

# The Discursive Opposition and the “Power of Discourse” in the Ukrainian Mass Media

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**Abstract.** The subject of this publication is related to such directions of modern linguistics as critical discourse analysis, media linguistics, and text semantics. The article examines the features of the media discourse of Ukraine on the example of antonymic semantic relations that are the result of modern discursive practice. The media discourse of modern Ukraine demonstrates the facts of the emergence and functioning of the pseudo-antonymic opposition. The research is based on economic topics articles published in Ukrainian online publications during 2019-2020. The texts of the publications are written in Ukrainian or Russian. All articles are devoted to the problem of “betrayal or victory”. The author of the article asserts that the active functioning of the Ukrainian lexemes “betrayal” and “victory” in the media discourse influenced not only the emergence of unusual oppositional relations between these lexemes. The active use of pseudo-antonyms in speech contributes to the destruction of traditional axiological values of Ukrainians and involves them in pseudo-discussions. Thus, first of all, the “power of discourse” is manifested. The author speaks about the formation of an independent discourse “betrayal or victory” in the Ukrainian media discourse. Pseudo-antonyms explode the pragmatic intentions of the sender of the message and are a means of manipulative influence on the linguistic consciousness of the recipient.

## 1 Introduction

In recent decades, humanity has faced challenges, some of which were created by itself. Both in naive and special scientific mastering the surroundings, a person records the results of his knowledge in primitive forms (such as elementary tools, sayings, proverbs, fairy tales, etc.) or in high-tech, modern examples of human skill. However, whatever it is, consciously or unconsciously striving for progress, a person finds himself at a crossroads. On one side of the road are predictable advantages, on the other – not expected, not foreseen by anyone in advance disadvantages. Such a dichotomous situation can be found in various spheres of human life: political, business, economic, social, domestic, cultural, etc. At the same time, we consider the opposite, which we observe both in the actions themselves and in their results, to be one of the regularity of human consciousness.

The traditions of the binary worldview are inherent in man as *Homo sapiens*. Binary perception of the world provokes our mental actions to divide everything that surrounds us into bad and good, good and evil, light and darkness, progressive and regressive, etc. Each of us has inherited this vision of the environment from our ancestors and is implementing it daily in relation to the facts of the new reality. Such a division is so ingrained for a person that he sometimes does not think about the essence of the comparing units, concepts, and facts. Such a person's attitude to the world around him

provokes him to change his views, to revise already established principles, attitudes, etc. We consider this ambivalent attitude as the root cause of the changes in the questions that a person asks himself in the world cognition process. Modern philosophers record a change in important questions for humanity: previously, humanity was interested in what are the laws of nature, now – why are the laws of nature such, and not others, and whether there is any “intelligence” in them, etc. Undoubtedly, at the beginning of the 21st century – the age of the information society – humanity is properly ripe for a new understanding of the problem [1].

The explicit or implicit use of this ability of human consciousness in manipulative strategies in various discursive practices, especially in mass media discourse, is quite natural. Modern discursive studies of mass media combine the communicative, pragmatic, stylistic, etc. analyses of both the communicative process itself and its participants – the addressee (sender) and the addressee (recipient).

«The person who speaks» (the concept of Claude Hagege «L'homme de paroles») [2] as a social being has a rich linguistic resource of his native language, which he can use in various communicative situations. The language decisions made by «the person who speaks», that is, the choice of certain language means, depends both on the communicative situation as a whole, and on a variety of intralinguistic and extralinguistic factors. The choosing of certain language means by «the person who speaks» helps researchers to understand their communicative and pragmatic purposes and intentions.

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## 2 Our contribution

It is well known that the mass media are the most dynamic, open, widely available resources in any country in the world. Their focus on the maximum reach of the addressee is the reason that determines many of their features, including pragmatic and linguistic ones. The most substantial distinctive media discourse features for this study are the following:

- group correlation (the author shares the views of his group);
- publicity (focusing on mass addressee);
- disens orientation (creating conflict with its following discussion);
- staging and mass orientation (impact on several groups simultaneously).

That is why scientists around the world have chosen mass media discourse as the object of the researches. Taking into account the communicative and pragmatic features of the media discourse, we turned to the analysis of the discursive and communicative features of the texts of financial and economic topics of Ukrainian periodicals of recent years.

