 3, *Geschichte* 1, *Schweizer Landwirtschaft* 1, *Schweizer Natur* 1, *Schweizer Steuer* 1). It can be explained by a sufficient level of intellectual development or by a high level of language proficiency and awareness of the cultural life of Austrians and the Swiss, or the gained experience of cross-cultural interaction of the respondents with the Austrian or Swiss context. 20,5% of the respondents did not provide reactions to the stimulus *Österreichischer Humor* and 15,9% of respondents – to the stimulus *Schweizer Humor*.

Reactions to the stimulus *Österreichischer Humor* were provided by the respondents through explication of dominating realia of the Austrian space (*Wiener Rathaus, das Wiener Riesenrad*) and in comic texts, which reflect the specificity of coding the information and clearly identify the Austrian space through the following meanings:

symbolic meaning (*Warum ist die österreichische Flagge rot-weiß-rot? – Damit sie nicht falsch herum aufgehängt werden kann*);

stereotypical meaning (*Was ist das Gegenteil von “Österreich”? – Geistreich*);

linguistic meaning (*Wie lernen die Kinder in Österreich sprechen? – Die Eltern werfen sie in den Wörthersee*);

psychological meaning (*In Österreich gibt es viele dumme Menschen. Zum Glück fahren die alle nach dem Urlaub wieder nach Deutschland*);

lingua-cultural meaning (*Die Straßen Wiens sind mit Kultur gepflastert. Die Straßen anderer Städte mit Asphalt. (Kraus K.)*);

cognitive meaning (*Wir könnten Deutsche sein, wenn wir wollen, aber wir wollen nicht. Die Deutschen wären froh, wenn sie Österreicher sein könnten, aber sie können nicht*);

communicative meaning (*Wie nennt man einen intelligenten Menschen in Österreich? – Tourist*).

Individual reactions to the stimulus *Schweizer Humor* point at realia imprinted in background knowledge about the Swiss lingua-culture (*Schweizer, Appenzeller, Kanton*) and in comic texts of small form and categorise the following spheres:

political sphere (*Das Einzige, was den Schweizer nicht gefällt, ist ihre Neutralität 1*);

medical sphere (*Ich brauche keine Therapie, ich brauche ein Konto in der Schweiz 2*);

financial sphere (*Wenn Sie einen Schweizer Bankier aus dem Fenster springen sehen, springen Sie hinterher. Es gibt bestimmt etwas zu verdienen (Voltaire) 7*);

ethical sphere (*Ein Deutscher will in einer Bank in Zürich Geld anlegen. “Wie viel wollen Sie denn einzahlen?” fragt der Kassier. Flüstert der Deutsche: “Drei Millionen”. “Sie können ruhig lauter sprechen”, sagt der Bankangestellte. “In der Schweiz ist Armut keine Schande” 7*);

cultural sphere (*Ein amerikanischer, ein deutscher, ein französischer und ein Schweizer Junge diskutieren, woher Babys kommen. Der Amerikaner erklärt: “In Amerika produzieren Roboter Babys in großen Fabriken”. Der Deutsche sagt: “In Deutschland bringt der Storch die Babys”. Der Franzose fügt hinzu: “In Frankreich machen ein Mann und*

eine Frau Liebe miteinander, um ein Baby zu zeugen". Zuletzt meint der Schweizer: "Bei uns ist das von Kanton zu Kanton verschieden" 1).

Idiomatic expressions most vividly express a bright image of any lingua-culture. By their planes of content and planes of expression, they categorise recorded cultural, psychological, and linguistic experience, aiming to identify the linguistic personality of a particular lingua-culture. The respondents were offered idiomatic expressions that directly outline the specificity of Austrian and Swiss humour in the German space.

