Associative Modelling of Lesya Ukrainka's Image

Svitlana Bohdan [a]

[a] *Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University, Ukraine*

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Abstract. In modern psycholinguistics, the association test is a traditional, widely used, and effective method for assessing cognition, revealing typological and differential features of different ethnic communities, elucidating their dominant auto- and hetero-stereotypic features, and tracing their dynamics. Despite its obvious importance and expediency, the use of this method in linguistic personology is a unique approach, especially when studying a particular personality. The article seeks to model the image of Lesya Ukrainka on the basis of a free word association test conducted on Facebook with more than 200 respondents, 100 males and 100 females, aged 13-70. The purpose of the study was to identify typical associates regarding words-stimuli (lexemes, phrases, utterances) related directly or indirectly to her personality (Ukrainka, Mysholosiie, Lesya, Larysa Kvitka, Larysa Kosach, Lesya Ukrainka, Daughter of Prometheus). The associative fields were formed on the basis of the systematisation of the received reactions to the first three stimulus lexemes, which are the most segregated from the personality of the writer. It enabled the distinction of stereotypical and individual reactions, which are classified into several thematic groups based on invariant seme. The names explicating the image of Lesya Ukrainka form the core of each associative field (though with different quantitative parameters). The most common associates are various anthroponymic lexemes: name (Lesya, Larysa), an autonym (Larysa Kosach), a pseudonym (Lesya Ukrainka, Ukrainka), widespread paraphrases (Prometheus' daughter),names of the professional activity (writer, poet, poetess), the most famous genres and works (poetry, poems, drama, "Forest song"), the usual loci of her stay (Volyn, Kolodiazhne)). The greatest difficulty for the recipients was the stimulus word-occasionalism Mysholosiie that caused their silential reactions. The study identified some typical associates in all associative fields, which affirm the regulative nature of Lesya Ukrainka's image in the linguistic consciousness of modern Ukrainian society.

Keywords: *word association test, word-stimulus, associate, modelling, Lesya Ukrainka, psycholinguistics.*

Богдан Світлана. Асоціативне моделювання образу Лесі Українки.

Анотація. У сучасних дослідженнях із психолінгвістики асоціативний експеримент належить до традиційних, найчастотніших і результативних методів пізнання й виокремлення типологічних та диференційних ознак різних етнічних спільнот, з'ясування домінантних авто- і гетеростереотипних ознак, вивчення їхньої динаміки.

Svitlana Bohdan, 0000-0002-4831-2770, bohdan.svitlana@vnu.edu.ua
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Використання цього методу в лінгвоперсонології, всупереч очевидній важливості й доцільності, належить до поодиноких спроб, зокрема, якщо йдеться про дослідження конкретної особистості. У статті вперше здійснено спробу моделювання образу Лесі Українки, сформованого на основі вільного асоціативного експерименту, проведеного в соціальній мережі «Фейсбук» (в ньому взяло участь понад 200 респондентів із віковими діапазоном 13–70 років). Метою дослідження передбачено вияв типових асоціатів, що стосуються опорних слів-стимулів (лексем, словосполучень, висловлень), пов'язаних прямо або опосередковано з її особистістю (*українка, Мишолосіє, Леся, Лариса Квітка, Лариса Косач, Леся Українка, Дочка Прометея*). На основі систематизації одержаних реакцій трьох перших стимульних лексем, найбільш дистанційованих із особистістю письменниці, сформовано асоціативні поля, що уможливили виокремлення стереотипних та індивідуальних реакцій, які скласифіковано в кілька тематичних груп на основі інваріантних сем. Встановлено, що ядро кожного асоціативного поля становлять найменування, які експлікують образ Лесі Українки (щоправда, з різними кількісними параметрами). Найчастотніші асоціати – це різні антропонімійні лексеми: ім'я (*Леся, Лариса*), автонім (*Лариса Косач*), псевдонім (*Леся Українка, Українка*), узвичаєні перифрази (*Дочка Прометея*), найменування професійної діяльності (*письменниця, поетеса, поетка*), найвідоміших жанрів і творів (*поезія, вірші, драма, «Лісова пісня»*), узвичаєних локусів її перебування (*Волинь, Полісся, Колодяжне*). Найбільші труднощі в реципієнтів (і відповідно – силенціальні реакції) спостережені щодо стимульного слова-оказіоналізму *Мишолосіє*. Зафіксовані типові асоціати в усіх асоціативних полях стверджують регулятивність образу Лесі Українки в мовомисленні сучасного українського соціуму.

Ключові слова: *асоціативний експеримент, слово-стимул, асоціат, моделювання, Леся Українка, психолінгвістика.*

Introduction

The word association test is one of the most frequently used and effective methods in contemporary psycholinguistic studies. Over the past few decades, this methodological tool has been used effectively in various humanities disciplines, particularly in psychology, cultural studies and sociology. One of the most common types of associative test is the free word association test (hereinafter referred to as WAT). Linguists have successfully employed it to investigate the specifics of how national-linguistic worldviews are constructed; to compare the denotative and connotative aspects of various lexemes in the semantic plane, particularly those with conceptual status; to determine the characteristics of how certain concepts are perceived by different age groups of speakers; to model social profiles of different speakers, ethnic stereotypes, and so on.

