

LUNFARDO LEXICAL UNITS RELATED TO LEGAL MATTERS

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Abstract: The article deals with the Argentinian slang Lunfardo which is spoken mainly in Buenos Aires, La Plata and their surroundings. The main objective of the paper is the lexicological analysis of Lunfardo lexical units related to legal matters. Lunfardo came into existence at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries when a great amount of immigrants from different European countries came to Argentina, mainly to its capital Buenos Aires. The languages and dialects spoken by immigrants started to mix with Spanish (its Argentinian variant) and Lunfardo started to develop. The article investigates the history of this linguistic phenomenon and its present situation. It tries to characterize Lunfardo focusing on its linguistic features and social background of its users.

Abstrakt: Artykuł dotyczy argentyńskiego slangu lunfardo, który używany jest głównie w Buenos Aires, La Placie i ich okolicach. Jego głównym celem jest analiza leksykograficzna jednostek leksykalnych lunfardo związanych z prawem, językiem prawnym i prawniczym. Lunfardo powstało na przełomie XIX i XX wieku, kiedy do Argentyny, a zwłaszcza Buenos Aires napłynęły bardzo duże liczby imigrantów z Europy. Języki i dialekty używane przez imigrantów zaczęły mieszać się z językiem hiszpańskim (jego argentyńską odmianą) i w ten sposób zaczęło rozwijać się lunfardo. Artykuł zajmuje się historią oraz obecnym kształtem tego zjawiska językowego. Charakterystyzuje lunfardo koncentrując się na jego cechach lingwistycznych oraz społecznym pochodzeniu jego użytkowników.

The origin and characteristics of Lunfardo

„There is nothing more difficult than giving a definition of Lunfardo which would satisfy at the same time linguists, Lunfardo’s enthusiasts and its speakers” (Gobello 2003, 9, transl. J.N.). This is the opinion of José Gobello, author of many books and dictionaries of Lunfardo, president of *Academia Porteña del Lunfardo* in Buenos Aires which promotes scientific research on it. Generally, Lunfardo is a lexicon of words that are used in colloquial speech in Buenos Aires, La Plata and their surroundings in Argentina.

It cannot be considered an independent language because it is based on Spanish morphology and syntax. It should be emphasized, however, that it is not identical with the Argentinian variant of Spanish. Lunfardismos, i.e. words that come from Lunfardo, generally are not listed in dictionaries of Spanish and are difficult to understand to native speakers of this language who are not acquainted with Lunfardo. Recently some of Lunfardo words have been introduced to *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española* (2005) (‘Dictionary of the Spanish Royal Academy, henceforth DRAE), e.g. *piba* ‘girl’,

but some of them, even if they can be found in this dictionary, have a meaning different from the one they have in Lunfardo, e.g. *merlo* in Lunfardo means 'stupid', while the definitions of DRAE dictionary refer only to the bird and fish species.

Lunfardo originated at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries in Buenos Aires and its surroundings, as great numbers of immigrants, mainly from Europe, were coming to Argentina. It is estimated that between 1870 and 1950 about six millions of Europeans arrived in Argentina. The majority of them came between 1870 and 1914 (Allendes and Solimano 2007, 12). The most numerous group of immigrants were Italians and Spaniards, but there were also Jews, Germans, Poles, people of French, British, Sirian and Lebanese origin. They lived mainly in poor districts, the docks and the suburbs of Buenos Aires. The various languages, dialects and slangs brought by them started to mix up with the local variant of Spanish. Although Lunfardo was created on the basis of loanwords it should be stressed that is not simply a conglomerate of words borrowed from different languages. According to Conde (2005), internationalisms also should not be classified as Lunfardo because a loanword needs to undergo some transformation in order to become a Lunfardo word.

