

# Linguistic and Semiotic Features of Music Clubs and Band Names in Bulgaria After 1989

Gergana Angelova Rayzhekova  
Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Sofia, Bulgaria

The current club situation in Bulgaria is one that started unfolding in the late 1980s with the gradual fall of communism and the emergence of many alternatives to the official mainstream bands. What followed after the abrupt end of the regime was an emigration wave of musicians followed by the opening of various clubs and bars and the first steps of music business together with the launching of many independent music projects. What the article examines is the way English language has invaded this particular sphere of entertainment influencing band names, bar names, and lyrics. The article is examining the reasons that lie behind this peculiar and persistent Bulgarian identity crisis, the accompanying identity emigration, English language saturation, and how these factors came to shape the current Bulgarian alternative music scene. A semantic and linguistic analysis of the names of the most popular clubs and bands will be provided and a few conclusions as to the reasons behind this overall trend will be offered supported by findings from the science of suggestology, sociology, and anthropology. The methods used are inclusive observation, anthropological interviews, rich ethnographic materials, and other methods.

*Keywords:* Bulgarian alternative music, club suggestion, neo-tribes, identity emigration, cover value

## Introduction

The Bulgarian music scene is one still carrying the trauma and consequences of the communist regime during which there was a prohibition towards most of the Western rock music accompanied by the impregnation of an overall disrespect towards English language. However, limited resources and scarcity can provoke creativity (Walker, 2006) and thus as a result in the late 1980s an alternative to the official Bulgarian mainstream rock music appeared heralding the upcoming changes in the political system. This alternative music became the spokesman of the upcoming changes in society and exploded in the appearance of more than 200 bands in various styles, which passionately composed and played around the country soon to be swept away by the first emigration wave after the changes. Twenty-six years later, the once forbidden dream of the West with its endless opportunities still shines in the back of the mind of many thus creating an obsession to escape from the Bulgarian reality of the current post-totalitarian chaos. In this way together with the physical emigration, a certain type of escapism came into being mainly through the usage of English language which has unfortunately turned the alternative music scene in Bulgaria into a mimesis, an imitation of the rock scene abroad. Currently the

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Gergana Angelova Rayzhekova, Ph.D., Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

alternative scene is trickling away into three exit-escapes. The first one is the emigration of many musicians from Bulgaria using tours, projects, foreign management, production, etc. The second path is the virtual emigration through the power of imagination, i.e., bands imagining themselves in a different context by actively participating in tribute nights, cover nights, Seattle nights, where the ultimate product is a crude imitation of certain rock idols and where improvisation and creativity are not tolerated at all. The third exit is a Bulgarian identity emigration that is done with the choice of English language when naming bands, clubs, and bars. In the band context, this goes even further by using English language, which is not understood by the majority of Bulgarians, as a choice of songwriting language, which can be interpreted as another way of emigrating from the audience itself.

The article focuses on the third exit way and dwells upon the linguistic and semantic features of clubs, bars, and bands in Bulgaria and how this on-going trend has affected the scene. A list of the most prominent clubs and bands will be provided together with a semantic and linguistic analysis of their names and a few conclusions as to the reasons behind this overall trend will be offered supported by findings from the science of suggestology, sociology, and anthropology. The article is part of a bigger research with a working title: *Problems of the Current Alternative Music Scene in Bulgaria (Clubs and Media)*. The methods used are inclusive observation, anthropological interviews, rich ethnographic materials, and other methods.

### **Bands: Break on Through to the Alternative Side**

The 1980s saw many changes in the social paradigm in Bulgaria and other neighboring countries as the communist regime slowly but surely started its demise. This tremendously affected the music scene together with the influx of Western music, images, media, and particularly MTV (Music Television). In this way English language, Western music, and the change came together in the country making various intraconnections, parallels, and analogies between each other. English language also gave people the freedom to travel, to communicate with different nations, and to have access to other unknown cultures beyond the well-known countries from the Communist Bloc thus turning it into a symbol of freedom and emancipation. When we consider the English-Bulgarian language paradigm and what stimulates the importance of this language, we should take into account the hypothesis of linguistic relativity that the differences in languages are not only a real barrier in communicating with people from other cultures but are basic in the way we view the world and how we think because the principles of classification are different and the mutual understanding is just an illusion (Paceva, 2004, p. 131). As John Locke argues words tend to “enchant” people, suggest ideas and distance people from the truth about objects. When it comes to getting the message across the insignificance of words,

