

## **Separatism: a cross-linguistic corpus-assisted study of the word meaning development in the time of conflict**

### **1. Context**

In the history of Ukraine 2014 was a particularly momentous year. Some historians rank the crisis of 2014 as the ‘worst to emerge between Russia and the West since the end of the Cold War’ and predict that its significance is such that the year ‘will be explored and debated for decades to come’ (Menon and Rumer, 2015: xii). Peaceful protests in support of European integration that started in November 2013 had, by the end of January 2014, turned into violent clashes between protesters encamped on Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square) in Kiev and the police. The climax came between February 18 and 20 when fierce fighting resulted in the deaths of over a hundred people. The pro-Russian incumbent president Victor Yanukovich fled the country, which led to a change of political regime and foreign policy – from pro-Russian to pro-European (Averre and Wolczuk, 2016; Kordan, 2016; Sviatnenko and Vinogradov; 2014, Wood et al., 2016; Yekelchuk, 2015). In March 2014 Crimea was annexed by Russia, following a referendum in which, according to Russian sources, over 95% percent of the population of Crimea voted for joining Russia. The referendum was considered flawed and illegal by a significant number of UN member-states: on 27 March 2014 a resolution affirming the territorial integrity of Ukraine was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly by 100 votes to 11 with 58 abstentions (Resolution 68/262). In May the situation deteriorated further as pro-Russian groupings in the south-east of Ukraine proclaimed two republics – the Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR), and the Luhansk People’s Republic (LPR) – which led to full-scale armed conflict between Ukrainian government troops and pro-Russian forces.

### **2. Introduction**

Historical context is important for corpus linguistic studies because it is within the historical context ‘the words studied are to be interpreted and understood’ (McEneaney and Baker, 2017).

For this study, in particular, historical context is vital. ‘Without understanding the societies in which these words were produced..., it is very difficult to understand their use and meaning’ (McEnery and Baker, 2017:31).

This paper focuses solely on two words - translation equivalents *separatist* and *separatism* in two different parliamentary discourses, using them as a lens to explore the influence of socio-political context on the usage and meaning of words. The study attempts to trace the changes in connotative, affective and denotative meanings of these words in Russian and Ukrainian parliamentary debates before and during the conflict. This paper is part of a larger study which investigates the discourses of Russian and Ukrainian parliaments before and around the time of conflict (Author, 2020).

The paper employs a cross-linguistic corpus-assisted discourse analysis along two lines: 1. comparing discourses around separatism in each parliament before and during the conflict and 2. comparing discourses of separatism between two parliaments in an attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What are the differences, if any, in the meaning and use of the translation equivalent pairs *cenapam\*/cenapam\** [separat\*] in the discourses of the two parliaments before and during the conflict?
2. What are the rhetorical implications of any such differences?

### **3. Corpora and Methods**

To answer these questions, two corpora were compiled: a corpus of debates in the Ukrainian parliament, the Rada, and a corpus containing the debates in the Russian parliament, the Duma. The corpora contain transcripts of debates which are historically and politically situated. The corpora were built on the basis of principles outlined by Sinclair (2004), such as representativeness, homogeneity within the corpora, comparability, and the reliability of statistical tests for corpora of different sizes. Both corpora cover roughly the same period: the

Rada corpus, February-August 2014 and the Duma corpus, January-July 2014, up to the summer parliamentary recesses in both countries. The variation between the periods was due to differences in the parliamentary schedules of both countries. The chosen period covers the initial crisis in relations between Russia and Ukraine, followed by fully-fledged armed conflict, and ends with the Minsk I agreement (September 2014) – the first attempt at negotiating a way out of the conflict. The corpora were compiled from the parliamentary websites of both countries containing the complete, openly available transcripts of parliamentary sessions. Both corpora contain transcripts of all the sessions for the chosen period. The size of the Ukrainian Rada corpus is 713,507 tokens; the size of the Russian Duma corpus is 1,469,502 tokens. The corpora vary in size because of differences in the number of sessions and the length of transcribed discussions in each period. My prime concern was to use complete parliamentary sessions for the given period as they constitute representative samples of language used in the period of conflict, as specified by Sinclair (2004). The corpora, therefore, incorporate transcripts which reflect discourses in both parliaments in a period of escalating armed conflict and are representative of the language used in these discourses. Both corpora comprise only parliamentary debates which makes them homogeneous, and this is another important requirement to observe when building a corpus (Sinclair, 2004). All the transcripts included in the target and reference corpora have a similar rhetorical structure and, because they cover the same period, contain references to the same events, which was essential for this research.

The research started with generating keywords for each corpus in order to see whether each of the translation equivalents appear on the respective keyword lists. Keywords, described by Scott as ‘words which occur with statistically significant frequencies in a corpus’, are unusually frequent ‘by comparison with a reference corpus’ (Scott, 1997:236). The unusual frequency of a particular word gives an indication of the statistical significance of this word in a corpus. It has been noted that in cross-linguistic studies a problem could arise from the lack of appropriate parallel reference corpora in multiple languages (Vessey, 2013:15). To overcome this problem,

the decision was taken to build two reference corpora which are suited to answering the questions in this research. Building reference corpora has the benefit of choosing the appropriate size, period, genre and context of production of the texts included in it, which is essential for deriving reliable keyword results (Baker, 2004; Scott 2009, Brezina, 2018: 81). In building reference corpora two principles were followed – size and similarity: ‘the larger and the more similar the reference corpus is to the corpus of interest the more reliable and focused the comparison is’ (Brezina, 2018: 81).

The reference corpora comprise the transcripts of the parliamentary sessions in both parliaments in 2011. 2011 was chosen as a year of a relative political stability and peace before the unrest of 2013-2014; this enabled a comparison between the parliamentary discourses of both parliaments before and during the military conflict. The reference corpus of Russian Duma (the complete 7<sup>th</sup> session of the 5<sup>th</sup> convocation of 2011) comprises 1,703,596 tokens and that of Ukrainian Rada (the complete 8<sup>th</sup> parliamentary session of the 6<sup>th</sup> convocation of 2011) has 1,227,829 tokens. Both are larger than the respective target corpora of 2014. The corpora were analysed with AntConc text analysis tools (Anthony, 2018) which allow for the manipulation of data in the Cyrillic alphabet.

<b>Corpora</b>	<b>Rada (Ukrainian parliament) corpus 2014</b>	<b>Rada reference corpus 2011</b>	<b>Duma (Russian parliament) corpus 2014</b>	<b>Duma reference corpus 2011</b>
<b>Tokens</b>	<b>713,507</b>	<b>1,227, 829</b>	<b>1,469,502</b>	<b>1,703,596</b>

**Table 1. Summary of corpus sizes**

In the analysis a balance was sought between the quantitative analysis of ‘de-contextualized’ large data sets (Baker, 2006: 25; Mautner, 2009) and qualitative analysis of data placed within

historical and political context. Qualitative analysis involved a comprehensive manual investigation of co-text and larger context of collocations, n-grams and concordance lines in each corpus, followed by subsequent cross-linguistic comparison of two data sets.