The theoretical foundations for conducting such research and analyzing the results are presented in the works of Ukrainian and international scholars (Butenko, 1979, 1989; Zahorodnia, 2018; Martinek, 2007; Nedashkivska, 2011; Stefanova, 2018; Terekhova, 2000a, 2000b; Aeschbach, Mata, & Wulff, 2025; Gósy & Kovács, 2002; Frantzen, 2025, 2026; Ludueña, Behzad, & Gros, 2014;

Mikołajczak-Matyja, 2015; Shono, Ames, & Stacy, 2016). The free WAT has enabled new approaches and interpretations in research into the most common thematic groups of vocabulary (Denysevych, 2010; Zahorodnia, 2018; Nedashkivska, 2007), as well as individual stimulus words (Halunova & Vasyanovich, 2016; Denysevych, 2011; Lyashuk, 2011; Pryshchepa, Plechko, & Svysyuk; Terekhova, 2017; Chmil, 2017; Sharavara, Kotsur, Syzonenko, & Tahiltseva, 2018). Various lexicographical works have been compiled on the basis of systematic research, including the Dictionary of Associative Norms of the Ukrainian Language (Butenko, 1979), the Dictionary of Associative Definitions of Nouns in the Ukrainian Language (Butenko, 1989), the Associative Dictionary of Ukrainian Advertising Lexicon (Kovalevska, Solohub, & Stavchenko, 2001), the Concise Associative Dictionary of Advertising Slogans (Kutuz & Kovalevska, 2011), and the Ukrainian Associative Dictionary: in 2 Vols. (Martinek, 2007). This method ensures a reliable understanding of various aspects of linguistic cognition, linguistic behaviour, and linguistic consciousness, enabling the modelling of typological and individual characteristics of each linguistic personality and of specific groups of speakers, particularly within the confines of a particular sociolect or dialect. Consequently, there has been an increase in such research in the field of linguo-personology, which has traditionally been limited to methods of analysing textual structures.

The selection of this research topic is primarily motivated by the observation that the image of Lesya Ukrainka in Ukrainian society remains shaped by stereotypical notions and well-known clichés. Public knowledge about her is often confined to perceptions of her as a "sick and frail" yet "courageous woman," limited familiarity with a few major works from the school curriculum (most commonly *The Forest Song* and *Contra spem spero!*), and her life in the village of Kolodyazhne or in Volyn, and so on. This has determined the aim of this study: to employ a free association test to model the image of Lesya Ukrainka as perceived by contemporary speakers, to identify core and peripheral responses, and to analyse their connection with the stimulus words. This article, based on experimental results, seeks to trace how and to what extent stimuli that hypothetically imply associative links to her personality actualise the image of Larysa Kosach-Kvitka in the minds of Ukrainian respondents. Additionally, the study aims to identify the characteristics of the lexical-thematic organisation of associative fields, quantify responses within each field, and establish a typology of the grammatical status of the associations obtained.

Method

The free WAT is rightly regarded as one of the most significant methods for modelling linguistic consciousness, enabling the delineation of the speaker's

mental lexicon, verbal memory and cultural stereotypes. An individual's linguistic thinking can be represented not only through their traditional linguistic activity, but also through an associative-verbal network that "correlates with the speaker's linguistic ability" (Sechina, 2018, p. 66). It is precisely for this reason that the free WAT is often used to decode a person's speech behaviour. As is known, this tool involves responding to a stimulus word with the first word, phrase or sentence that comes to the respondent's mind after reading it. This technique frees the respondent from any constraints on their choice, thereby ensuring the most accurate, immediate response.

A key and distinctive feature of this test was the implementation of measures to eliminate potential editing of responses and minimise errors in immediate reactions, which are common in oral interviews or printed questionnaires. The survey was conducted anonymously and utilised an electronic format in which only one stimulus word appeared on the screen at a time. After entering a response, the respondent could proceed to the next word, but could not return to make corrections, as this was technically restricted by design.

The objectivity of experimental data depends on various factors. One of the most important of these is generally considered to be the number of participants in a WAT (at least one hundred). It is for this very reason that it was decided to begin systematising the material after two hundred responses had been recorded (although the experiment itself continues online, which, in the long run, will help us to more fully substantiate theoretical generalisations, and perhaps even revise them). However, the available results are already sufficient to identify general trends, as people's responses, as is well known, tend to be repetitive, all the more so if they belong to a linguistically similar environment, even in the presence of differences in profession, educational status, and so on. It should be noted straight away that it is impossible to compile a complete list of respondents with all the desired (and necessary) distinguishing characteristics. The survey is largely spontaneous, with the exception of the initial stage, when we post the questionnaire on our own Facebook page. Consequently, only friends and acquaintances can, in theory, take part in the experiment. However, this process becomes almost unmanageable after the first stage (as evidenced by some participants' responses, which were sometimes inappropriate).

An important aspect of our survey was its anonymity, which allowed respondents to feel free and at ease and to offer spontaneous, candid responses. The overall statistics regarding the characteristics of the experiment's participants are as follows:

1) *the respondents' ages* range from 13 to 70 years (the most active age groups were 31–40 years – 70 respondents – and 21–30 years – 40 people; the

following age groups (listed in descending order of frequency) had the following numbers: 14–20 – 30 respondents; 41–50 – 22; 51–60 – 14; 61–70 – 7; one response was given as approximately 40+; we do not take the response of 98 years into account, as this is most likely an example of the respondent's wordplay rather than a factual statement);

