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## UKRAINIAN HUMOROUS DISCOURSE IN THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR

*The article focuses its attention on military time humorous discourse presented in literature journalistic style or informal style in Ukrainian multimedia since the beginning of the Russian military aggression. It analyses cognitive features, literary and stylistic devices of the military time humorous discourse presented in the Ukrainian and English languages. The research reveals the application of such cognitive patterns as the 'illusionary superiority pattern,' 'the distinct contrast,' 'the easel pattern,' 'the infantry man fallacy,' 'heuristic analogy,' 'Von Restorff pattern.'*

*The study concentrates on the analysis of the literature journalism style of the Ukrainian humorous news presentation and the interconnection of facts and storytelling technique, emotional appeal and dramatic tension.*

*In this research the Ukrainian military time humorous discourse is defined as a text written by a Ukrainian author in Ukrainian or English languages during the war with specific linguistic and extra linguistic stock of realization of inner laughing intention, unrolled in the dynamic situation of joyful and playful communication. The main variants of Ukrainian military time humorous discourse is literary journalism or non-fiction humorous discourse, jokes, funny one-liners, humorous video materials, humorous photos and memes, presented in Ukrainian multimedia.*

*The literary journalism is considered to be a fusion of common journalism with storytelling and stylistic devices used in fiction, making an emotional appeal and forcing the audience to feel the facts. The application areas of literary journalism are different (politics and war, economics and ecology, etc.) but typically it relates to soft news spheres.*

*The Ukrainian literature journalism style of the news presentation is characterized with the mixture of facts, storytelling technique, emotional appeal, dramatic tension and satirical humor.*

*Ukrainian military time jokes are distinguished with brevity (one-liner jokes) and the appliance of such stylistic figures as paraprosoodian, antithesis, allusion, irony, satire.*

**Key words:** *literary journalism, cognitive pattern, humorous discourse, stylistic figure, literary device, irony, illusionary superiority.*

The **purpose** of the article is to single out some cognitive patterns, stylistic figures, literary devices of Ukrainian humorous discourse relating to the Russian-Ukrainian war presented in Ukrainian and English languages.

The purpose raises such **tasks**: 1) description of the literary journalism features of the humorous articles in Ukrainian multimedia; 2) determination of 'illusionary superiority,' 'Von Restorff' and other cognitive patterns applied to cause a comic effect; 3) disclosure of the connection of cognitive patterns with a number of stylistic figures; 4) stylistic analysis of the military time humorous discourse in Ukrainian multimedia

The **novelty** of the analysis is defined with the synthesis of theoretical and practical studies of Ukrainian military time humorous discourse and introduction of some terms, including 'illusionary superiority,' 'distinct contrast,' 'Von Restorff' cognitive patterns.

The **theoretical value** of the study is reasoned with the definition of several cognitive mechanisms of humor and the disclosure of the basic methods of the analysis of Ukrainian humorous discourse written in literary journalism style.

The **practical importance** of the article, which could be used in cognitive linguistics, discourse analysis and literary journalism, is determined by the complex analysis of the characteristic features of the military time humorous discourse in Ukrainian multimedia.

The cognitive and linguistic analysis is based on the approaches of V.O. Samohyna [16, p. 15-25], V. Raskin [11, p. 20-50] and S. Attardo [1, p. 25-65] who researched the problems of humor and comism in the most comprehensive way.

We determine comism as a kind of intellectual and emotional activity of playful and creative character, based on unexpected reframing of meaning, aimed at

audience laughter, with such communicative intentions as cheery laughing, lighthearted fun, pejorative stoop, and possible libido or aggression.

Keeping in mind the definition of humorous discourse made by V.O. Samohyna [16, p. 45-55], we define Ukrainian military time humorous discourse as a text written by a Ukrainian author in Ukrainian or English languages during the war with specific linguistic and extra linguistic stock of realization of inner laughing intention, unrolled in the dynamic situation of joyful and playful communication. The main variants of Ukrainian military time humorous discourse is literary journalism or non-fiction humorous discourse, jokes, funny one-liners, humorous video materials, humorous photos and memes, presented in Ukrainian multimedia.