Many words in Lunfardo were borrowed from other languages but changed their meaning or form. For instance, *parlar* from Italian *parlare* 'to speak': the word changed its form (acquired the Spanish inflectional suffix) but the meaning remained the same; *guerra* 'war' is a loanword from Spanish which in Lunfardo changed its meaning and refers to 'love affair'. One of the characteristic features of Lunfardo is *vesre*. The name of this linguistic mechanism comes from Spanish *revés* 'reverse'. *Vesre* is a way of coining new words that is based on reversing the order of the syllables in a word, for example: *choma* from *macho* 'man', *gotán* from *tango*, *dorima* from *marido* 'husband'. There were many different ways of changing the order of syllables in a word and adding or omitting a letter or a syllable was also possible. For example, *vesre* can involve changing the order of the last syllables so that the first one remains at the same position, e.g. *ajoba* from Spanish *abajo* 'under', *congomi* from Spanish *conmigo* 'with me'; the last syllable may take the position of the first one, and the rest of the word remains without changes, e.g. *jotraba* from *trabajo* 'work' and others (Gobello 2003, 255-56).

At the beginning, Lunfardo was used only in speech. It is said that one of the first written records of Lunfardo were police records from interrogations of suspects and witnesses of crimes (cf. Antoniotti 1998). The first time the word *Lunfardo* appeared printed in relation to this linguistic phenomenon was in 1878 in an anonymous note in the press in which also the relation between Lunfardo and the criminal underworld was suggested. A year later, two articles by Benigno B. Lugones, former policemen, appeared in the newspaper *La Nación*. In these articles, he described methods of committing crimes by thieves and other criminals as well as the language they used. He adduced some examples of Lunfardo words and stated that it was a special and secret language of criminals. The name given to this linguistic phenomenon, *Lunfardo*, was a synonym of the word 'thief' (it should be remarked that it is no longer used in this meaning). According to Amaro Villanueva, the word probably comes from Italian *lombardo* 'the inhabitant of Lombardy'. In the Roman dialect it meant 'thief', and in Sicilian 'inhabitant of Lombardy' but also, metaphorically, 'a dishonest man' (Gobello 2003, 159). Also in other books Lunfardo was described as a secret slang of criminals, invented and used in

order to be incomprehensible to others. These books include: *Los hombres de presa* ('Predatory men') written in 1888 by criminologist Luis M. Drago, *El idioma del delito* ('The language of crime') written in 1894 by Antonio Dellepiane, *Memorias de un vigilante* ('Memories of a guard') written in 1897 by José S. Álvarez and *El lenguaje del bajo fondo* ('Language of the lower social classes') written in 1915 by policeman Luis Villamayor. As noticed by Óscar Conde (Conde 2007), one of the contemporary Lunfardo authorities, these authors were people professionally related to the underworld and therefore the first time they heard Lunfardo words was from criminals. This is why they labelled Lunfardo as a slang typical of thieves. These books and articles written not by linguists but by policemen and criminologists lack a more profound analysis of this linguistic phenomenon. At the same time, the first articles written by journalists appeared in the press in which Lunfardo words and dialogues were used and associated with the street slang rather than with a secret language of criminals. It seems that journalists were more aware of the diversity of the society and knew that not only criminals were using these specific words (Conde 2007).

Lunfardo was created in a way in opposition to the language of the rest of society and was widely used mainly in port districts and suburbs. It cannot be denied that there were many thieves and other criminals in this environment and that they created and used specific words. However, it is evident that Lunfardo was not limited to the criminal or prison slang and was used also by law-abiding citizens. At the beginning of Lunfardo history, the rest of society, not interested in the lowest classes living in poorer districts, did not have many opportunities to get familiarized with Lunfardo. What is more, people often tend to stereotype immigrants as criminals who are a threat to the rest of society. Undoubtedly, these were the reasons why Lunfardo has often been erroneously classified as a slang of criminals. With the passing of time Lunfardo gained more popularity and started to be used in written texts – mainly in texts of tangos but also in poetry and literature which focused on the topics and social groups which earlier were excluded from the public debate. Later it was used also in lyrics of blues and rock songs. Gradually, Lunfardo started to permeate into colloquial speech of all social groups. It is a vivid linguistic phenomenon which is still developing.