2) *by professional status / occupation* – these are mainly *teachers / educators* – 29 / *lecturers* – 18 (*in philology, history, biology*), *students* – 11 (one response – *'martyr student'*), *researchers* – 16 / *research work* – 2 / *academic* – 2, *school pupils – 5, molecular biologist – 2, entrepreneur – 2, postgraduate student, master's student, lawyers, biologists, research biologist, biotechnologists, psychologists, photographer, artists, doctors, bank employee, IT specialists, engineer, design engineer, environmental engineer, programmers, journalists, nursery teacher, laboratory technician, nurse, copywriters, unemployed person, housewives – 5, pensioners* – 3; some respondents specified only their field (*biology – 12, education – 7, medicine – 2, translation – 2, biophysics, pedagogy, aviation, music, Japanese culture, humanities, linguistics, sports, acrobatics, geography, marketing company, computer technology, civil service*) or did not specify it precisely *(various types, various kinds of activities, working with children, community work, car repairs, maternity leave, creative work)*;

3) *by place of residence* – these are mainly residents of Ukraine: Volyn Oblast – 18 people (+ Lutsk – 58, + Kovel – 22), Kyiv Oblast – 3 (+ Kyiv – 52) (these two regions are predominant), Rivne Oblast – 8 (+ Rivne – 2), Kharkiv – 7, Sumy – 1 (+ Sumy – 2), Dnipropetrovsk – 1 (+ Dnipro – 1), Odesa – 1 (+ Odesa – 1), Chernihiv – 2, Dnipropetrovsk – 1 (+ Dnipro – 1), Donetsk – 1, Dnipropetrovsk – 1 (+Dnipro – 1), Khmelnytskyi – 1, Ivano-Frankivsk – 1, Zaporizhzhia – 1, Luhansk – 1, (1 – Poland, 1 – France, 1 – United Kingdom, 1 – Israel). When asked about *their native language*, the majority named Ukrainian – 167 people, Russian – 25, Ukrainian and Russian – 4 / Russian and Ukrainian – 3, Ukrainian and Polish – 1; *for the language used in private communication*: Ukrainian – 139 people, Russian – 23, Ukrainian / Russian – 12 / Russian / Ukrainian – 5, Ukrainian / Polish – 2, English / Ukrainian – 1, Ukrainian / English – 1, Ukrainian / Spanish – 1, Russian / Ukrainian / English – 1, Ukrainian / Russian / English – 1; 177 people named Ukrainian as *their official language of communication* (+1 – Ukrainian language (?)), Russian – 1, Ukrainian/Polish – 1, Ukrainian/Russian – 6, Russian/Ukrainian – 2, Ukrainian/English – 3, Ukrainian/Russian/Polish – 1, English – 5, Polish – 1, Rus' (?) – 1.

Of the 185 respondents who took part in the free WAT, 147 were female, and 38 were male.

The responses consistently retain the author's spelling and formatting conventions (capitalisation, italics, underlining, non-verbal markers), while

obvious technical errors have been corrected (such as: "Україна"/Ukrainaa, "Українк"/Ukraink).

In such experiments, it is also essential to select the optimal register of stimulus words that, above all possible options, will most clearly reflect the desired/anticipated matrix of potential reactions through which we will model the image of Lesya Ukrainka. At first glance, the stimulus word "Ukrainka" (a female Ukrainian) seemed to relate solely to the formation of typical reactions to the image of any Ukrainian woman; that is, it was hypothetically intended to represent the set of associations that constitute the core ethnic self-stereotype of Ukrainians. The second – "Mysholosie" (an occasional nickname for the young Kosachs – Mykhailo and Lesya) was focused on identifying the cognitive framework within which this name functions, or its absence, in the speech of contemporary respondents. At the same time, according to the recollections of their sister Olha Kosach-Kryvyniuk, they were called "Mysholosie" within the family, a derivative of the names "Misha" and "Losya," which had become customary in interpersonal communication (Memoirs, 2016, p. 153). Only the third – the anthroponym *Lesya* – offered a more or less "unmediated" approach to the image of Lesya Ukrainka. The next three were, in various ways, formal identifiers of her identity – *Larysa Kosach, Larysa Kvitka, Lesya Ukrainka*. The seventh stimulus is represented by the well-known periphrastic marker – "Daughter of Prometheus." Consequently, each stimulus word (to a greater or lesser extent) hypothetically implied the formation of certain generalised and stereotypical notions among the speakers regarding Lesya Ukrainka. In this article, we shall consider only the first three stimulus words, which provisionally form a group of implicit connotations regarding the image of Lesya Ukrainka.

Results and Discussion

As a result of the free WAT, associative fields were formed on the basis of the responses obtained. These can be described using classifications that have been tried and tested and are widely used in such studies. It should be noted, incidentally, their great number and the absence of a single universal classification, emphasising that the classification criteria and their selection, depend to a large extent on the aim of the research and the object of study. Most importantly, the very analysis of specific associations makes it possible to refine and formalise the identified classes. However, most scholars analyse associates based on the type of grammatical and semantic links with the stimulus word, grouping them according to such criteria, although terminologically they may have different applications. In fact, all linguistic classifications involve differentiation based on formal and semantic indicators. In terms of grammatical

parameters, they are most often defined as homogeneous and heterogeneous reactions. Among semantic parameters, various types of syntagmatic and paradigmatic manifestations are most frequently analysed. Ultimately, all associative links between an associate and a stimulus word can be of only three main types: 1) formal-semantic (words are associated on the basis of both form and meaning); 2) semantic (words are associated solely on the basis of meaning, whilst form is irrelevant); 3) formal (words are associated solely by form).