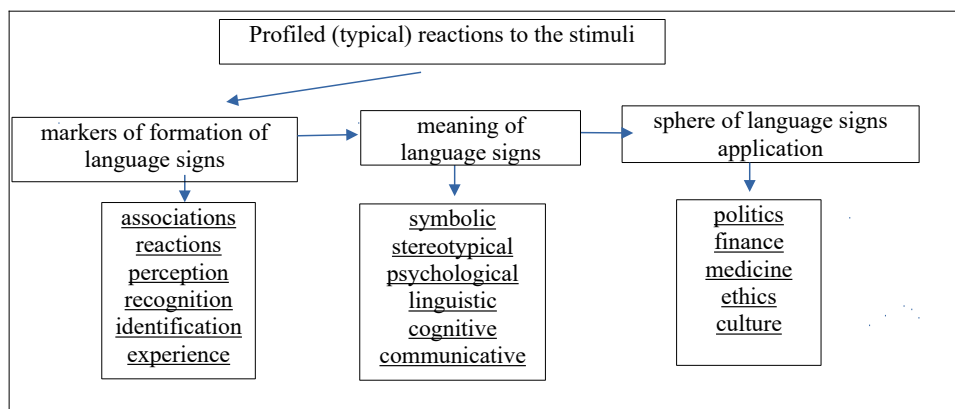
21,5% of the respondents point out the conceptual dimension of Austrian humour and recognize it as the best humour in the world (*Österreich: Heimat des besten Humors der Welt*). Almost identical reaction was noticed in the respondents, 21,4% and 23,8%, in relation to the expressions where, to our mind, psycholinguistic constituent is explicated more than cultural one (*Der österreichische, gute Humor ist für die dumme Masse einfach zu gut, zu qualitativ hochwertig, als dass er von ihr verstanden werden könnte = Humor in Österreich ist kein Spaß*). Notably, a relatively high index of reactions to the expression *Humor in Österreich ist kein Spaß* can indicate its polyfunctional semantic scope, which, on the one hand, may point at cognitive dissonance in perceiving the Austrian humour as comic product, on the other hand – reducing it to functional purpose – entertain, evoke laughter or positive emotions. 11,9% of the respondents defined Austria as a country with specific humour, which is a sign of self-expression or self-assertion of the Austrian humour culture in the German space (*Österreich ist als Land mit einem besonderen Humor bekannt*). We define 7,2% of reactions as non-typical, which does not deny the importance of humour for the society, identifies humour of Austrians with the target space, but at the same time hints at its tendency to black humour (*Der Humor ist sicher ein wichtiges Element. – In Österreich neigt man sehr zum schwarzen Humor*). 14,2% of the respondents did not provide any reactions to any of the expressions, which may indicate an insufficient semantic scope in the expressions which could identify the Austrian humour.

The analysis of the reactions to the stimulus *Schweizer Humor* revealed the presence of punchlines in the humour culture, which conceptualizes the notion denoting nationality (*Schweizer*) and highlights the role of punchlines as intellectual markers. At the same time, we do not exclude the impact of punchlines on the formation of national awareness of the Swiss humour (*der Schweizer Humor*), which is proved

by the recorded reactions to the expressions *Die Pointe des Schweizer Humors ist seine Diskretion* 29,3% and *Die Pointe der Schweizer ist in ihr Humor* 19,5%. A special attitude to the Swiss humour and its function in state-building can be traced in the reactions to the expression *Dabei ist der Schweizer Humor eine staatserhaltende Größe* 12,2%, probably due to stereotypical image of Switzerland as a country with established norms of functioning. At the same time, a considerable number of reactions to the expression *In der Schweizer ist Humor immer ein Fremdkörper* 19,5% is worth considering. In the semantic core of it, we observe, on the one hand, some doubt regarding the existence of the Swiss humour; on the other hand – the associative reaction to it is something not common for this lingua-culture, something strange or extraneous. 19,5% of the respondents provided no reactions to any of the expressions.

At *Stage Two*, reactions to the stimuli showed the respondents' specificity of reflection, level of academic proficiency and intuition. Reactions revealed the respondents' attitude to the stimulus and its description within the expression, acceptance or non-acceptance, and positive or negative evaluation. A specific dialogue of the respondents with the expressions was traced through their internal interpretation or external abstractions due to mental and cognitive processes interaction involving language signs (see Table 2).