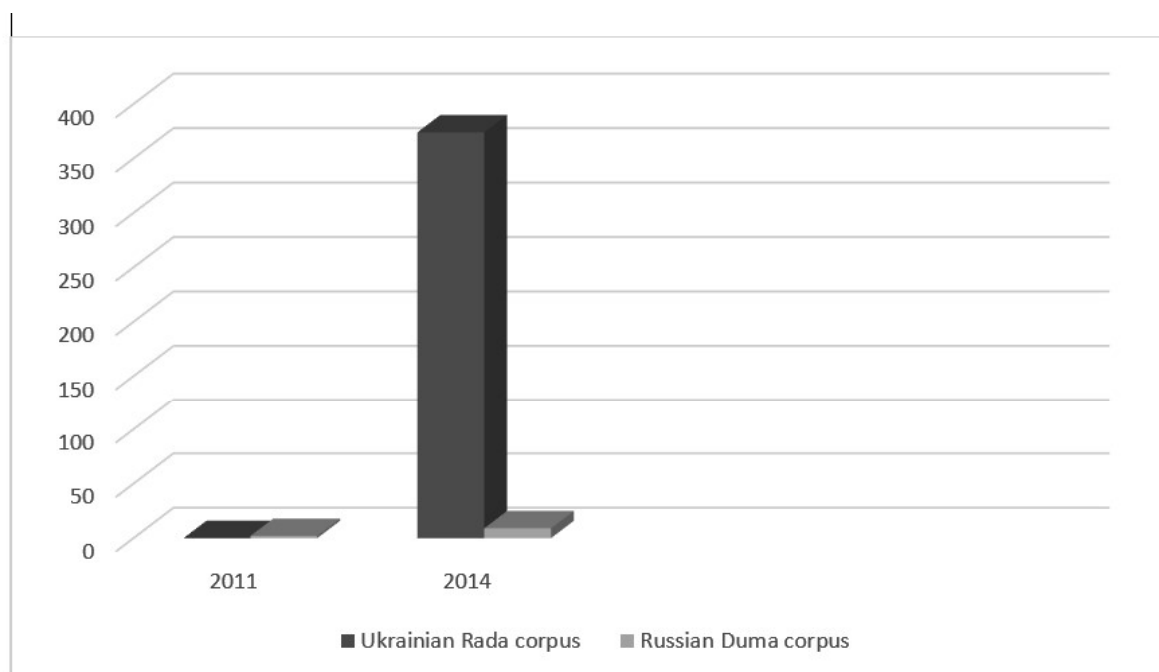
To sum up, in conducting this research, the following steps were followed:

- Constructing two corpora of comparable length in two languages covering the same period
- Building two reference corpora- one for each target corpus
- Generating keywords for both target corpora to find out whether *separatist/separatism* is featured on each of the keyword lists
- Studying the collocations of the translation equivalents in each corpus, followed by comparing the collocations between the corpora
- Investigating n-grams and comparing them in respect of the two corpora
- Conducting qualitative analysis of concordances of *separatist/separatism*
- Exploring the co-text and the wider context in which *separatist/separatism* is used and drawing comparisons chronologically and between the Russian Duma and Ukrainian Rada corpora.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Frequencies

The data shows that in 2014 the frequencies of the lemma *cenapam\** [separat\*] surge abruptly in Ukrainian Rada corpus; it occurs 267 times in comparison with 0 in 2011. This is connected with the rise in 2014 of a new political phenomenon which received the name *separatism*. All 267 (374 wpm) of occurrences *separat\** in Ukrainian Rada corpus refer to *Donetsk and Luhansk separatists, Russian separatists or pro-Russian separatists*



**Fig. 1. Comparison of frequencies of lemma *cenapam\** [separat\*] in the Rada and the Duma corpora in 2011 and 2014**

	Ukrainian Rada corpus 2011	Ukrainian Rada corpus 2014	Russian Duma corpus 2011	Russian Duma corpus 2014
words per million	0	374	2	9
raw frequencies	0	267	4	13

**Table 2. Frequencies of lemma *cenapam\*/cenapam\** [separat\*] in the Rada and Duma corpora in 2011 and 2014**

## 4.2 Keywords

Next, corpus analysis was conducted to determine whether the translation equivalent pair *cenapam\*/cenapam\** [separat\*] appears on both keyword lists. Keywords are ‘a useful tool for directing researchers to significant lexical differences between texts’ (Baker, 2009:126).

In order to discover differences and similarities between the usage of the translation equivalent pair *cenapam\*/cenapam\** [separat\*] in discourses of two parliaments, two keyword lists were created – one for each corpus using log-likelihood (LL) scores to identify the difference in frequency (if any) of particular words in a target and reference corpora and to establish whether the difference is accidental or can be considered significant. In this study a cut-off point of LL = 10.83 was applied providing certainty of 99.9% that the statistical significance of the keywords was not accidental ( $p < 0.001$ ). However, log-likelihood scores do not indicate the size of the difference in frequencies – the ‘effect size’. For calculating effect size, Hardie’s Log Ratio (LR) was used. The keywords in both corpora (with a LL of 10.83 or over) were sorted by Log Ratio, and then all the keywords with an effect size below 3 were disregarded. Next, all the proper names except the geographical names of areas of conflict were discounted. This left me with 200 keywords for the Russian Duma corpus and 466 keywords for the Ukrainian Rada corpus.

Keyword lists provide an idea of what lexical items are central to the discourses. The analysis of keywords from the Ukrainian Rada corpus showed a strong discourse pattern of words connected with war, aggression and conflict. It is indeed by far the most numerous semantic group, 165 items out of 466 keywords, or 35.4%. The results for the lemma *cenapam\** [separat\*] show that, in the Ukrainian Rada corpus, it is not only exceptionally high in frequency, but that it also appears in the list of keywords whose frequency contrasts sharply with the corpus of 2011, in which it never occurred at all. In the 2014 Ukrainian Rada corpus of the 2014 debates, the 267 instances of the lemma *cenapam\** [separat\*] account for 13 keywords (see Fig. 2). The list of keywords (Fig. 2) also shows that war, aggression and conflict are high on the agenda of the Ukrainian parliament with such keywords as *aggression*, *terrorism*, *terrorist*, *military guard*, *occupied*.

In the Russian Duma corpus, there are 13 occurrences of *cenapam\** [separat\*], 9 of which are related to Ukraine, none of them on the keyword list.

In the sections that follow I will be looking into the meaning, usage and reference of the translation pairs in Russian and Ukrainian parliamentary discourse at a time of conflict.