Given the diversity of existing classifications, traditional ones may, where necessary, be combined with others, primarily those aimed at identifying formal-semantic relationships among all associative pairs, establishing the motivational basis of a particular individual (unique) response, and interpreting the associative behaviour of each informant. Under such circumstances, it is appropriate to make use of, for example, well-known classifications for structuring pre-semantic association responses, and the concept of semantic gestalts, which corresponds to a systemic-level description of language. The concept is characterised by its evidential nature, and has prompted the examination of the associative field from both linguistic and cognitive perspectives, and so on. It is appropriate to supplement formal classifications with those that adopt a functional approach and focus on describing the set of valency characteristics of the words under study, which constitute the associative field. It is precisely this comprehensive approach that will enable us to understand the presuppositional conditions and motivational characteristics of associative fields. The main classification criteria chosen in our study are semantic, formal-grammatical and motivational.

First, it is worth highlighting the characterological features common to all the associative fields obtained, which, ultimately, belong to the universals of any field – particularly in the Ukrainian language – formed as a result of the free WAT, and can therefore be classified as typological. They have: 1) marked lexical variation; 2) grammatical heterogeneity with a predominance of noun-type associates when the stimulus is a noun (this refers primarily to those that were the subject of our study); 3) isolated instances of pre-semantic association (avoidance of responses and infrequent reports of difficulties in formulating them due to unfamiliarity with a particular word or a lack of information about individuals). In particular, such difficulties arose among respondents with associations to the stimulus words *Mysholosie*, *Larysa Kvitka* and *Larysa Kosach*, which have clear underlying reasons: the occasional nature of the first and the optional use of proper anthroponymic names (autonyms) as opposed to pseudonyms).

According to the results of the free WAT, the ethnonym "Ukrainka" formed an associative field, the core of which consists of the following single responses: *Lesya* – 29 (21 – single lexemes / 8 – the reference lexeme in phrases, expressions

and common collocations); *wreath* – 13 (10 / 3); *Ukrainian woman* – 10 (0 / 10); *woman* – 10 (6 / 4); *girl* – 18 (9 / 9); *beautiful* – 8 (4 / 4); *embroidered shirt* – 9; *beauty* – 9; *wreath* – 6 (5 / 1); *Motherland* – 5 (3 / 2); *strong* – 5 (3 / 2), whilst on the periphery – *beautiful* – 4; *lovely* – 4 (2 / 2); sincere – 4; *beauty* – 3; *nationality* – 3; *guardian* – 3 (2 / 1), *Ukraine* – 2 (1 / 1); *patriot* – 3; *young lady* – 2 (1 / 1); *parents* – 2 (1 / 1). As we can see, the dominant response to the stimulus word—which is an ethnonym—is, predictably and justifiably for Ukrainian informants, the proper name "Lesya," which, when combined with it, forms the pseudonym of Larysa Kosach-Kvitka (see Figure 1).

Figure 1
The Emergence of the Image of Lesya Ukrainka in Associative Responses to the Stimulus Word "Ukrainian Woman"

The associative field of this stimulus word was formed by the following main semantic groups of responses:

1) **identifiers: self-identifiers and pronouns** (*I, I am Ukrainian*), general terms denoting national identity (*nationality* – 3); designations of persons of different genders by national affiliation, less frequently by citizenship (*Ukrainian, a woman of Ukrainian origin, a woman / girl residing in Ukraine, she was born a Ukrainian woman*); designations of persons by family relationship, names of literary characters (*mum, parents, grandmother, Natalka Poltavka* – 1); terms relating to everyday life, and linguistic and cultural lexemes (*house, cherry, hollyhock, flute, wreath, small wreath; a cottage in the village*); proper names and conventional designations for the Motherland (*Ukraine* – 3; *Vinnytsia* – 1; *Motherland* – 4 / 2; *blue-eyed Ukraine* – 1; *native land* – 1; *native country* – 1);

2) **autostereotypical** terms (terms comprising core lexemes and single evaluative features): a) terms referring to females (*girl, young lady* – 1; *woman,*

migrant worker, citizen – 1; *guardian* – 2; Ukrainian guardian – 1); b) linguistic portrayals of members of the Ukrainian ethnic group (***physical appearance***: "*girl in an embroidered blouse" – 2; "long plait" – 1; "beauty"; "beautiful" – 4; "beautiful girl" – 1; "beautiful girl in a wreath"* – 1; *beauty* – 9; *beauty* – 3; *young girl with a wreath* – 1; *smiling girl in a wreath* – 1; *the most beautiful girl* – 1; lovely – 1 / 1; *unrivaled* – 1; *pretty girl* – 3; *A lovely young housewife in traditional dress is busy in a clean, festively decorated house with a table laden with treats and a sumptuous wedding loaf on a richly embroidered towel (just like at Grandma's) and is waiting for her family and guests* – 1; *adorned with flowers* – 1; *voluptuous* – 1; *dark-browed* – 3; *dark-browed* – 1; *attractive* – 1; *radiant* – 1; *lovely* – 1; *genuine* – 1; *the most beautiful woman – 1; enchanting young lady – 1; wreath* – 5; *girl – wreath – pearls* – 1; *girl in embroidered dress* – 1) and ***inner qualities*** (*strong and proud; strong woman; patriot*; *guardian; happy; true Ukrainian woman; strong woman; sincere* – 4; *sincerity* – 1; *unyielding person* – 1; *strong* – 2; *soul* – 1; *dream-will* – 1; *freedom* – 1; *love* – 1; *struggle* – 1);

3) **Lesya Ukrainka** (the most common ways of referring to her are: given names, pseudonyms and established proper names used as identifiers, individual author names, and designations of her field of activity: *Lesya* – 29; *Lesya Ukrainka* – 3; *Lesya (Lesya Ukrainka)* – 1; *writer* – 2); evaluative elements relating to her perception in society: *'The Beauty'. Lesya* – 1; *'famous writer'* – 1, *'outstanding writer'* – 1); specific objects associated with her image (such as: a banknote – *two hundred hryvnias* – 1); reactions with diverse thematic orientations were also recorded, e.g.: *a settlement in the Kyiv region; the writer Lesya Ukrainka* – 1; *Ukrainian woman – girl, Ukrainian woman – Lesya* – 1; *Lesya Ukrainka – Ukrainian literature – Ukraine – Struggle – war* – 1.