While defining literary journalism, we think that the following definition given by R. Marnane looks as the most comprehensive, “**Literary journalism**, as a form of reportage that employs narrative techniques more commonly associated with fiction, remains uniquely suited for bridging gaps between class content and contemporary, real-world applications” [8, p. 146-157].

We can add just only one remark saying that literary journalism presents a fusion of common journalism with storytelling and stylistic devices used in fiction, making an emotional appeal and forcing the audience to feel the facts. The application areas of literary journalism are different (politics and war, economics and ecology, etc.) but typically it relates to soft news spheres.

Accepting the idea that the flow of discourse is conducted through some cognitive frames [13, p. 10-57], at least partly, the comic effect is caused by such conceptual things as cognitive patterns.

The majority of cognitive biases were discovered and experimentally proved by D. Kahneman [3, p. 25-100]. In our opinion, a cognitive pattern is a mental filter, which presents a scheme of connecting of a set of several frames and a dynamic model of the reality cognition, amalgamated around some key value dominant, the frequent usage of which forms and sometimes deforms the cognitive frames of reality cognition and leads to the fixation of a cognitive bias of the same name in the world view of a communicant. The linguo cognitive pattern is an interim chain between a frame and a cognitive bias.

The cognitive pattern of ‘*Von Restorff*’ is an essential one in humorous discourse. The key idea of it lies in the fact that people pay more attention to unusual, non-standard and bizarre objects and words. Von

Restorff affirmed that such cognitive bias is intrinsic to a lot of people (Von Restorff, 1933). This pattern is based on such value dominant as “*Curiosity*” and consists of two main frames: the frame “*extraordinary objects*” and the frame “*unusual phenomena and puzzles*.”

Example 1. Funny Snippets Of The Bloody War In Ukraine [4].



*‘Military trucks entered Ukraine from Russia’*

*‘March 10, 2022. In Chernihiv region, one local man shot a video with 15 Russian trucks belonging to logistic support units circling solemnly on a snowy agro field. The video looks bewildering. The first idea striking the head says, “The loaded trucks are drilled for a parade march.” The second idea asks, “Why does it happen on the territory of Ukraine?” Only the third flash of mind solves this catch-22, I mean this paradoxical war ploy, – this logistic unit just only wants to run out gas in order not to go into the nightmare of this ‘military operation...’*

The situational humor of this news, presented in literary journalism style, where facts are mixed with storytelling technique and emotional appeal, actualizes the cognitive pattern of Von Restorff (the situation looks weird), revealing the communicative intentions of pejorative stoop and lighthearted fun. Stylistically, the author uses metaphors (catch-22, nightmare, flash of mind), alliteration (solemnly snow), paradox (trucks circle on a field), satire.

The cognitive pattern of ‘*illusory superiority*’ means that people estimate their IQ qualities as high and the qualities of others as low. It lies in the foundation of the same named cognitive bias, discovered by D. Kahneman and A. Tversky, who state that such cognitive bias is intrinsic to a lot of people (Kahneman, Tversky, 1982). This pattern is based on such value dominant as “*We are smarter!*” and consists of two main frames: the frame “*We*” of a sender or senders (IQ, gender, profession, ethnic group, social position), and the frame “*They*” (opponents, rivals, enemies).

Example 2. Funny Snippets Of The Bloody War In Ukraine [4].



“March 8, 2022. In Sumy region, four Russian tanks T-72 got crashed by two Ukrainian flags. In the morning, local folks noticed 4 Russian tanks pulled up to the center of their small village. Young tank men, being baffled by the lack of fuel, drained gas from two tanks and filled the tanks of two others. After that they moved away seeking the way and leaving two T-72 with closed hatches. In a while, jolly farmers fixed two Ukrainian flags on the tanks` turrets parked in their settlement. On arrival, puzzled troopers of two tanks racked their brains for a sec and started shooting at tanks with Ukrainian flags. After getting a decisive ‘victory,’ they came closer and got disappointed looking at their own damaged tanks. Then they brainstormed for a while, actively gesticulating and bitching. Soon they decided that the best way ran across the local bridge with a load capacity of 5 tons. Ignoring the traffic sign, the first tank broke down the bridge and tumbled into a quite deep river, leaving no chances to save it. The last tank chose another way and after a long circling around the village outskirts, at long last, found a deep ditch where it got stuck till the end of the war.”