Manifestly fills their discourse with abundance of empty unintelligible noise and jargon, especially in moral matters, where the words for the most part standing for arbitrary and numerous collections of ideas, not regularly and permanently united in nature, their bare sounds are often only thought on, or at least very obscure and uncertain notions annexed to them. (Locke, 1824, p. 345)

If we further push the limits in Locke’s theory about the untranslatability between words and ideas where two parallel universes overlap but never mix, we can add to the Bulgarian situation the fact that after the changes English language started being taught as a second language in schools thus creating a generation living in an English context in opposition to the previous generations brought up in a Russian one. Connected to the political

changes at that period, we can draw conclusions upon the importance of signs and “the textual world” (De Beaugrande & Dressler, 1996, p. 101) that it was formed around these two language systems and how it slowly evolved in an English-dominated music scene. Shortly after the changes many bands started composing primarily in English, named their bands with English names, and were supported in their acts by clubs and bars with English names, too. If we take Saussure’s paradigm, the use of English is the signifier, the symbol, the form of expression. What it signifies is the concept of otherness, of freedom which ultimately leads to an identity crisis or an identity emigration as was mentioned above. When we talk about club experience, it can be taken as a form of a self-development or self-realization process, a so called “identity project”, in questions concerning love and romance (Rief, 2009, p. 132). Another way to look at club culture is the way music and dance help people reinvent the surrounding world and their place in it (Shankar & Elliott, 1999). What Statelova explains is that “identity” is formed gradually where identity develops and shapes in the presence of “difference” and “interaction” (Statelova, 2011). What stems from this difference is the disposition that “non-actors” in this act of self-construction are class inferior others and from this “exaggerated otherness” the idea of an existing community strengthens even more (Thornton, 1997, p. 200). It is an “emotional community” to use Arjun Appadurai’s term about a group of people who present themselves and feel together (Appadurai, 1990). Also it is necessary to take into account the fact that these communities occupy somehow not so ordinary places which are situated somewhere in a distorted space and time and add to this the property of musical language to be able to incorporate and convey spatial images, simultaneously producing and reproducing social systems (Kong, 1995, p. 4). Thus the Bulgarian club scene with its identity projects founded on the mutual need to be different and to interact, based on the innate necessity to distance from other generations started forming an alien community who belonged not here, here meaning Bulgaria, and which in order to occupy a certain physical space started producing their own spaces like clubs and bars. In the Bulgarian club scene which is too rigid and young since it started developing in the 1990s, we have two categories of club-goers: the “emotional communities” which is a very small group of people loyal to certain places and consistent in their music taste occupying these specific islands of otherness; and neo-tribes (Maffesoli, 1996) which, like subatomic particles act according to chance, chaos, coincidence, and don’t obey any laws of subculture and club culture but juggle with different identities in a hedonistic fashion. In his work on the power of suggestion “Suggestopedia—desuggestive teaching. Communicative method on the level of the hidden reserves of the human mind”, prof. Georgi Lozanov takes into account the specifics of a common psychological condition called multipersonality where “changes in the whole personality, including functions of the body and the brain” take place, a condition inherent in every person more or less (Lozanov, 2005, p. 55). According to his findings “one and the same emotion or thought changes the overall physical activity, attitudes, motivations, readiness for one activity or another” (Lozanov, 2005, p. 55). The example provided by the professor is connected to children who “living in an environment of irresolvable conflicts exhibit different personality traits in communicating with a different parent, teacher, friend, etc.”. In the Bulgarian music scene, the irresolvable conflict comes from the Cold War rivals Russia and the USA. During the communist regime on one side, there was the mandatory Russian language in schools, the widely tolerated propaganda Russian music and culture. On the other side stood stifled and incomprehensible English language, the dangerous West and its forbidden music. And while other countries like former Yugoslavia did a smoother transition between socialism and capitalism as far as music is concerned in Bulgaria the harsh methods towards

