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PLAYFULNESS AS A RELEVANT LEXEME IN THE BILINGUAL LINGUISTIC CONSCIOUSNESS OF UKRAINIAN PEOPLE

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Abstract. The article describes the results of the free association experiment with the stimulus word “playfulness”. The total number of respondents amounted to 3,300 people. The analysis of the associations convincingly proved that in terms of its functioning “playfulness” is a relevant lexeme in the bilingual linguistic consciousness of Ukrainian people. The further step of the research was aimed at revealing common and specific features of respondents representing different “profession types”: “person-nature”, “person-person”, “person-sign systems”, “person-technology”, “person-artistic image”. The sample involved 500 people, with 100 people for each “profession type”, men and women being equally represented. The overall number of reactions amounted to 2,452 (including word combinations and sentences (88)), with 270 occurring more than once, and 503 singular reactions. The analysis of the most frequent reactions revealed certain common features in the verbal behavior of the respondents, reflected in the lexemes “merry-making” (96(3.915)), “delight” (80(3.262)), “flirting” (79(3.221)), “laughter” (70(2.855)), “champagne” (49(1.998)), “a young girl” (46(1.876)), “children” (43(1.754)), “mood” (42(1.713)), “coquetry” (37(1.509)), “happiness” (31(1.264)), “smile” (30 (1.223%)). The analysis of singular reactions revealed the impact of professional activity on the understanding of playfulness. The procedures of sememic attribution and semic interpretation made it possible to outline the meanings of the lexeme “playfulness” and formulate their definitions as a coherent enumeration of the identified semantic components.

Keywords: *playfulness, free association experiment, association field, profession type, verbal behavior.*

Сипко Артем, Гордієнко-Митрофанова Ія. Грайливість як актуальна лексема в двомовній свідомості українців

Анотація. Статтю присвячено результатам аналізу вільного асоціативного експерименту зі стимулом «грайливість» (игривість). Загальний обсяг вибірки склав 3300 респондентів. Аналіз складу й характеру асоціацій переконливо доводить, що з точки зору функціонування «грайливість» є актуальною лексемою в двомовній свідомості українців. Наступний етап дослідження передбачав виявлення універсальних і специфічних рис досліджуваних за різними «типами професій»: «людина-природа», «людина-людина», «людина-знакові системи», «людина-техніка», «людина-художній образ». Вибірку склали 500 осіб: по 100 чоловік у кожному «типі професії» й рівному співвідношенні чоловіків та жінок. Загальна кількість реакцій склало 2452 (включаючи словосполучення й закінчені речення (88)), з них реакцій з частотою більше 1 – 270, одиничних – 503. Результати аналізу високочастотних реакцій говорять про те, що універсальні риси у вербальній поведінці випробовуваних знайшли своє відображення в лексемах «веселощі» (96 (3,915)), «радість» (80 (3,262)), «флірт» (79 (3,221)), «сміх» (70 (2,855)), «шампанське» (49 (1,998)), «дівчина» (46 (1,876)), «діти» (43 (1,754)), «настрій» (42 (1,713)), «кокетство» (37 (1,509)), «щастя» (31 (1,264)), «посмішка» (30 (1,223%)). Аналіз зареєстрованих одиничних реакцій виявив вплив професійної діяльності на сприйняття грайливості. Процедури

семейної атрибуції та семної інтерпретації асоціативних реакцій дозволили виявити значення лексеми грайливість і сформулювати дефініції як зв'язне перерахування виявлених семантичних компонентів.

Ключові слова: *грайливість, вільний асоціативний експеримент, асоціативне поле, тип професії, вербальну поведінку.*

Сышко Артем, Гордиенко-Митрофанова Ия. Игривость как актуальная лексема, в языковом сознании украинцев, основанного на двуязычии

