

OPPOSITION “OWN – ALIEN” IN SOCIAL DIALECT OF UKRAINIAN FOOTBALL FANS

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In this article opposition “own – alien” has been considered which is principal for football fans community. Specific means of both verbal and visual identification have been analysed which are characteristic for fans subculture and which are used by Ukrainian football fans for expressing opposition “own – alien”. Analysis has been made on the basis of banners, scansion and songs of football fans in which we can find lexemes that make opposition “own – alien”. Two groups of nominations have been described: 1) names of fans groups and teams they feel for, and 2) names used for denominations of fans “enemies” – police, stadium securities, referees, football functionaries etc.

Key words: social dialect of football fans, opposition “own – alien”, verbal identification, visual identification.

One of the most numerous subcultures in Ukraine is subculture of football fans. In our country this subculture actively developed in the nineties of XX century and in the early XXI century, though football fan movement was firstly initiated in the seventies-eighties of XX century. An important component of identification of football fans is their specific language – social dialect which is not only the attribute of belonging to a certain group but also a form of group consciousness, reflection of group values and social solidarity.

Opposition “own – alien” is principal for fans community in which intellectual and emotional attitude of football fans to all the world around is reflected. Under opposition in linguistics “contraposition of two or several homogeneous linguistic units for detection of difference between them” is implied [1: 405]. In this article

opposition in fans social dialect will be analysed on the basis of word groups for the description of lexico- semantic system of language.

“We” are fans of our own team and “alien” are, first of all, fans of the rival team. “Alien” is one who thinks differently than we do, looks in a different way, he acknowledges other values. We often need “alien” or “them” only to understand that “we” could define ourselves, formulate principles and norms of behaviour, system of value. The strongest social connection which unites members of football fans community is feeling for their own team and wars with fans of rival teams. As Polish social linguist Yeva Kolodzieyik thinks “characteristic feature of stadium subculture which distinguishes it from other modern group cultures is the imperative of struggle. It looks like thirst of fight which rules the football field has been carried over onto the very fans” [2: 110]. For the fans of a certain team not only the rival team and its fans are the components of the notion “alien”. Despite the fact that other people are not football fans, they are also regarded as “alien”, they are referees, football functionaries, police, stadium securities, journalists, sports commentators etc.

This article aims at description of specific for this subculture means of verbal and also visual identification which are used by Ukrainian football fans for the expression of opposition “own – alien”. Novelty of the touched topic is that social dialect of football fans in Ukrainian linguistics still remains poorly investigated [3, 4, 5, 6]. In several publications it has been analysed as a component of modern youth slang and city language [7, 8], not taking into account that social dialect of football fans is a verbal representation of one of the most numerous subcultures in Ukrainian society.

The most important means of visual and verbal identification of football fans are club *colours* which are characteristic of their favourite teams. Names of club colours in fans subculture are at the same time informal names or nicknames of the teams and also names of football fans of the very club. For instance, *green-white* means Lviv “Karpaty”; *orange-black* means Donetsk “Shakhtar”; *white-blue* means Kyiv “Dynamo”; *yellow-blue* means Kharkiv “Metalist” and Uzhgorod “Zakarpattia”; *white-red* or *white-crimson* means Lutsk “Volyn”; *yellow-black* Chernivtsi

“Bukovyna”; *dark blue-white-blue* means Dnipropetrovs’k “Dnipro”; *white-green* means Poltava “Vorskla”; *black-blue, ultramarine* means Odesa “Chornomorets”; *red-yellow-black* means Zaporizhia “Metalurh”; *red-white* means Kryvyj Rih “Kryvbas”; *red-blue* Kyiv “Arsenal”; *white-red-blue* – Simferopol’ “Tavriya”; *blue-golden* – football club “Lviv”; *black-white* – Luhans’k “Zoria”; *orange-blue* – Mariupol’ “Illichivets”; *yellow-black* – Okhtyrka “Naftovyk”; *yellow-green* – Ternopil’ “Nyva”; *green-crimson* – football club “Kharkiv” [9]. The importance of club colours are confirmed by scansions and songs texts which sound at the stadiums, for example, fans of Lviv “Karpaty” usually chime the following: *“Our colours are green-white. We are unconquerable – swords up”, “Move forward “Karpaty”, forward to fight! Your fans are always with you! Your green-white colours are in our hearts forever!”* [10]