Table 2
Formation of the Psycholinguistic Dimension of Humour

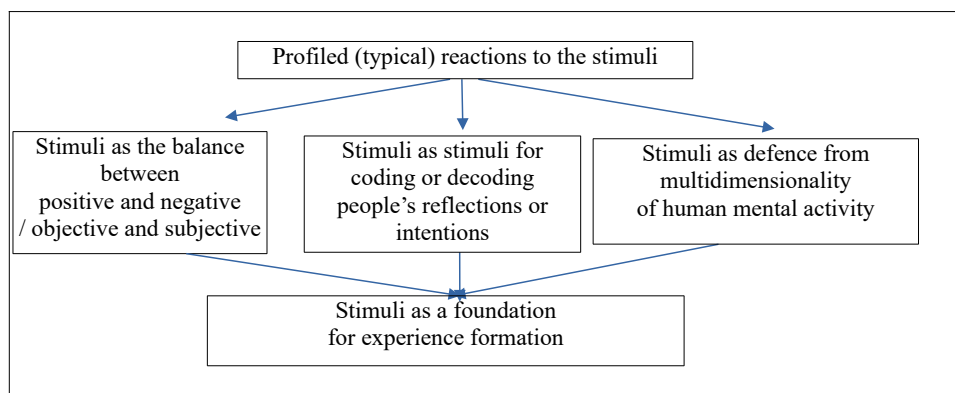


Stage Three. We have analysed associative fields regarding the attitude and perception of stimuli and identified profiled (typical) reactions of the respondents in which Austrian and Swiss humour are considered a distinctive regulatory balance between humour itself and something offensive (*eine Balance/ Gleichgewicht zwischen Humor und Beleidigung 30,2%/11,6%*), at the same time, difficult for understanding (*schwierig 11,6%/25,6%*), ambiguous (*zweideutig 18,6%/20,9%*), a sign of intellect (*ein Zeichen von Intelligenz 25,6%/18,6%*). We recorded individual reactions to the stimulus *Österreichischer Humor* in which Austrian humour is identified as cognitive (*kognitiv*), a symbol of national wisdom (*die Weisheit mit dem Löffel gegessen haben*), a representative of a target humour culture (*Slapstick kommt gut an*), a constituent of culture (*ein Bestandteil der Kultur*), an identifier of the European culture classical style (*als Anhänger des klassischen europäischen Stils*), a marker of black humour and irony (*Kenner des schwarzen Humors und der Ironie*), risky, at the same time, as it reveals social issues in the society (*riskant, denn er soziale Themen betont, aber großartig*) and a stimulus for reflection (*ich habe daran früher nicht gedacht, ... hatte keine Ahnung davon, ... es regt zum Nachdenken an, die Kenntnisse über die Welt verbessern*). The stimulus *Schweizer Humor* also evoked a set of reactions in which Swiss humour is considered explicit, transparent and friendly (*der Humor ist einfach und transparent, wohlwollend*), not offensive towards people (*denn er beleidigt niemanden*), drawing attention to everyday and social issues (*denn er verspottet den Alltag*), as an essential part of the life of society (*der wichtigste Bestandteil des Lebens*), appealing to something significant for society (*eindeutiges Kompliment für etwas Hervorragendes*). In particular, we recorded the reactions to the stimulus *Schweizer Humor* identifying features of contradiction in it (*viele Widersprüche haben, keine Emotionen hervorrufen, nicht lustig*), having a special feeling (*Pointe um Pointe, ein feines Gespür für den Humor haben*), defensive function (*Humor ist für die Schweizer eine Waffe*), markers of stereotypes to identify the Swiss space (*“made in Witzerland”, schweizerische Stereotype*), regional or ethnic life (*..., das örtliche Leben in weichen Tönen von Ironie und Selbstironie malt*), its famous/branded products (*Schweizer Humor ist Schweizer, wenn er über Käse und Schokolade Witze macht*). At the same time, we recorded the reactions of the respondents who considered Austrian and Swiss humour not funny (*humorlos 7%/11,6%*), probably

by comparing it to German humour. 7%/11,6% of the respondents provided no reactions to any stimuli.

