STEREOTYPES ABOUT AUSTRIA AND AUSTRIANS AMONG YOUNG SIBERIANS (BASED ON ASSOCIATIVE EXPERIMENT)
“Stereotypes derive in large measure from, or are an instance of, the general cognitive process of categorizing. The main function of this process is to simplify or systematize, for purposes of cognitive and behavioral adaptation, the abundance and complexity of the information received from its environment by the human organism” [Tajfel, 1981:145]
STEREOTYPE: DEFINITION AND FUNCTIONS

“Stereotype is an over-simplified mental image of (usually) some category of person, institution or event which is shared, in essential features, by large numbers of people” (ibid)

Functions of stereotype:

- 1. reducing anxiety;
- 2. creating and maintaining a positive image of in-group;
- 3. enhancing in-group solidarity
The aliens captured three humans: an American, a German and a Russian. They placed each in a separate empty room, gave them three metal balls and said that they would let go the one who can surprise them most. The German learnt how to juggle them, the American juggled and step-danced, but the winner was the Russian – he managed to break one metal ball and lose the other.
STEREOTYPICAL MAP OF EUROPE
ASSOCIATIVE EXPERIMENT AS A TOOL OF INTERCULTURAL RESEARCH

- Not informing the participants on the research aim (and target word);
- Not spending more than several seconds on one word (up to 5 seconds)
- “white noise” as a distractor and as material for other researchers
- Background information about the participants (age, gender, travel experience, second and third languages)
THE PARTICIPANTS:

- 266 students of Novosibirsk State University
- Aged 18-24
- 25% having extensive travel experience (more than two countries)
- 5% have visited Austria
- 32% study German as their second or third language
Types of Associations:

- Syntagmatic associations (collocations or chunks);
- Paradigmatic associations (relationship in the language system);
- **Thematic (mediated) associations** (associations dealing more with the image of the referent than with the word as a language unit)
## Multiple Associations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stimulus</th>
<th>Reactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Vienna (48), country (23), Europe (12), Mozart (10), Hungary (9), German (7), Germany (7), music (6), the Alps (6), Germans (4), kangaroo (4), Schwarzenegger (3), mountains (3), Kommissar Rex (3), beer (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austrian</td>
<td>no answer (23), person (30), Mozart (9), European (9), German(s) (8),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vienna</td>
<td>Austria (52), river (26), blood (11), city (10), Mozart (7), water (7), no answer (6), waltz (4), waffle (4), Strauss (3), capital (3),</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AUSTRIA:

- Part of Europe (Europe, Germany, Switzerland, Hungary)
- Landscape features (mountains, the Alps, the Danube river)
- General impressions (TV-generated) (small, greenery, cosiness. Red roofs, old roads, bridges)
AUSTRIA: CONTINUED

- Cities and towns (Vienna and Salzburg as major tourist destinations)
- Historical associations (the Habsburgs, Maria Theresia, Franz-Ferdinand, Anna (of Austria?), conquests, Anschluss, neutrality)
- Cultural associations (music – Mozart, Strauss, Haydn, Beethoven, music, composer, violin, ball); Freud, the Illusionist, Kommissar Rex
AUSTRIA: CONTINUED

- **Culinary associations** (tasty, schnitzel, beer, strudel, pie, buns, waffles, chocolate)
- **Lifestyle** (peacefulness, directness, primness, aristocracy)
AUSTRIAN:

- Refusal (no answer or "I don’t know" answer) - 10%
- General answer (person, man, citizen of Austria, European) - 39%
- (A) German (qualified – not German, almost a friend of a German, like a German but an Austrian)
- Language (incomprehensible German, a German dialect)
- Synonymous associations (a Portuguese, a Pole, a Russian, a Hungarian)
AUSTRIAN (CONTINUED): FAMOUS AUSTRIANS
AUSTRIAN (CONTINUED):

- Austrians in Russia: strangers, foreigners, travelers;
- Appearance: a man wearing a suit vs. shorts and feathered hat;
- Lifestyle: eats schnitzel, drinks coffee, sings songs;
- Character: calm, serious, hospitable, pedantic, pompous;
- Lives in Vienna
VIENNA:

- Geographical associations: somewhere in Europe; Austria, capital – 25%;
- Vienna or Venice: gondola, city on the water, dampness
- General image: beautiful city, beautiful buildings, stone embankments, turrets, paved streets, churches
VIENNA (CONTINUED):

- Tourist centre (tourists, sights, stroll);
- Music (Mozart, Strauss, Vienna ball, Austrian opera, composers, waltz)
- History (Vienna Congress, Maria-Theresia, Hitler)
- Others (fine arts, psychoanalysis)
WHAT'S NEXT?

- Autostereotypes of Austrians
- Stereotypes about ...
Thank you for your attention.
Any questions are welcome