Indissoluble connection of a football club and its fans is reflected in banners and songs. In these the most frequent are pronouns such as *we, our*: *“Together we are strong!”*, *“The flame of our passion will live forever!”*, *“Our hearts are burning with love for you!”* (Kharkiv “Metalist”); *“Our hearts are beating in one rhythm!”*; *“We are cossacks, you are null!”* (Zaporizhia “Metalurh” adressing Dnipropetrovs’k “Dnipro”); *“Here we go, here we go. We lead our football club to victory”, “You are our pride. We are your support!”*, *“Go forward Karpaty. We are with you!”*, *“We need victory!”*, *“Who are we? – “We are Lions”, “Who are we? – “We are green Lions”. “We are guys from Bandershtadt!”* (Lviv “Karpaty”); *“Our tradition since 1961”* (Kyiv “Dynamo”); *“I can’t help loving you “Polissia”, When a fan call you, remember our ancient tradition and sing a nice song!”*, *“We are nice guys hooligans and we don’t care for anything!”* (Zhytomyr “Polissia”).

In the first place rival teams and their fans are considered to be “alien” that is enemies. This is them who are addressees of exclamations and scansions sounding from tribunes, mostly provocative. Verbal struggle takes place at the stadium which aims at warming-up of fans’ emotions and preparing them for the likely street fights after the match. Examples of these are as follows: *“Once khokhol was born Jew began crying!”* (saying of Kyiv “Dynamo” fans who have a nickname “khokhly”

(*khokhly* is an offensive name of Ukrainians [Velykyj Tlumachnyj Slovnyk Suchasnoyi Ukrayins'koyi Movy: 1351]), addressing fans of Odessa “Chornomorets” who are called *zhydy* (*zhydy* means 1. the same as Jews; 2. offensive name of Jews [Velykyj Tlumachnyj Slovnyk Suchasnoyi Ukrayins'koyi Movy: 275])) or: “*Green-white colours – farmer is not worth them!*” (text of fans of Lviv “Karpaty” for whom green-white colours are native, addressing fans of Poltava “Vorskla” who also play in white-green colours. Fans of other football clubs offensively call “Vorskla” players and their fans collective farmers. (*collective farmer* – a member of a collective farm [Velykyj Tlumachnyj Slovnyk Suchasnoyi Ukrayins'koyi Movy: 439] – according to the first name of Poltava football team “Kolhospyk” (that is “Farmer”), name which they bore since 1955 to 1984).

Transformed, most often reduced, names of football teams which are used by fans are usually offensive. In particular lexemes: *DyKy* – football club “Dynamo” (Kyiv), *Zaka* – football club “Zakarpattia” (Uzhgorod), *MetaDon*– football club “Metalurh” (Donets'k); *MetaZapor* – football club “Metalurh” (Zaporizhia) – these names were combined out of two words aiming at language economy. Example of the opposite tendency in creation of a football club nickname can be combination of words *Pavlov's dogs* – team “Vorskla” from Poltava (deriving from second name of the coach Mykola Pavlov who is a homonym to a famous Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov, the latter described conditional and absolute reflexes experimenting on dogs [11]; footballers of “Vorskla” are compared to experimental dogs).

Very often names of both rival teams and their fan groups are offensive as, for example, *zapory* (audio association with the city name Zaporizhia; *zapor* – insufficient or irregular defecation [Velykyj Tlumachnyj Slovnyk Suchasnoyi Ukrayins'koyi Movy: 321]), *bomzhi* (*bomzh* – a person without a certain place of habitation, homeless [Velykyj Tlumachnyj Slovnyk Suchasnoyi Ukrayins'koyi Movy: 59]) – Zaporizhia “Metalurh”; *kryvi* (meaning *crooked*) (derived from the first part of the city of Kryvyj Rih) – Kryvyj Rih “Kryvbas”»; *kroty* (*krit* – a small insectivorous mammal that lives underground [Velykyj Tlumachnyj Slovnyk Suchasnoyi Ukrayins'koyi Movy: 466]), *shakhta* (*shakhta* – system of underground

constructions where minerals (usually coal) are taken [Velykyj Tlumachnyj Slovnyk Suchasnoyi Ukrayins'koyi Movy: 1391]), *terykon* (meaning *mine*) (*terykon* – conical mound of bare rock on the surface near the mine [Velykyj Tlumachnyj Slovnyk Suchasnoyi Ukrayins'koyi Movy: 1241]) – Donetsk “Shakhtar”; *metahlysty* (audio association with the name “Metalist”; from *metal* – a reduced form of team’s name “Metalist” and *hlyst* – a worm that parasites in human and animal body [Velykyj Tlumachnyj Slovnyk Suchasnoyi Ukrayins'koyi Movy: 185]), *metal* (reduced form of a team’s name “Metalist”), *khammery* (audio association with the city name Kharkiv; *khammer* (from Hummer) – name of an American off-road army vehicle [10]), *khor'ky*, *tkhory* (audio association with the city name Kharkiv; from the Russian word *khoriok* – Ukrainian *tkhir* – a predatory animal of family of martens with precious fur [Velykyj Tlumachnyj Slovnyk Suchasnoyi Ukrayins'koyi Movy: 1278]) – Kharkiv “Metalist”; *tatary* (one-word form from *kryms'ki tatary* – native inhabitants of the Crimean peninsula; *tatary* – name of different Turkic, Mongolian and other tribes [Velykyj Tlumachnyj Slovnyk Suchasnoyi Ukrayins'koyi Movy: 1232]) – Simferopol’ “Tavriya”; *khokhly* (*khokhly* – an offensive name of Ukrainians [Velykyj Tlumachnyj Slovnyk Suchasnoyi Ukrayins'koyi Movy: 1351]), *mienty* (*mient* – a jargon name of a policeman; this name implies that the society “Dynamo” was an association of sports groups of police bodies) – Kyiv “Dynamo”.

Rival team fans usually hear exclamations which aim at offending them and making a mock of their team: “*Obolon' – bad beer!*” (addressing Kyiv “Obolon” fans” whose sponsor is a Ukrainian producer of beer and non-alcoholic drinks – corporation “Obolon”); “*You smell of grilled ferret!*” “*You stink!*” (addressing Kharkiv “Metalist” fans who are called *khor'ky*, *tkhory* (ferrets) (characteristic sign of ferrets is that they have a speci smell [11])); “*Crush bandery!*” (addressing Lviv “Karpaty” fans who are called *bandery*); “*You place is in mausoleum!*” (addressing Mariupol’ “Illichivs'k” fans who are called *vnuchata Illicha* meaning grandsons of Lenin). Often texts addressing fans of visiting team contain vulgarisms as one of the means of linguistic expression of negative emotions: “*Türk domuz uzakta Avrupa'dan! (Turkish swines, get out of Europe!)*” (addressing Turkish “Galatasaray”

fans). And quite the opposite, texts addressing their own team do not contain vulgar words: “*Are there Lions in the team?*” (“Karpaty” fans to the footballers of their club. Fans often encourage their own the players with exclamations from the tribunes: “*Vivtsi!*” which means sheep).

One more group of “alien” for all the *fans* are police. Even most irconcilable fan groups can unite against policemen. In the environment of football fans the following offensive names are used – *vovkulaky* (ghoul), *kashkety*, *mienty*, *musory* (rubbish), *A.C.A.B.*, *akaby*, *akabery*, *copy* (*cops*), *liahavi*, *nedoliudy*, *pohony* (*straps*), *sambisty*, *rehbisty* (*rugby players*), *slony* (*association with elephants*) (from Russian abbreviation *S.L.O.N.* – death to policemen by knife). The majority of the above mentioned denominations of policemen are used in modern jargon speech except for the lexeme *A.C.A.B.* which is functioning only in the environment of football fans. This English abbreviation is the expression of hatred towards police officers (*A.C.A.B.* – from Eng. *all coppers are bastards*), one can see it all over the fences and walls of the city buildings everywhere. It is known that fan groups are acting on the border with the law or even violate it, that is why contacts with police are regulated by the so-called fan code which is universal for all the fans: “1) one cannot give away rivals even from the most hostile clubs; 2) lost scarves or banners picked up by policemen and being therefore dishonored cannot be hung at the stadiums; 3) when policemen beat fans even from the most hostile club the first duty of a fan is to support the spirit of those beaten; 4) a fan has his own dignity and does not need to be protected by police; those who seek police protection deserve the biggest disrespect” [1: 111]. Fighters from OMON (Russian abbreviation – platoon of police of special appointment) who are often involved in stadium securities are called *cosmonauts* (*cosmonaut* – a person that flies in space [Velykyj Tlumachnyj Slovnyk Suchasnoyi Ukrainy: 458]) due to great similarity of their uniform to cosmonauts’ armour. Policemen from special unit “Berkut” are called *berkuty* or *berkutiata* (from *berkut* (a kind of eagle) – a huge predatory bird from eagle breed [Velykyj Tlumachnyj Slovnyk Suchasnoyi Ukrainy: 48]), and policemen from special unit “Gryfon” who help maintain peace and order before, during and after

football matches are called *gryfony* (*gryfon* (griffin) – a huge predatory bird from Falconiformes that lives on carrion in the mountains [Velykyj Tlumachnyj Slovnyk Suchasnoyi Ukrain's'koyi Movy: 198]). Attitude of football fans towards police can be summarized with the help of quotation from *ultras'* banner (Uzhgorod "Zakarpattia"): "*Football is for fans, not for cops*" [12].

Stadium securities bound to maintain order and resist unrest during matches are also fans' enemies and often unnerve overactive fans. That is why guards-stewards are often called *tserbery* (*tserber* – alert and severe guard [Velykyj Tlumachnyj Slovnyk Suchasnoyi Ukrain's'koyi Movy: 1361]). Negative attitude towards the stadium securities results from the fact that they together with the police conduct a search (*shmon*) before letting fans inside the stadium taking away banners, pyrotechnics, flagstaff etc.

Brutal and vulgar are also exclamations to one more category of fans' "enemies" – referees who, in fans' opinion, commit errors in favour of the rival team. The most offensive exclamations towards referees are all possible synonyms to the word homosexual: "*Suddia* (referee) *gay!*", "*Suddia pidaras!*", "*Suddia trydvaraz!*" (the latter example is the substitution of obscene words close in phonation (derived from three-two-one). In fans' understanding referees are the people who seldom are impartial and who, by their conviction, for a certain financial reward act in favour of one of the teams. In those exclamations corruption of referees are emphasized. It is worth paying attention that former exclamation "*Suddiu na mylo!*" which used to be popular several decades ago towards referees is not used any more in modern stadium scansions.

Football functionaries are also among fans' enemies, they are accused of self-interest, dishonesty, selling of the matches, intrigues aiming at gaining profit or imposing penalties on football clubs. At the Ukrainian stadiums one could often hear exclamations about the former chief of Ukrainian Football Federation Hryhoriy Surkis who is called *Shubkis* (derived from the word *shuba* which means a fur coat) by fans (after the well-known bribe of foreign referees by means of fur coats): "*Surkis zhyd!*", "*Surkis khuylo!*", "*Bye-bye Hrysha!*". At L'viv stadium fans

repeatedly appealed to Honoured President of “Karpaty” Petro Dymins’kyj who is also called *Dym* or *Demon*: “*Dym, it is enough to sell matches! You had better sell the club!*”. Football Federation of Ukraine control-dysciplinary committee of which often fines football clubs or imposes penalties for indecent behaviour of their fans is called *Pederation*. Here is an example of one of the texts adressing functionaries of Football Federation: “*Take your dirty hands off “Metalist” and “Karpaty”!*” [13] (a hint at Federation Chairman Hryhoriy Surkis’ belonging to masons).

Journalist can also be adresees of negative sayings of football fans. They are often called *paparatsi* and accused of incompetencne which results in creation of a false image of fans movement in mass media.

To summarize, it is worth saying that principal opposition “own – alien” which is an important component for football fans’ identity has its own verbal expression in two groups of denominations of this social dialect: 1) in names of fans’ groups and teams who they feel for (whith positive connotation when the thing is about “own” and with a negative connotation when the thing is about rival teams and their fans), and 2) in names which are used for denomination of fans’ “enemies” – police, stadium securities, referres, football functionaries etc. As analysis has shown, these lexemes are functioning both in oral speech of fans, firstly in scansions and songs and also in written language that is in banners texts and printed editions of football fans.

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