Summing up this short introduction to Lunfardo, it may seem that it is easier to determine what Lunfardo is not than to describe this linguistic phenomenon by means of a single term. Nevertheless, it seems that Lunfardo could be understood as a kind of slang. To this respect, de Klerk writes:

In defining slang, one needs to remember four vital aspects: firstly, slang is typical of the spoken, colloquial, informal aspects of human interaction (...) Secondly, typically such words are restricted in their social status and distribution, and they are more metaphorical and transitory than standard language, rapidly going in and out of fashion within the particular subculture that knows and uses them. (...) A third feature of slang is the fact that it is generally vague in meaning, and slang words are notoriously difficult to define. (...) Also, many slang words refer to taboo aspects of life, where secrecy is important. (de Klerk 2006, 407)

Lunfardo meets all of these criteria. Although it has been used in written language, it is still peculiar to colloquial speech. Lunfardo words are used in place of those of standard language. It is still developing, some words are not longer in use, because of the changing reality, or are simply out of fashion. Frequently, it is a matter of discussion whether particular words should be classified as Lunfardo or not. Lunfardo is a kind of street slang with many words that are vague in meaning and polysemic. Many of them refer to taboo aspects of life, like the underworld, prostitution, sexuality, names of sexual organs etc. Although some Lunfardo words spread to other areas of Argentina or to Uruguay, it is peculiar to Buenos Aires, La Plata and their surroundings. However, Lunfardo is no longer limited to one social group as it was at the beginning. It is present in colloquial, everyday speech of all members of the society.

Lexicological analysis of Lunfardo lexical units related to legal matters

Lexicological analysis of Lunfardo lexical units related to legal matters has been based on *Nuevo diccionario Lunfardo* by José Gobello (Gobello 2003). In his dictionary, Gobello made use of various sources: a corpus of authentic texts in which Lunfardo appears, various studies devoted to Lunfardo and the analysis of spoken language. Many (but not all) entries contain etymological information as well as quotations from written sources in which Lunfardo words are used in context. All etymological information given in this paper is based on that presented in the dictionary. In his dictionary, Gobello included not only words that originated at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, but also contemporary ones that he considered belonging to Lunfardo. However, some of these contemporary words may raise doubts as to whether they should be classified as Lunfardo, e.g. *capuchino*, which is a loanword from Italian that not only was not morphologically or semantically transformed but is also wide-spread in many languages.

All entries of the Gobello's dictionary have been analysed in order to excerpt words and phrases connected to legal matters. More than 100 such words have been identified, almost all of which concern criminal law and police service. The majority of these words are nouns and verbs¹³. Polysemic words (which have also other meanings, not referring to legal matters) have been included in this group as well. The study focuses on main entries of the dictionary, which means that not all possible derived forms of the main entries are discussed here in detail¹⁴. The excerpted words can be divided into the following basic semantic categories:

- Terms concerning the judiciary,
- Terms concerning the police,
- Terms concerning imprisonment,
- Terms concerning theft:
 - Words denoting the act of stealing and thieves,
 - Terms concerning various types of thieves and thefts,

¹³ It should be stressed that as Lunfardo is not an independent language and its lexis is limited, it consists mainly of nouns, verbs and adjectives.

¹⁴ Word formation in Lunfardo is generally based on rules of the Spanish language.

- Terms concerning thieves’ accomplices,
- Terms concerning criminal assault,
- Others.

The most represented category is undoubtedly the one referring to theft. It is remarkable that not only there are many words denoting the act of stealing and thieves but there is a highly diversified group of words referring to various kinds of thieves (it could be said – their professional specialisation), the tools they used and various thieves’ accomplices. There are not many words referring to other types of criminals. In what follows, the above mentioned categories are discussed in detail.