17	62	+	123.55	7.7269	мобілізації	conscriptio
19	62	+	123.55	7.7269	сепаратистів	separatists
20	58	+	115.58	7.6307	радикальна	radical
22	115	+	218.6	7.6182	продан	sold
24	54	+	107.61	7.5276	мобілізацію	conscriptio
25	53	+	105.62	7.5006	терористи	terrorists
27	50	+	99.64	7.4165	гвардію	guard (military)
29	49	+	97.65	7.3874	сепаратизму	separatism
30	47	+	93.66	7.3273	лічильної	counting
31	47	+	93.66	7.3273	терористами	terrorists
32	276	+	519.67	7.2963	всеукраїнське	all-ukrainian
34	44	+	87.68	7.2321	антитерористична	antiterrorist
35	88	+	165.32	7.2321	гвардії	guard
42	76	+	141.7	7.0206	агресії	aggression
43	38	+	75.73	7.0206	люстрації	lustration (purge)
46	37	+	73.73	6.9821	агресора	aggressor
49	71	+	131.87	6.9224	виборчий	electoral
56	65	+	120.09	6.7951	територіальну	territorial
57	32	+	63.77	6.7727	анексії	annexation
59	500	+	921.68	6.7385	включить	switch on
61	185	+	340.68	6.7191	сісти	sit down
65	29	+	57.79	6.6307	кримських	Crimean
66	29	+	57.79	6.6307	прокоментуйте	commentate
67	678	+	1241.516	5.929	удар	Strike (political party)
69	28	+	55.8	6.58	мобілізація	conscriptio
70	28	+	55.8	6.58	сепаратизм	separatism
73	27	+	53.81	6.5276	бюлетені	voting cards
75	27	+	53.81	6.5276	розпуск	dissolution
76	26	+	51.81	6.4731	антитерористичній	antiterrorist
77	26	+	51.81	6.4731	люстрація	lustration (purge)
79	26	+	51.81	6.4731	штабу	headquarters
80	51	+	92.67	6.4451	мов	languages
81	152	+	276.07	6.4357	шановне	esteemed
82	25	+	49.82	6.4165	антитерористичну	antiterrorist
85	49	+	88.76	6.3874	східних	eastern
86	24	+	47.83	6.3577	бюлетень	voting card
88	47	+	84.86	6.3273	спробуємо	let's try
90	23	+	45.83	6.2963	позичальників	borrowers
95	22	+	43.84	6.2321	окупованих	occupied
97	42	+	75.12	6.165	обороздатності	defence capabilities
98	21	+	41.85	6.165	окупованої	occupied
100	21	+	41.85	6.165	перевибори	re-elections
101	21	+	41.85	6.165	розпочинає	begins
103	950	+	1697.3	6.1409	свобода	Freedom (political party)
105	40	+	71.23	6.0946	агресію	aggression
106	20	+	39.86	6.0946	вбивали	killed
109	40	+	71.23	6.0946	кримськотатарського	krimean tatar
111	20	+	39.86	6.0946	сепаратистські	separatist
113	19	+	37.86	6.0206	зрадників	traitors
115	19	+	37.86	6.0206	недоторканності	(territorial) integrity
116	19	+	37.86	6.0206	перемир	truce
117	19	+	37.86	6.0206	сепаратисти	separatists
118	19	+	37.86	6.0206	сепаратистських	separatist
119	112	+	198.17	5.9951	цілісності	(territorial) integrity
127	18	+	35.87	5.9426	терористам	terrorists

Fig. 2. Lemma *cenapam\*/separat\** in the keyword list (2014 Ukrainian Rada corpus).

#### 4.3 *Cenapamucm/cenapamuzm* [separatist/separatism] in the Ukrainian Rada corpus

Frequency counts and keywords help in identifying areas of interest for close analysis. Such corpus data can be seen, on the one hand, as more objective and less speculative (Gabrielatos and Baker, 2008; Mautner, 2009), but, on the other, as de-contextualized and ‘semiotically impoverished’ (Mautner, 2009: 35), a feature that can only be overcome by placing the results

into larger contexts – both linguistic and social; ‘the analysis gradually becomes more qualitative and context-led, relying less on computer software’ (Baker and McEnery 2015: 2). In this study, quantitative analysis of corpus data was followed by a vital stage of qualitative data analysis. In the sections to follow, the collocations of this lemma will be discussed in more detail backed with qualitative analysis of co-text and context.

#### 4.3.1 Collocations, 3- grams and concordance lines. Shift in connotative meaning

One of the research question of this study was concerned with the meaning of translation equivalents *сепарат\*/сепарат\** [separat\*] before and during the conflict. To find out the pre-conflict meaning of these words the dictionary definitions pre-dating the conflict were studied. Below, consider, for example, two Ukrainian definitions from *Dictionary of Politology* and *Encyclopaedic Dictionary of State Governance* and two Russian definitions from the *Encyclopaedia of Sociology* and the *Dictionary of Political Terminology*. [Below and hereafter all translations are my own].

Russian:

**Сепаратизм** 1. Стремление к обособлению, отделению. 2. Движение к самостоятельности нек-рой группы, организации, стремящихся к отделению от большой ассоциации.

**Separatism** 1 Desire to detach, separate 2. Movement of a certain group or organisation towards separating from a bigger entity (Antinazi, Encyclopaedia of Sociology, 2009)

**Сепаратизм** Стремление к отделению, обособлению, к самостоятельным действиям и выступлениям.

**Separatism** Desire for separation, detachment, to independent actions and activities (Dictionary of Political Terminology, 2011).

Ukrainian:

**Сепаратизм** ідеологія та практика дій суспільно-політичного руху що спрямовані на встановлення суверенитету етнічної спільноти на території її проживання в межах існуючої держави, відокремлення території та створення власної держави або її приєднання до іншої (іредентизм).

**Separatism** ideology and practice of a socio-political movement aimed at establishing the sovereignty of an ethnic community in its territory within the existing state, separation of the territory and establishment of its own state or accession to another state (irredentism) (Dictionary of Politology, Golovaty and Antoniuk (eds.), 2005).

**Сепаратизм** політичних сил до відокремлення від іншої країни. У багатонаціональних державах – це рух національних меншин до відокремлення і створення власної держави чи встановлення автономного самоврядування.

**Separatism** desire of political forces/powers to separate from a country. In multinational countries – a movement of national minorities to separate and to create their own state or establish autonomy (Mikhnenko and Sosnin, Encyclopaedic Dictionary of State Governance, 2010, 639)

These definitions show that the translation equivalents *сепаратизм/сепаратизм* [separatism] are very similar in their dictionary denotative meanings. The definitions can be considered neutral in the sense that they are not marked positively or negatively and do not have affective or evaluative characteristics.

In order to investigate whether the political context of conflict affected their meaning and usage, it is important to place these words within the context of the events of 2014. The words *separatist, separatism* rose to prominence in Ukrainian discourse after the formation of two self-proclaimed pro-Russian republics which were described as ‘separatist’. In May 2014 the Ukrainian government stipulated by an act of law that the territories of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk republics, as well as Crimea, were ‘temporarily occupied’. (Law № 1207-VII). Separatism was condemned in several acts of the Ukrainian parliament as a criminal and subversive activity fuelled by the Russian Federation and directed at undermining the territorial integrity of Ukraine (Law № 1533-VII, Decree № 756-VII).