At *Stage Three*, we recorded the reactions of the respondents who focused on the mechanisms of knowledge presentation about humour and its place in human consciousness, the interrelation between respondents' objective knowledge about humour and their subjective attitude to it through the stimulus, which, on the background of some processes in respondents' consciousness, synthesises processes of cognitive, mental and language activity of a person to determine multifunctionality and integrity of the nature of humour and the means of its cognition/understanding (see Table 3).

Table 3
Formation of Cognitive Dimension of Humour



Stage Four. A person acts either internally or through their body, visibly from the outside. Every human action is a complex unity of internal actions felt by a person who is acting, and external actions, which can be experienced through sensory perception by other people (Ungeheuer, 1983). Humour, as a human ability to see, feel and perceive something, takes a central place in people's collective life. It is also the most multifaceted human phenomenon, mentally and socially significant, which creates conditions not only for communication, but also focuses on the forms of using various images in colour reflection. Therefore, an individual can be regarded as a work of art in terms of shape and colour (Seufert, 1995), as "everything living strives for colour" (Goethe, 1810). The attribution of a specific meaning to the colour results from

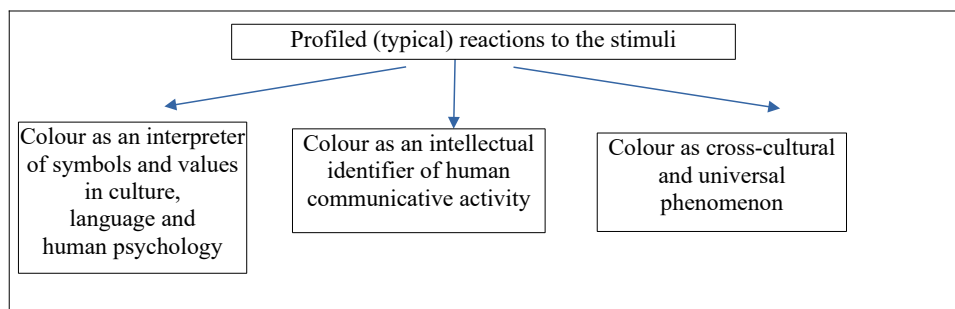
sensory perception and rational awareness and an effective means to preserve the unity of people and their environment.

The respondents were asked to associate Austrian and Swiss humour with colour. Reactions of the respondents outlined the colour spectrum of the humour culture for both stimuli: white (*weiß*) 25%/22,7%, yellow (*gelb*) 22,7%/13,6%, black (*schwarz*) 18,2%/18,2%, grey (*grau*) 13,6%/15,9%, green (*grün*) 6,8%/11,4%. The non-typicality of reactions, which we perceive as “intellectually accidental” due to the need for self-expression or the association of “illogical colouring” of humour, is also evidenced through colours and partial comments on their associative perception for both stimuli: *rot* 4/1 (*lebhaft, energisch*), *braun* 0/1 (*die Hälfte der Witze über Politik und Bürokratie*), *blau* 1/3, *lila* 0/1 (*die lila Kuh in der Werbung*), *orange* 2/0 (*sarkastisch, witzig*), *violett* 1/0 (*nicht beleidigend*), *rosa* 0/1, *golden* 0/1, *beige* 0/1. We recorded two reactions of the respondents who associated these spaces through a set of colours, under the influence of a person’s emotional state (*Mentalität der Österreicher ist wie ein Punschkrapfen: Außen rot, innen braun und immer ein bißchen betrunken; rot, blau, grün, gelb, denn Humor und Lachen sind leuchtende Emotionen*). One respondent mentioned the inability to mark or associate humour with colour, as colours are intended to colour only objects or things. 31,9% of the respondents did not indicate any colour about the stimuli under analysis. To our mind, recorded “colour associations” are a manifestation of individual reactions to colour, which is understood as a universal and cross-cultural phenomenon perceived and comprehended by every person. The respondents provided their own associative interpretation of some colours to the stimulus *Schweizer Humor*, which mainly reflected national-cultural constituents of the Swiss lingua-culture, in particular, nature, psychology of people’s emotional condition and the level of intellectual ability: *gelb* (*eine sehr wichtige Nation auf der Erde, die anderen nicht beleidigt*), *blau* (*die Farbe der Güte und Freiheit, nicht völlig unverständlich*), *grün* (*mit Bergen assoziiert*), *grau* (*eine gewisse Emotionslosigkeit, die Überlegenheit der Vernunft über die Emotion, Ernsthaftigkeit der Menschen*). On the other hand, we think that formation of reactions may be affected by the symbolic meaning of colour accepted in the German-speaking space, where *white* is considered a symbol of purity, innocence, even death, *yellow* – a symbol of spirituality, greatness, jealousy, lie, *black* – besides being