stopping cultural influences from the west managed to form major discrepancies resulting in a generation gap between musicians, an older generation unwilling and unable to pass their knowledge to the young ones, and a young generation disinterested in anything belonging to that particular period of time. This explains the certain push in the extremity where Bulgarian bands have started adopting English names, English lyrics and follow West models. If we take a quick look at bands throughout the years and how the audience responded we can find a certain correlation between political aspirations and musical preferences, too. Beginning with the 1970s and 1980s bands were forced to have Bulgarian names at the time if they wanted to be played on the radio. Such bands are: Нова Генерация, Ревю, Кокоша глава, Атлас, Бели Зелени Червени, Второто Национално Нищо, Клас, Зеленото убива, Вход Б, Сребърните гривни, Щурците, etc. (in English: New Generation, Review, Hen's Head, Atlas, White Green Red, The Second National Nothing, Class, The Green Kills, Entrance B, The Silver bracelets, The Crickets). With the case of punk bands like the band Кокоша глава (Hen's head) and Второто Национално Нищо (The Second National Nothing), there is a tendency to mock and irritate authorities and that is why most of the names of punk bands are still in Bulgarian since they are meant to be understood by everybody in order to shock and provoke. Other punk bands are: Холера (Cholera), Аборт (Abortion), Контрол (Control), Боли Ме Фара (I Don't Give a Fuck), Битов Терор (Home Terror), Хиподил (a blend between hippopotamus and crocodile), Разврат и Поквара (Fornication and Rot), Нови Цветя (New Flowers), Voyvoda (Revolutionary), Акаши Джуджета (Pooping Dwarves), Деца с Увреден Слух (Kids With Impaired Hearing), Безполови Хиени (Sexless Hyenas), Срам и позор (Shame and Disgrace), Виолетов Генерал (Violet General), Ревю (Review), and others. Bands with English names started emerging after the mid-1990s and slowly began dominating the scene. These are: P.I.F. (Pioneers In Fashion), Babyface Clan, Panickan Whyasker, Pyromania, Slang, Awake, Gravity Co, Wickeda, Bluba Lu, and many others. Here we will not focus on female vocalists who tend to keep their personal names such as Milenita, Milena, Raja, Ruth, Beloslava, etc. What is interesting with bands currently on the scene is that the trend has been kept and the exceptions have become bands in Bulgarian with Bulgarian letters—Остава, Анимационерите, Исихия, Разходка по Луната, Обратен Ефект, Оратница, Черно Фередже, Дрънч, Мерудия and Белонога though because of platforms like youtube and other sites for sharing for the sake of easy search these bands can also be found transliterated. Even rarer occasions are bands with Bulgarian names written in Bulgarian and not transliterated with very few examples. Without any particular order, active alternative bands with English names now are: smallman, LaText, Apemen, Popara, Voyvoda, Macrophone, Musicoholic, Bears and Hunters, Casual Threesome, Urban Grey, Soundprophet, Der Hunds, No more many more, Jin Monic, Comasummer, Nick Chongi, Balkansky, Dozen't Frogs, Urban Grey, The Black Swells, Affection, Panic Station, D\*VINE, Drynch, Jeremy?, Overgame, Kottarashky & The Rain Dogs, Hayes & Y, and the ones already mentioned above. If we include band names from other styles like metal, metalcore, hardcore, neo-metal, etc., we will see the same trend reoccurring. Examples include the bands: 40 Days Later, Alien Industry, Sepuko 6, Vendetta, Last Hope, Them Frequencies, Odd Crew, 8m/s, JFT, K.O.R.A., Downer Kill, Formless Reality, Booze Brothers, Skirt, Fyeld, O.H., PIRAHNA, and others. What is important in a band name is the name to be catchy, short and at best if the word is part of the international vocabulary. The last feature is seen across different generations of Bulgarian bands and musicians. What is not tolerated are words which include sounds not found in the Bulgarian phonetics like [th], [ng] while an [r] is widely used but it is almost always pronounced with a rhotic [r] since this is the norm in Bulgarian.

When we talk about music and music production, we can explain the process of music making by the triangular methodology suggested by Barbosa in 1991 in connection to art production. According to it in order to create a piece of art, we need to pass through three stages: learning, practice of critique, and finally creating a piece of art, i.e., to learn the development of a certain style then practice music critique to get enabled to evaluate music works and finally make music, which “is assuredly based on the knowledge and sense of evaluation gained through the previous phases” (Barbosa, 1991, p. 7). According to Von Oech “the creativity process consists of four steps: the explorer, the artist, the judge and the warrior. Each character represents a stage of the creativity process” (Oech, 1987, p. 12). Some of the stages of Von Oech overlap with Barbosa’s theory for example the explorer mirrors the learning stage. The explorer’s task is to collect necessary information related to a specific topic. The second step, i.e., the artist represents the experimentation phase of the process where the collected data is used to freely generate multiple answers and pieces of art with questionable value. The third figure of the judge is responsible for the process of evaluation, i.e., critique so that the best option can be chosen. Finally, the warrior stands for the stage of applying the selected solution in a broader context. Taking these two paradigms of art making into account, we can conclude which stage Bulgarian musicians mostly inhabit. If we take Barbosa’s triangular model, we can say that stage one or learning is a very problematic one since because of the communist regime the Bulgarian mass audience have decades of music development to catch up with. As one of the interviewees, an owner of the former Club Lebowski in Plovdiv city, laments:

