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## Imagination as a Component of Ludic Competence

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### Abstract

#### Background:

A keen interest to playfulness as a personal feature can be explained by the fact that playfulness underlies ludic competence which is an integral part of the professional competence of would-be psychologists.

We define ludic competence as a system of inner resources, resorted to by a person in order to balance their personality against outer conditions of social environment on the basis of positive emotions, i.e. interest and joy, which are frequently expressed in a very emotional way, accompanied by tension or excitement. Ludic competence is formed alongside with the development of playfulness, which is a stable personality trait in the modern world of gamification.

Relying on the previous theoretical and empirical research into playfulness as a personality trait, as well as on the analysis of the outlined components-scales of playfulness, high-frequency reactions of the biggest sample of 4.795 respondents, and the established psycholinguistic meanings, we managed to single out the following components of playfulness: “sensitivity”, “imagination”, “sense of humor”, “ease”, “flirting”, “mischievousness”, “fugue” (Gordienko-Mytrofanova & Sauta, 2016; Gordienko-Mytrofanova & Kobzieva, 2017; Gordienko-Mytrofanova et al., 2018).

*The aim of the research* was to define and explain the psycholinguistic peculiarities of imagination as a component of ludic competence.

#### Methods:

The research was conducted during the years of 2016-2018. The total number of respondents who took part in the experiments was 200 young people (21-30), males and females being equally represented. The main method of the conducted research is experimental, in particular, a psycholinguistic experiment, whose main goal is to single out the psycholinguistic peculiarities of “imagination” as the component of ludic competence. The main stage of the research was the free association experiment with the word-stimulus “imagination” as the most elaborated technique of semantic analysis. As additional methods, the surveys have been applied (in order to refine the results of the free association experiment); questioning (in order to specify the characteristics of the sample). As a mathematical-statistical method to analyze the results of the research, we used frequency and cluster analysis, which allowed us to identify tendencies in the distribution of associations produced by the experimental group. The free association experiment with the stimulus word “imagination” was conducted in the written form.

### Results:

As a result of the conducted experiment, a conclusion can be made that the psycholinguistic peculiarities of imagination as a notion that belongs to the inner world and as a component of ludic competence, were reflected in the every-day linguistic consciousness as three core (more than 10%) semantic clusters: 1) associates that reflect psychic processes and states (54.5%); 2) associates that are connected with creative activity (25.5%); 3) associates that describe the outer world (11%). Imagination is mostly represented by lexemes with abstract semantics.

The semantic content of the word “imagination” does not depend on gender identification. Both male and female respondents tend to evaluate this stimulus as something positive.

### Conclusions:

The data obtained in the course of the experiment confirm that the psycholinguistic experiment and the method of free association experiment in particular can be extensively applied beyond linguistics and prove to be rather effective, e.g. for organizing various coaching sessions aimed at comprehending abstract notions and words that are semantically non-differentiated.

Thus, the analysis of the results of the psycholinguistic experiment with the stimulus “imagination” allowed us to understand which of its meanings are actualized in the every-day linguistic consciousness, which of them are core meanings and which are not sufficiently instilled and therefore have to be “introduced” in the course of the theoretical-methodological part of the coaching.

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