Taking these quantitative parameters into account, the predominant responses can be considered to be those linked to the stimulus word by a paradigmatic connection (mostly grammatically homogeneous, though heterogeneous ones are also possible (isolated cases)): *Ukrainian woman – nationality, Ukrainian man, Lesya, girl, woman, young lady, earnings, mum, parents, grandmother, Natalka Poltavka, home, Ukraine, cherry, hollyhock, embroidered shirt, wreath, small wreath, flute, struggle, love, native land, native country*, etc.

Among syntagmatic (internal) associations, adjectival-type responses are more frequent (with a marked tendency towards the idealisation of the image of Ukrainian women): *beautiful* (whilst responses from other grammatical classes with the same root are also recorded: *beauty, beauty*), *lovely* (*lovely girl*), *unrivalled, pretty, flower-adorned, voluptuous, dark-browed, attractive, radiant, genuine, sincere* (*sincerity*), *lovely, hard-working, domestic, strong*. *Noun-based* responses also model certain distinctive features of members of the Ukrainian ethnic group; cf.: *'citizen', 'guardian', 'patriot', 'beauty', 'migrant worker'* (the

latter term likely reflects the social realities of recent decades rather than the traditional image of a Ukrainian woman).

Extended, multi-component responses are less commonly used; however, their structural and semantic organisation almost entirely mirrors the above series of single-word key response terms, supplemented by the lexemes *stork*, *language*, *song*, *crust*, e.g.: *stork, mum, wheat*; *the scent of Mum's crust of bread; blue-eyed Ukraine; greenery (green Ukraine), language, song, embroidered shirt* (*in the order of the associations mentioned); to love one's Motherland* – 1; *language, Motherland, dearest* – 1; *wreath, embroidered shirt, song, language* – 1; *Ukrainian wreath* – 1; *wreath, embroidered shirt, song, language* – 1; *wreath of flowers* – 1, etc.

Only two responses in this category relate to information gaps: *city (1)* and *Kalashnikov machine gun (1).* It is difficult to explain why a Ukrainian woman is associated with the topos of a city rather than a village, and even more so why her image is linked to an element of the stereotypical warrior-man (presumably, such a response can be interpreted as the influence of contemporary Ukrainian realities). The motivation behind these responses bears the hallmarks of situational reactions; therefore, their semantics can only be commented on in a tentative or hypothetical manner.

The associative field of the stimulus word "Mysholosie" is characterized by the highest frequency of "zero" responses, which is due to objective factors: a lack of knowledge of its lexical meaning, given that this proper name belongs to the Kosach family's metalinguistic system, and was therefore originally known only to a narrow circle of speakers, with its use defining the distinctive communicative boundaries of this family. The use of such an occasional name (in reference to Mykhailo and Lesya in their childhood) in educational literature (in particular, in school textbooks and workbooks) has, to a certain extent, neutralized the "mysteriousness" of this shared name for the Kosach children and the optional nature of its use within Ukrainian society. It was therefore assumed that this stimulus was entirely free of communicative and associative deviations, given, first and foremost, the respondents' status.

Lack of familiarity with the occasionalism "Mysholosie" is accompanied by the following pre-semantic reactions of silence: "*I don't know"* – 3; "*I don't know what that is"* – 1; "*There isn't any"* – 1; "What's that?" – 2; "?" – 2; "*I don't know what that is"* – 1; "*I haven't heard that* before" – 1; "*an unfamiliar word"* – 1; "*I'm hearing it for the first time"* – 1. All informants giving such responses confirm their lack of knowledge of the word's meaning, and some of them admit that they are hearing it for the first time. The absence of associations is sometimes reflected in evaluative reactions (*positive and negative*) to the unfamiliar word: *oddity* – 1; *strange word* – 1; *a very strange word* – 1; *fantasy* – 1; *something scary and huge* – 1; *something bizarre* – 1; *nonsense* – 2; *rubbish* – 1; *abomination* – 1.

The last pejorative reaction reflects a negative connotation in perception, evidently due to its association with terms familiar to the respondent, in particular the word "mouse."