Despite the whole information there is now, a big cultural gap because of the Wall, the communist wall, exists. The people who had information at that time have one interest in music, the people who were not like that they are interested if something is sellable or not, modern or not, which is not a serious attitude at all towards music in general and the media does not help in any way that thing to be overcome. (...) You can turn the radio on after two years and hear the same songs at the same time and that’s true, that’s funny and that’s tragic. There is a lot of work to be done and unfortunately the standard is low and people (...) cannot let themselves experiment, be calm, not agonize and all this lowers the chances of somebody really delving deep into music.<sup>1</sup>

If we consider Von Oech’s evolution of explorer, artist, judge, and warrior all four stages in the alternative scene in Bulgaria altogether are very superficially touched upon in order to save resources and time and most of all because there was no support from mentors and musicians from previous generations. This resulted in the emergence of Do-It-Yourself, Do-It-Together (DIT) or Do-It-With-Others (DIWO) projects. Due to the lack of critical engagement in the Bulgarian alternative scene and music making a situation has emerged which can be compared to reading a book without analyzing what has been read which ultimately leads to minority, not maturity (Stiegler, 2011, p. 37). This explains why since 1989 the alternative scene in Bulgaria has been shrinking rather than maturing. One of the consequences connected to the shrinking of the alternative scene and its immature imitations has resulted in the up-bringing of a passive audience, a neo-tribe which soon migrates to the next new thing in the entertainment business whether it is piano bars, karaoke bars, or anything suggested on the weekly program. What is characteristic about neotribes is that they are multiple so a person can choose being part of many without them dominating his or her life. Second, neotribes are based on the idea of games and thus they lack moral responsibility (Muñiz, 2001). Third feature is that they are transitory, fluctuating, appearing, and disappearing according to people or resources as in the case with piano bars and karaoke bars and other fleeting

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Nikolay Kostikov, Plovdiv city, June 28, 2015.

trends in night life culture. Forth characteristic of neotribes is that they are entrepreneurial and constantly shape the products on the market according to their taste (Kozinets, 2007). So if the alternative scene is dependent on neotribes since emotional communities are still gaining ground or are shrinking into minorities, we come to the conclusion that in order to attract the eye of the masses a band or a club must imitate or at least resemble a mass product to be popular. This further contradicts the opposition mainstream—alternative questioning the right usage of the “alternative” label in the Bulgarian context. No wonder then that the alternative scene in the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s was a majority and that was because it was opposing a mainstream pop culture. In the 2010s with the lack of any visible and clear mainstream the “alternative” label has lost its important connotations and has become a minority. This shrinking eventually brings us to the problem of consumption or to put it in other words this closes a vicious circle where lack of original/authentic music is followed by a lack of professional musicians which leads to imitation and altogether lowers the standards. This on the other hand generates a disinformed and disinterested audience which is unwilling to pay unless the product is well-known which leads to low income of clubs, managers, producers and results in an overall reluctance to sponsor authentic new music and new artists. The “I must survive” choice brings us to easy listening formats where cover bands, tribute nights sweep the clubs and suck in neo-tribes as customers. As one musician confirms the situation “If you play your own music in Bulgaria you have cut your head from the waist up”.<sup>2</sup> How does the identity emigration look from the point of view of clubs will be tackled in the next chapter where a special emphasis will be put upon club names and the specific context they outlay for bands, the specific semantic fields they inhabit and what is the suggestion behind the chosen semantic fields according to the science of suggestology.