Аннотация. Статья посвящена результатам анализа свободного ассоциативного эксперимента со стимулом «игривость». Общий объем выборки составил 3300 респондентов. Анализ состава и характера ассоциаций убедительно показал, что с точки зрения функционирования «игривость» является актуальной лексемой в языковом сознании украинцев, основанного на двуязычии. Следующий этап исследования предполагал выявление универсальных и специфических черт испытуемых разных «типов профессий»: «человек-природа», «человек-человек», «человек-знаковые системы», «человек-техника», «человек-художественный образ». Выборку составили 500 человек: по 100 человек в каждом «типе профессии» и равном соотношении мужчин и женщин. Общее количество реакций составило 2452 (включая словосочетания и предложения (88)), из них реакций с частотой больше 1–270, единичных – 503. Результаты анализа высокочастотных реакций говорят о том, что универсальные черты в вербальном поведении испытуемых нашли свое отражение в лексемах «веселье» (96 (3,915)), «радость» (80 (3,262)), «флирт» (79 (3,221)), «смех» (70 (2,855)), «шампанское» (49 (1,998)), «девушка» (46 (1,876)), «дети» (43 (1,754)), «настроение» (42 (1,713)), «коккетство» (37 (1,509)), «счастье» (31 (1,264)), «улыбка» (30 (1,223%)). Анализ единичных реакций выявил влияние профессиональной деятельности на понимание игривости. Процедуры семейной атрибуции и семной интерпретации ассоциативных реакций позволили выявить значения лексемы игривость и сформулировать дефиниции как связанное перечисление выявленных семантических компонентов.

Ключевые слова: *игривость, свободный ассоциативный эксперимент, ассоциативное поле, тип профессии, вербальное поведение.*

Introduction

The present article continues a series of articles devoted to the issue of defining and describing the psycholinguistic meaning of the word “*playfulness*” (Gordienko-Mitrofanova 2014a, b).

When a society has a paradigm of perceiving culture as a play, where culture emerges and manifests itself in a play and as a play (Huizinga 2003), this kind of society imposes certain requirements to the functioning of the subject of activity, whose integrity and development may be secured by unique personality features.

Previous publications have suggested a hypothesis that *playfulness* can become one of the core personality traits (Gordienko-Mitrofanova et al. 2015).

Our proposal is grounded on the works that contain empirical evidence on relations of playfulness with flow-experiences (Csikszentmihalyi 1975), enhanced group cohesion (Bowman 1987), creativity and spontaneity (Glynn 1993), intrinsic motivation (Amabile 1994), curiosity, fantasy, sentiment, sensitivity to internal experience, and fugue (Tsuji et al. 1996), decreased computer anxiety (Bozionelos, Bozionelos 1997), curiosity, inventiveness and the need to play with novel ideas and innovations (in the concept of *cognitive playfulness* in which cognitive playfulness is defined as a characteristic within an individual that causes them to explore and “play” with a problem until it is solved) (Dunn 2004), positive attitudes towards the workplace, job satisfaction and performance,

and innovative behavior (Yu et al. 2007), academic achievement (in terms of cognitive playfulness) (Tan 2009), quality of life (Proyer 2011), strengths of character (Ruch, Proyer 2011), intellectual curiosity and imagination/creativity, intellectual dexterity and agility, willingness to experiment with new ideas (playfulness as a learning disposition that mobilises productive engagement with new learning innovations despite the restrictions of a traditional learning culture) (Tan, McWilliam 2013).

In the framework of the present theoretical and methodological context, *playfulness* is regarded as a constructive strategy of personal behavior, as it can provide individuals with *maximum social adaptability (including high level of role flexibility and depth)* both in a simulation conflict and in unexpected, uncertain and critical situations, *without losing a strongly articulated individual identity*.

On the one hand, this treatment of playfulness makes it possible to define it metaphorically as “*the unbearable lightness of being*» (the title of the well-known novel by Milan Kundera) in terms of compatibility of incompatible strategies (internal and external, as described by P. Gornostay). However, on the other hand, this compatibility requires an extremely high level of creativity, since “interpreting” everyday hardships as a kind of game displays a creative approach to life. *This constructive behavioral strategy promotes harmonization of a personality, reinforces personal stability and fully satisfies the need for self-actualization.*

The above stated hypothesis and the aforementioned definition of *playfulness* lead to the overall reconsideration of the very phenomenon of a play within the cultural and historical paradigm, as a specific kind of subject’s activity, which therefore causes the notion of *playfulness*, as a fundamental personality trait, to be thoroughly introduced into the psychological science.

The latter calls for a psychological experiment, whose final aim is to outline and describe the psycholinguistic meaning of a given word, which is localized in human psyche. The necessity to carry out this experiment has already been justified in the works published earlier (Gordienko-Mitrofanova 2014b).

The sample of 2,902 respondents, featured in our latest paper, proved convincingly that in terms of its functioning, “*playfulness*” is a relevant lexeme in the bilingual linguistic consciousness of Ukrainian people. It also revealed the influence of gender, age and profession-related differences on the verbal behavior of the subjects of association.

In the first place, the aim and the objectives of the present paper focus on questioning the representativeness of samples in association experiments. Secondly, it seeks to analyze single individual responses against the “profession” criteria in order to identify specific features in the respondents’ verbal behavior.