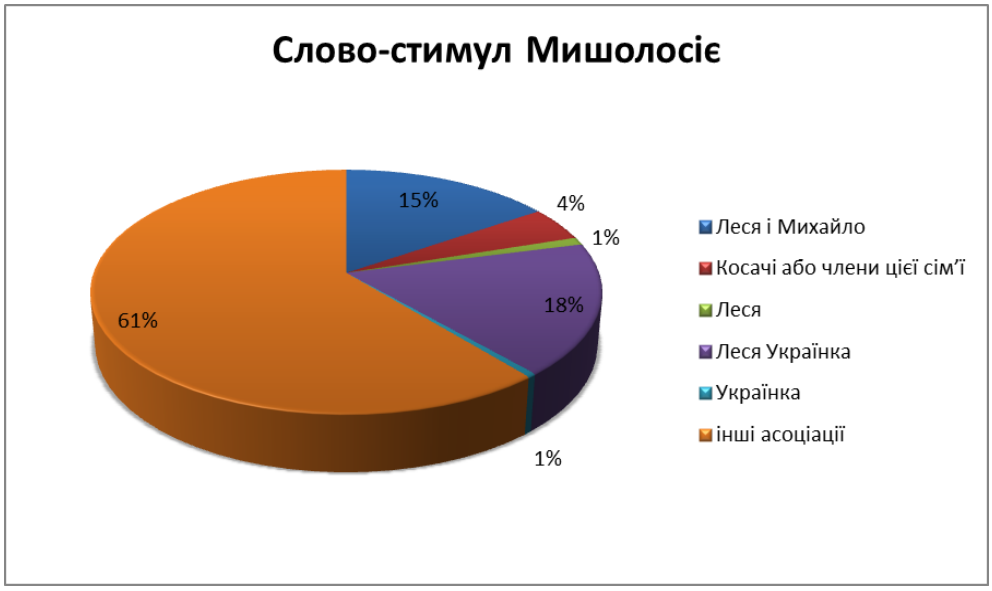
One of the respondents attempted to identify the source of this term's borrowing (*derived from Russian* – 1), whilst another linked it to *an unknown work*. *The* reaction *'Lesya Ukrainka's collection'* belongs both to the associations caused by the ambiguity of the stimulus word's meaning and to the group of reactions which, albeit indirectly, are linked to the image of Larysa Kosach. Only one response identifies the proposed stimulus word as a nickname (without specifying *its family origin*): *the nickname 'Mysholosie'* – 1.

However, the most frequent responses do indeed accurately depict the figures of the two young Kosachs, with various combinations of their names and positional characteristics: *Lesya and/or Mykhailo*; *Mykhailyk and Lesya*; *Mykhailyk and Lesya Kosach*; *Mykhailo and Lesya in the photo*; *Mykhailo and Larysa; Myshko and/or Lesya*; *Lesya Kosach and her little brother Mykhailyk*; *Lesya Ukrainka and her brother Mykhailo*; *Lesya Ukrainka and Mykhailo Kosach*; *Lesya Ukrainka and her brother Mykhailo*; *Lesya Ukrainka (Larysa Kosach) and Mykhailo Kosach*; *Mykhailo Kosach*; *the friendship between Mykhailo and Larysa Kosach*; *Mykhailo+Lesya*; *Myshko+Lesya*; *brother and sister* – 22. Only a few respondents correctly mention the brother's name first: *Mykhailo, Mykhailyk, Myshko* (in accordance with the proposed conventional compound model); however, the overwhelming majority of responses place the sister's name first: *Lesya, Larysa, Lesya Kosach, Lesya Ukrainka.* It should be noted that not a single respondent mentioned the given name that served as the basis for the creation of this joint name for the brother and sister – *Losya* (it was only later, in a letter written by the five-year-old Lesia to the Drahomanov family (Novohrad-Volynskyi, autumn–early winter 1876)) that she had been 'renamed Lesya' (to the Drahomanov family, Novohrad-Volynskyi, autumn–early winter 1876) (Ukrainka, 2016, p. 38)). However, the absence of precisely this reaction does not at all imply that all informants were completely unaware of this information, although it clearly attests to the instability of this variant of the name in relation to the image of Lesya Ukrainka (see Fig. 2).

The fact that *Lesia* is named first in this 'family dyad' (incidentally, often without her brother's name being explicitly mentioned: *'Lesya and her brother*') can hardly be regarded as a spontaneous reaction. It is likely that this association reflects a greater awareness within Ukrainian society (even contemporary society!) of Lesya Ukrainka specifically, as opposed to the lack of specific information about Mykhailo Kosach, which is the root cause of the order of their names in the responses. Also telling are those responses containing qualifiers such as *'her', 'them' or 'her own*': *Lesya Ukrainka and* ***her brother***

Mykhailo – 2; *Lesya Ukrainka and* ***her brother*** *Mykhailo* – 1; *Lesya and* ***her brother*** – 1; *little Lesya Ukrainka with* ***her brother****; a photo of* ***them*** *together* – 1.

Figure 2
The Emergence of the Image of Lesya Ukrainka in Associative Reactions to the Stimulus Word "Mysholosie"



The prevalence of this form of address during their childhood, and thus its association with the childhood years of Mykhailo (*Misha*) and Lesya (*Losya*), is indicated by the diminutive *'little brother'* (*Lesya Kosach and her little brother Mykhailo* – 1) and terms of endearment (*Mykhailo and Lesya* – 2). The 'time of childhood' and 'childhood persona' are also present in other semantically similar responses: *childhood* – 1; *little* – 1; *small* – 1; *sweet child* – 1. The rationale behind the paradigmatic links between responses such as *'Olena Pchilka'* – 1, *'family'* – 1; *Lesya Ukrainka and her family* – 1 and *the Kosach family* – 1 with the stimulus word is evident, as this designation was part of the family's metalanguage, and its probable author was their mother, Olha Kosach. The association *'Volyn'* – 1 in this context, with regard to the young Kosachs, has a distinct local characteristic: their childhood years coincided with the period when they lived in this very region of Ukraine.

The seme 'inseparability', which constitutes an invariant feature of this shared designation, likely gave rise to other structural elements in the common associative responses: *friendship, a group photo, Mykhailo and Lesya in the photo. At* the same time, it is precisely this semantic component that is identified as a distinguishing feature by certain individual associations: *Kosachs* – 1; *relatives* – 1; *together* – 1; *inseparability* – 1; *shared name* – 1.

