



**POPULAR CULTURE:
READING FROM BELOW**

**ПОПУЛАРНА КУЛТУРА:
ПОГЛЕД ОДОЗДОЛА**

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POPULAR CULTURE: READING FROM BELOW ПОПУЛАРНА КУЛТУРА: ПОГЛЕД ОДОЗДОЛА

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THE MASS MEDIA IN DISSEMINATING THE EUROPEAN (SUB)CULTURE THROUGH EUROJARGON

Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to discard the conventional views according to which subculture is generally connected with a certain lower level of culture. Contrary to general belief, subculture is associated with every group of people who separate themselves as a distinct group in society by the manner of behaviour and beliefs they share, but also by the manner in which they express themselves. The media representatives in the European Union form a distinct group that shares common interests, whereas their everyday communication is characterised with the use of a specific jargon, popularly referred to as Eurojargon. It is a type of supranational vocabulary considered to be a distinguishing feature of a unique multicultural and multilingual environment – such as the European Union. This vocabulary is created on a supranational level with the purpose of surpassing the national borders of the member states and reflecting the European identity, the common values and a unique social-political system. The mass media largely contribute to dissemination of this vocabulary in the Republic of Macedonia as well, and thereby contribute to dissemination of the European culture as a new type of subculture that is unfamiliar to us.

Key words: subculture, Eurojargon, dissemination of culture, mass media

Introduction

According to various subcultural theories (especially the Chicago School of Sociology), many authors connect the term 'subculture' to something negative or even malicious (Cohen in Downes, 1966) and different from the mainstream or dominant culture (Clinard, 1974). According to Clubb, these deviant groups in society "reject or depart from the traditional norms and views of the majority" because this inconsistency with the standard is typically connected with a lower-class status (Clubb, 2001: 1-2).

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However, there are other authors, especially in today's contemporary society, who connect subcultures to less deviant groups, especially to occupation groups and individualism. In fact, they focus on groups whose distinctiveness or individuality is not regarded in terms of violence, but rather in terms of expressing identity and independence (Hodkinson, 2002). For instance, Hodkinson and Lincoln primarily focus on the aspect of communication, such as subcultural communication through different forms of media (Hodkinson and Lincoln, 2008: 27).

It is safe to conclude that both standpoints have one thing in common – that subculture involves an individualistic way of life. This notion serves as the starting point for the analysis in this paper, which shall open room for debate and arguments. In that regard, by providing empirical arguments, the purpose of this paper is to discard the classical theories as well as popular belief that subculture inevitably means lower culture and social marginality. The emphasis in this research is put on the use of language in the communication process as an important element of every subculture, because distinctiveness and individuality can also be observed in the way specific groups express themselves and communicate within the group and outside of it.

Questions of the Research

The questions of the research arise from the thesis on the inadequacy of the previously mentioned classical theories, including popular belief in defining subcultures as lower cultures and social marginality, especially nowadays. This paper shall provide answers to two main questions. The primary question is how the term 'subculture' is regarded or should be regarded in today's contemporary society, with special emphasis on the so-called European (sub)culture? To demonstrate this, a secondary question must also be regarded, in particular, the manner in which the mass media disseminate this distinct type of European (sub)culture.

Model for Defining (Sub)culture

An adequate model for properly defining the concept of (sub)culture is that of Trice – an author who primarily defines (sub)culture in terms of shared values, visions, practices, knowledge and existence of a primary reference group, whereas he specifically focuses on organisational cultures that he believes are composed of many different subcultures (Trice in Livigni, 1993: 290). This is an adequate starting point for our analysis because organisations can basically be observed as groups whose members are people with common norms, values and behaviour. Specifically, this author explains that occupations should be seen as distinct subcultures because they involve groups of people with shared education, knowledge, group norms and professional socialization, whereas their values are unique to them and often differ from the dominant culture within the organisation (Trice in Livigni, 1993: 290).