a sign of mourning, may affect other human feelings, *grey* is a colour of softening difficulties, contrasts, disharmony, *green* brings absolute pleasure and has a calming effect (Goethe, 1810; Seufert, 1995; Schopenhauer, 1924). The analysis of “colour reaction” and symbolic meanings of colour in the target language culture reveals that colour reactions are formed based on positive connotative meanings of colours and emotions or reactions evoked by specific colours.

At *Stage Four*, we identified the specificity of generating knowledge about colour and colour spectrum in close interaction with linguistic, socio-linguistic and psycholinguistic parameters, embedded in the semantic form of colour designation. We consider the recorded reactions to be not only nationally and socially motivated but also as specific types of sign codification of knowledge about colour and its intellectual-communicative nature. The reactions may act as a precondition for the formation of impulses to form a concept about colour and systematize knowledge about it in human consciousness and record its national, cultural or individual symbolic colouring, which may explicitly or implicitly reveal in the structure of individually or collectively created conceptual spheres for the target lingua-culture (see Table 4).

Table 4
Formation of Conceptual Dimension of Humour



Stage Five. The recording of semantic chains structures the array of information regarding the deep and surface structures of the meaning of language signs. It stimulates the formation of networks of associations and reactions that activate the processes of consciousness control, the activation of critical thinking skills, and influence on the psychological

internal state of a person. Notably, all respondents emphasized the importance and relevance of conducting the experiment, highlighting the usefulness of investigating the identified stimuli, which they had never considered or associated with the German-speaking space before. They noted that precisely these stimuli prompted them to delve deeper into the study of Austrian and Swiss humour and the specificity of their expression in the target lingua-culture. We consider the respondents' reactions (*condition humaine*), which pointed at the conceptual constituent of the conditions of perceiving the world and the purpose of human beings in it to be really important. Respondents highlighted the necessity to be aware of history and traditions of the target countries (*man muss viel über die Kultur, Land und Leute wissen, alle Witze enthalten eine große Kulturgeschichte Österreichs und ohne Kenntnisse dieser Geschichte ist es schwierig, Witze zu verstehen*). We also recorded the reaction which is a manifestation of surprise regarding the difference of the Austrian humour from the German one and existence of the Swiss humour (*eine Überraschung, dass österreichischer und deutscher Humor so unterschiedlich sind, alle Völker haben humorlose Seiten, habe nie über den Schweizer Humor gehört, weil nichts über Schweizer Humor wusste*), as the respondents were aware of the main difference of Austrian humour from German one in dialects or accents (*der österreichische Humor hängt mit dem Dialekt zusammen*). The usefulness of the experiment was also confirmed by the reaction of the respondents that testified relevance and significance of the stimuli analysis (*interessant, aktuell, wichtig, spannend, fesselnd*). We recorded the reactions to the experiment that indicated either a lack of particular interest in the experiment or indifference towards it (*langweilig, nicht wichtig, mir ist es egal*), perhaps due to insufficient knowledge about humour culture and its function in society or personal attitudes towards experiments and humour in general.

At *Stage Five*, the identified reactions marked ways of representing the range of respondents' thoughts and their internal state towards the scientific and communicative components of understanding the world. The reactions reflected the respondents' cognitive activity and shifts of the image of the humour culture of the German-speaking society in their stereotypical consciousness.