The situational humor of this news, presented in the literary journalism style, where facts are mixed with storytelling technique, emotional appeal and dramatic tension, actualizes the cognitive pattern of Illusionary Superiority (locals look smart and Russian soldiers show their low IQ), revealing the communicative intentions of pejorative stoop and lighthearted fun. Stylistically, the author uses metaphors (they racked the brains, brainstormed.), bathos (bitching), alliteration (deep ditch), satire.

The ‘*picture dominance*’ cognitive pattern, which we call as the ‘*easel pattern*,’ is an important pattern in humorous discourse. The existence of the same called cognitive bias was experimentally proved by A. Paivio, according to whom people memorize visual pictures and images created by words considerably more quickly than any abstract information [9, p.27-40]. The ‘*easel cognitive pattern*’ sticks around such value dominant as the ‘*picture delight*’ and consists of such frames as ‘*visual picture*’ and ‘*mental image*.’ Stylistically, this pattern is actualized through different metaphors, similes, hyperboles and non-standard epithets.

Example 3. Joke.



“Two kids play in a backyard sandbox. The boy asks the girl, ‘What is your name?’

‘Javelina! And how are you?’ The girl wonders.

‘Bayraktar!’ The boy answers proudly” [7].

From the stylistic point of view, the humorous effect of this joke is caused by metaphoric allusions to Javelin, an American portable antiaircraft missile, and Bayraktar, a Turkish unmanned aerial drone, both of which are used by Ukrainian Army. The cognitive base of this joke is the ‘*easel pattern*,’ creating a funny picture of two militarized kids.

Example 4. In the Kherson region a flock of wild geese ravaged a Russian fighter jet [14].



“March 18, 2022. Wild geese joined the air defense of Ukraine. According to SpecMachinery.

com.ua, another enemy fighter crashed near Kalanchak in the Kherson region. According to eyewitnesses...a pair of Russian fighters flew near Kalanchak. The first raised a flock of geese who decided to perform a patriotic duty to the people of Ukraine. One or more birds heroically got into the engine of a Russian fighter, as a result of which it fell into the swamp.”

In this short article, written in literary journalistic style, the author applies personification metaphors – wild geese like people ‘joined the air defense of Ukraine’ and ‘decided to perform a patriotic duty’; hyperbole – they did it ‘heroically.’ Besides, we notice the emotional appeal and dramatic tension causing together the humor effect. Cognitively, the easel pattern is used.

The cognitive pattern of ‘*heuristic analogy*’ is the constituent part of ‘*heuristic representativeness*’ bias [3, p.77-95], which underlines the audience’s inclination to switch on imagination and to solve any problems through the search of spontaneous analogies. The cognitive pattern of ‘*heuristic analogy*’ rotates around such value dominant as ‘*imagination respect*.’ It is based on such frames as ‘*appropriate objects*’ and ‘*appropriate phenomena*.’

Example 5. Joke. “*Girls, whom Turks write to, ask Bayraktars! Such times we have...*” [2]. Stylistically, the humorous effect of this joke is caused by the parapsodokian figure (unexpected joke end) and the metaphoric allusion to Bayraktar, a Turkish unmanned aerial drone, used by Ukrainian Army. The cognitive base of this joke is the ‘*heuristic analogy pattern*,’ shaping a funny picture of a beloved girl asking Bayraktar instead of some romantic gift.

‘*The Infantry Man Fallacy*’ cognitive pattern is based on the cognitive bias exposed by L. Santos. Rephrasing the famous saying “*knowing is half the battle*”, L. Santos affirms that “*knowing is less than half the battle*”. With this cognitive bias the researcher outlines the tendency of a communicant to adhere to his or her wrong biases, even if he or she wants to get rid of them: “*I have biases – not enough. I know that I know knowing I have biases isn’t enough – not enough...*” (Santos, 2015).

In our opinion, ‘*the Infantry Man Fallacy*’ cognitive pattern means that a communicant, in spite of his or her knowledge about the possible verbal delusion or trap, could get trapped and this knowledge do not protect him or her. This cognitive pattern is based on such value dominant as ‘*caution*’ and such frames as ‘*trap*’ and ‘*experience*.’

Example 6. Joke. “*Where do we go?*” “*To Chornobaivka.*”



There is a funny allusion to the film ‘Groundhog Day’ [10] where the same day happened for many times. Besides, such stylistic figures as parapsodokian and irony are used here. It is based on the cognitive pattern of ‘*the Infantry Man Fallacy*.’ The successful shelling of Chornobaivka airport with Russian helicopters and military vehicles was conducted by Ukrainian artillery for 11 times.

The cognitive pattern of ‘*Distinct contrast*’ (from ‘*contrast effect bias*’) [3, p.110-125] consists in the fact that contrastive referents, which are juxtaposed together, focus more attention and are memorized better. This pattern is based on such frames as ‘*contrastive objects*’ and the value dominant ‘*interest to all unusual things*’. The actualization of this pattern occurs through the appliance of satire and different figures of contrast (antithesis, oxymoron, chiasm, absurd, parapsodokian etc).

Example 7. One-liner joke.

“*The news of the day: Ukrainians storm military enlistment offices and Russians storm cash machines*” [7].

Example 8. One-liner joke. “*In the military enlistment office of Ivano-Frankivsk: ‘How to serve – all are sick. And how to fight – everyone is healthy!’*” [7].

The humor effect of both jokes is based on the cognitive pattern of distinct contrast, which is actualized stylistically through funny paradoxes based on antithesis.

Example 9. The Powerful Punch of Ukrainian Police To Poltava Farmers buying and selling Russian Tanks On Their Black Market [6].



*"The profit is not so big, but it's honest work."  
(a farmer from Poltava)*

*"March 26, 2022. Poltava police smashed a serious strike to local farmers buying and selling Russian T-72 tanks and armored personnel carriers (APC military vehicles) on the black market after their successful 'Hadiach safari' on Russian military vehicles started on February 24, 2022.*

*As it was informed by Evgen Rogachov, Chief of Poltava region police, "Since the beginning of the large-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, Poltava police have seized 11 tanks, 2 armored vehicles, 8 machine guns, 9 submachine guns, 5 rifles, 10 pistols, about 4,000 rounds of ammunition, 14 grenades and about 200 other ammunition."*

*According to off-the-record sources, in Poltava region the price of a working T-72 varies from \$15,000 to \$100,000...Armored personnel carriers of various modifications including BTR-70 and BTR-80 are offered by farmers for considerably lower prices...The brand-new ones used for military parades could be more expensive and it sounds reasonable.*

*So, in spite of Poltava police persecution, local farmers keep on chasing Russian tanks T-72 and APC of various modifications...On the one hand, it is time to start seeding and sowing works, so they need additional vehicles. On the other hand, speaking honestly, extra money wouldn't hurt..."*

In this article, written in the literary journalistic style, with emotional appeal and dramatic tension, the writer uses metaphors – ‘smashed a serious strike,’ ‘Hadiach safari,’ and ‘black market’; alliteration – ‘seeding and sowing works,’ ‘Poltava police persecution’; satire. Anti-irony is displayed in the fact that Ukrainian farmers turned out to be smarter than professional Russian military men. Besides, on the level of context, we see the contrast referents, juxtaposed together: Russian military men loosing tanks – Poltava farmers chasing tanks – Ukrainian police seizing tanks from farmers. From the cognitive point of view, the easel pattern and distinct contrast are applied. All together it leads to the humor effect.

**Example 10. Чмонія (Чмоня)**

A popular present day in Ukrainian social networks [7].

**Чмонія** (Andrey Ryazantsev) is a captive soldier of the aggressor (POW) from Gorlovka, a former 38 years old teacher. In the photo, the man looks funny and hopeless. Tiktokers started joking that this is a tough ‘Russian Iron man’. They make various videos and memes with him in Tiktok.



**The Simpsons For Ukraine**

The meme illustrating the international support of Ukraine [7].



**Memes about Ukrainian President Zelensky**



**Conclusion.** The conducted cognitive and stylistic analyses of a number of Ukrainian humorous discourse fragments functioning in Ukrainian multimedia permits us to affirm that to create a comic effect, a number of cognitive patterns are engaged, which stand behind some stylistic figures and influence the manner of the news presentation. The main patterns include the ‘illusionary superiority pattern,’ ‘the distinct contrast,’ ‘the easel pattern,’ ‘the infantry man fallacy,’ ‘heuristic analogy,’ ‘Von Restorff pattern.’

The literature journalism style of the news presentation is characterized with the mixture of facts, storytelling technique, emotional appeal, dramatic tension, humor and satire.

Military time jokes are distinguished with brevity (one-liner jokes) and the appliance of such stylistic figures as paraprosoodokian, antithesis, allusion, irony.

The number of stylistic devices and cognitive patterns engaged in Ukrainian humorous discourse,

leading to a comic effect, is not limited by those mentioned in the research, so the **perspective** of the analysis of such kind of discourse is their further disclosure and analysis, classification and codification.

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#### Харченко О. В. УКРАЇНСЬКИЙ ГУМОРИСТИЧНИЙ ДИСКУРС ПІД ЧАС РОСІЙСЬКО-УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ВІЙНИ

*Стаття зосереджує увагу на гумористичному дискурсі військового часу, представленому в літературі, публіцистичному чи неформальному стилі в українських мультимедіа від початку російської військової агресії. Проаналізовано когнітивні особливості, літературно-стилістичні прийоми гумористичного дискурсу військового часу, представленого українською та англійською мовами. Дослідження розкриває застосування таких когнітивних патернів, як «ілюзійна перевага», «виразний контраст», «мольберт», «помилка піхотинця», «евристична аналогія», «шаблон фон Ресторфа».*

*Дослідження зосереджено на аналізі літературно-публіцистичного стилю українських гумористичних новин та взаємозв'язку фактів і техніки оповідання, емоційної привабливості та драматичної напруженості.*

*У цих наукових розвідках український військовий гумористичний дискурс визначається як текст, написаний українським автором українською чи англійською мовами під час війни зі специфічним мовним і позамовним запасом реалізації внутрішньої сміхової інтенції, розгорнутий у динамічній ситуації радісного та ігрового спілкування. Основними варіантами гумористичного дискурсу українського військового часу є літературно-публіцистичний або нехудожній гумористичний дискурс, жарти, веселі*

*одностроки, гумористичні відеоматеріали, гумористичні фотографії та мему, представлені в українських мультимедіа.*

*Літературна журналістика розглядається як злиття загальноприйнятої журналістики з технікою розповіді оповідань і стилістичними прийомами, що використовуються в художній літературі, викликаючи емоційну привабливість і змушуючи аудиторію відчувати факти. Сфери застосування літературної журналістики різні (політика та війна, економіка та екологія тощо), але, як правило, це стосується сфер неактуальних новин.*

*Український літературний публіцистичний стиль викладу новин, або стиль літературної журналістики, характеризується змішуванням фактів, техніки оповідання, емоційної привабливості, драматичної напруженості та сатиричного гумору.*

*Українські жарти військового часу відрізняються стислістю (однострокові жарти) та застосуванням таких стилістичних фігур, як паранпросдокіян, антитеза, алюзія, іронія, сатира.*

**Ключові слова:** *літературна публіцистика, когнітивний зразок, гумористичний дискурс, стилістична фігура, літературний прийом, іронія, ілюзорна перевага.*