Methods

A free association experiment as a method of exploring the word “*playfulness*” as a stimulus word has been conducted. The total number of respondents amounted to 3,300 people, which made it possible to cover all the regions of Ukraine.

In the context of the present research the general statistical population refers to Ukrainian citizens aged 18–60, whose linguistic consciousness is characterized by bilingualism. This age group represents 55.5% of the entire population of Ukraine (over

42 million people). Ukraine has 459 cities, 490 administrative districts, 885 small towns and 28,450 villages. The country is divided into 24 regions (“oblast”). Urban population amounts to 64%, and rural population is 36 %. Ukrainians make up 77.8 % of the country’s population, whereas Russians represent 17.3 % of the population. Ukraine is also home to other nationalities: Byelorussians, Moldavians, Crimean Tatars, Bulgarians, Hungarians, Romanians, Poles, Jews, Armenians, Greeks, Tatars, and others.

The respondents were asked to respond to the stimulus word “*playfulness*” with any five words that first occurred to them. The respondents were supposed to work in the framework of visual modality (a written survey). Originally, the statistical sample was selected according to the requirement of homogeneity, first of all against such criteria as “age” and “gender”. The preliminary analysis of the association field and individual reactions shows that association patterns depend on education and professional background. That is why, another criterion was introduced, i.e. “profession”.

The study

As N. Ufimtseva noted, the association field derived in the course of the association experiment is “not only a fragment of a person’s verbal memory, but also a fragment of the world image of some particular ethnos, reflected in the consciousness of an “average” representative of this particular culture, as well as their motives, values and, consequently, their cultural stereotypes” (Ufimtseva 2006). The nature of reactions within the association field illustrates the usage patterns of this word, revealing the content which is psychologically relevant for the speakers of this language. This must be the reason why association experiments have not lost their validity until now.

The question arises how many respondents have to be interviewed so that the achieved result of the association experiment could be considered valid. The practice of conducting association experiments, reflected in particular in the Associative Thesaurus of Russian compiled by Yu. N. Karaulov, G. A. Cherkasova, N. V. Ufimtseva, Yu. A. Sorokin, and E. F. Tarasov and in the Associative Thesaurus of English (microfilm version) compiled by G. R. Kiss, C. A. Armstrong, and R. Milroy demonstrates that 100 reactions to each stimulus prove to be enough. Exceeding the number of respondents beyond 100 has no significant influence on the proportion of the most frequent reactions.

We are not going to quote other leading experts in this field. It is sufficient to say that our own experience of conducting association experiments proves that the minimum number of respondents is governed by the aims and objectives of the research, as well as by the total population, i.e. the hypothetical set of all the items about which a researcher is intended to provide comprehensive and undistorted information, if only the researcher does want to provide this information, of course.

In this connection, a question arises if there is such a thing as a minimum number of respondents, which is obligatory for all association experiments. We claim that there is no such thing. The procedure of selecting a group of respondents in each association experiment has its own inner logic determined by the aims and objectives of the experiment.

Before we go on to discuss the results, it is considered worthwhile to say a few words about the “profession” criterion. Here we rely on the typology developed by E. A. Klimov, where all professions are classified according to the object of labor the

worker deals with, the instruments of labor (if the worker uses machines or manual tools), etc. Thus, all the professions are divided into the following types: “person – nature”, “person – technology”, “person – person”, “person – sign systems”, “person – artistic image” (Klimov 2004:158–198).

Discussion and results

Interestingly, there was only one questionnaire that contained associations both in Russian and in Ukrainian: “самость” (Rus. “selfness”), “протест” (Rus. “protest”), козочка (Rus. “a little goat”), “зеленое платье” (Rus. “a green dress”), “щирість” (Ukr. “sincerity”), “тоска” (Rus. “gloom”), “не своя жизнь” (Rus. “not living your own life”), “внучки” (Rus. “granddaughters”), “надежда” (Rus. “hope”). The respondent was a woman, aged 52, working as a university teacher of psychology in the city of Sumy. It brings us to the conclusion about the well-established bilingualism characteristic of Ukrainian people.

The ideal sample organized according to the “profession” criterion involved 500 respondents, with 100 people for each “profession type”, men and women being equally represented (50 people of either sex).

The overall number of reactions amounted to 2,452 words, including 88 word combinations and full sentences, 270 words that were repeated and 503 individual words. The analysis of the most frequent reactions, obtained in the course of the free association experiment, revealed certain common features in the verbal behaviour of the respondents, reflected in the lexemes “merry-making”, “delight”, “flirting”, “laughter”, “champagne”, “a young girl”, “children”, “mood”, “coquetry”, “happiness”, “smile” and “mood”. Table 1 shows a fragment of the association field with the frequency of responses being more than 30.