Discussion

Psycholinguistics is considered a paradigm of modern trends in researching the ways of humans' perception and understanding the world, the interaction of language and speech, human consciousness, and the creation of national stereotypes for the purpose of identifying lingua-cultural spaces. Psycholinguistic research aims to identify the mechanisms of thinking processes, rational knowledge processing, and the course of communication, which directly influence the formation of a person's thoughts and reflections of the world. Psycholinguistic research explores cognitive processes such as working memory and long-term memory, and memory systems involved in data acquisition (Juffs & Harrington, 2011). Psycholinguistics is a science that considers aspects of assessing the surrounding world and representing it in the human brain as a register of target lingua-cultures formed within the process of cross-cultural communication. It creates the foundation for a multicultural or even transcultural reality in the conditions of globalization.

It is worth noting that humor is not a term with numerous meanings but rather a "cognitive style", a term for both the stimulus and the reaction to it (Moran, 2013). Humour plays a leading role in the formation of personality (Limon, 1977; Duncan, 1985; Norrick, 1993; Pratt, 1998) and is one of the various linguistic and pragmatic strategies available for those who are "out of power" to create positive features of identification and for the influence of the dominating group on forming the norms in the society (Holmes et al., 2003). Humour is simultaneously playful and serious, a vitally important aspect of the human experience. It often reflects more profound cultural perceptions and offers a powerful tool for understanding culturally formed ways of thinking and feeling (Driessen, 1997). Humour may be conceptualized in different ways, namely, as a personality feature, attitude, coping mechanism based on emotions, aesthetic advantages, abilities and competence, virtue and, recently, strength of character, which is often encountered in human communication (Martin & Ford, 2018; Ruch et al., 2018).

Humour may be defined as a set of means that enhance memorizing, compensate for detalisation of certain features of a concept and enlarge the scope of language signs. Stimuli for marking humour provoke

the formation of new associations between objects and phenomena, which can be caused by a subjective understanding of the essence of humour culture structure and the balancing of its constituents. Reactions to the stimuli create synonymic chains of language units to optimize the process of their mental implementation into human consciousness. Language units may be represented by stylistically marked units, or abstract lexical units, which make the process of memorizing easier, expand the volume of memory and active/ passive lexicon. An emotional constituent of stimuli influence on the respondents cannot be excluded, as it impacts the logical representation of reactions, in which, at the lexical level, intentions, logical assumptions, development of thought and pragmatic nature of respondents' experience decoding are encrypted.

Human communication exists based on the rules formed, taking into account customs, habits, stereotypes, reactions, mental processes of perceiving the world and interpersonal relations in the target lingua-culture. Cross-cultural interaction should be studied as an interaction among the individuals of the groups, which, due to the spectrum of cultural, psychological and linguistic differences, can adequately assess humour in the target lingua-culture.

From the perspective of psycholinguistics, cross-cultural competence is understood as a way to rationally evaluate and adequately transmit the national-cultural psychology of the target lingua-culture with the aim of supporting cross-cultural dialogue. The psycholinguistic component of cross-cultural competence involves going beyond passive awareness of multiculturalism, accepting the coexistence of many lingua-cultures, and understanding the psychology of how they perceive the world. Stimuli provoke reactions capable of forming the concept by reflecting graphic images of the language unit and its semantics in language. In the reactions, we trace the ability of the respondents to master the essence of cross-cultural competence through the prism of knowledge about the target lingua-culture, the ability to categorise concepts, assess these concepts, form semantic network and accompany it with mental interpretations born in human consciousness.

Linguistic consciousness explained through association experiments, contributes to understanding mental images with linguistic equivalents, demonstrating the cultural-mental characteristics and moral standards of a specific community (Kuzembayeva et al., 2019). Word association test involves not only the spontaneous identification of symbolic means of

representing the surrounding world by respondents but also predicting the respondent's ability to filter the semantic parameters of stimuli and determining the intellectual level and degree of associative logic in the presentation of linguistic material. Notably, respondents' associations attested to the manifestation of communicative, perceptual, and interactive knowledge, and conscious logical coherence in the linguistic presentation of the target lingua-culture. Respondents' reactions revealed the ability to apply relevant knowledge and experience, uncovering their communicative competencies that enable orientation in lingua-cultural spaces.