The purposes of this research are to identify and describe examples of the linguistic implementation of the discursive opposition “betrayal – victory” (Ukr. “зрада – перемога” [‘zrada – peremoga’]), built on pseudo-paradigm relations of antonymy, to argue for the discursive-pragmatic conditionality of the mentioned opposition, to determine its functional purpose in the analyzed type of discourse.

Text is not only the elementary source of information. Text and word are means of manipulating the process of perception, evaluating informative flows, and forming a worldview. That is why the discourse power is primarily a social power.

## 3 Background

### 3.1 The degree of knowledge of the problem

The subject of this publication is related to such directions of modern linguistics as critical discourse analysis, media linguistics, and text semantics. At the same time, it is easy to see that despite the diversity of the principles of language learning today, they are based on system-structural methods of describing language phenomena. The importance of using this approach was noted by A. Reformatsky: “Since we believe that language is not an ideology, but a tool, and moreover a tool of a special kind, which does not have a structure like any material tool (axe, plow, combine), but a structure and a system organization, for all speakers, the first task is to practically master this tool in its given state” [3]. And although, according to A. Reformatsky, language is not an ideology, nevertheless, it is language that is used as tool of power.

### 3.2 Power and discourse from the linguistic point of view

The relationship between power and discourse has become a special subject of analysis and has formed an independent direction in discursology – the critical analysis of discourse (henceforth CDA). The history of the formation of this linguistic direction is considered in a number of works [4]. Without analyzing the stages and different schools of CDA, we will mention the names of those scientists whose studies have influenced the formation of this linguistic direction.

First of all, let us remember that any scientific direction is based on the main methods and principles of analysis. N. Fairclough and R. Wodak have summarized the basic principles of CDA most completely and precisely. In one of their articles, they named the seven tenets of CDA:

1. CDA addresses social problems
2. Power relations are discursive
3. Discourse constitutes society and culture
4. Discourse does ideological work
5. Discourse is historical
6. The link between text and society is mediated
7. Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory
8. Discourse is a form of social action [5].

None of the works on CDA today is complete without mentioning the researches of T. van Dijk. According to his own and Ruth Wodak definitions, his studies have shaped the social-cognitive approach in the analysis of discourse [6; 9]. Based on the concepts of power, history, and ideology, T. van Dijk justifies the need to study the abuse of power and the reproduction of inequality through ideologies. One of the main points of his theory says that “power is related to control, and control of discourse means preferential access to its production and hence to its contents and style, and finally to the public mind” [7].

In modern discourse studies, the concept of “the discursive power” is primarily associated with the ability to express power and influence in the process of communication. At the same time, scientists interpret the produced influence in two ways. Some of them talk about the power locations: where can power be “behind the discourse”, or the power is “in it”. According to Fairclough, the idea of “power behind discourse” is that the entire social order of discourse is folded and held together as a “hidden effect of power” [8]. So what is hidden is not the power itself, but how it manifests itself in the discourse.

One way or another, it is language in its influencing power that is defined as the power center of the social communicative space. From this perspective, researchers at the macro and micro levels of discourse investigate how “opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control” manifest themselves in language. According to Ruth Wodak, the purpose of critical discourse analysis is to critically examine social inequality and how it is expressed or signaled through linguistic means or in discourse [9]. If there is no direct explicit statement of the arguments or if the texts are not

transparent, the researchers reconstruct them. The description of the hidden meaning is the result of this reconstruction. In any case, language is precisely the means that not only provides communication, but also allows you to achieve ideological understanding/misunderstanding.

The potential multidimensional nature of language study creates the conditions for a comprehensive analysis of a particular discourse. Ruth Wodak emphasizes that critical discourse analysis has never been presented or attempted to be a single or specific theory. The researcher insists that the research methodology in the CDA is very diverse. She states the fact that scientists who work in this direction of discursive analysis use a wide variety of methods. These methods are based on different theories and on various data. Some researchers in the field of CDA also use grammatical approaches [9].

In the first version of the article «Critical Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis», Ruth Wodak considers the social construction of meanings to be one of the constitutive principles of critical discursive analysis. We accept the scientist's opinion that meanings arise as a result of the interaction between the reader/hearer of the text and those who speak/write this text. Meanings "are always subject to more or less closely enforced normative rules (for instance, generic rules), and to the relations of power obtaining in this interaction. Many different conscious and subconscious motives and planning procedures are relevant in text production and text comprehension, which result in manifest and latent meanings, cognitive and emotional aspects of discourse" [10].