Terms concerning the judiciary

Only few words occur in Gobello’s dictionary that can be included in this category. *Ave negra* refers to ‘prosecutor’ or ‘barrister’, literally it means ‘a black bird’. This term was coined in association with the black clothes that prosecutors and barristers wear in the court. The term *lavandero* also refers to ‘barrister’ and comes from Italian slang *lavandaio* with the same meaning. *Confesor* refers to ‘judge’. *Cantar*, literally ‘to sing’, means ‘to confess one’s guilt’ and comes from colloquial Spanish *cantar* with the same meaning. *Muerte*, which in Spanish means ‘death’, in Lunfardo acquired another meaning: ‘incriminating evidence’. There is also a word *chicana* which does not refer directly to the judiciary but means ‘abuse of legal formalities’. The expression *por izquierda* (from Spanish ‘on the left’) in Lunfardo means ‘illegally’. The fact that these words are not used with a specialised meaning in a consistent way (e.g. *ave negra* can refer to a barrister or a prosecutor) suggests a rather loose understanding of legal terms.

Terms concerning the police

This group consists of numerous synonyms of the word *policía* ‘police officer’: *abanico*, *botón*, *cana*, *ciapoli*, *chafó*, *chancha*, *mayorengo*, *milico*, *varita*, *yusta*. *Abanico* in Spanish means ‘fan’ (‘a folding circular or semi-circular device made of paper or silk that is waved to and fro by hand to produce a cooling current of air’ (NPED 2000, 500), in Lunfardo it refers to a police officer. This noun, as claimed by the author of the dictionary, comes from the *germania*, a slang of thieves and procurers, in which it referred to an old prison in Madrid. The word *botón* means ‘button’ in Spanish. According to Gobello, this noun acquired this meaning during the uprising in 1890, when insurgents were shooting at policemen aiming at buttons of their uniforms. The expression *tirar a los botones* ‘to aim at the buttons’ was created then and thus policemen started to be called *botones*. *Ciapoli* is an example of *vesre* – it is a reverse form of the word *policía*. The next three words come from Italian slang: *chafó* comes from *ciaffo* ‘police officer’; *mayorengo* comes from *maggiorengo* ‘chief, mayor, senior’ (Lunfardo *mayorenguería* means ‘police station’); *yusta* or *yuta* comes from *giusta* ‘urban police’. *Milico* is an apocope of Spanish *miliciano* ‘a member of militia’.

Other words refer to police officer’s specialisations. *Zorro gris* and *varita* denote ‘traffic policemen/policewomen’. *Zorro gris* refers to the colour of the uniforms worn by such police officers in the fifties. *Varita* in Spanish means ‘wand’. The word *cosaco*, meaning ‘policemen on horseback’, comes from Spanish, in which it refers to ‘Russian

soldier of light cavalry'. *Tira* (also *tirante* or *tiroles*) refers to 'investigator (police officer) in plain clothes'. This word also comes from Italian slang: *tira* 'a police spy'.

There are some other words connected with the police and their work. Two of them refer to investigation: *asador* is 'interrogator' and *cartón* 'identikit portrait', the latter coming from Spanish *cartón* 'cardboard'. *Ratonera* in Lunfardo means 'trap prepared by the police to catch a thief', in Spanish this word means 'mousetrap'. *Hotel del Gallo* is a term for 'the former Police Department in Buenos Aires' because Spanish *gallo* means 'cock', which was a symbol of the police in Buenos Aires. There is one more, quite old word connected to the police: *cincuenta* 'fifty' – it was a fifty-peso fine for indecently accosting women in the public.

Terms concerning imprisonment

There are many words referring to 'prison': *canasta*, *capacha*, *cufa*, *cuja*, *estaribel*, *jaula*, *juiciosa*, *la Nueva*, *la Tierra*, *devoto*. It can be observed that some of them have their origins in words denoting various types of baskets, both in Spanish and other languages. *Canasta* is a paronomastic wordplay of Lunfardo *cana* 'prison' or 'police officer' and Spanish *canasta* 'basket'. Also Spanish *capacha* refers to a kind of basket. *Cufa* comes from Genoese *cōffa* which means 'basket'. *Cuja* denotes 'bed' or 'prison', the second meaning being probably influenced by the aforementioned *cufa*, which is phonetically similar.