Word association test is a mechanism of psycholinguistic verbalization of language systems, culture, psychology and elements of their realization. While conducting word association test, stimuli provoke the emergence of typical, non-typical and individual reactions, influencing the system of language and its lexical composition, ways of its preservation and realization and formation of the mental lexicon, which creates unique access to recognizing conceptual, communicative and cultural peculiarities of presenting lingua-cultural space.

Grouping and interpretation of association fields of consciousness depend on the frequency of responses and on the connections with the word stimulus. Associations are ranked by within one field. The reactions to the stimuli reveal a unique internal structural-semantic organization, a "semantic gestalt", characterized as a unit of knowledge not only about the world but also about human interaction with it. Word association test as one of the ways to structure the language system and determine its scope, contributes to the formation of additional semantic planes for synonymic chains, idiomatic structures, conceptual categories, and the spheres of their functioning.

Using the colour depends on understanding its purpose in the surrounding environment and on the symbolic meaning it acquires due to the accumulation of cultural, social and psychological experience. The prevalence of the same colour designation in lexical and phraseological units of different languages signifies that they are the major and most significant colours in a particular ethnic community. Colour semantics meaning as a constituent of culture has a complex and varied sacred system of senses and interpretations for every nation and turns to embodiment of certain cultural values. The colour nomination may be presented as a linguistic cultural phenomenon influencing

moods, behaviours, attitudes and tendencies of people in general (Mazhitayeva & Kaskatayeva, 2013). Word association tests to identify “colour reactions” facilitated the process of verbalizing colours through lexical units and revealed communicatively significant fragments of the target lingua-culture, identifying it within another space.

Processing humour is a complex task that involves handling information and its cognitive and emotional aspects, which probably influences conceptual blending, cognitive operations (Willinger et al., 2017), recognizing two facets of language — the relation to things and the relation to thought, indicating that language is not just a means of communication but also evidence of an active thinking process (Gould, 1978). These actions are involved in the formation of self-consciousness and reflection and lead to establishment, development and existence of an individual in the social-cultural space. These operations also include mechanisms of psychological regulations of interrelations, establishing social contacts, building trust and feeling sympathy. The stimuli for representing conceptual objects in humour are considered productive elements that effectively influence enhancing of the interactive process of acquiring social and cultural experience. Word reactions to the stimuli are the products formed under the influence of language, speech and mental factors with the aim to form psychological codes and language-speech chains to reflect a person’s intellectual level and their rational acquired experience in cross-cultural interaction.

Every small community formed within a bigger one develops the methods of re-forming the model of habits brought from the outside. As laughter is always humiliating for the person it is directed at, it may be understood as real social education (Bergson, 2011). An Austrian differs from a German by the same language. Behind this is a brilliant message: two culturally interconnected units, historically close, differ only in the same language, German (Huemer, 2023). In any language, there are enough stimuli that, through reactions, create preconditions for self-identification of lingua-cultural space and its language, speech and mental constituents for the adequate course of communication. Researchers focus on the changes in the psychophysiological tone of the personality in the organization of cognitive processes, regulation of emotional-evaluative resources (Misra & Trivedi, 2017) and in the construction of behavioural strategies (Bialystok, 2007), in particular, with the help of the means of identification of communicative and

informational processes, which results in individual interpretation of patterns and ways of interaction in the assimilation of social techniques and processes of mastering another language.

