ASSOCIATIONS AS A CULTURAL IMAGE OF THE WORLD

Alina Yodlovskaya
PhD student
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland

Summary. The article presents an analysis of an associative experiment conducted with native speakers of the Polish language. With the help of data taken from the associative dictionaries of the Ukrainian and Russian languages a comparison of different reactions to the bird stimulus in different language cultures was carried out. Differences and similarities in perception by native speakers are shown.

Key words: associative experiment, dictionary, stimulus, reaction, culture

The anthropocentrism of the contemporary linguistic scientific paradigm has become one of the leading topics of research conducted using the associative experiment method. Using an association experiment, we can investigate the linguistic image of the world. The experiment creates a person's associative system, thus revealing his worldview.

The association experiment provides "living" material for building associative fields of certain concepts, reconstructing fragments of language and conceptual images of the world.


I conducted a free association experiment in oral and written form. A free association experiment involves the respondent being asked to respond with the word that first came to mind after the stimulus was presented, without limiting the choice of response by any criteria. The respondent had to respond in writing to the heard stimulus word as quickly as possible.

The stimulus list contained 20 words that were associated with different perceptual modes. In this work, I focused on the words of the association experiment, namely the word «bird».

100 respondents took part in the study. They are students of computational linguistics, Polish philology, Bohemian studies, and Slavic studies. The respondents included 74 women and 26 men aged 18-32.
We took the answers of Ukrainian speakers from the Associative Dictionary of the Ukrainian Language. "Ukrainian associative dictionary" by Svitlana Martinek [4] shows experimental results that are relevant not only for a specific age group, but also for a wide range of Ukrainian language users.

We took the data of native Russian speakers from the associative dictionary of the Russian language (Russian associative dictionary [9]).

Let's move on to the results and dictionary definitions. For all stimulus words, the frequency of use of this or that word was calculated. The most frequent reactions became nuclear, less frequent – peripheral.

**Reactions to the bird stimulus for Polish speakers:**


According to the results of the associative experiment, the following are included in the nuclear zone of the associative field of the lexeme bird:

- wings 12
- flight 10
- flying 8
- sky 6
- freedom 5
- pigeon 5
- nest 5
- feather 4
- animal 4

Thus, we see that the most frequent reaction of the respondents is wings to the stimulus of a bird, and that it makes flight, flying.

Polish speakers also pointed to the abstraction freedom. In the Polish language we can find phraseological units for example to be free (light) like a bird which means to be free, unrestricted, unrestrained.

It is interesting that among all the birds, respondents named the pigeon the most times. This is a really popular and widespread bird, especially at Polish railway stations and around the cities.

According to the results of the survey, the following reactions are attributed to the peripheral zone: parrot 3, sparrow 3, fly 3, chirping 2, stork 2, air 2, tree 3, singing 2, egg 1, summer 1, dirty cars 1, market 1, no 1, twitter 1, beak 1, seaside 1, lightness 1, flies 1, summers 1, flying 1, eagle 1, magpie 1, swallow 1, gliding 1, singing 1, bird image 1, crane 1, bird in the air 1, blackbird 1, calm 1, bird - 1.

Thus, birds such as parrots, sparrow, stork, eagle, magpie, swallow, blackbird, crane entered the peripheral zone.

The perception of hearing is verbalized in the respondents' answers, namely the sounds that are characteristic of birds: chirping, singing, twitter.

**Answers of the speakers of Russian language culture:**

total stimulus responses: 102, different stimulus responses: 45, single stimulus responses: 32, failures: 0.

According to the results of the questionnaires, we attributed the following reactions to the nuclear zone: songbird 16, small bird 10, titmouse 10, cage 5, sings 5, sparrow 4, small 4, nightingale 4.

Russian speakers most often associate a bird with the perception of hearing songbird, sings and visual sensations, namely the size small bird.

Among the names of birds, the tit, the sparrow and the nightingale (which is also a songbird) are distinguished, and these birds are the most common in this country.

Other birds also got into the peripheral zone, for example, pigeon 1, swallow 1, crow 1, oriole 1, wren 1.

An indication of hearing (finished singing 1, singer 1, song 1, sing 1), and visual perception (golden 1, little bird 1) was also presented in the peripheral zone.
It is interesting that, for example, Polish speakers associate a bird with freedom, while Russian speakers repeatedly indicate the reaction of a cage, which means the opposite of freedom: cage 5, in a cage 1.

Also, Polish speakers indicate the summer season, while Russian speakers name the spring: spring bird 1, spring 1.

Among other reactions that got into the peripheral zone were animal 3, flew away 3, God’s 2, on a tree 2, flight 2.

Reactions to the bird stimulus for Ukrainian speakers:

- total stimulus responses: 262
- according to the results of the associative experiment, the following are included in the nuclear zone of the associative field of the lexeme bird: eagle 41; pigeon 30; falcon 13; stork 10; sparrow 6; flies 6; big 5.

Thus, for the most part, the names of birds that are characteristic of this country are presented. Only speakers of the Ukrainian language mentioned a falcon. All the birds named by the respondents are national symbols of Ukraine. For example, the stork is a symbol of love for the father-mother who blessed this world. And therefore, it is a symbol of procreation, family well-being and love for the native land, and many omens and legends are associated with it.

Like for native speakers of the Polish language, Ukrainians also associate the bird with freedom, so the response freedom was also presented in the questionnaires.

Only native speakers of Ukrainian mentioned domestic birds in their answers, for example, chicken, turkey and rooster.

The names of other birds were also presented in the peripheral zone: stork 3; hawk 3; nightingale 3; crow 2; phoenix 2; seagull 2; golden eagle 2; sparrow 1; parrot 1; woodpecker 1, swan 1 swallow 1; tit 1; polar owl 1.

Conclusions

Research has shown the existence of linguistically and culturally conditioned associations common to many people, as well as personal associations that differ from person to person, related to specific experiences.

According to the results of the experiment, we see that the respondents name different birds that are characteristic of their country, and the reactions which are related to perception, in particular, vision and hearing.

Speakers of the Russian language mostly associate birds with the perception of hearing, namely singing, while speakers of the Ukrainian language indicate the names of specific birds, and speakers of Polish name the main type of movement of the bird and the part of the body with the help of which they do it namely wings.

The associative field showed a fragment of verbal memory (human knowledge) and a fragment of images of consciousness, motives and assessments of people, in this case young Poles, Ukrainians and Russians.

References: