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## МЕДІАКОМУНІКАЦІЇ, КОГНІТИВНІ АСПЕКТИ, УКРАЇНСЬКИЙ ГУМОРИСТИЧНИЙ ДИСКУРС ВОЄННОГО ЧАСУ



## MEDIA COMMUNICATION, COGNITIVE ASPECTS, WAR-TIME UKRAINIAN HUMOROUS DISCOURSE

**ABSTRACT.** *The article analyses the functioning of the war-time Ukrainian humorous discourse in media communication in general and the cognitive mechanisms of humor, including the 'Availability Heuristic' cognitive pattern in particular. The study aims to examine twelve Ukrainian war-time jokes and to reveal the main cognitive patterns and accompanying stylistic figures producing the comic effect. All jokes manifest the application of the 'Availability heuristic' cognitive pattern inherent to the war period when old pre-war realities are changed with new war-time realities and explained in a funny way. The study addresses some cognitive and pragmatic aspects of war-time Ukrainian humor, focusing on the role of cognitive patterns in selecting stylistic humor devices while processing the incoming information and shaping the cognitive frameworks of humor perception and creation. The paper reveals the main cognitive patterns, including the 'Availability Heuristic,' the 'Distinct contrast,' 'Negativity Thinking,' the 'Superiority or Illusionary Superiority,' the 'Easel,' and their humorous actualization through such stylistic figures as paraprosdokian, irony, bathos, double entendre, pun, metaphor and pastiche in its narrow meaning. The researched Ukrainian jokes are interwoven with the situational context of the dramatic events within the temporality of the speedy streaming news of the Russian-Ukrainian war. The paper explores the main pragmatic functions of Ukrainian war-time humorous discourse and makes additional remarks about a number of affirmations from some humor theories.*

*The war-time Ukrainian humorous discourse is set against the background of the current cruel Russian-Ukrainian war realities. It differs from the pre-war Ukrainian humorous discourse stylistically, pragmatically, and cognitively.*

**Keywords:** *cognitive patterns, Ukrainian war-time humorous discourse, stylistic figure, paraprosdokian, irony, bathos, pastiche.*

**АНОТАЦІЯ.** *У статті аналізується функціонування українського гумористичного дискурсу воєнного часу в медійній комунікації загалом та когнітивні механізми гумору, зокрема когнітивний патерн «Евристика доступності». Розкрито основні когнітивні закономірності та супутні стилістичні фігури, що створюють комічний ефект. Усі жарти демонструють застосування когнітивного шаблону «Евристика доступності», властивого воєнному періоду, коли старі довоєнні реалії змінюються новими реаліями воєнного часу та пояснюються смішно. У дослідженні розглянуто деякі когнітивні та прагматичні аспекти українського гумору воєнного часу, увагу зосереджено на ролі когнітивних патернів у виборі стилістичних прийомів гумору, під час обробки інформації, що надходить, і формування когнітивних рамок сприйняття та створення гумору. У статті розкрито основні когнітивні патерни, зокрема «Евристика доступності», «Виразний контраст», «Негативне мислення», «Перевага або ілюзорна перевага», «Мольберт» та їх гумористична актуалізація за допомогою таких стилістичних фігур, як парепросдокіан, іронія, батос, подвійний зміст, каламбур, метафора та пастиш у вузькому значенні. Досліджувані українські жарти влітаються в ситуативний контекст драматичних подій у темпоральності стрімкого потоку новин про російсько-українську війну. У статті до-*

сліджуються основні прагматичні функції українського гумористичного дискурсу часів війни та зроблено додаткові зауваження щодо ряду тверджень із деяких теорій гумору.

Український гумористичний дискурс воєнного часу проаналізовано на тлі нинішніх жорстоких реалій російсько-української війни. Він відрізняється від довоєнного українського гумористичного дискурсу стилістично, прагматично та пізнавально.

**Ключові слова:** когнітивні паттерни, український воєнний гумористичний дискурс, стилістична фігура, паранпросдокіан, іронія, батос, пастиш.

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**I**ntroduction. The war-time Ukrainian humor is a reflection of the dramatic war launched by Kremlin leaders against Ukraine on February 24, 2022. It differs from the sparkling and soft pre-war Ukrainian humor, acquiring new aggressive features, which are supposed to be analyzed in this work. As a multidimensional and multifaceted phenomenon, it will be researched from three main perspectives: linguistic, cognitive, and pragmatic.

**The cognitive level.** In this work, the cognitive research of such multifaceted phenomenon as humor discourse is based on the 'prospect theory' of D.Kahneman and A.Tversky, which takes into consideration a number of cognitive factors, including cognitive biases, explaining the decision-making process, its fallacies, and peculiarities (Kahneman & Tversky, 1982). Humor discourse, like any other kind of discourse, is influenced by switching cognitive biases and cognitive patterns lying in the foundations.

The four E cognition theory affirms that cognition does not happen just inside human brains but is embodied and embedded, enacted and extended by way of extra-head processes and structures (Rowlands, 2010). The processes shape the brain-body-world interaction that connects all constituents into a self-regulation system. The cognition processes passing through the brain and body embodiment, and embedment are amplified through social and cultural communication.

**The research takes into account the incongruity theory developed by G. Kuipers (Kuipers, 2009) and N.Goldman (Goldman 2013),** who affirmed that the cognitive mechanism of incongruity between what is expected and what is experienced triggers the comic effect shaping, underlying that humorous discourse can serve as a medium of social correction.

According to the reframing theory of humor by O. Kharchenko (2014), in humor discourse, the

comic effect is caused by a semantic complication that occurs due to unexpected reframing of the situational context, contrasting inferences, and cognitive patterns exposed through a set of stylistic figures.

**The pragmatic level.** Pragmatics analyses the relation of explicit and implicit language features, focusing on the interaction of texts, contexts, and functions.

In this work, it is based on the superiority theory of A. Barton stated, "The superiority theory is the theory that the humor we find in comedy and life is based on ridicule, wherein we regard the object the object of amusement as inferior and/or ourselves as superior" (Barton, 2005). The pragmatic function of 'disparaging' or 'insulting' the enemy is based on this theory.

Besides, it relies on the psychological tension relief theory developed by R.A.Malphurs (Malphurs, 2010), according to which people get rid of negative emotions by laughing and smiling. The pragmatic function of humor, defined as 'stress relief,' is grounded in this theory.

According to the 'Wheel Model' theory (Robert, Wilbanks, 2012), humor is emotionally contagious, and regular humor events serve as essential drivers of social group happiness and well-being through their impact on positive effect. The intentionally created 'positive humor effect' shapes individual 'state positive affect,' leads to 'emotional display,' socially shared 'group positive affect' and then to a 'humor supportive environment.' So successful humor events, through their cyclical and cumulative processes, fulfill the pragmatic functions of forming good team spirit and behavior correction, greater team cohesiveness and mutual influence, better productivity and specific group culture, and optimistic and homogenous collective mood.

It is difficult not to agree with J. Terrion and J. Ashforth (2002), who stated that humor with aggressive and negative overtones could promote a sense of identity and community. Being aimed at outsiders of some social group (they), such humor can lead to better in-group cohesiveness (we). The smart, sarcastic, put-down humor can generate a worse image of the target-group opponents and shape the better image of in-group members. In such a way, within a social context, aggressive humor could be perceived as amusing for some social group members and negative for another social group. This kind of humor has the pragmatic functions of disparaging or insulting opponents and uniting members of some social, professional, or cultural group.

The successful humor is supposed to be well-timed and relevant. Odmark S. (2018) expresses the importance of the timeliness category. Underlying the affirmation that the humor of TV comedians has agenda-setting and persuasive effects, she claimed that to be fortunate, the TV comedians 'mostly handle current events as opposed to historical or future events.' It is hard to disagree with such an assertion; a funny joke at a car accident spot will not be appropriate; the same relates to some story that happened in the long ago past, slightly known by a large audience. So, while analyzing humor, the pragmatic function of timely relevance looks reasonable.

The idea of the violation of Grice's principle of cooperation with its general maxims of quantity, quality, relation, and manner, which leads to their infringing, opting out, and flouting, looks appropriate. It is expressed by such linguists as Cutting (2002: 34-35), Black (2006: 24-25), and S. Attardo (2020: 157-175).

**The linguistic level.** A lot of scholars analyze humor from the linguistic perspective, paying attention to the most obvious humor devices belonging to stylistics and rhetoric. The stylistic and rhetorical figures leading to a comic effect were described by many researchers, starting from Aristotle and Cicero almost two thousand years ago.

In the opinion of Aristotle, rhetoric's humor is supposed to be subtle and spontaneous, amusing and witty, and appropriate to situations, audience, and opportunities (Aristotle, 1934).

Cicero affirmed that the humor of orators should be timely, based primarily on irony, humorous

ambiguities, and a smart shift from serious to humorous speech and behavior (Cicero, 1942).

Different stylistic figures accompanying the incongruity mechanism and causing the comic effect are well analyzed by Samokhina, V.A. (2008).

While defining 'black humor,' A. Breton mentioned various stylistic tools, headed by skeptical irony, supporting the idea that black humor is limited by stupidity, sarcasm, and mild jokes and was "the mortal enemy of sentimentality par excellence," standing against the "obsolete artifices." (Breton, 1940).

Besides, this research is influenced by the 'Semantic Script' theory of V. Raskin (Raskin, 1985), who analyzed the semantic mechanisms and semantic models of humor standing behind and causing the comic effect in various types of jokes.

**Methodology and research approaches.** Considering the above-mentioned ideas, the analysis of the war-time Ukrainian humor belongs to a wider volumetric analysis combining different theoretical and methodological approaches taken primarily from discourse analysis, stylistics, pragmatics, and cognitive science. It encompasses three main dimensions: the language humor tools, the pragmatic humor functions, and the cognitive humor mechanisms.

**Discussion.** Considering the definition of humor by N. Goldman (Goldman, 2013) and the humorous discourse by V. O. Samohyna (Samohyna, 2008), we define war-time Ukrainian humorous discourse as the war-time Ukrainian humorous text with particular linguistic and extralinguistic devices of inner laughing intention realization unrolled in the dynamic situation of joyful and humorous communication. It is grounded on the effect of the deceived expectation caused by the reframing of cognitive patterns, supported by the shift of inferences (from logic to illogic, imaginative, absurd, paradoxical, probably inductive, fantasy, unlikely, religious, and so on), as well as situational contexts, causing a clash of explicit and implicit meanings and the further comic effect.

D. Wilson and D. Sperber consider inferences as cognitive operations, mainly of an inductive plan, which derive knowledge from given statements and the information they carry and, apparently, contribute to predicting subsequent statements (Wilson, Sperber, 1986). It is obvious

that the unexpected reframing of inferences, which leads to a comic effect, is a manifestation of both linguistic creativity and creativity in general, taking into account that the cognitive mechanism of their switching has a multi-vector character. To crack a joke, a speaker can change the expected logical inference into a completely unexpected, unlikely, or paradoxical inference (other variants are possible, too). For example, a communicant can hear the following question, “*What does a Ukrainian woman think before a large hole from a missile in her garden?*” Making a logical inference, one can suppose an answer, “*How good that I survived, the danger was nearby.*” However, the communicant gets another answer, “*Maybe I will have time to replant the cucumbers.*” Instead of a logical inference, a probably inductive inference is used. It sounds funny and creates a comic effect.

The term ‘reframing,’ defined by R. Bandler in neuro-linguistic programming, means the procedure of rethinking and rearranging the mechanisms of behavior, perception, and thinking to transform negative mental patterns, including phobias and negative habits, into positive (Bandler, 1983).

In our work, ‘reframing’ means the process of shifting cognitive patterns and stylistic devices leading to the comic effect.

The main types of war-time Ukrainian verbal humorous discourse are real-life and fictional mini flash stories presented in short forms, such as jokes, funny one-liners, conversational dialogues, and long forms, such as humorous flash and long short stories, blogs, opinion articles, and so on, presented in Ukrainian multimedia. In humorous video blogs, programs, and films, the combined variants of humorous discourse are used, mixing video, audio, and verbal elements.

In this work, we take only short forms of war-time Ukrainian humor, including jokes and funny one-liners.

The **purpose** of the article is to determine the combined cognitive and stylistic mechanisms shaping the comic effect, including the ‘Availability Heuristic’ cognitive pattern, in war-time Ukrainian humorous discourse. Besides,

It leads to the following **tasks**: 1) defining key cognitive patterns and their role in producing comic effect within the war-time Ukrainian humorous discourse; 2) exposing the connection

of cognitive patterns with stylistic figures producing the comic effect; 3) determining the main pragmatic functions of the Ukrainian humorous time during the war period.

Accepting the idea that the flow of humorous discourse goes through some cognitive frames (Vaina, Hintikka, 1994), we assert that, at least partly, the comic effect is formed by changing cognitive patterns.

The main cognitive biases were described and defined by D. Kahneman and A. Tversky (Kahneman & Tversky, 1982). From our point of view, a cognitive pattern is a mental filter, linking several frames and the active model of reality cognition, rotating around a key value dominant, the frequent usage of which shapes as well as distorts the cognitive frames of the real-world cognition, leading to the same name cognitive bias functioning in the world map of a person. The cognitive pattern is an interim filter between a frame and a related cognitive bias.

In our opinion, the ‘Availability Heuristic’ cognitive pattern (AHCP) is the constituent part of the ‘Availability Heuristic’ cognitive bias discovered by A. Tversky and D. Kahneman (Tversky, Kahneman, 1973), according to which a decision is made as a result of pursuing fresh experience or information reflecting frequent and recent events. It presents a variant of the ‘Heuristic analogy’ cognitive pattern.

C. Gleason affirms that “the brain takes frequent and predictable shortcuts. The availability bias – in which the prevalence and likelihood of an event are estimated by the ease with which relevant examples can be recalled – is one such mental shortcut” (Gleason, 2022).

The ‘Availability Heuristic’ cognitive pattern is based on such key value dominant as “correct solution” and consists of two main frames: the “problem” frame and the frame «new reality» that presents the war reality in the time of the Russian-Ukrainian military hostilities.

During the war, the ‘Negativity Thinking bias’ clearly manifests itself too.

According to S.S. Casabianca and K. Gepp (2012), The ‘Negativity Thinking Bias’ displays itself through such cognitive distortions as polarization, overgeneralization, discounting the positive, magnification and minimization, emotional reasoning,



labeling, always being right, the fallacy of fairness, the fallacy of change. This list is not complete. It could be added with cynical skepticism and tragic event framing, I think.

As S. Frothingham affirms: “We humans have a tendency to give more importance to negative experiences than to positive or neutral experiences. This is called the negativity bias. We even tend to focus on the negative even when the negative experiences are insignificant or inconsequential” (Frothingham & Legg, 2019).

I consider that the ‘Negativity Thinking’ cognitive pattern (NTCP) as a part of the ‘Negativity Thinking’ bias presents a mental filter permitting just only negative thoughts to pass through, being based on such key value dominant as “negativity protects” and consists of three main frames: the ‘self-preservation reaction’ frame and the frames of «the real fact» and ‘the real situation.’

**Data and analysis.** In the sample of the war-time Ukrainian jokes chosen for the research, we just took only the jokes based on the ‘Availability Heuristic’ cognitive pattern. However, there are many jokes which exhibit other cognitive patterns. For example, there is a precedent phrase said by R. Hrybov, a Ukrainian border guard, to the captain of the Russian missile cruiser ‘Moskva’ who offered to surrender on Zmiinyi island, which later turned into a famous and funny one-liner chanted at world protest demonstrations, “*Russian warship, go f\*\*k yourself!*” (Wikipedia, 2022) Cognitively, this funny one-liner is based on the ‘Distinct Contrast’ cognitive pattern. The rude words of this one-liner sound unexpected, creating some contrast, taking into account the situational context because the Ukrainian military garrison on Zmiinyi island had considerably fewer weapons than the Russian warship. Stylistically, in this example, the comic effect is caused by such devices as paraprosookian, bathos (*go f\*\*k yourself*), and pastiche (a mixture of the military and rude informal lexicons). However, this funny one-liner belongs to the most cited war-time Ukrainian humorous examples, with millions of printed postal stamps and T-shirt slogans; such viral jokes and one-liners are not analyzed in this article because one of the main tasks of this article is to study the functioning of the ‘Availability Heuristic’ cognitive pattern. As for the cognitive

pattern of the ‘Distinct Contrast’ (from ‘*contrast effect bias*’) (Kahneman, Slovic, Tversky, 1982), it is based on the fact that contrastive referents, placed together, present more interest and are fixed in the mind better. This pattern includes such frames as ‘contrastive objects’ and the value dominant ‘the attention to all unusual things.’

In this paper, all sample jokes are chosen on the basis of two criteria: their situational context relates to the current Russian-Ukrainian war, and the ‘Availability Heuristic’ pattern is involved in the creation of the comic effect. These jokes circulate on Ukrainian electronic multimedia, firstly, on social networks and, secondly, on mass media outlets. Some of them are viral, with millions of views. According to our empirical monitoring, it relates to jokes 1 and 2 (posted on six Ukrainian popular websites and numerous social network memes and messages.); joke 9 (Was aired on Ukrainian TV, five Ukrainian popular websites, and many memes and messages); joke 10 (placed on a Facebook website with 1.2 million viewers and two more websites). The least popular is joke 12. It is presented only on one Ukrainian website. The other jokes from this sample take the middle positions.

(1) If we look at a person trying to determine the difference between an old pre-war Ukrainian school and a new war-time Ukrainian school for children, we notice that before the war, teachers asked parents to collect money for new curtains and small classroom renovations. It is a pre-war reality. During the war, teachers ask for money for various volunteer funds to help the Ukrainian military with first aid kits, bulletproof vests, and small and big drones. That is the war-time reality. So the following Ukrainian joke appeared: “*In the new Ukrainian school, money is collected not for curtains, but for Bayraktars*” (Baraban, 2022). This joke applies such stylistic devices as paraprosookian, which we define as an unexpected joke ending or a punch line, and pastiche, which we take in the narrow postmodernism meaning as the mixture of the lexicon belonging to various registers, genres, social and professional groups. In this joke, we have the juxtaposition of the educational language and the military language *school-Bayraktar*. In the wider meaning, pastiche presents the technique of the imitation of a famous fiction work. Cognitively, we see the application of

the 'Availability Heuristic' cognitive pattern. After the beginning of the war, new realities appeared. The joke reflects a recent experience, which sounds unusual and funny. The functions of this joke are the following: shaping the will to fight against occupants, improving cognitive skills through the promotion of creativity, entertaining through the generation of a positive emotional mood, and relieving stresses. It represents the mockery of the quality maxim proposing information, which looks ironic.

(2) "To get a kick in the ass on Zmiinyi (Snake) island is called a 'Goodwill gesture'" (Gornostal M. 2022). The joke is based on real events that happened on this Black Sea island belonging to Ukraine. After a successful artillery and missile attack by the Ukrainian Army, the Russian commanders withdrew their troops using a euphemism and calling this act 'a goodwill gesture.' The 'Availability Heuristic' cognitive pattern functions in this joke because 'an ass-kicking action' (the bathos stylistic device is applied) is called a goodwill gesture,' which reflects the recent war-time reality. Bathos can be defined as a stylistic figure characterized by an unexpected and often funny transition from the literature lexicon (register) to the rude or colloquial lexicon (register) in writing or speech. Additionally, the cognitive pattern of the 'Distinct contrast' (DCCP) is used, being exposed through such stylistic figures as a paradox. So the comic effect of the joke is caused by the complex involvement of bathos, euphemism, irony, and paradox, reflecting the stylistic level and two cognitive patterns – the 'Availability Heuristic' cognitive pattern and the 'Distinct Contrast' cognitive pattern, exposing the cognitive level of the humorous discourse. As for the cognitive pattern of the 'Distinct Contrast' (from 'contrast effect' bias) (Kahneman, Slovic, Tversky, 1982), it is based on the fact that contrastive referents, placed together, present more interest and are fixed in the mind better. This pattern includes such frames as 'contrastive objects' and the value dominant 'the attention to all unusual things.' The joke performs the functions of improving cognitive skills through the promotion of creativity, uniting the nation, entertaining and forcing people to laugh, and disparaging enemies. It marks the mockery of the

manner in which the maxim presents ambiguous information.

(3) "This season, lips, eyebrows, and buttocks are no longer in fashion! Trend 2022 – a girl with a salt pack and a benzine (gasoline) canister!" (Zotenko, 2022). The joke describes a real situation in Ukraine relating to the deficit of salt and gasoline as a result of the war in Ukraine in April and May 2022. At this time, the people having salt and filled car gas tanks looked really lucky. Stylistically, the joke uses parapsydokian, irony, and pastiche (the lexicon of the fashion industry – fashion, eyebrows, lips, buttocks, and the lexicon of the food and car industry – salt pack and benzene canister). Cognitively, it utilizes the 'Availability Heuristic' cognitive pattern because, in this joke, the war reality overshadows the typical fashion trends, leading to a comic effect. Besides, the joke illustrates the 'Distinct Contrast' cognitive pattern since such fashion trends as 'salt pack' and 'benzene canister' sound too contradictory compared to 'lips' and 'buttocks.' The joke fulfills the functions of sharpening cognitive skills through the promotion of creativity, relieving stresses, and entertaining through optimistic emotional mood formation. It illustrates the mockery of the quality maxim offering information, which looks ironic.

(4) "The police stopped the car.

"Did you drink?"

"Drank."

"Why are you driving?"

"I wanted to donate my car to the Ukrainian Armed Forces!" (Persha. kr, 2022).

The joke reflects the real situation during the war when millions of Ukrainians donated money, clothes, and cars to the Ukrainian Armed Forces. However, this phenomenon is imposed on the widespread traffic wrongdoing – drunk driving. Stylistically, we see the application of parapsydokian, anti-irony (the drunk driver looks smarter than police officers.), and pastiche (the juxtaposition of the police and military lexicon: drank – to donate...to the Ukrainian Armed Forces). Cognitively, the 'Availability Heuristic' cognitive pattern is exposed, revealing the laughing intention of a speaker. The joke has the functions of improving cognitive skills through the promotion of creativity, relieving stresses, and entertaining through the generation of a positive emotional

mood. It illustrates the mockery of the manner maxim by giving ambiguous information.

(5) *“Friends and relatives from Russia who do not believe Ukrainian news! Welcome to Ukraine. I will hospitably share my cellar with you”* (Zotenko, 2022). The joke describes two real war phenomena in Ukraine during the war: many Russians don't trust Ukrainian news and believe in their propaganda news; many Ukrainians go down to their cellars because of the air alarms brought about by Russian rocket attacks. However, stylistically, these two phenomena are connected by funny logic, irony, fake enthusiasm, and pastiche (the mixture of mass media and household lexicon: *news – cellar*). Cognitively, there is the application of the 'Availability Heuristic' cognitive pattern. The joke has the functions of entertaining and promoting people to laugh, mocking enemies, relieving stress, and uniting the Ukrainian nation. It displays the mockery of the quality maxim by presenting ironic information.

(6) *“The vacancy for which Ukrainians have been waiting for a long time: HIMARS operator...”* (Novosti-n, 2022). In Ukraine, such war phenomena as the popularity of HIMARS, a multiple rocket launcher made in the USA, caused the creation of this joke. From the stylistic point of view, the comic effect of the joke is evoked by the usage of paraprosookian, irony, and pastiche (a mixture of business and military lexicon: *vacancy – HIMARS*). At the cognitive level, the 'Availability Heuristic' cognitive pattern is manifested with a war reality ousting the civil one. The logical inference shifts to probably an inductive, which sounds funny. The joke fulfills the functions of improving cognitive skills through the stimulation of creativity, entertaining through an optimistic emotional mood, and denigrating enemies. It demonstrates the mockery of the quality maxim because the information looks ironic.

(7) *“Give a man a fish, and he will be fed for a day. Give him headphones, and he will listen for 24 hours ‘Good evening, we are from Ukraine!’”* (Karmazina, 2022). In Ukraine, one of the new war realities is the creation of a new music subculture, reflected in the popularity of the dozens of brutal and militant songs, inspiring Ukrainian soldiers and officers, volunteers and patriots, protecting their state. The song 'Good evening, we are from Ukraine' belongs

to such military music. It sounds like a threatening phrase imposed on various video footage showing the destruction of the enemy's tanks and armored personnel carriers, fighters, and helicopters. So, in this joke, the innuendo is made that if a person looks at video materials with this music, he or she gets pleasure from the explosions of enemy warehouses, military vehicles, etc. Stylistically, in this joke, the comic effect is caused by paraprosookian, double entendre (the phrase 'Good evening, we are from Ukraine' has two meanings), accompanied with anaphora (*give...give...*) and pastiche, where the lexicon of peaceful fishing is mixed with the lexicon of music, having a military time innuendo. Cognitively, we notice the application of the AHCP because the recent war reality connected with modern Ukrainian music pops up in the punch line. The joke has the functions of ameliorating cognitive skills through the promotion of creativity, entertaining through generating a positive emotional mood, and disparaging enemies. It illustrates the mocking of the manner maxim giving information that looks ambiguous.

(8) *“True Ukrainians should love Ukraine, the Ukrainian language, borsch, and Boris Johnson!”* (Levkovych, 2022). During the war, Boris Johnson, Prime Minister of the UK, was the most popular Western leader, with 90 % of the population supporting him in Ukraine, according to several sociological polls. His name is mentioned in many informational, opinion, and humorous multimedia texts posted in Ukraine. Therefore, stylistically, the punch line of the joke is based on paraprosookian, with the obvious application of the incongruity mechanism. Cognitively, the 'Availability Heuristic' cognitive pattern is used when the new war-time reality overshadows the traditional description of the 'true Ukrainian person'. Additionally, the joke adopts the cognitive pattern of 'Distinctive contrast'; the opposition of such concepts as 'Ukrainian culture' and 'British culture' is blurred here. The joke performs the functions of streamlining cognitive skills through the stimulation of creativity, entertaining and causing people to laugh, and uniting with key allies. It displays the mocking of the quantity maxim because it gives unusual and additional information.

(9) *«If my son is born, he will be named Bayraktar, if a daughter – Javelin.»* *“As for me, I*

will call my son as Boris and my daughter as Lend-Liza.” (Krutogolov, 2022, Levkovych, 2022). The cognitive base of this joke relies on the ‘Availability Heuristic’ cognitive pattern and the ‘Easel’ pattern, creating a funny picture of four militarized kids. This joke elucidates such war-time realities as the Javelin, an American portable anti-aircraft missile; Bayraktar, a Turkish unmanned aerial drone applied by the Ukrainian Armed Forces; Boris Johnson, the most reliable world leader, helping Ukraine, and ‘The Ukraine Democracy Lend-Lease Act’ adopted by the US Congress and signed by President Joe Biden in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine on May 2022. This act is mentioned through the allusion and wordplay devices in the female name Lend-Liza. These war-time realities ousted the civil life realities in the cognitive world map of Ukrainians, leading to the comic effect, though the incongruity mechanism together with the cognitive ‘Easel pattern’ based on the ‘Picture dominance’ cognitive bias which was experimentally proved by A. Paivio, according to which communicants remember visual pictures and images shaped by words considerably more quickly than any logical or abstract information (Paivio, 1971). The ‘Easel cognitive pattern’ rotates around such value dominant as the ‘picture delight’ and includes such frames as ‘visual picture’ and ‘mental image.’ Stylistically, this pattern is realized through various metaphors, similes, hyperboles, and bright epithets. In this joke, the above-mentioned cognitive patterns are actualized stylistically through metaphoric allusions to Javelin, Bayraktar, Lend-Lease act, the corresponding wordplay (*Lend-Lease and Lend-Liza*), pastiche (the mixture of the war-time lexicon and the neutral family lexicon), paraproductian because the punch lines in this joke sound too unexpected. The joke has the functions of sharpening cognitive skills through the stimulation of creativity, entertaining and promoting laughing, and mocking enemies. It demonstrates the mocking of the quality maxim because the information looks ironic.

(10) “*A dog loves meat. A crow likes cheese. And I love cotton, with delivery to Crimea.*” (Jokes in Ukrainian. Facebook, 2022). In this joke, the ‘Availability Heuristic’ cognitive pattern is applied because the war-time realities, exposed through

aggressive intentions presented figuratively (*And I love cotton, with delivery to Crimea.*), are imposed on the common peaceful time realities (*The dog loves meat. A crow likes cheese*). The ‘Negativity Thinking’ pattern is displayed in the inner intention of seeing and enjoying explosions on the territory of occupied Crimea. Additionally, the ‘Easel’ cognitive pattern is applied because the word cotton is used metaphorically. The Russian word ‘хлопок’ has several homonymous meanings: ‘clap’ and ‘cotton.’ The Russian mass media call the explosions in Crimea as ‘хлопок’ with the meaning ‘claps’ or ‘small explosions.’ It sounds like euphemism. Ukrainian social network users started calling the Crimean explosions ‘бавовна’ or ‘cotton,’ poking fun at the opponents. The cognitive pattern of ‘superiority or illusory superiority’ is exposed in this joke, too. The speaker is sure that he or she is smarter and stronger than the occupants. This cognitive pattern means that communicants estimate their IQ and EQ qualities as high and the qualities of their opponents as low. It lies on the foundation of the same named cognitive bias, defined by D. Kahneman and A. Tversky, who asserted that such cognitive bias is intrinsic to many people (Kahneman, Slovic, Tversky, 1982). The functioning of this cognitive bias is the manifestation of the superiority theory in humor. As asserted by T. Hobbes, “The passion of laughter is nothing else but sudden glory arising from a sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves by comparison with the infirmity of others or our own formerly” (Hobbes, 1958). Morreall J., a supporter of this theory, adds, “Simply put, our laughter expresses feelings of superiority over other people or over a former state of ourselves” (Morreall, 2013). The cognitive pattern of ‘Superiority or Illusory Superiority’ is based on such dominant values as “We are smarter!” It consists of two main frames: the frame “We” of a speaker (IQ, EQ, gender, profession, ethnic group, nationality, social position) and the frame “They” (opponents, rivals, enemies). Stylistically, these three cognitive patterns are actualized through such figures as a pun formed by two meanings of ‘cotton’ (the metaphoric Ukrainian meaning ‘explosion’ and the direct ‘fluffy plant’), leading to the creation of double entendre (*And I love cotton, with delivery to Crimea.*). A double



entendre or ambiguous expression is a stylistic figure characterized by a special way of speaking, designed to get a double meaning. Usually, one meaning is obvious due to the context, while the other requires further thinking. Besides, in the Ukrainian language, this joke is characterized by rhyme. The joke carries out the functions of improving cognitive skills through the promotion of creativity, promoting media communication among Ukrainians, entertaining and causing people to laugh, and ridiculing enemies. It illustrates the mockery of the maxim of manner while presenting ambiguous information.

(11) *“I went out to the garden and looked around – it was full of weeds. I imagined that these were orcs... In an hour I pulled out all of them... with the roots!”* (Ukraina Moloda, 2022). In this Ukrainian joke, a recent war-time reality is mentioned. Russian soldiers who participate in the invasion of Ukraine are nicknamed ‘orcs.’ This nickname is given after the gloomy goblins shown in the epic fantasy film ‘The Lords of the Ring’ (2001–2003) staged after the novel by J.R.R. Tolkien. While putting her garden in order, the speaker, the old female farmer, remembers the newly appeared phenomenon – the so-called ‘orcs,’ feeling the surge of hatred, she uproots all weeds on her land. Cognitively, the ‘Availability Heuristic’ cognitive pattern is applied because, in the mind of the old woman, the civilian village reality is replaced by the reality of wartime. The ‘Negativity Thinking’ pattern is manifested through the inner intention of the speaker to wipe out all enemies. Additionally, the ‘Superiority or Illusionary Superiority’ cognitive pattern is exposed, so far as the old woman feels moral supremacy over the occupants – she works on her own land. Besides, the ‘Easel’ cognitive pattern is used since the joke leads to the creation of the ‘weed-orc’ image. In terms of stylistics, the comic effect is caused by such figures as pastiche (a mixture of the lexicon of farmers and the war-time lexicon), bathos (‘orc’ is a rude word), and metaphor (‘weeds’ are ‘orcs’). The joke makes an innuendo that the old woman is ready to eliminate all occupants. The functions of this joke are the following: forming a strong will to fight against invaders, improving cognitive skills through the promotion of media communication and creativity, and entertainment

through the generation of a positive emotional mood. The speaker mocks the maxim of manner while giving ambiguous information.

(12) *“Jesus taught us to forgive and love people. But he did not say anything about the Russian occupiers...”* (Zotenko, 2022). In this joke, the role of the new wartime reality is played by Russian soldiers on the territory of Ukraine. So, we notice the application of the ‘Availability Heuristic’ cognitive pattern. The logic inference (*If you follow Jesus Christ, you should forgive and love all people.*) is shifted to the probably inductive inference based on funny logic (*If Jesus Christ had not mentioned Russian occupiers in his gospels, they were not supposed to be forgiven and loved.*). Stylistically, the comic effect is evoked by pastiche based on the mixture of religious and military lexicons (*Jesus... Russian occupiers*), irony, and funny logic. Besides, an innuendo is made in this joke that Jesus permits not to forgive occupants. The ‘Negativity Thinking’ pattern is actualized through the inner intention of the speaker to punish the occupiers severely. The joke performs the functions of improving cognitive skills through the promotion of creativity and entertainment by creating a positive emotional mood and disparaging enemies. It illustrates the mocking of the quality maxim because the information looks false or ironic.

While analyzing the stylistic innuendoes, having the same named inner intentions behind them, we single out the ideas of solidarity between Ukrainians and ridicule of the occupants, which permeate almost all the above-mentioned jokes. Such linguists as M. Billig affirm that humor can be social, leading to solidarity by bringing people together and anti-social by excluding people through mockery (Billig, 2005). The researched Ukrainian jokes uphold such approaches since they are social for Ukrainians, leading to their camaraderie and cohesive group thinking, and anti-social for Russian occupants, poking fun at them through mockery and ridicule. The aggressive intentions towards occupants pass through all sample jokes, excluding jokes 3, 4, and 8. It means that they sound amusing to Ukrainians and negatively to their enemies. So, during the current conflict, the war-time Ukrainian humorous discourse functions as a tool inspiring Ukrainian soldiers and people as a whole, relieving their tensions, making their spirits stronger,

uniting them, and creating a positive, humorous environment.

**Conclusions and future research.** The war-time Ukrainian humorous discourse is set against the background of the current cruel Russian-Ukrainian war realities. It differs from the pre-war Ukrainian humorous discourse stylistically, pragmatically, and cognitively. At the same time, it has the features of the main humor theories, including the psychological tension relief and the superiority theories, the incongruity, and the reframing theories. All twelve jokes taken for the research apply the 'Availability Heuristic' cognitive pattern, which is characterized by solution search through pursuing fresh experience or information reflecting recent war events. According to this analysis, the 'Availability Heuristic' cognitive pattern is accompanied by the 'Distinct contrast' cognitive pattern, both of which are the manifestations of the incongruity mechanism. Besides, it is used together with the 'Negativity Thinking' pattern, focusing on negative intentions; the cognitive 'Easel' pattern, responsible for the dominance of visual pictures and images; and the cognitive pattern of 'Superiority or Illusionary Superiority.' The number of cognitive patterns involved in the war-time Ukrainian humorous discourse, creating a comic effect, is not restricted by those mentioned in this article, so the perspective of the study of this type of discourse is the further detection, classification, and description of all cognitive patterns engaged in it. Every cognitive pattern has a set of stylistic figures standing behind it. In the researched jokes, the cognitive patterns are exposed through such stylistic figures as paraprosookian, irony, bathos, and pastiche in their narrow meaning. Besides, other stylistic figures are used, including allusions, double entendres, puns, and metaphors. The majority of analyzed jokes are permeated with the intentions of mockery and aggressiveness toward Russian invaders. All of them display the intention of solidarity between Ukrainians, creating a homogenous collective mood and better group-thinking cohesivity. The main pragmatic functions of the Ukrainian war-time humorous discourse are the following: relieving stresses; shaping a strong will to fight and to protect their country; uniting the whole nation and leading to the solidarity of Ukrainians; promoting media communication among Ukrainians; improving cognitive skills through the promotion of creativity;

timely relevance; entertaining through creating positive emotional mood and promoting laughing; disparaging and mocking the enemies. All sample jokes illustrate the violation of Grice's cooperative principle, mocking the maxims of quality, quantity, and manner.

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