Single-element responses *such* as *'Lesya'* (*Lesya* – 1; *'our Lesya'* – 1) and dual-element *responses such as 'Myško and/or Lesya'* are infrequent (*Myško and Lesya* – 1; *Myško and Lesya* – 1). Also atypical is the sporadic reaction of actualising only the image of the brother: *Mykhailo* – 1; *Lesya Ukrainka's brother* – 1; Larysa *Kosach's brother* – 1. By contrast, the genus-species pair *'Mysholosie – Lesya Ukrainka*' can be considered central to this associative field: *Lesya Ukrainka* – 31; *Ukrainka* – 1. In addition to the pseudonym, a stereotypical periphrasis is also recorded as an association: *'Daughter of Prometheus'* – 1.

Incidentally, it should be noted that reactions such as *'Lesya Ukrainka's brother' or 'our Lesya'* can hypothetically be interpreted in two ways: as the recipient's lack of knowledge or, conversely, as the mere actualisation of just one component of this associative pair.

Sometimes Larysa Kosach's pseudonym is supplemented with evaluative lexemes (*'the female knight' – Lesya Ukrainka* – 1) or expanded with one or more noun-based associations (e.g.: *'Lesya Ukrainka and her family*' – 1; *Lesya Ukrainka, childhood, friendship, first poems* – 1).

The following responses illustrate the difficulties ('hesitation') in selecting an associative response—or, more precisely, in finding an appropriate interpretation of the name: *'off the top of my head – I don't have one, although – if I really think hard, then Lesya Ukrainka* – 1); *automatically: Mykhailo + Lesya. (Actually, an unpleasant association with stinking mice)* – 1.

It was precisely the literal interpretation of the unknown word that triggered reactions based on proximity to common nouns similar to proper nouns – *'mouse'* and *'elk'* – which repeat the root elements of this compound. These include single-word responses with the lexemes *'mouse', 'mice'* and *'elk'* (*'mouse'* – 8; *'elk'* – 2) and two-component responses of the paradigmatic and, less frequently, syntagmatic variety (*'mouse' and 'elk'* – 1; *Elk and mouse* – 1; *mice and elk* – 1; *mouse and elk* – 1; *a fox-coloured mouse* – 1; *mice in the field* – 1; *mice; ears of corn* – 1) with one or, simultaneously, two reference lexemes. The locational characteristics regarding the associate *'mouse / mice – in the field, ears of corn'* are likely indicated by a search for a potential interpretation of the second part of the compound. Another group of this type of response, based on phonetic similarity to one of the components, is linked to the activation of the lexemes *'salmon', 'forest' and 'mercy'* as reference lexemes: *'salmon'* – 1; *forest* – 4; *dense forest with animals* – 1; *forest animals* – 1; *mercy* – 2; *acts of mercy* – 1. Some of the responses, which are specific names for locations where these animals might be found, are associatively linked to the stimulus word through paradigmatic connections: *harvest* – 2; *crop* – 1; *field* – 1; *zoo* – 1.

Phonetic association based on the similarity between proper and common names led to the response *'Myshko, myshka/mouse'* – 1. However, the core responses in this category can be considered to be those constructed on the

principle of rhyming with the stimulus word / rearrangement of elements of the stimulus word (*'mysholosie-urolosie'* – 1; *losemishie* – 1) or by correlation with well-known terms formed according to the same word-formation model (*KitPes* – 1; *katavasia* – 1; *kolosie* – 1; *tykhoholosie* – 1; *Batrachio-machia* – 1; *chrevo-ugodiye* – 1; 'Blagorodiye' – 1). Reactions involving the repetition of the stimulus word include the responses *' '* and *'mysholos'* – 1.

Associations of a situational nature are known to be among those that complicate their motivation: *'floral chaos'* – 1; *'sowing in vain'* – 1; *'process'* – 1; *'slash'* – 1; *Russia* – 1; *Sweden* – 1; *hairy* – 1; *in the wind* – 1; *eradication* – 1; *GMO* – 1; *trifle* – 1; *voice* – 1; *problem* – 1; *silence* – 1; *to speak quietly* – 1.

The associative field of the stimulus word "Lesya" is represented by a variety of grammatical responses, though single-word noun associations proved to be the most frequent: *Ukrainian woman, poet / poetess, writer, Lesya, Olesya, Larysa, Kosach, name, girl, flower, poetry, poems, drama, Polissya, Gonchar, mum, wife, sister, friend, neighbor, woman, smile, plait*.

Thematically, all the responses obtained can be broadly divided into three semantic groups: 1) those associated with the image of Lesya Ukrainka (***the core of the field***) (*Ukrainka* – 120 / of which – *Ukrainka* – 104 (1 – *Ukrainka*), *ukrainka* – 5, *UKRAINKA* – 1, *Ukrainka*)) – 1, *Ukrainka* – 1, the rest – as part of extended associations); 2) those that refer to the informant's relatives or close acquaintances (***the near-core zone***); 3) those that evoke figures known to the informant – Ukrainian writers – or relate to precedent texts and are reminiscences (*Kurbas*; *Lesya + Roma*;); 4) reactions of opaque situational semantics and silent reactions (***peripheral zone***) (*soldier, dog, ear of corn, microbes*) (see Fig. 3).