In order to find out whether any changes in meaning of the lemma *сепарат\** [separat\*] occurred during the conflict, the collocations of *separatist/separatism* were studied in the Russian and Ukrainian corpora, collocations being ‘a central method for the exploration of word meaning in corpus linguistics’ (McEnery and Baker, 2017).

Statistically significant collocates were derived from both corpora using the AntConc Collocates Tool and applying the collocate measure of Mutual Information (MI), a statistical test that can establish the strength of association between words (Baker, 2006: 101; McEnery and Wilson, 2001: 86; Clear, 1993: 280). The MI scores of the collocates were calculated, which indicates ‘the confidence with which we can claim there is an association’ between words (Clear, 1993: 281). The MI measure is known to favour low-frequency words (Baker, 2006: 102, 179; Gabreilatos and Baker, 2008: 11). This feature, though sometimes seen as negative, is useful for this study because, as noted by Gabreilatos and Baker (2008: 11) ‘low-frequency words are usually content words (nouns, adjectives, verbs), which are the word classes that can more clearly indicate semantic/discourse prosodies or topics/topoi’. Collocates were derived within a five-word span on each side of the node (Baker, 2006: 100; Gabreilatos and Baker, 2008: 11). A minimum MI score of 3.0 was applied, which can be taken as evidence that the two items have a strong collocation (Hunston, 2002; Stubbs, 1995).

In Ukrainian Rada corpus of 2014, the lemma *cenapam\** [separat\*] has consistently negative collocations, for example the first 10 collocates (5R-5L, minimum frequency 5, sorted by MI stat.) include *terrorists*, *terrorism* and *extremism* (see Fig. 3).

Rank	Freq	Freq(L)	Freq(R)	Stat	Collocate
1	5	5	0	13.00494	екстремізму
2	5	5	0	12.81230	фінансує
3	7	7	0	12.29773	попередження
4	5	4	1	11.81230	тероризм
5	6	2	4	10.68302	тероризму
6	6	5	1	10.52075	терористами
7	8	8	0	10.20497	підтримують
8	12	7	5	9.96681	терористів
9	5	3	2	9.85810	сепаратистів
10	5	5	0	9.68302	боротьби
11	10	8	2	9.54551	фінансування
12	5	2	3	9.41998	референдуму
13	6	6	0	9.30715	заходи
14	6	4	2	9.18052	справи
15	8	2	6	8.90541	сході
16	7	4	3	8.62530	дії
17	5	4	1	8.42860	підтримує
18	5	4	1	8.27314	участь
19	13	8	5	8.19081	проти
20	6	2	4	8.08098	дій
21	8	2	6	8.03094	это
22	5	3	2	8.02440	повинна
23	6	4	2	7.96681	зокрема
24	21	12	9	7.85340	хто
25	5	4	1	7.63239	крим
26	7	3	4	7.61825	криму
27	5	1	4	7.54551	навіть
28	7	3	4	7.29491	ні
29	12	5	7	7.29397	тих
30	11	6	5	7.21171	ті
31	5	3	2	7.04743	что
32	6	2	4	6.95121	маємо

Search Term  Words  Case  Regex  Advanced  
 From... 5L To... 5R  
 Min. Collocate Frequency 5  
 Sort by  Invert Order  
 Sort by Stat

Fig. 3. Top 30 collocates of *cenapam\** [separat\*] in Ukrainian Rada corpus (5R-5L min freq 5 sorted by MI stat)

These findings were further corroborated by an n-gram search. N-grams are word sequences appearing repeatedly in a corpus: ‘effectively, they are a kind of extended collocation’ (Partington and Morley, 2004:179). The most frequent 3-grams (or three-word sequences) in the Ukrainian Rada corpus are *extremism and separatism* ranking first in frequency and

*terrorists and separatists*, ranking 3, 8 and 9. The latter appear three times on the list because it is used in different case forms (plural genitive, instrumental and nominative respectively with a joint frequency of 8). The 3-grams *to fight with separatism* *a fight against separatism*, *a fight against separatists* have rankings 4 and 21 to 27 with a joint frequency of 10 (see Fig.4).

AntConc 3.5.8 (Windows) 2019  
File Global Settings Tool Preferences Help

Corpus Files  
Rada 1 Feb-March 20  
Rada 2 Apr-Aug 2014.

Rank	Freq	Range	Cluster
1	4	1	екстремізму та сепаратизму
2	4	1	за фінансування сепаратизму
3	4	1	терористів і сепаратистів
4	3	2	боротьби з сепаратизмом
5	2	1	активно підтримують сепаратистів
6	2	1	в руках сепаратистів
7	2	1	в Україні сепаратистських
8	2	1	терористами і сепаратистами
9	2	1	терористи і сепаратисти
10	2	1	участь у сепаратистських
11	2	1	хто підтримує сепаратистів
12	2	1	які підтримують сепаратизм
13	1	1	а з сепаратистами
14	1	1	аби назвати сепаратистів
15	1	1	або фінансує сепаратистів
16	1	1	агентурної структури сепаратистських
17	1	1	адекватна відповідь сепаратистам
18	1	1	адміністративних будівель сепаратистами
19	1	1	бойовиків, не сепаратистів
20	1	1	боку - нападами сепаратистів
21	1	1	боротись з сепаратизмом
22	1	1	боротьба з сепаратизмом
23	1	1	боротьба із сепаратизмом
24	1	1	боротьби проти сепаратизму
25	1	1	боротьби із сепаратизмом
26	1	1	боротьбою з сепаратизмом
27	1	1	боротьбу з сепаратистами

Search Term  Words  Case  Regex  N-Grams Cluster Size Min. 3 Max. 3  
cenapat\* Advanced  
Start Stop Sort  
Sort by  Invert Order Search Term Position Min. Freq. 1 Min. Range 1  
Sort by Fran  On Left  On Right

extremism and separatism  
terrorists and separatists  
a fight against separatism  
terrorists and separatists  
to fight with separatism  
a fight against separatism  
a fight against separatists

Total No. 2

#### Fig. 4. 3-grams of *сепарат\** [separat\*] in Ukrainian Rada corpus of 2014

Three-word sequences containing the lemma *сепарат\** [separat\*] show that the lemma collocates with words of negative semantics:

*неконституційні і сепаратистські дії* [unconstitutional and separatist actions];  
*це тероризм, сепаратизм* [this is terrorism, separatism];  
*сепаратистських антидержавних сил* [separatist, anti-state forces];  
*терористичні, сепаративні дії* [separatist, terrorist activity];  
*сепаратистську, антиукраїнську, терористичну* [separatist, anti-Ukrainian, terrorist]

**a fight against separatism**

**terrorists and separatists**

Expanded contextual search of concordance lines containing the lemma *сепарат\** [separat\*] supports the finding that the lemma consistently co-occurs with negatively marked words:

*ознаки сепаратизму та державної зради* [hallmarks of separatism and high treason].