The next group of words consists of the names of three former prisons in Argentina: *la Nueva*, *la Tierra* and *Devoto*. *La Nueva*, Spanish 'new', was a national prison functioning between 1877 and 1961 in Buenos Aires. *La tierra* was a prison located in the province of Tierra del Fuego in the South of Argentina. *Devoto* was a prison situated in Buenos Aires, in the district Villa Devoto.

Estaribel comes from *caló* (a Spanish slang of criminals), in which it has the same meaning. *Jaula* means 'cage' in Spanish but colloquially also refers to 'prison' (verb *jaular* means 'to imprison'). There is also an expression *a la sombra* 'in prison', which means 'in the shadow' in Spanish.

There are also numerous words with the meaning 'to imprison'. Many of them are derivationally related to the above-mentioned nouns denoting 'prison': *encanar*, *encanastar*, *encufar*, *jaular*, *ensombrar*. Other words that mean 'to imprison' are *guardar* and *amurar*. *Amurar* comes from Genoese *amurrá* 'to make (a ship) run aground', metaphorically 'to paralyze'. *Guardar* comes from Spanish, in which it means 'to keep, watch'. There is also a word *mesada* 'detention that is extended for 30 days' (the maximum that can be imposed by the police), which comes from the Spanish *mes* 'month'.

The last group of words concerning imprisonment are those referring to prison guards: *telangive* is *vesre* from the Spanish noun *vigilante* 'guard'; *esbiro* comes from Spanish *esbirro* 'thug'; *gallipín* is connected with the noun *gallo* 'cock', the symbol of the police in Buenos Aires. *Gavilán blanco* is 'prison employee who does the clandestine shopping for prisoners'. The author of the dictionary does not explain the etymology of this phrase. Nevertheless, Spanish *gavilán* denotes a small predatory bird, specifically the Eurasian Sparrowhawk and *blanco* means 'white'.

Terms concerning theft

As this is the most numerous and diversified group of words, this category is divided into three subcategories, which are analysed in detail below.

a) Words denoting the act of stealing and thieves

The words discussed here are frequently derived from one another, cf. for instance *shacador* ‘a thief’ from *shacar* ‘to steal’. Therefore, only the words listed as main entries in Gobello’s dictionary are discussed here in detail. The group of words referring to ‘thief’ comprises the following nouns: *grata* from colloquial Italian *gratta* ‘thief’; *grupo* (a polysemic word of uncertain origin); *ladriyo* from Spanish *ladrillo* used in the *germania*, i.e. a slang of thieves and procurers, which is a diminutive of Spanish *ladrón* ‘thief’; *lunfardo* (described in the first part of this paper). *Golpe* means ‘theft’ and comes from Italian slang *colpo* ‘theft’.

As far as words denoting the act of stealing are concerned, the following words can be listed here: *afanar*, *granfiñar*, *hacer*, *tocar el piano*, *solfear*, *shacar*, *trabajar*, *soliviar*. There are two words that refer to stealing as if it was work: *afanar* and *trabajar*. *Afanar* comes from colloquial Spanish, in which it means ‘to work’; also the forms *fanar* and *vesre anafar* exist (*afane* and *afano* mean ‘theft’). *Trabajar* means ‘to work’ in Spanish. *Granfiñar* comes from Italian slang *sgranfiñare* ‘to steal’. The word *hacer* (‘to do’ in Spanish) is a literal translation from Italian slang, in which *fare* means ‘to steal’, while in general Italian it means ‘to do’.

The expression *tocar el piano* / *tocar el pianito*, in Spanish ‘to play the piano’, refers to the movements of fingers, which in both cases, playing the piano and stealing, has to be very quick and efficient. In association with this expression, Spanish *solfear* ‘to sol-fa’ gained the meaning ‘to steal’. The expression *do re mi*, connected with *solfear*, means ‘theft’.