The comprehensive analysis, which covers all levels of creation and organization of discourses (lexico-semantic, phonetic, stylistic, rhetorical, communicative-pragmatic, compositional-structural, formal, etc.) and uses different linguistic directions methods, is characteristic of the critical discursive studies of T. van Dijk, R. Wodak, V. Cherniavskaya, F. Bacevich, O. Selivanova, O. Semeneč, L. Shevchenko, etc.

The integrative approach is also characteristic of the representatives of the French school of discourse analysis. The works of M. Foucault, L. Althusser, J. Lacan, R. Barthes, A.-J. Greimas, M. Pesce, and others, as well as the French-Swiss linguist P. Serio, implement this approach in the study of history, philosophy, psychology (psychoanalysis), and linguistics. The researchers focus on the social meaning of communication. In this aspect, K. Levi-Strauss, R. Barth, M. Foucault, J.-F. Lyotard, J. Baudrillard, and others consider language and symbolic space as the main dimension of social life. Studying different discourses, they are united in understanding communication through the prism of symbolic creativity of social actors. Representatives of this discursology direction attempt to identify and to describe the patterns of influence of the total symbolic language system on a person. Thus, we observe the shift of research attention from formal linguistic features to their symbolic meanings associated with socio-cultural and psychological phenomena [11].

One of the important statement of M. Foucault's theory is the statement of the discursive nature of human consciousness. The scientist speaks about the epochs of the development of knowledge, which are characterized by historically changing forms of scientific discourse – epistemes that reflect certain ways of knowledge and determine the conditions for the possibility of thoughts, theories and sciences in each period. The norms of the discourse of a certain episteme determine both the speech behavior and the thinking of a person. Therefore, within each science, there is an interaction of the "will to know" and the "will to power".

Foucault describes three stages of formation of modern "European mentality" with corresponding major episteme: Renaissance (XVII), classical (rationalism of the XVI –XVIII centuries) and modern (the end of XVIII– the beginning of XIX). Each of them characterized by its correlation of "words" and "things". The scientist traces the stages of these relationships: from their identification and interchangeability (word-symbol), mediated relationship through thinking, in the space of representation (word-image), to the mediation of words and things in the modern episteme "language", "life", "work" (word – sign in the system of signs). In the era of postmodernism, the word is focused and closed on itself, exists by itself, which causes a crisis in the relationship between "words" and "things" [12].

In M. Foucault's vision, the "system of discursivity" manifests itself in the fact that it presupposes the possibility or impossibility of the appearance of a certain type of utterances and actions [13].

### 3.3 Features of studying the media discourse

The foundations developed by the classics of the discourse theory are developing further today. The forward movement is carried out in different directions. This is evident from a number of dissertation studies and scientific publications. The most productive, we think, are the studies of various types of discourse, in particular media discourse. It is the discourse of the mass media that we find most interesting for the analysis of the "power of discourse".

Because the source of the material in this publication was mass media discourse, we want to clarify its interpretation by the French linguist Elizabeth Le. The researcher talks about three aspects of studying it: 1) discourse as the use of language; 2) discourse as the "implantation" of certain ideas into the public consciousness; 3) discourse as the interaction of social groups and individuals. Therefore, researchers, according to the author, have the following requirements: first, since discourse is the use of language, its study involves the analysis of the text, covering different areas: syntax, vocabulary, "voices of polyphony", functions, various ways of modalizing individual components in order to clarify or, conversely, obscure some details; secondly, the discourse forms, "implants" representations and makes it necessary to analyze the production of texts and their interpretation; thirdly, discourse as the interaction of social groups and individuals should be investigated in connection with

the social structures of the culture of a given society [14].

The discourse of the mass media of Ukraine is studied by Ukrainian and foreign scientists in various aspects: formal-structural, sociolinguistic, cognitive, typological, etc. The Ukrainian media discourse of different periods was studied by S. Yermolenko, S. Sokolova, S. Bybyk, L. Shevchenko, M. Zhovtobryukh, A. Zagnitko, A. Koval, G. Solganik, G. Chernenko, A. Grygorash, I. Filatenko, N. Rudnichenko, K. Serazhym, O. Serbenska, O. Styshov, etc. [15].

### 3.4 Discursive opposition as a ground to generate pseudo-beliefs

According to the observations of many linguists, speech provides us with a unique material for analysis, which allows us not only to observe various modifications of word usage, but also to draw conclusions about those processes that go beyond the traditional ideas about the language system. One of these phenomena, which we found in the modern socio-political and media speech practice in Ukraine, attracted our attention.