### **Clubs: Clubs Are Strange**

With the fall of the communist regime the first clubs in Bulgaria appeared. They opened in the beginning of the 1990s in Plovdiv city and Sofia city. Ironically the first club in the capital carried the name “Chaos” which in a way resembled the situation in the country at that time. Although it worked only three years, it was the first authentic punk bar and had the aura and mystery of a notorious underground “hole” with an improvised stage space. Thanks to its habitants one of its nicknames was “The Punk”, while because of its humidity another name it got during its time was “The Muddy Place”. Soon after its success and demise a plethora of clubs flooded the big cities. A thousand of voices wanted to be heard, to live through the Western kind of atmosphere and parties, to hear live their favourite songs. Some of the clubs appearing around Bulgaria and mostly in Sofia were the following: Swinging Hall, Маската, Строежа, Библиотеката, Три Уши, Mr Punch, and others, while in Plovdiv the existing clubs were Устата, Найлона, Петното, and Конюшните на Царя. If we divide the club names in categories semantically, we will have three groupings: Films and wordplay, Marginalised spaces, and of course Musical themes. In the first category, we have clubs like: Тънка Червена Линия (Thin Red Line), Lebowski, Adams, Rockenrolla, Маската (The Mask), Четири стаи (Four Rooms), MAZE (which in Bulgarian can be also read as “Basement”), NoSense, Wrong Bar, Bar Zar (“Zar” meaning dice), Bar Dak (a pun with the Bulgarian word “бардак” meaning warehouse), Bar Fly, Non-Sleep Hostel. The second category includes clubs whose names occupy marginalized spaces, sometimes with negative connotations suggesting a certain type of danger,

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with Valentin Kamenov, Gabrovo city, May 1, 2015.

for example the clubs: Chaos, Строежа (The Construction Site), Terminal 1, MAZE, Маймунарника (The Monkey House), Библиотеката (The Library), Хамбара (The Barn), Neu!Berlin, Петното (The Spot), Конюшните на Царя (The Tsar's Stables), Три уши (Three Ears), Найлона (The Nylon). The third category is logically connected to the semantic field of music with the following clubs: Fans, Sofia Live Club, Swinging Hall, Stage 51, Studio 5, Mixtape 5, Rock It, Steppenwolf, and others. Here we can refer to Stuart Hall's coding/decoding article and how there are certain "degrees of symmetry" or degrees of "understanding" and "misunderstanding". The communicative exchange "depend on the degrees of symmetry/asymmetry (relations of equivalence) established between the positions of the 'personifications', encoder-producer and decoder-receiver" (Hall, 1973, p. 510). In the first two cases where we have clubs with film names and bars named after marginalized spaces club owners suggest to their clientele the possibility of "interhuman experiences that try to shake off the constraints of the ideology of mass communications" (Bourriaud, 2009, p. 62). The suggestion of the club name means that by going out to that particular place something bizarre, unearthly and even slightly dangerous can happen so "alternative forms of sociability, critical models and moments of constructed conviviality" are developed (Bourriaud, 2009, p. 62). As far as register is concerned in the second category bar names are predominantly colloquial with an overall sense of anarchy. These spaces occupy the semantic field of urban, interior places which though being public have been squatted or taken over by a community of outsiders. In these underground musical squats individuals can freely express themselves by breaking the laws of society in the meantime. In the third group apart from the obvious emphasis on the semantic field of performance arts what strikes is the usage of numbers which signifies a kind of continuity, a legacy that has been kept and has been passed down onto the next generation and that these places are inevitably connected to other studios, other stages, and other mixtapes. Another suggestion we find in the provided list is that these places are not only marginalized or magical but that they belong to another culture of alien music culture, that they possess the allure of the unknown, they are the foreigner, the stranger. If we take Simmel's observations in his famous essay *The Stranger*, we have the relation where "one who is close by is remote, but his strangeness indicates that one who is remote is near" (Simmel, 1971, p. 143) meaning that the proximity of the clubs indicate a certain attainability of the assets of these otherwise unattainable spaces. According to Simmel "the stranger makes his appearance as a trader" and "a trader is required only for goods produced outside the group" (Simmel, 1971, p. 144) so it is no wonder that clubs indicate themselves as traders of other culture by their specific English names. The same can be applied to band names as well. Going through the list of characteristics provided by Simmel another feature of the foreigner fits in the alternative club scene in Bulgaria which is the foreigner's estrangement from the community, a "distinctly 'objective' attitude" which in the club scene translates as the failure or even lack of interest of many if not most club owners and managers to attract and further educate a community of shared musical interests. This means that most clubs choose to depend on neo-tribes and thus not have any obligations whatsoever. Just like strangers or foreigners they keep their freedom to try their luck, move on to another neo-tribe or simply close down. The same can be said about the plethora of bands with English names which as was mentioned above an English name is the rule not the exception. By choosing to distance themselves from their local identity they ascribe more general qualities to themselves "to the extent to which the similarities assume a universal nature, the warmth of the connection based on them will acquire an element of coolness, a sense of contingent nature of precisely this relation". It is another instance of "both nearness and remoteness simultaneously" (Simmel, 1971, p.