Syntactically *сепарат\** [separat\*] often occurs in coordinated strings of adjectives (*separatist, anti-Ukrainian, terrorist* [activity], *unconstitutional and separatist* [actions]) and nouns (*this is terrorism, separatism; groups of provocateurs, separatists, groups of*

Coordination, a structure widely considered a cross-linguistic universal

(Haspelmath, 2004), is characterised by the structural parallelism of its elements, or conjuncts.

Such parallelism triggers the expectation of conceptual closeness between the conjuncts (Lang, 1984:28). Thus, in both binary coordinating constructions (e.g. *separatism and high treason*)

and multiple coordinates (*separatist, anti-Ukrainian, terrorist*), the conjuncts are interpreted as being homogeneous, related in meaning, and belonging to one and the same semantic field.

On the discourse level, their communicative purpose in the Ukrainian Rada discourse is to create an association between separatists and other groups, such as terrorists, saboteurs and occupiers:

*терористів і сепаратистів* [terrorist and separatists];  
*терористами, окупантами і сепаратистами* [terrorists, occupiers and separatists];  
*сепаратисти та російські диверсанти* [separatists and Russian saboteurs];

**to fight with separatism**  
**a fight against separatism**  
**a fight against separatists**

*сепаратистам або маріонеткам Кремля [separatists or Kremlin puppets]; групи провокаторів, сепаратистів, диверсійні групи сусідньої окупаційної країни [groups of provocateurs, separatists, groups of saboteurs from the neighbouring occupying country].*

By including *separatists/separatism* in the coordinate strings shown above the speakers attach evaluative meaning to these words, and thus express their judgement based on the speakers' values and attitudes, or 'norms about how people should and shouldn't behave' (Martin, 2000, p.155). In Martin and White's comprehensive framework of evaluative meaning in English, such judgements constitute one of three elements of evaluation, others being affect and appreciation (Martin, 2000; Martin and White 2005; White, 2004). Judgements and affect associated with the word *сепарат\** [separat\*] signals the development of the meaning from neutral to negative connotative and affective.

However, not all the collocations and 3-grams showed negative associations; for example, the phrases *to support separatists, to finance separatists, separatist actions* do not have an obvious negative connotation. In order to explore such word combinations more closely, a qualitative analysis of concordance lines, co-text and larger context of the lemma *сепарат\** [separat\*] was conducted which showed that an overwhelming number of occurrences of *сепарат\** [separat\*] (259 out of 267 words or 97%) are negative. In these cases the negative meaning is constructed contextually. The examples below demonstrate that phrases like *separatist actions* acquire negative meaning through shared background contextual knowledge:

- (1) позбавлення звання Героя України за здійснення сепаратистських дій Дейча Бориса Давидовича.

...to strip Boris Deich of the honorary title of the Hero of Ukraine **for separatist actions.**

- (2) давайте поставимо зараз на голосування про позбавлення депутатської недоторканності тих конкретних депутатів, які мають відношення (оплески) до сепаратистських заяв і дій



let's now put to vote the stripping the deputies who are associated with **separatist statements or actions** of parliamentary immunity (applause).

In both (1) and (2) the negative meaning is implicit. 'Hero of Ukraine' is the highest and most prestigious national title of merit; stripping somebody of it for separatist actions conveys a negative judgement. Similarly, the removal of parliamentary immunity is also a strong indication of how these actions are viewed in the parliament. There are several instances where a negative judgement is communicated through references to the illegality of separatism: *подання на сепаратистів/suing separatists, розслідування фактів сепаратизму* [investigation of the instances of separatism], *проекту Закону про протидію та запобігання сепаратизму* [draft law on counteraction against, and prevention of, separatism]. Contextual negative meaning is indirect and is construed through inferences and shared background knowledge. Indirectly expressed (or 'invoked', using Martin and White's term (2005: 61), negative judgement dominates in Rada corpus. Interestingly, explicit negative evaluative adjectives are significantly less frequent. Only one negative adjective – *anti-constitutional* - is used with the noun *separatism* and another one – *armed* – with the noun *separatists*. One explanation could be that in the discourse of Ukrainian Rada negative connotation of *separatist/separatism* has become intrinsic and did not require reinforcement by explicit evaluation.

Together with concordance lines and co-text, 'collocations ... form the evidence both for any claimed shifts in word meaning ... and for any changes in representation' (McEnery and Baker, 2016: 22,25-26). The collocations, 3-grams, concordance lines and co-text discussed above demonstrate a shift in connotative meaning of *сепарат\** [separat\*] from neutral to negative in the discourse of Ukrainian parliamentary debates during the conflict. Leech describes connotation as characteristics attributed by the speakers to the referent 'due to the viewpoint adopted by an individual, or a group of people or a whole society'. The fact that connotative meaning can be associated with views of groups of people, or indeed individuals, makes it

‘unstable’. Connotative meanings ‘vary considerably ... according to culture, historical period, and the experience of the individual’ (Leech, [1974] 1990: 12-13). These variations of connotative meanings are particularly relevant to the discourse of parliamentary debates which is by definition multivocal. The corpus shows several attempts at re-defining separatism in the context of a dominant discourse condemning it. The following examples from Ukrainian Rada corpus show how speakers who represent different factions and political affiliations dispute and re-negotiate the dominant meaning of *separatism*:

- (3) та временная власть сравняла понятия ‘федерализма’ и ‘сепаратизма’, развернув настоящий террор против жителей юго-востока, отстаивающих свои конституционные права.

Those provisional authorities equated the concepts of ‘federalism’ and ‘separatism’ starting a real terror against the people in the south-west, who are standing for their constitutional rights.

- (4) Теперь, дорогие коллеги, я хочу вам задать вопрос. Почему когда в Ровно, Полтаве вооруженные захваты администрации вы называете революцией, в Крыму вы называете сепаратистским переворотом?

Now, dear colleagues, I would like to ask you a question. Why when it is an armed invasion of city administrations in Rovno, Poltava, do you call it a revolution, while in Crimea you call it a separatist coup?