The subject of the analysis in this publication is the opposition “betrayal – victory”, which is quite actively used in publications on various topics.

The material for the study was formed from articles published in the online versions of periodicals of Ukraine during 2019-2020 and written in Ukrainian, Russian or both languages. From the total amount of material for analysis in this work, publications on financial and economic topics were selected.

### 3.5 History and usage of opposition “betrayal or victory”

This pair of lexemes appeared in the socio-political and media discourse of Ukraine around the middle of 2015. According to our observations, it is August–October 2015 that its first fixations are dated. At the same time, some bloggers talk about the active use of this opposition already during the Revolution of Honor. The data collected by us registers its appearance in the Ukrainian periodicals in the indicated period.

It is essential to note that texts fix the contraposition of two completely different phenomena, named by lexemes, which form their own antonymic pairs in the lexical and semantic system of the Ukrainian language “betrayal – victory”.

In Ukrainian and Russian, victory (перемога / победа [peremoha / pobjeda]) means “Success in battle, war, in the struggle for something, achievement as a result of the struggle, overcoming something” [16]. The lexical and semantic antonym of this word, registered in the dictionaries of antonyms of Russian and Ukrainian languages, is the word defeat (поразка / поражение [porazka / porazeniye]): “1. Defeat of the army in battle, bringing it out of the state of combat capability... 2. Failure in the struggle for something, in some business, etc.”. Such an opposite of the results of actions called by these lexemes is also reflected in their semantic opposition, which is realized by a pair of antonyms

victory – defeat (Ukr./Rus. перемога – поразка / поражение – победа [peremoga – porazka / pobjeda – porazeniye]).

The opposition, which is offered to us by the texts of the media publications of Ukraine, is represented by the lexeme betrayal (Ukr. зрада [zrada]). Moreover, this Ukrainian word, which in the Russian language corresponds to the two lexemes treason (Rus. измена [izmena]) and betrayal (Rus. предательство [predatelstvo]), functions as the second component of the opposition in publications in both Ukrainian and Russian languages. The dictionary describes the following meanings of the word зрада: “1. going over to the enemy's side; treachery, betrayal... 2. violation of loyalty in love, friendship. ... 3. giving up your beliefs, views, etc.”. This lexeme is connected by antonymic relations in the Ukrainian and Russian language systems with the lexemes faithfulness (Ukr./Rus. вірність/верность [virnist/vernost]) and devotion (Ukr./Rus. відданість/преданність [viddanist/predanost]) [17]. The noun faithfulness (Ukr. вірність [virnist]) is formed from the adjective faithful (Ukr. вірний [virnyj]) in the meaning of “who deserves trust; constant in his views and feelings; devoted”.

As we can see, the semantic structures of the lexemes victory (Ukr./Rus. перемога / победа [peremoha / pobjeda]) and betrayal (зрада [zrada]) do not contain any grounds for their semantic opposition. But acknowledgment that the authors see the opposition relationship between these words, may be a combination of these lexemes with the conjunctions or (Ukr./Rus. чи/или [chy/ili]), which is more often used to express the separation relations, emphasizing the relationship of mutual exclusion, incompatibility [18]. Moreover, according to our observations, the separative-oppositional conjunction or (Ukr./Rus. чи/или [chy/ili]), in media discourse is used more often in the headlines, less often in the texts of publications, sometimes both in the title and in the text, for example:

a) in the headline: [“Zmicnjenja hryvni -2019: zrada chy peremoha”] (Ukrainian transliteration), [Eng.: Strengthening of the hryvnia-2019: betrayal or victory] (24.01.2020. Ekonomichna Pravda) [25];

b) in the text: [“Arbitrazhnyj trybunal OON z morskoho prava vynis pershe rishenya u spravi “Ukrayina proty Rosiyi”. Ale rishennya polovynchaste: vin vyznav yurysdykciyu lyshe za chastynoyu zvyuvachen. To ce zrada chy peremoha? <...>”] (Ukrainian transliteration), [Eng.: The UN Arbitration Tribunal for the Law of the Sea issued the first decision in the case “Ukraine versus Russia”. But the decision is half-hearted: he admitted jurisdiction only on part of the charges. Is this a betrayal or a victory? <...>] (25.02.2020. Yevropejska pravda) [26];

c) in the headline and in the text: [“Peremoha chy zrada? <...> Vyznacheni tranzytni potuzhnosti na pyat rokov, za jaki Hazprom harantovano maye zaplatyty. Ale obsiahy tranzytu mozhyt buty i bil'shymy, prosto potrebnobude dodatkovojih bronjuvaty (i platyty za znachno vyshchym taryfom) na rik/kvartal/misyac/dobu napered. Tryvalist kontraktu tezh mozhe buty prodovzhena. Peremoha chy zrada? Hazprom hotiv odynd rik, my – desiat, ziyshlysa poseredyni <...>”]