147). Thus this presumed connectivity to the global rock scene offers the possibility of making it abroad or at least by choosing an English name bands leave that option open for invitations. The fan base around such clubs and bars connected to foreign culture and especially because they are music-oriented, promises a relationship of unique proportions, to put it in Depeche Mode terms promises “strange love”. As Simmel puts it himself: “a love such as this has never existed before” and it includes “many possibilities of similarities” (Simmel, 1971, p. 148) thus connecting the Bulgarian fans to an infinite number of foreign fans contributing to the feeling of belonging to a general community of “indeterminate number of others” i.e., the global scene. The love or praise towards the alien/the stranger has further mutated in a cover culture with the support of most clubs in Bulgaria providing their stage. Another interesting fact is the emergence of tribute bands many of which pay tribute to bands currently in the peak of their careers such as Arctic Monkeys, Queens of the Stone Age, MUSE, Aerosmith, Rolling Stones, Depeche Mode which further creates and enhances a vacuum of musical mimesis, delivering another such moment of “constructed conviviality”. What happens with cover and tribute nights is the shift of roles where passive consumers meaning musicians who do not compose or have no repertoire of their own can become active producers in order to satisfy their own needs (Atkinson, 2006) changing themselves from mere customers to co-creators in the process (Fuad-Luke, 2009). The shift from consumers to creators is also reflected in the term “presumption” (Toffler, 1984) indicating an approach to sustainability in which consumers create (produce) for their own consumption. Arguably, prosumption includes not only the process of production and consumption, but also remarkably meaningful layers such as value creation. For this reason, prosumption can be described as an “activity” initiated by the consumer in order to create values (Xie, Bagozzi, & Troye, 2008). Since after the fall of the communist regime too few an artist could produce any Western-influenced music many consumers became producers of that art so as to meet their own thirst for Western music. “If no ‘meaning’ is taken, there can be no ‘consumption’. If the meaning is not articulated in practice, it has no effect” (Hall, 1973, p. 508). So musicians supported by clubs and bars that relied on neo-tribes and their fluctuating preferences and where bar-owners and managers are not interested in developing a Bulgarian music scene caused the emergence of a process where pure imitation grew into the existence of the cover value. This explains why the Bulgarian cover culture, tribute practices and English identity swaps are seen as valuable and not harmful practices of the scene. This is later rationalised in explanations that the “language of rock music is English” or that “English comes/sounds natural”. To quote again Stuart Hall: “Certain codes may be widely distributed in a specific language community or culture and be learned at so early an age, that they appear not to be constructed” (Hall, 1973, p. 511) thus what follows is the “profoundly naturalized” codes. As Hall continues further “The operation of naturalized codes reveals not the transparency and ‘naturalness’ of language but the depth, the habituation and the near-universality of the codes in use” (Hall, 1973, p. 511). This further supports the thesis of the suggestive factors that govern the current alternative scene in Bulgaria and reveals the “(ideological) effect of concealing the practices of coding” connected to both periods of communist and post-communist society (Hall, 1973, p. 511). It is important to note that,

Before this message can have an “effect” (however defined), satisfy a “need” or be put to a “use”, it must first be appropriated as a meaningful discourse and be meaningfully decoded. It is this set of decoded meanings which “have an effect”, influence, entertain, instruct or persuade, with very complex perceptual, cognitive, emotional, ideological or behavioral consequences. (Hall, 1973, p. 509)



Here we can add another important circumstance that serves to seriously encapsulate the scene in an English value cover. This push away factor is the spread of the pop folk music or the so-called “chalga” in the beginning of the 1990s. It was another oppressed style of music during the regime that originated in the end of the 19th century and that after 1989 morphed into “dance, techno, r’n’b, hip-hop, soul with a global sound but in Bulgarian; with the eroticism and the image of Madonnas but with Oriental details in the sexual carnal dancing and musical pleasing” (Dimov, 2009, p. 113). Thus another opposition appeared between the sexually explicit feminine pop-folk Bulgarian-sung scene and the masculine Western models entering the country through MTV and other media. Visual media and different visual instruments as a whole is a perfect example of peripheral perceptions that are part of paraconsciousness and another way to code meaning especially when there is organised involvement in the process. Going back to the science of suggestology peripheral perceptions play an important part in the process of suggestion.