Figure 3
The Emergence of the Image of Lesya Ukrainka in Associative Reactions to the Stimulus Word "Lesya"

Among the first group of associates that can be divided into several subgroups directly or indirectly linked to the personality of Lesya Ukrainka are as follows:

1. expansion reactions, i.e. those that explicate her full proper names and professional status (pseudonym (*Ukrainka* – 1; *Ukrainian woman* – 5), autonym (*Kosach* – 1)); type of activity (*writer* – 4; *poetess* – 2, *poetess* – 1; *female poet* – 1; *writer Lesya Ukrainka* – 1); elements of characterisation (*fair-haired woman from Volyn* – 1; *unbreakable* – 1); other figures associated with her image (*Honchar* – 1);
2. titles of various genres of fiction, works by Lesya Ukrainka, characters, and her well-known aphorisms (*poetry* – 1; *poems* – 1; *drama* – 1; *fairy-tale play* – 1; *Mavka* – 1; *The Forest Song* – 2; *'So as not to cry, I laughed'* – 1);
3. real-life locations and place names (*ash tree* – 1 (this presumably refers to the ash tree in Lutsk near Lubart's Castle, where, according to recollections, little Lesya loved to spend time); *Lesya Ukrainka Eastern European National University* – 1; *Kolodyazhne* – 1; *Polissia* – 1; Volyn – 1; *Ukrainian, Ukraine* – 1).

Sometimes associations combine several responses from different thematic groups, e.g., *Ukrainka, Larysa Kosach, The Forest Song, 'I want to live ...'* – 1, or bring out synonymous responses: *Ukrainka, Larysa Kosach* – 1.

As with the previous stimulus words, *'Lesya'* also elicits rhyming responses such as: *'male-sya'* – 1, *'zdesya'* – 1, *'Lesya-Ukrainka' (and also 'Lesya-perelesya'* :)) – 1; whilst there is no apparent reason for their occurrence, it can be assumed that their appearance is part of a language game.

The core zone of this associative field consists mainly of names of female individuals belonging to the informant's circle of family, friends and colleagues (*mum* – 1; *mum's mum* – 1; *sister* – 1; *sister, dear, name* – 1; *wife* – 1; *girlfriend* – 1; *woman* – 1; *neighbour* – 1; *Mykytiuk (presenter)* – 1; *acquaintance Lesya* – 1) and anthroponymic names of acquaintances or variants of the stimulus word (*Volodymyrivna* – 1; *Oleksandra* – 1).

The periphery consists of responses characterised by situational associations; therefore, decoding their semantic links to the stimulus word is complicated. These include, in particular, the following responses: *soldier* – 1; *dog* – 1; *ear of corn* – 1; *microbes [explanation: i.e. microorganisms]* – 1. Several of the recorded associations could equally well apply to Lesya Ukrainka or any other person: "mother" – 1; "smile" – 1. Zero responses to this stimulus word are isolated and indicated by graphic symbols: a question mark (? – 3) and a dash (- – 1).

Consequently, the construction of the associative field for the personal name "Lesya" reveals a distinct tendency to evoke the image of Lesya Ukrainka specifically.

Conclusions

A comparative analysis of the three associative fields, formed on the basis of reactions to the stimulus words "Ukrainian woman," "Mysholosie," and "Lesya," confirmed our initial hypothesis regarding the probable predominant explication of the image of Larysa Kosach-Kosach in all potential associations.

The register of the most common shared responses in the first two fields includes: the diminutive form of her name "Lesya," the pseudonym "Lesya Ukrainka," and the autonym "*Larysa Kosach / Kosach*." With regard to the third stimulus word, a distinct regulatory actualization of her image was recorded through the part of the pseudonym – the ethnonym *Ukrainka* (120 responses). Sporadically, this response (as a duplicate) was also observed in the first associative field.

Implicitly, the image of Lesya Ukrainka is also represented through general associative terms that have a direct semantic connection with her. This applies primarily to terms indicating her professional (literary) status (in particular, in the first and third fields), sometimes with evaluative components (*writer, poetess, poet, outstanding writer*), as well as the names of literary genres, her individual works, and quotations (mainly in the third field), for example: *poetry, verses, drama, fairy-tale play, Mavka, The Forest Song, So as Not to Cry, I Laughed. The* explication of place names associated with her is also a regular feature in the formed associative fields (mostly in relation to the stimulus "Lesya"; in other fields, there are only isolated occurrences), such as *Kolodyazhne, Polissya, Volyn, and Ukraine*. Incidentally, it was the "Lesya" stimulus that showed the greatest commonality among the responses obtained.

The most frequent responses in the second associative field – "Mysholosie" – bring to mind both of the young Kosach children: Lesya and Mykhailo (with various forms of their names and varying positional characteristics, though with a quantitative predominance of responses using the sister's primary name, which is likely due to Ukrainian speakers' insufficient familiarity with the figure of Mykhailo Kosach). At the same time, it was precisely this stimulus word that caused (as might be expected) associative deviations, as well as zero and evaluative responses.

The clear association of these responses with Lesya Ukrainka across all three stimuli provides grounds for concluding that her image is constantly present and firmly established in the linguistic consciousness of a significant part of Ukrainian society.

Each associative field for the proposed stimulus words is formed from units that are structurally and syntactically diverse: words, word combinations, idioms and free utterances. The most common are single-word noun responses. Phrases

and associations formed on the basis of paradigmatic and syntagmatic links with the stimulus words can also be considered productive, whilst complex phrases formed by combining several key response words and utterances are considered unproductive. Phonetic reactions and silent-type reactions also form part of the periphery.

The application of the associative experiment in modelling the image of Lesya Ukrainka confirms the significance of this line of research for contemporary psycholinguistics and linguo-personology. The results highlight the potential of this method not only for understanding the personalities of famous Ukrainians but also for representing them in the minds of contemporary speakers.

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Generative AI Statement

During the preparation of this work the author did not use AI tools and takes full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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