(Ukrainian transliteration), [Eng. Victory or betrayal? Transit capacities have been identified for five years, for which Gazprom is guaranteed to pay. But transit volumes may also be large, you just need to book them additionally (and pay at a much higher rate) for a year/quarter/Month/Day in advance. The duration of the contract can also be extended. Victory or betrayal? Gazprom wanted one year, we wanted ten, and we agreed in the middle. <...>] (23.12.2019. *Novoe Vremya*) [27].

Characterizing antonymy as a phenomenon of the language system K.V. Taranenko notes that antonymy is based on some common reasons that lie in the very nature of human thinking [19]. L.M. Polyuga defines antonymy as the most essential and characteristic for all native speakers of the language. The scientist notes that antonyms best express the contrast of meanings in speech [20]. The analyzed example of opposition, which is actively used in the mass media discourse of Ukraine, does not fit into the traditional notions of antonymy with its different types described in the works of Yu. Apresyan [21], L. Vvedenskaya [17], V. Turchyn [22], etc. At the same time, we have the opposition of absolutely different phenomena of objective reality, which is actualized in the media discourse.

Researchers of antonymic relations have repeatedly said that antonyms reflect the complex perception of objects of reality by the human brain, processing information about them based on comparisons with other objects or with the same ones, but in different conditions. Choosing an antonym reflects the influence of extralinguistic factors: the situation in which a person encounters an object, his prior knowledge of the object, his own, and more often imposed on him stereotypes in relation to the object, his own perception characteristics, etc. That is, the subjective factor, or rather the pragmatic component of communication, plays an important role in creating an antonymic pair.

We have noticed that the lexeme victory (Ukr. перемога [peremoga]) in the Ukrainian mass media discourse of this period loses its positive connotation, which is actualized in the antonymic pair “victory – defeat” (Ukr. перемога – поразка [peremoga - porazka]). By choosing the modality of doubt, the authors of publications violate the readers' confidence in the assessment of the facts they are talking about, for example: [“Yakoyu bude serednya zarplata v 2020 roci <...> avtory ne zhaduyut kurs 25 hrn/dol, yakuy tumchasovo zmichnyvsya pislya pryhodu nerezidentiv na rynek oblihaciy vnutrishnioyi derzhavnoyi pozyky (OVDP) i zrostayuchyeh nadhodzhen vid zarobitchan. Same vin dopomih v dolarah otrymaty taku ocinku. Chy ce mozhna vvezhaty peremohoyu? <...>”] (Ukrainian transliteration), [Eng. “What will be the average salary in 2020 ...the authors do not mention the rate of 25 UAH/USD, which temporarily strengthened after the arrival of non-residents on the market of domestic government loan bonds (government bonds) and growing revenues from employees. It was he who helped to get such an estimate in dollars. Can this be considered a victory? <...>”] (1.08.2019. *Novoe Vremya*) [28]. We also find the loosening of axiological values in the opposition of peremoga to the negative

phenomena of the economic sphere. In the following article, the doubt set in the title is also supported in the text of the article: [“OVDP: “peremoha” chy vidstrochka vyroku <...> Dehto iz fahivciv z investyciy reklamuye OVDP, yak “bezpechnyi instrument dlya pochatkivciv investoriv”, yihni kolehy po cehu svyatkuyut velyki “peremohy” pislya kozhnoho aukcionu, <...> ne varto viprobovuvaty patriotychnyi orhazm kozhnoho razu, koly uryadu vdayetsya vzyaty v borh pid velychezni vidsovky. Taka “peremoha” bilshе shozha na vidsrochku vyroku <...>”] (Ukrainian transliteration), [Eng. “Government bonds: “victory” or postponement of the sentence .... Some investment professionals advertise government bonds as a “safe tool for novice investors”, their colleagues in the shop celebrate big “victories” after each auction, ... you should not experience a patriotic orgasm every time the government manages to borrow at huge interest rates. Such a “victory” is more like a postponement of the sentence”] (26.11.2019. *Novoe Vremya*) [29]. The results of state measures in the economic sphere are very rarely unambiguously evaluated. Therefore, the use of pseudo-orientations in the form of the opposition “betrayal or victory” (Ukr. “зрада чи перемога” [zrada chy peremoga]), in our opinion, corresponds to the ambiguity and complexity of the phenomena that are evaluated by the authors. The authors of articles thus force their readers to doubt, to change their points of view.