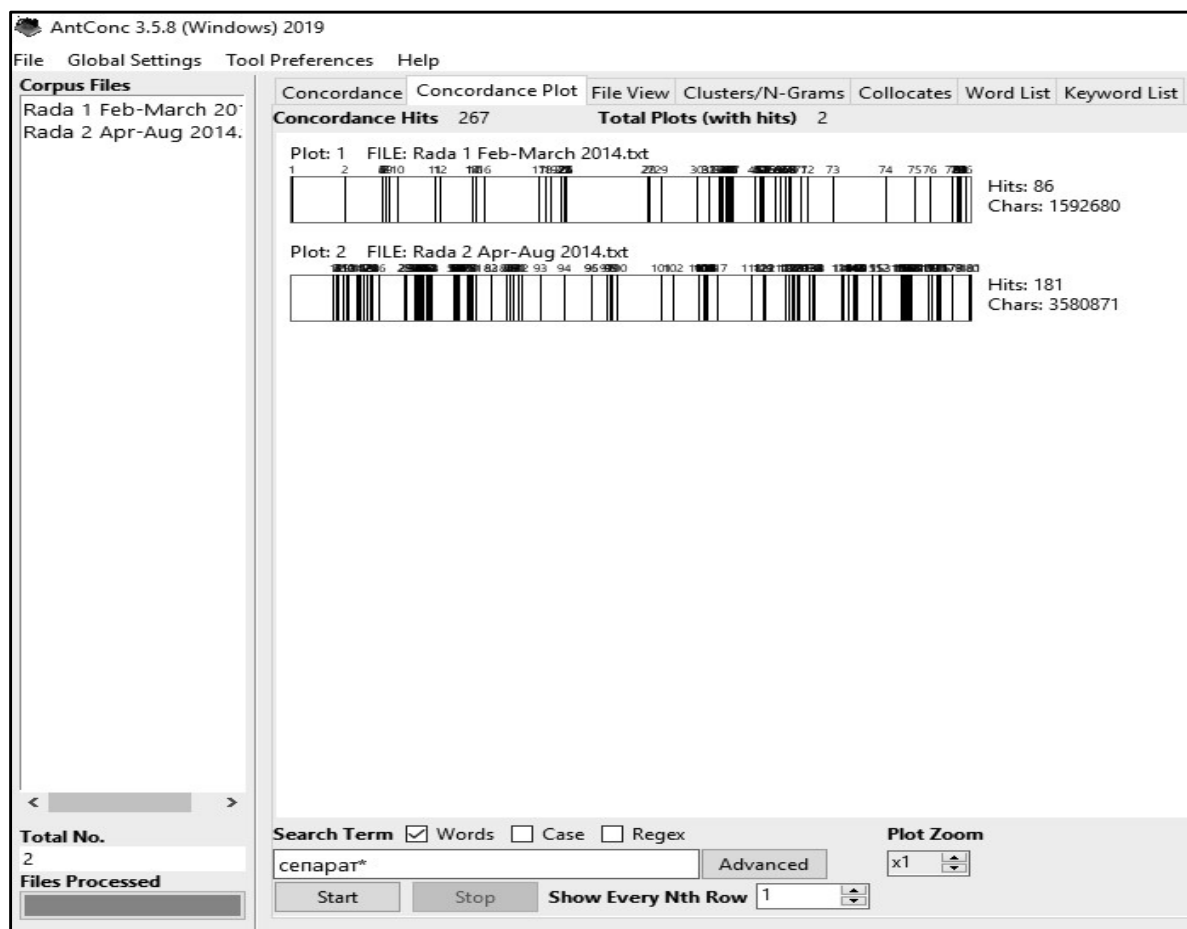
- (5) Комунисти приходять сьогодні в парламент... для того аби поставити все з ніг на голову аби перекрутити Українську історію, аби назвати сепаратистів мирними громадянами.

Communists come to the parliament mainly to turn everything upside down, twist Ukrainian history, to call separatists ‘peaceful citizens’.

The above examples demonstrate that words *сепаратист*, *сепаратизм* became within the socio-political context of conflict ‘ideologically contested, the focus of ideological struggle’ (Norman Fairclough, [1989,]1996 :114).

To sum up, the collocational profile of the lemma *сепарат*\* [separat\*] in the Ukrainian Rada corpus of 2014 shows that this word is strongly associated with negative context, and, as a result, becomes negatively marked. It is probable that this usage was initiated by the beginning

of the military conflict. This can be supported by the plot results (Fig. 5) which register the first use of the word on 20 February 2014 with reference to some sections of population in Crimea who were promoting federalism; this occurrence was preceded by the phrase ‘the so-called’ indicating that its use had not yet become established. In the parliamentary session of 23 February, the *cenapam\** [separat\*] usage became more frequent – 8 times – all with reference to Crimea, which corresponds to the first pro-Russian demonstrations in the Crimean city of Sevastopol on 23 February. The use intensified from mid-March – when Crimea was formally annexed – and the term *separatist* was applied to pro-Russian supporters of annexation. At the beginning of April, the usage intensified again, but this time with reference to pro-Russian supporters of the self-proclaimed Luhansk and the Donetsk People's Republics, coinciding with their declaration of independence from Ukraine. The usage became particularly frequent in parliamentary sessions in May as the military conflict between pro-Russian forces and Ukrainian regular troops deepened.



### Fig. 5. Plot of usage of lemma *сепарат\** [separat\*] in Ukrainian Rada corpus 2014

Considering that the frequency of the lemma *сепарат\** [separat\*] increases progressively throughout the 2014 debate and taking into consideration the fact that negative lexical items found in the co-text appear in 97% of all the occurrences of the lemma, it can be said that negative evaluation strengthens through the parliamentary session in a way that is, to use Hunston's term, 'cumulative' (Hunston, 2010).

The intensity of negative collocations shows that negative attitudes towards separatism are prevalent in the Rada parliament (259 out of 267), which is scarcely surprising in the context of an ongoing military conflict between government forces and pro-Russian separatists.

#### 4.3.2 Acquired affective meaning

Apart from positive/negative assessment, another aspect of evaluation highlighted, in particular, by Martin (2000) Martin and White (2005) and White (2004), is affective, or connected with human emotions. Close reading of concordance lines showed that the words surrounding the lemma *сепарат\** [separat\*] in the Rada corpus are often not only negative, but highly emotionally charged (highlighted in bold in the following examples):

- (6) Це **злочини** проти територіальної цілісності України. Це тероризм, сепаратизм. І це **злочини проти фактично людей, які стосуються масових вбивств**.

These are **crimes** against the territorial integrity of Ukraine. This is terrorism, separatism. In fact, **these are crimes against people, they are mass murders**.

- (7) Перша проблема – яка пов'язана з бандитизмом, тероризмом і антиконституційним сепаратизмом. Ті, хто **стріляють у мирних громадян**, ті, хто **розстрілюють українських військовослужбовців**, ті, хто **проводили тортури**... ті повинні бути відповідно до закоу ізольовані.

The first problem is connected with gangsterism, terrorism and anti-constitutional separatism. Those who **shoot peaceful citizens**, who **execute Ukrainian servicemen**, those who are **involved in torture** have to be detained in conformity with the law.

By appearing in the contexts of mass murder, execution and torture; by collocating with emotive lexis such as *розпалювання ворожнечі* [inciting of animosity], *ворожі* [hostile],

*кровопрлиття* [bloodshed], the lemma *сепарат\** [separat\*] triggers negative emotional response. In such exchanges it has an acquired affective meaning communicating ‘the feelings and attitudes of the speaker/writer’ (Leech, [1974] 1990: 23). This phenomenon, according to Leech is typical of the ‘words referring to political ideas or movements’ with such ‘strong connotations on one side or the other that the dictionary sense of the word can be almost forgotten’ (Leech, [1974]1990: 43).

