

Abstract

The subject of reflective inquiry in this dissertation are the chants of football fans from the clubs: Arka Gdynia, Lechia Gdańsk, Partizan and Red Star Belgrade. The aim of this work is to examine whether they can be considered folklore texts. Choosing this topic, I was guided by the desire to deepen my knowledge while combining my diverse interests – football and linguistics. Additionally, this research serves as a continuation of my previous studies, where I conducted a linguistic analysis of chants from the aforementioned Belgrade football clubs.

For the analysis, I use songs collected and transcribed by the fans themselves in fan songbooks available on their respective websites: www.arkowcy.pl, www.lechia.net, <https://www.oaza.rs/sport/delije/av/pesme.htm>, www.partizan.net. This is the only reliable material that can be gathered individually. Football matches usually occur simultaneously, making it impossible for me to personally transcribe chants from the fans of four clubs from two different countries within a single football season. However, by relying on the fans' own transcriptions, I analyse the text itself as well as the way it was written.

The first chapter is dedicated to the challenges in defining the term folklore, providing the theoretical foundation for the subsequent analysis. I discuss the historical development of this concept, highlighting the influence exerted on its definition by romanticism, followed by the socialist regime, political transformations, and the war in the Balkans. I also delve into the impact of the Internet and digital culture on the definition of folklore. Here, my focus is primarily on the development of the term in the Polish academic community, enriched by the perspectives of Yugoslav and Serbian scholars.

The following two chapters (2nd and 3rd) serve to present the necessary context for understanding the analysed chants. The detailed descriptions of the football clubs and their supporters groups contained therein aim to elucidate the transformations and influences they underwent, which significantly influenced the texts sung in the stadiums. Chapter two (2) aims to present the history of football development in Belgrade, Gdańsk, and Gdynia (along with the discussed football clubs) – from the linguistic point of view. I analyse names, club colours, emblems, and provide information about the stadiums where they usually play (at home). In chapter three (3), I describe the performers of the examined chants, namely the fans of Arka Gdynia, Lechia Gdańsk, Partizan, and Red Star Belgrade. I provide a closer look and discuss the organized fan groups of each club, their most renowned supporters, their political involvement, criminal activities, physical violence, as well as their charitable activities. To outline the communicative situation in which fan texts are sung I analyse (along with

the terminology used by football fans) the ultra stands, various forms of fan support, fan attire, as well as other forms of football fans' creativity. I broaden this data with musical releases containing songs about the discussed clubs, as well as the characteristics of derby matches and the associations with away games.

The final chapter (4) is devoted to the analysis of selected chants. I present the definition of a football chant and its characterization as a genre. I discuss the research material, as well as the chosen methodology, before analysing the collected material as a linguistic self-portrait of the fans, the linguistic image of the beloved club, its colours, stadium, and fan attributes. I also present the linguistic image of the rival club, its fans, and the violence directed towards them, as well as recurring themes of sex, alcohol, and drugs. I conclude with the findings from a comparative analysis of the folklore of the examined fan groups.

The analysed selected texts of chants from the football clubs: Arka Gdynia, Lechia Gdańsk, Partizan and Red Star Belgrade can be considered folklore texts, as they serve as symbolic and artistic forms of communication within a specific group of fans, a community built around a given club, people present at the stadium or watching the match broadcast. Football chants are designed for specific purposes, such as building collective identity, glorifying the club, professing one's love for it, providing comfort after a defeat, expressing loyalty and devotion, as well as rallying for a fight. The texts also reflect the group's way of thinking, the values they hold, and a specific hierarchy. While the chants are primarily sung at matches (accompanied by choreographies and banners), they also exist in written form as texts in songbooks, and fragments are sometimes used by fans or create posts on social media. Football fans and their chants are subject to constant influences (political, cultural etc.) and continuous development (determined by rivalries), making their texts challenging but also, at the same time, fascinating research material.