Table 1

Association field with the frequency of responses

Associations	Frequency and share (%)	Profession type and frequency				
		person-nature	person-technology	person-person	person-sign-systems	person-artistic image
merry-making	96 (3.915)	18	19	15	26	18
delight	80 (3.262)	23	15	14	13	15
flirting	79 (3.221)	18	13	19	14	15
laughter	70 (2.855)	15	8	18	17	12
champagne	49 (1.998)	8	5	13	15	8
a young girl	46 (1.876)	10	6	7	12	11
children	43 (1.754)	6	5	11	11	10
mood	42 (1.713)	9	12	2	8	11
coquetry	37 (1.509)	8	8	12	6	3
happiness	31 (1.264)	14	4	5	3	5
smile	30 (1.223)	6	4	8	8	4

On the stage of sememic attribution, associative reactions were divided into groups according to their denotative indications. The division was performed with the help of lexicographic description of the adjective “playful” (see our previous publication). As a result, separate meanings of *playfulness* (different sememes) were outlined and actualized in the course of the experiment. What is more, each sememe is represented as a set of particular reactions. Due to the limited volume of the present paper, the procedure of sememic attribution of reactions will be illustrated with the help of only one of the meanings of *playfulness*, **MERRY-MAKING**, as an example.

Playfulness (500 respondents)

1. (316 reactions (12.887%)) merry-making **96**; laughter **70**; guffaw **1**; champagne **49**; sparkling wine **1**; wine **14**; alcohol **6**; cocktail **3**; mojito **1**; booze **1**; vodka **1**; entertainment **11**, entertainments **2**; fun **7**; to enjoy oneself **1**; to make fun **1**, holiday **16**; carnival **2**; dancing **7**; round dance **2**; waltz **1**; music **5**; good music **1**; party **3**; drunken party **1**; get-together **1**; inebriation **2**; air balloons **1**; balloons **1**; a balloon **1**; tinsel **1**; paper streamers **1**; candles **1**; marshmallow **1**; sweets **1**; a song **1**; songs **1** – **the meaning “MERRY-MAKING”**.

The reactions obtained at the stage of seme interpretation were considered as linguistic representations of semantic components (sems) of the stimulus word. Semantically related associates were pooled together, and their frequencies were summed up. The figures in the square brackets below show the summarized frequencies. Apart from semantically related associates, this summarization procedure also involved cognate associates, periphrases, etc, i.e. those associates whose verbal forms nominate one and the same semantic component. After that, the sems of the identified meanings were arranged in a coherent definition. The latter is formulated as a coherent consecutive enumeration of interrelated semantic components of each meaning, which were identified in the course of the experiment. Each meaning is formulated separately, and each sems is accompanied by a figure that corresponds to the number of respondents.

Playfulness (500 respondents)

1. (316 reactions (12.887%)) playfulness is a state of *merry-making* **96**, the emotional representation of which is *laughter* **71** [guffaw **1**]; (merry-making) may be caused by drinking *champagne* **50** [champagne **49**, sparkling wine **1**] or some other *alcohol* **26** [wine **14**, alcohol **6**, cocktail **4** [cocktail **3**, mojito **1**], vodka **1**, booze **1**]; which (alcohol) may cause the state of *inebriation* **2**; or (merry-making) may also be caused by various kinds of *entertainments* **22** [entertainment **11**, entertainments **2**; fun **7**; to enjoy oneself **1**; to make fun **1**]; *dancing* **10** [dancing **7**, round dance **2**; waltz **1**.]; *music* **6** [music **5**, good music **1**]; *songs* **2** [song **1**, songs **1**], i.e. attributes (alcohol and entertainments) that are typical of a *holiday* **18** [holiday **16**, carnival **2**]; on the occasion of which a *party* **5** is organized [party **3**, drunken party **1**, get-together **1**]; with *balloons* **3** [air balloons **1**, balloons **1**, a balloon **1**], *paper streamers* **2** [tinsel **1**, paper streamers **1**]; *candles* **1**; sweetmeats *marshmallow* **1**, *sweets* **1** – **the meaning “MERRY-MAKING”**.

Such is the definition of playfulness in the meaning of “MERRY-MAKING” as it exists in the common sense of the respondents.