### 4.3.3 Denotative meaning

These considerations raise the question of whether the changes in connotative and affective meaning initiate modifications in the denotative meaning of the word *separatism*. Overwhelmingly negative use the lemma *сепарат\** [separat\*] in the parliamentary debates is on several occasions connected to the calls for criminal responsibility for separatism which can indicate that the semantic element of negative attitude becomes imbedded in its meaning:

(8) Але у нас повинен бути зараз Генеральний прокурор, який вносить подання на сепаратистів...

We now need a Prosecutor General who is going to take legal action against separatists.

(9) ...припинення фінансування державних службовців та працівників Міністерства внутрішніх справ, які зрадили Україну та перейшли на бік сепаратистів

...to stop financing government officials and employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs who betrayed Ukraine and changed sides to become separatists

(10) в нас в Кримінальному кодексі є дві статті, які, за якими можна кваліфікувати дії про підбурювання і розпалювання ворожнечі і до сепаратизму.

In our Penal Code there are two articles which relate to the incitement of hatred and instigation of separatism.

(11) це проект Закону про внесення змін до Кримінального кодексу України (щодо відповідальності за фінансування сепаратизму).

This is the draft of the law about changes to the Penal Code of Ukraine (as to the [criminal] responsibility for financing separatism).

Institutionalisation of negative evaluation can be seen in a 2014 amendment to the Penal Code of Ukraine introduced by the Supreme Rada (№ 1533-VII) making financing separatism a

criminal offence. The same year the Supreme Rada also adopted a Decree on preventing separatism and other threats to national security (N 756-VII), article 1125), thus confirming the understanding of separatism as a ‘national threat’. In these legal documents separatism is treated as a criminal offence, legitimising the negative meaning it had acquired. Interestingly, such attempts by the government to criminalise the concept of separatism caused concern among some representatives of legal profession and legal academics in Ukraine who consider them politically motivated (Rubashchenko, 2017: 487-488) maintaining that ‘separatism cannot have an unequivocal negative or positive meaning’ (Divak, 2010: 6-7).

*Separatism* in the language of politicians is used negatively not just with reference to Ukraine, but also to other countries, which can be seen in the following examples:

(12) Напевно, вони не знають про те, а можливо знають, що відбулося в Абхазії, що відбулося в Осетії, що відбулося в Придністров'ї. Я отримав дані, наприклад, про те, як зараз люди живуть в Абхазії. З 5 мільярдів доларів, яких було обіцяно, прийшло всього-на-всього 500, які були розкрадені злочинними так званими сепаратистськими урядами

They are probably not aware what has happened in Abkhazia, what has happened in Ossetia, what has happened in Transdnestria. I have information about how people live in Abkhazia. Out of 5 billion dollars, only 500 were received, the rest was stolen by the so-called separatist government

The changes, however, have not yet been acknowledged in lexicography, and, thus, it may still be too early to say whether the denotative meaning was affected. The conflict has not been resolved and the word connotations may change again in response to further socio-political changes. There has, however, been some change to an entry in the ‘Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Contemporary Political Terms’ (2015) which points to some, albeit modest, semantic modification in the denotative, or dictionary, meaning, see below (emphasis) added:

Сепаратизм – політика та практика відокремлення, відділення частини території держави з метою створення нової самостійної держави або отримання статусу широкої автономії. **С. веде до порушення суверенітету, єдності та територіальної цілісності держави, нівелює принцип непорушності кордонів, зазвичай приводить до міждержавних і міжнаціональних конфліктів**

Separatism – policy and practice of separation, dissociation of a part of the territory of a state in order to form a new independent state or to obtain broad autonomy. **S. causes violation of sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of a state, compromises the principle of inviolability of borders and commonly causes interstate and ethnic conflicts** (Orlov, 2015: 257-258).

In comparison with the earlier quoted dictionary definitions of 2005 and 2010, this one has the important addition of a second sentence listing some highly detrimental outcomes of separatism: ‘*violation of sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of a state*’, ‘*compromise the principle of inviolability of borders*’, ‘*causes interstate and ethnic conflicts*’. This negatively colours the whole definition and could be interpreted as a commentary on the political situation. Another indicative example from the online dictionary of borrowed words SlovoTVir (2015) is the usage of the word *сепаратист* [separatist]:

Сепаратисти в Криму та на Сході України отримують гроші з Московії.

[Separatists in Crimea and in the East of Ukraine receive money from Moscovia].

*Moscovia* (from the historical name of the Duchy of Moscow) is used as a mildly derogatory term for Russia. Despite these instances, it is perhaps still too early to reach conclusions about the changes in denotative meaning of the word.

#### **4.4 *Cenapam\** [separat\*] in the Russian Duma corpus 2014**

In the 2014 Russian Duma corpus there are 13 occurrences of *сепаратист*\* [separat\*] altogether, 9 of which are used with reference to Ukraine. The Russian translation equivalent *сепаратист*\* [separat\*] also has a negative connotative meaning quite close to that in the Ukrainian corpus. The speakers, however, do not use this term to name the pro-Russian rebels in the south-east parts of Ukraine; in all 9 instances they demonstrate their resentment to referring to pro-Russian rebels as separatists because of the negative affective connotation the word had acquired in Ukraine. The word only appears when speakers report and condemn its usage by Ukrainian politicians, media or legislation (see examples 13-15).

Such reports in Russian Duma parliamentary debates appear as summaries and are commonly used to represent the position of the opposing side. According to Short's taxonomy of discourse-presentation summaries, such use can be described as Indirect Speech (IS) discourse-domain summaries, or summaries of 'larger stretches of discourse' rather than of individual propositions (Short, 2012: 18). One of the features of such summaries is, according to Short, that the listeners do not have access to the original text represented in the summary, which as a result, may bring into question the faithfulness of speech presentation in a discourse summary (Short, 2012: 25-26). It can be suggested that these characteristics make IS discourse-domain summaries useful in the rhetoric of parliamentary debates which may involve misrepresentation and bias.

Examples of IS discourse summaries are given below:

- (13) Геноцид против мирного населения эти СМИ называют населения эти СМИ называют антитеррористической операцией, граждан, вставших на защиту своей жизни, чести и достоинства, -- **сепаратистами**, боевиками и тому подобное

The media call genocide against civilians an antiterrorist operation and citizens who are protecting their lives, honour and dignity – **separatists**, militants and so on

- (14) **тех людей, которые отстаивают свою собственную правоту** через референдум... доказывая законность своих действий, защищая свои семьи и детей, **вдруг стали считать сепаратистами**, и Запад закрывает глаза на это!

The people who stand for what they consider right, using a referendum ... to prove the legitimacy of their actions, protecting their families and children, **all of a sudden are considered separatists**, and the West is turning a blind eye to it!