Conclusions

Word association test facilitated the identification of profiled (typical), non-typical or individual reactions to the *Österreichischer Humor* and *Schweizer Humor*, which allowed singling out two centres of humour culture in the German-speaking space and identifying the specificity of their perception by the respondents, non-native speakers. Interpretation of the respondents' reactions to the stimuli presupposes representation primarily of semantic features of language signs as units of language system containing sufficient description or information and differential characteristics of a language sign, which the respondents identify during association and retrieving from memory. The recorded profiled (typical) association reactions affirmed Austrian and Swiss humour belonging to the German-speaking space through noun, adjective, and verb reactions. This revealed the essence of the functional purpose of humour in German-speaking society as a means to provoke positive emotions or stimulate reflections as a way of intellectual development. The individual reactions of the respondents revealed national-cultural constituents of humour culture, which identified realia of Austrian (*Wiener Rathaus, das Wiener Riesenrad*) and Swiss (*Schweizer Konto, Appenzeller, Kanton*) spaces. Explicit markers played a significant role in eliciting reactions to the stimuli (*österreichisch / Österreicher, schweizerisch / Schweizer*), which directly pointed to self-realisation and self-identification of the space. The recorded reactions to the analysed stimuli will act as the precondition for creating dimensions to form conceptual categories or concepts *Österreichischer Humor* (*österreichische Seele, österreichische Flagge, die Straßen Wiens, der österreichische Humor*) and *Schweizer Humor* (*von Kanton zu Kanton, eine Bank in Zürich, Schweizer Neutralität*). The reactions helped identify possible meanings formed around stimuli (*symbolic, stereotypical, linguistic, psychological, communicative*) and the sphere of functioning (*politics, psychology, finance, ethics, culture*) of these meanings in the linguistic worldview. "Colour associations" and "colour

reactions” were formed based on positive connotations of colours and their symbolic meanings. Self-affirmation of Austrian and Swiss humour was also recorded in idiomatic reactions to the stimulus *Österreichischer Humor* (*zu gut, zu qualitativ hochwertig, kein Spaß*) and to the stimulus *Schweizer Humor* (*Diskretion, staatserhaltende Größe, Fremdkörper*). We consider the definition of Austrian and Swiss humour, which requires a particular feeling or understanding as a regulatory balance between humour itself and something offensive and the feature of human intellect to be noteworthy.

ADHERENCE TO ETHICAL STANDARDS

Ethics declarations. The study complies with the ethical standards of the Helsinki Declaration of 1964 and its later amendments. This investigation was conducted with full adherence to established ethical guidelines, ensuring both the integrity and transparency of the study. The study involved voluntary participation, with all participants being 18 years of age or older. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, ensuring that they understood the nature of the research and their rights to withdraw at any time without consequence.

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Data Availability. The datasets analysed during the current study are not publicly available but are available from the author on reasonable request.

Consent for Publication. The authors approve the publication of the current work. The work has not been, nor has it been submitted to other journals in consideration for publication. The author read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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АНОТАЦІЯ

Метою статті є дослідження мовної свідомості, специфіки міжкультурної комунікації, ролі гумору як соціального продукту ідентифікації мови, культури та психології людини, що формується під впливом психолінгвістичних елементів пізнання світу та набуття знань про нього. Особливу увагу приділено вивченню специфіки сприйняття австрійського та швейцарського гумору та їх ідентифікації в німецькомовному просторі крізь стимули *Österreichischer Humor* та *Schweizer Humor*.

Методи. Теоретичними методами були структурно-функціональний аналіз лексичних одиниць та методи систематизації та моделювання. З метою дослідження специфіки сприйняття та виокремлення стимулів *Österreichischer Humor* та *Schweizer Humor* у німецькомовному просторі у свідомості українських респондентів ми використали асоціативний експеримент.

Результати. Показано, що досліджувані стимули є репрезентантами концептуального усвідомлення про існування австрійського та швейцарського гумору в німецькомовному просторі та мають місце у світогляді української мовної особистості. Завдяки типовим та індивідуальним реакціям респондентів виявлено, що в їх свідомості сформований образ австрійського та швейцарського гумору та його ціннісні орієнтири в німецькомовному просторі.

Висновки. Ми довели, що поняття австрійський та швейцарський гумор сформувалося у свідомості респондентів-не носіїв мови за результатами практичної та освітньої діяльності, пізнавальних процесів і різного ступеня досвіду. Досліджувані стимули викликали типові, нетипові та індивідуальні реакції, що свідчить про різний принцип формування ментальної репрезентації, раціонального усвідомлення та емоційного сприйняття німецькомовного простору та специфіки маркування елементів ідентичності сміхової культури людиною.

Ключові слова: гумор, стимул, міжкультурна комунікація, лінгвокультурологічний аналіз, психолінгвістичний аналіз.