The analysis of periphery reactions (less than 10) showed that such profession types as “person-nature”, “person-technology”, and “person-artistic image” have their own subjective emotional way of perceiving colours: (yellowish-green, black 1), (red, black 1) and (red 2, pink 1) respectively.

The association technique reflects both cognitive structures that stand behind the linguistic meaning and individual peculiarities of respondents, i.e. their personal connotations and prior experience. Therefore, the individual perception of the word’s denotative meaning should necessarily be considered when defining the psycholinguistic meaning of the word “*playfulness*”. The discrepancy on the level of single individual responses can be rather big. It is not surprising, as the association field of any stimulus word is influenced by a lot of factors, including individual preferences.

However, it does not prove to be characteristic of our case, which confirms our assumption as to the universal nature of playfulness as a personality trait. Nevertheless, certain specific features are still to be traced when analyzing singular individual responses.

It is discovered that the representatives of “person – technology” and “person – artistic image” profession types tend to correlate *playfulness* with their professional activity. “Person – technology” 12 (13 % of the total number of words): *wax, spindler rotation, stone, computer, to adjust a lathe, to regulate a line, to handle equipment, welding, steel chip, a lathe, plaster, electrodes*.

Thus, the representatives of “person-technology” profession type clearly tend to associate *playfulness* with a subjective image of *technological process* (how?) and *a lathe* (with the help of what?), i.e. those components of technology that have immediate impact on the visual analyzer together with certain kinesthetic sensations that also contribute to the act of perception. Most singular individual responses are connected either with the technological process or its stages (“*to adjust a lathe*”, “*spindler rotation*”, “*to regulate a line*”, “*to handle equipment*”, “*welding*”, “*plaster*”), that refer to deliberate actions that aim at changing and (or) defining the condition of the object of labour (“*wax*”, “*stone*”, “*steel chip*”, “*electrodes*”).

“Person – artistic image” 19 (17 %): *waltz, guitar, clay, illumination, musician, music score, image, hue, palette, parody, song, to paint, a wall painting, pictures, stage, a successful show, good music, black paper, cabaret song*.

Instead of associating *playfulness* with the creative process as such, the representatives of “person – artistic image” profession type tend to associate it with the subjective perception of professional attributes and tools (“*guitar*”, “*palette*”), material (“*clay*”, “*black paper*”), means (“*illumination*”, “*music score*”, “*hue*”), a place for theatrical performance (“*stage*”) and by all means the final product of creative activity (“*waltz*”, “*parody*”, “*song*”, “*good music*”, “*cabaret song*”, “*a wall painting*”, “*pictures*”).

A conclusion can be made that it is when comparing singular responses of the above mentioned profession types, one can identify a certain peculiarity of “person – artistic image” type. As it is stated by E.A. Klimov, this peculiarity lies in the fact that “a significant proportion of labor is concealed from outsiders. Moreover, it is

not uncommon that extra effort is put in order to create a feeling of lightness and effortlessness of the final product” (Klimov 2004).

As for the analysis of periphery association fields of the other profession types, with frequency of reactions being more than 1 and less than 10, it also reveals the impact of professional activity on the understanding of *playfulness*. It is quite logical. As V.P.Zinchenko claims, a perceptive image serves as a regulator of activity. On the other hand, however, activity is a fundamental condition for the development of perception. What and how a person perceives depend on what he does and how he does it. In the context of practical activity, perception becomes a deliberate process of exploring the reality (Meshherjakov, Zinchenko 2003). In other profession types, however, this pattern is not so accentuated, which is explained by the specific nature of professional activity of “person – technology” and “person – artistic image” profession types.

The analysis of singular reactions also made it possible to point out associations-definitions of *playfulness* which are verbal representations of the essence of the profession: *social intelligence, hue*.

Conclusions

At the current stage of the free association experiment common features have been revealed in the verbal behavior of respondents grouped according to “profession” criterion, being reflected in the lexemes “*merry-making*” (96 (3,915)), “*delight*” (80 (3,262)), “*flirting*” (79 (3,221)), “*laughter*” (70 (2,855)), “*champagne*” (49 (1,998)), “*a young girl*” (46 (1,876)), “*children*” (43 (1,754)), “*mood*” (42 (1,713)), “*coquetry*” (37 (1,509)), “*happiness*” (31 (1,264)) and “*smile*” (30 (1,223%)).

The findings of the analysis of periphery association fields were in line with expectations. The results indicate that professional activity has the impact on the understanding of *playfulness*, as it is influenced by the perception of objects, phenomena and processes. It is evident, since perception is indispensable for adequate orientation in the surrounding environment.

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