- (15) Конечно же, конфликт зашёл в тупик, пролита кровь, люди не хотят новых смертей, но всё ещё можно изменить, если киевские власти изменят свою риторику, изменят своё отношение к волеизъявлению граждан на юго-востоке Украины, **если они прекратят называть их сепаратистами, прекратят называть их террористами**

The conflict has certainly reached a dead end, blood was shed, people do not want more deaths, but everything can still be changed if the Kiev authorities change their rhetoric, change their attitude to the will of the citizens living in the south-east of Ukraine, **if they stop calling them separatists, stop calling them terrorists**.

The functions of discourse-domain summaries in the corpus of Russian Duma debate is not just reporting what was said but expressing their disagreement with Ukrainian use of a particular



term. This disagreement is clearly expressed in sentences where negatively evaluated *separatists* are contrasted with *citizens who are protecting their lives, honour and dignity* or *people who stand for what they consider right ... protecting their families and children*.

The fact that *сепарат\** [separat\*] was used only in the context of reporting and refuting Ukrainian rhetoric may explain the low frequencies of the use of *сепарат\** [separat\*] in the Duma corpus. Low frequencies, however, should not lead us to the misleading conclusion that the conflict in the south-east of Ukraine was low on the agenda of the Russian parliament. A search on place names in the conflict zone (*south-east of Ukraine, Donetsk and Luhansk, Donbass*) shows that in the discussions of the conflict in Russian parliament *south-east of Ukraine* is referred to 91 times, *Donetsk and Luhansk* – 56, *Donbass* - 25, 172 references altogether.

*жители Донецка* [inhabitants of Donetsk];  
*население Донбаса* [population of Donbass];  
*русскоязычное население Донецкой и Луганской областей* [population of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts];  
*люди из Донецка и Луганска* [people from the Donetsk and Luhansk republics];  
*Наши соотечественники в Донецке и Луганске* [our compatriots in Donetsk and Luhansk];  
*юго-восток Украины* [south-east of Ukraine];  
*граждане юго-востока Украины* [citizens of the south-east of Ukraine];  
*мирные жители юго-востока Украины*

The concordance results demonstrate that in the Russian Duma corpus naming strategies of avoiding, reporting and rejecting the use of the term *separatist* have been used. Instead, the words *people, population, inhabitants, citizens* were used placing the emphasis on the civilian populations in south-east Ukraine and ignoring, or masking, the presence of the military formations of the pro-Russian militants. Such naming strategies have ideological underpinnings and play role in promoting the speakers' attitudes and values in the discourse (van Dijk, 2002, 2009; Simpson, [1993] 2005).

#### 4.4.1 *Cenapam\** [separat\*]: selective reference

As mentioned before, 9 out of 13 occurrences of *cenapam\** [separat\*] refer to pro-Russian rebels in IS reporting structures. In the remaining 4 cases the lemma is used in the Duma corpus with a negative connotation to name those who are perceived as threatening the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation. Two cases referring to Chechnya and ‘*Chechen separatism*’ bear witness to events in the 1990s when the Chechen republic declared independence from the Russian Federation, leading to a series of armed conflicts. Despite the apparent parallels with the situation in Ukraine, one of the Russian Duma speakers deny such similarity:

(16) Я недавно слышал от отдельных наших политических умников, которые считают себя оппозицией, такие заявления в связи с ситуацией в Украине: почему, мол, российская власть не поддерживает киевские власти, ведь точно такая же ситуация была в Чечне, когда армия пыталась подавить очаги сепаратизма? Вы знаете, параллели есть, но они совершенно в ином -- не надо врать людям!

I have recently heard from some of our political smart alecs who consider themselves an opposition statements in relation to the situation in Ukraine such as these: why don't the Russian authorities support Ukrainian authorities, because the situation in Chechnya was exactly the same, when the army tried to suppress outbreaks of separatism? You know, there are parallels, but they are totally different – do not lie to people!

The Duma speakers use the terms *separatist/separatism* but only to name those who wanted to separate from Russia:

(17) и даже чеченские сепаратисты, подкармливаемые с американско-английской стороны, не смогли добить Россию!

and even Chechen separatists, supported by the English and the Americans, could not finish off Russia!

(18) ...страну буквально захлестнула волна сепаратизма, терроризма и экстремизма.

... the country [Russian Federation] was literally swept by a wave of separatism, terrorism and extremism.

Thus, the word *separatist* seems to be employed selectively in the discourses of the Russian Duma parliament: it is used to of those who want to separate from Russia, but not those wanting to separate from Ukraine. Conversely, the Ukrainian parliamentary discourse uses *separatist* to name those who intend to separate from Ukraine. Bourdieu (1991:105) noted that people

can ‘create the world through naming’. It is clear that the worlds created by two different discourses are quite different, and because these discourses are used by the members of parliament in the context of the highest legislature of the country, these usages of the word – and world views – are given legitimacy.

## 5. Conclusions

In conclusion, the semantic development of the translation equivalent pair *cenapam\*/cenapam\** [separat\*] in Russian and Ukrainian political discourse display different dynamics: ‘[a]cross languages and societies, seemingly functionally equivalent words may depict variant versions of reality’ (Cohen, 2001: 29). The meaning and usage of the translation equivalent pair *cenapam\*/cenapam\** [separat\*] in the political discourses of 2014 show some new characteristic features in comparison those of 2011. These features can be summarised as follows:

- A frequency count shows the abrupt prominence of the word in the 2014 Ukrainian parliamentary in comparison with 2011, which can be attributed to a change in the political situation of the country.
- Data from concordance lines and co-text of Ukrainian Rada and Russian Duma debates show the movement of the word meaning in both corpora sets from neutral to politically charged
- The word’s connotative meaning shifted from neutral to marked negative; negative connotation of lemma *cenapam\** [separat\*] is constructed through collocations with words of negative meaning, particularly when it is imbedded in a coordinated string of negatively marked words. Negative connotation of the word is also formed by the wider negative context containing explicit and implicit judgement.

- The word has also acquired a strong negative affective meaning which is demonstrated in corpus by the emotive co-text.
- The connotative meaning of the translation equivalent pair displays instability and its negative connotative meaning is contested and re-negotiated by language users of different political persuasions in both parliaments. Corpus data made it possible to trace the change in word connotations and the way the affective, connotative and denotative meanings start to diverge in the discourses of the two parliaments and individual speakers depending on their ideologies and attitudes.
- The translation equivalent pair shows variation in reference. The generic referent (an ethnic group within a state seeking separation from this state) has become more specific. Ukrainian and Russian translation equivalents refer to different groups of people in the discourses of two parliaments.

Drawing attention to such language features could play a constructive part in conflict resolution as outlined in the first UN resolution on the situation in Ukraine where the two parties were urged ‘to exercise restraint, to refrain from ... inflammatory rhetoric that may increase tensions’ (UN Resolution 68/262). More generally, a cross-linguistic corpus-assisted approach may become a productive tool for studies in the language of conflict within a framework of conflict resolution.

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