This theory and model is accepted by various authors and institutions, and it is based on the notion of a unique set of values that are characteristic for specific subcultures that co-exist within a larger group or organisation, in which case geographical separation, field of expertise, etc. are possible factors that contribute to the formation of subcultures within organizations,⁵⁵ whereas organisations may be understood as a wider concept.

If we apply this model for defining (sub)cultures in the research in this paper, it will be possible to speak of a so-called “European (sub)culture” as a specific group of people whose members share common norms, values and knowledge in the process of mutual communication that differ from the rest of Europe. This group can be identified and separated on the basis of the previously mentioned two factors: the geographical factor (a group living on the territory of the European Union) and the common field of expertise (a group composed of EU bureaucrats and media representatives). What differentiates this specific group of people (who come from 28 EU countries) from the rest of Europe is: their common values, common legislation, common borders, common institutions, and, especially, the common manner of professional speaking called Eurojargon, which is not familiar to other groups in Europe.

⁵⁵ <http://education-portal.com/academy/lesson/organizational-subculture-definition-examples.html>.

Defining a Distinct European (Sub)culture

Jargon is generally defined as vocabulary in a specific field that has restricted use among the members of a distinct social or professional group depending on their social status, age, profession, etc. This means that it is not only used to enable understanding between members of the same social group, but also between members of the same professional group (Minova-Gjurkova, 2003: 143). Therefore the conclusion can be drawn that it is precisely the language they use that enables them to stand out from others as a distinct group and to form their own subculture within the European culture, whereas the geographical factor and the common field of expertise serve as secondary identifiers of the group.

Eurojargon is a distinct type of professional jargon used by the bureaucrats and media representatives who live and work in the EU. It is used in their everyday communication – not only within the administrative institutions, but also in the communications with the wider public when providing information on all EU-related affairs through the mass media. Eurojargon is not a secret language like argot and slang, but it is equally obscure to people outside the group. Many Eurojargon terms and expressions have a hidden meaning that is not obvious and they often have metaphorical meaning or have acquired a completely new meaning that is specific to the domain of the EU and is therefore incomprehensible outside the group. For example, the commonly used term “*Green Paper*” has nothing to do with colour but everything to do with the documents published by the European Commission to stimulate discussions on given topics at the European level, whereas the expression “*Hard core*” is not used in the usual informal context because in the EU it signifies a limited group of countries that are able and willing to develop closer cooperation.⁵⁶ Furthermore, a “*rendezvous clause*” refers to a type of auxiliary clause in the legislative texts in the EU, while the expression “*Single European Sky*” can also not be understood literally because it denotes a package of EU measures regulating the European air space, etc.

This restricted vocabulary is used by the voluminous administration in the EU with the purpose of providing efficient communication considering its

⁵⁶ http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/index_en.htm.

multicultural and multilingual nature. With so many different bureaucrats and media representatives with diverse cultures and languages, they are bound to be different even in the manner they speak and express themselves. However, despite of the differences, it is Eurojargon that unites them as a distinct group that uses a common specialised terminology that enables them efficient communication with and among the EU administration and media.

These special lexical units and phraseological expressions are specific to the bureaucratic discourse of the EU and have restricted use among the EU administrative officials and media, whereas they designate specific EU-related concepts, such as documents, programmes, policies, institutions, etc. with a restricted meaning in the EU domain. These concepts are not familiar outside this restricted EU group. This supranational terminology is not distinctive of only one European language and culture, but it is characteristic of the EU political and social system as a whole.

The Mass Media in Disseminating the European (Sub)culture through Eurojargon

Through the terminology and language they use,⁵⁷ the EU manages to disseminate its influence and culture (or subculture within the larger European continent) to countries that are not EU member states, whereas the mass media play a key role in this process. This is especially the case with Macedonia where the media serve as a doorway that enables dynamic and intensive entry of words and expressions in the Macedonian language, which are increasingly becoming part of the discourse of the administration, the media and the professional public in Macedonia and is increasingly used by the general public as well. In this way, the EU spreads knowledge and information on their values, beliefs, institutions, policies, legislation, culture, manner of functioning, etc.

The Eurojargon is quite present in the Macedonian daily newspapers and web media, often without undergoing any adjustment. Reporters often tend to suppress the Macedonian equivalents as a way to explain the foreign concepts, and they prefer to use the manner of speaking of the EU bureaucrats and media representatives instead. The origin of Eurojargon is from English and French, as

⁵⁷ Also often referred to as Eurospeak.

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dominant official languages that are used in the EU institutions. Eurojargon signifies prestige because it is part of the distinct (sub)culture that is spread by the European Union as a supranational institution. This can be demonstrated with certain typical examples given below, which are extracts from Macedonian newspapers showing clear examples of the everyday use of Eurojargon.

(1) „Постои одговор кој би можел да ги смири целите што се исклучуваат заемно: потребата на работодавците да бидат во можност да отпуштаат непотребни работници и потребата на вработените за сигурност на стабилни приходи. Тоа се нарекува *флексикурити*.“⁵⁸

From English: *flexicurity* (model of social policy in the EU combining flexibility of the employers and security of the employees)

(2) „Колку е Македонија поподготвена за имплементација на **Акито** толку ќе бидат поголеми шансите тој процес на преговори да заврши побрзо.“⁵⁹

From French: *acquis* (the corpus of EU law)

(3) „*Бенчмаркингот* во поголемиот број случаи бара службени посети на конкурентски и неконкурентски објекти поради набљудување, испитување, споредба на практиките и процеси на разни можни размени на податоци.“⁶⁰

From English: *Benchmarking* (EU standards for evaluation of a country's successfulness compared to other countries)

(4) „ОЛАФ примил најмногу сигнали за злоупотреби со европски средства од Бугарија.“⁶¹

From French: *OLAF* – Office de Lutte Anti-Fraude (the European Anti-Fraud Office)

⁵⁸ Несигурноста главна одлика на работните места на 21 век. *Утрински весник*, 5 април 2010.

⁵⁹ Македонија со британска помош ќе се усогласува со ЕУ во областа на животна средина. *Сител*, 17 јуни 2013.

⁶⁰ Бенчмаркинг во вашата компанија. *Macedonia Daily*, 30 мај 2011.

⁶¹ Олаф примал најмногу сигнали за злоупотреба со европски средства од Бугарија. *Денешен весник*, 23 мај 2013.

(5) „Тој не успева да ја исполни примарната цел за ослободување на буџетот на ЕУ и редуцирање на искривените ефекти на **КАП** на светските земјоделски пазари.“⁶²

From English: *CAP* – Common Agricultural Policy (the common EU policy in the field of agriculture)

(6) „Ова го истакна вицепремиерката за европски прашања Теута Арифи во одговор на прашањето поставено од пратеникот Андреј Петров од СДСМ во рамките на денешната собраниска седница посветена на пратенички прашања, зошто **скринингот** Македонија го почнува токму со поглавјата 23 и 24.“⁶³

From English: *Screening* (a process of monitoring the factual situation in a country in various fields during the EU negotiations)

(7) „ЕУ СО „МЕКО ПРАВО“ ЈА ДЕКРИМИНАЛИЗИРА КЛЕВЕТАТА“⁶⁴

From English: *Soft Law* (the non-binding legislation of the EU)

(8) „Во случај да имаше формално гласање, според правилата на таканаречената **комитологија**, ЕК би морала одлуката за одобрување на тој вид ГМО да ја донесе во рок од 24 часа.“⁶⁵

From English: *Comitology* (a process when the European Commission consults specialized advisory committees with experts from the member states)

(9) „Директорот на ГД за проширување на ЕУ на средби со државниот врв во Скопје.“⁶⁶

From English: *DG* (Directorate General)

⁶² Земјоделските реформи на ЕУ можат да помогнат на светските пазари. *Southeast European Times*, 16 July 2003.

⁶³ Арифи: пракса на ЕУ е скрининг процесот да го почне со поглавјата 23 и 24. *Сител*, 23 февруари 2012.