It is extremely important to know that they are in fact controllable, although they are part of paraconsciousness. If attention is deliberately directed to them they enter consciousness and then one can either accept or reject them. Very often, however, they can enter consciousness spontaneously as well. In terms of strength and duration, these are normal supra-threshold stimuli. However, when these stimuli fall beyond the scope of attention and consciousness, which happens all the time, they acquire the properties of sub threshold signals. (Lozanov, 2005, p. 51)

In tribute nights sub threshold signals are again connected to the peripheral perceptions as far as singing, dressing and stage presence is concerned. Thus the coded signals reach the paraconsciousness and because of the repetitive mode of these nights together with the tolerance towards them from both bar owners and band members this trend has slowly become the norm dominating the music scene. Other suggestive factors are connected to the audience on these special emotional occasions who experiences two types of behavior also documented by prof. Lozanov and experimented in suggestopedic courses. These are infantilisation and pseudo-passivity. The term infantilisation is used in the sense of “increased trust and receptivity while retaining a critical attitude and self-control” while pseudo-passivity is in the sense of a calm, relaxed, undisturbed and controlled activity” (Lozanov, 2005, p. 53). “Infantilisation is the natural and spontaneous reaction in receiving information with a high degree of credibility (reliability). On the other hand, pseudo-passivity is largely the expression of good self-discipline, and at the same time a form of concentrative self-relaxation” (Lozanov, 2005, p. 53). This in the sense of club culture can be expressed through dancing i.e., the infantilisation where we have spontaneous reaction to the music and the band, on the other hand the other type of perceiving music is with a static pseudo-passivity where during shows and performances part of the audience don’t dance but witness and experience the show. What is important here is that it does not matter whether the audience is experiencing infantilization or is pseudo-passive because the mere presence at such events is what triggers the suggestion. In the situation where other options of musical experience are almost absent this “creates the intuitive sense of correctness and plausibility”. When we connect these psychological experiences with other suggestive factors such as multipersonality, prestige, peripheral perceptions, the Hawthorne and placebo effect (Rayzhekova, 2015) we have a serious club suggestion where covers dominating a concert are interpreted as something quite acceptable and even obligatory. As prof Lozanov continues “it is the soil where suggestion grows” (Lozanov, 2005, p. 54) and thus the cover value continues to spread and remain strong in the Bulgarian alternative scene.

### Conclusion on the Dancefloor

For 26 years now the Bulgarian music scene has been struggling with its past, reconciling old models of behavior with new trends of business and music making. In the article an attempt was made to go through some of the reasons for the predominant cover culture and English-oriented scene in Bulgaria as far as band names, club names and lyrics are concerned. Together with the end of communism came the beginning of capitalism and swayed generations of musicians from a Russian affinity to an American and English one, a process enhanced by social factors as well as the change of generations and a crude disassociation between them. The identity crisis shook the overall idea of Bulgarian identity and music caught these changes on the strings of alternative music waiting to be analyzed. Together with bands new places connected to the entertainment business like bars and clubs appeared. Their alien nature suggested unearthly experiences, presented new cultural models and occupied dangerous underground places to allure the curious masses comprised of irresponsible towards the music scene neo-tribes. A vicious circle of easy exit ways has thus resulted in a shrinking alternative scene where cover and tribute nights supported by the power of club suggestion has become the norm.

In this article a list of most of the Bulgarian alternative bands was provided as well as a list of the majority of clubs in Bulgaria. A semantic as well as linguistic analysis has given depth towards certain practices where through the science of suggestology current psychological processes that enhance the tribute culture in Bulgaria were introduced such as the suggestive factors of infantilisation, pseudo-passivity, multipersonality and others, all part of the process of identity crisis and identity swap. Through sociology and the work of Simmel the figure of the foreigner was introduced in the face of clubs and bands with English names explaining the shift of perception that this peculiar escapism has led to. The scientific contribution of the article is connected to the terms “cover value” and “club suggestion”.

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