The same thing is observed with the lexeme betrayal (Ukr. зрада [zrada]), when using which the unambiguous negative assessment is erased. The modality of the doubt “is this true or not?” shakes the established ideas about these concepts as in these examples:

a) [“<...> Ta ne varto dorikaty derzhavi za ce, a prohrash spravy ne varto pospishno nazyvaty “zradoyu”. Sprobuyemo rozibratysya, zhcho oznachaye ce rishennya SOT i zhcho daye Ukrayini shansy na uspishnu apelyaciyu <...>”] (Ukrainian transliteration), [Eng. “...but you should not reproach the state for this, and the loss of the case should not be hurriedly called “betrayal”. Let's try to understand what this WTO decision means and what gives Ukraine a chance of a successful appeal”] (8.04.2019. *Yevropejska pravda*) [30];

b) [“Chy ye “zrada” v zmini prohramy kredyuvannya MVF dlya Ukrayini”] (Ukrainian transliteration), [Eng. “Is there a “betrayal” in changing the IMF lending program for Ukraine”] (8.05.2020. *Ekonomichna Pravda*) [31].

Statement a) contains the construction “do not be hasty to name...” (Ukr. не варто поспішно називати...), which in a soft, unobtrusive form, without any imperative-ultimatum connotations, recommends thinking carefully before qualifying a particular phenomenon with the help of a popular pseudo-opposition. Statement b) has the form of a question that makes the reader think about its meaning. With the help of these simple speech constructions, the discourse influences the reader, exerting its pressure on him in assessing certain realities of modern life, in this case from the financial and economic sphere.

Lexico-semantic and other features of the media discourse in Ukraine are largely due to the social and political events of this period. We interpret the opposition that appeared in Ukrainian periodicals at a certain moment in the development of society as a manifestation of the “power of discourse”. In connection with the above, the opinion expressed by A. Shekhovtsov in a post on the Facebook page is quite reasonable. The author characterizes the discourse “betrayal vs victory” (Ukr. зрада vs перемога [zrada vs peremoga]) not only as “intellectually flawed”, but also as “harmful from the point of view of the medium-term strategy of the country’s democratic development”. The reasons for this lie in the potential for making mistakes. These errors are explicated by the semantics of the false opposition inherent in this discourse and conditioned by the Orange Revolution. According to the author of the publication: “Both “zrada” and “peremoga” are precisely detached observations of the behavior of political elites, so ... both narratives lead to catastrophe. Ukrainian civil society should go beyond the discourse of “zrada vs peremoga” and not just control the political elites, but also directly participate in the process of democratization of the country” [23].

Today, we can no longer determine the exact date and reason for the appearance of this pseudo-opposition. But appeals to the binary perception of reality, built on false guidelines, sometimes have negative consequences. For example, a Japanese researcher of mental personality states claims that mental personality disorders such as borderline personality and narcissism are associated with binary thinking: “The results indicated that thinking dichotomously may lead to wide-ranging personality disorders” [24].

## 4 Conclusion

The neutralization of positive / negative connotations is the result of a certain type of word usage practice that implements specific pragmatic goals. The use of pseudo-antonyms, firstly, destroys the logical opposition in the system of value concepts “good-bad”, and secondly, disorients Ukrainian and Russian language speakers and affects their perception of events. We consider the destruction of traditional paradigmatic connections between lexemes as one of the means of manipulating the language consciousness of a person.

That is, the repeated reproductions of pseudo-antonyms in the speech which describe problematic situations provoked several negative processes for the development of the public consciousness of Ukrainians. Trying to give answers to the questions raised by the authors of publications about the presence of “betrayal or victory”, the addressee unwittingly joins the imaginary process of fighting for justice: for victory or against betrayal, although the opposition itself is not logically justified. Not every victory can have positive results, just as treason does not always lead to negative consequences. This can be proved by numerous examples of both ancient and modern domestic and foreign history. We can say about the formed discourse

“zrada vs peremoga”, which we characterize as a discourse of detachment, falsity, erroneousness. A pair of pragmatic pseudo-antonyms, the contraposition of which is the result of consistent use in mass media resources, creates a false effect of active participation in social processes.

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