⁶⁴ ЕУ со „меко право“ ја декриминализира клеветата. *Дневник*, 11 мај 2012.

⁶⁵ Европската унија ќе дозволи одгледување ГМО-пченка? *Дневник*, 12 февруари 2014.

⁶⁶ Директорот на ГД за проширување на ЕУ на средби со државниот врв во Скопје. *Новини*, 4 јуни 2014.

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(10) „Дури и да се обезбедат финансии, непостоењето граници меѓу земјите-членки на ЕУ значително го олеснува меѓународниот транспорт преку **TEN-T** коридорите.“

From English: *TEN-T* (Trans-European Transport Network).⁶⁷

The examples given from 1 to 10 are typical Eurojargon that is present in all media in Macedonia, not only in the printed and web media but also in the news reports. By reading about them and by hearing them in news reports, the professional public and the general public become increasingly acquainted with them and use them on a daily basis. For example, when referring to the EU corpus of legislation, they use the French term “*acquis*” (“*aku*”) as if it is part of the Macedonian language. However, it should be noted that, if due to their frequent use in the future these terms and expressions become part of the standard Macedonian language, they will no longer be considered as jargon, but as standard terminology.

Conclusion

In today’s contemporary society, it is inadequate to relate the concept of ‘subculture’ only with deviant groups on the brink of social marginality and lower-class status. On the one hand, we have demonstrated that subcultures are connected with groups expressing distinctiveness in terms of expressing individuality and identity. The European subculture is distinctive of a restricted group whose members, the EU bureaucrats and media representatives, have a unique organisational and professional culture. One of the key elements uniting them as something distinct from the rest is the jargon they use in the communication with and among the EU administration and media as well as in the communications with the wider public when providing information on all EU-related affairs. However, this culture has become so dominant and popular that it is unclear whether it is more adequate to refer to a European subculture or culture.

⁶⁷ ЕУ ќе инвестира во Коридорот 4, македонските коридори заобиколени! *Build*, 23 October 2013.

On the other hand, we can also conclude that with the frequent use of Eurojargon, not only in the Macedonian language, but also in the other Balkan languages, the non-EU languages undergo a process of transformation in order to address the need for changes. The new terms and expressions elaborated in this paper signify a European identity and concepts characteristic of a new socio-political system that is very different from our own system, and in that regard they also signify a manner of speaking and expressing of a distinct group whose members live and work on the territory of the EU. In this manner, we learn about their programmes and policies, institutions and common values in general or, in other words, we learn about the EU culture that is entering our own. The mass media are accessible to large masses of people and they are a powerful communication tool with the power to exert influence.

Eurojargon surpasses the national borders of the member states and wherever it travels it reflects the European identity, the common values and a unique socio-political system. The mass media largely contribute to dissemination of this vocabulary in the Republic of Macedonia as well, and thereby contribute to dissemination of the European culture as a new type of subculture that is unfamiliar to us.

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Милена Саздовска-Пигуловска

МАС-МЕДИУМИТЕ ВО ШИРЕЊЕ НА ЕВРОПСКАТА (СУП)КУЛТУРА ПРЕКУ ЕВРОЖАРГОНОТ

Резиме: Целта на трудот е да се отфрлат конвенционалните сфаќања кои вообичаено ја поврзуваат супкултурата со определена пониска култура. Супкултурата се поврзува со секоја група луѓе која се разликува по начинот на однесување и размислување, но и по начинот на изразување. Една таква група се медиумите во Европската Унија, коишто во секојдневната комуникација користат посебен жаргон, т.н. еврожаргон. Речникот што го користат со цел остварување ефикасна комуникација е неразбирлив за други лица надвор од групата со оглед на тоа што се создава на наднационално ниво, односно во специфична мултикултурна и мултијазична средина каква што е Европската Унија. Преку мас-медиумите овој карактеристичен жаргон навлегува во сите европски јазици и придонесува за ширење на една наднационална (суп)култура.

Клучни зборови: супкултура, еврожаргон, ширење култура, масовни медиуми