Shacar (also *chacar*) means ‘to wheedle money from someone by means of tricks or false promises’ and ‘to steal’. It comes from Genoese *sciaccã* ‘to break’, vulgarly ‘to force, to violate’. *Shacamiento* or *chacamiento* means ‘theft’ (cf. *shacador*, *chacador* and *achacador*, all meaning ‘thief’). *Soliviar* comes from Spanish *soliviar* ‘to help to pick up / lift something’.

b) Terms concerning various types of thieves and thefts

This is one of the most diversified groups of words. It concerns various professional specialisations among thieves. It can be observed that these words refer to petty thefts. In this group, there are five words connected with pickpockets. *Culata* means ‘hip pocket’ and comes from Italian *culatta* ‘back side of something’. On the basis of this word, the expression *trabajar de culata* ‘to work as a pickpocket’ and the noun *culatero* ‘pickpocket’ were coined. The verb *capear* means ‘stealing money from a wallet of a victim without taking the wallet out of the pocket’. *Shuquero* means ‘pickpocket’; the origin of this word is uncertain. The expression *Tomador del dos* (literally ‘someone who takes something by using the two’) refers to ‘a pickpocket who uses his two fingers for stealing’ and comes from Spanish slang. *Punga* and *pungista* mean ‘pickpocket’. These words come from Southern Italian *punga* ‘pocket’. *Punguerar* refers to ‘pickpocketing’ but also ‘stealing’ in general.

The next group of words is generally associated with the kind of things stolen by thieves. *Rastriyo* (also *rastriyante*) denotes 'thief of small things' (*rastriyar* 'to steal small objects') and comes from Spanish *rastrillo* 'rake'. *Maletero* means 'thief who steals suitcases from passengers, mainly in railway stations'. It comes from Spanish *maleta* 'suitcase'. *Santero* refers to 'thief who steals in churches' or 'thief's accomplice', it is associated with the Spanish adjective *santo* 'saint'. *Mechera* denotes 'a woman who steals clothes in shops, hiding it in the clothes which she is wearing'. Also an *escamoteador* steals mainly in shops. *Cuatrero* means 'thief of livestock' (*cuatrear* 'to steal livestock'). *Esquifrunista* (also *schifrunista*) is 'a thief who collaborates with prostitutes stealing money from their clients'.

The next group of words refers to the means of stealing rather than to the type of the stolen goods. *Yavero* is 'a burglar who breaks into houses during the absence of the inhabitants using various picklocks and keys'. The dictionary does not give the etymology of this word but certainly it is connected with Spanish *llave* 'key'. *Voltear* and *escruchar* (or *escruchar*) also mean 'to break into a house' (*escruchante* or *escruchante* means 'burglar'). *Descuido* refers to 'theft which is made by taking advantage of somebody's inattention'. It comes from Spanish slang *descuidero* 'thief who practices *descuido*'; in Buenos Aires this type of thief is called *descuidista*. *Atrapar* means 'to steal from homosexuals'.

There is also a verb *mancar*, which refers to theft in general, which means 'to catch someone stealing'. It comes from Italian *mancare* 'to fail, not to occur'.

c) Terms concerning a thief's accomplices

The first group of words are those connected with the loot. *Cambalachero* refers to 'a person who buys and sells the loot'. It comes from the Argentinian variant of Spanish *cambalache* 'second-hand shop'. The verb *astiyar* means 'to divide the loot'. *Rostrear* means 'said of a thief: to keep the whole loot to oneself without sharing it with accomplices'. This word comes from Genoese *rosti* 'to bake' or 'to defraud', by association with Spanish *rostro* 'face'. There are also two words referring to the loot itself: *brodo* and *toco*. *Brodo* has its origins in Italian *brodo* 'soup, stock'. *Toco* means also 'any part of the loot distributed among the thieves' and 'money (in general)'; it comes from Genoese *tocco* 'piece'.

Campana refers to 'a thief's accomplice who helps him/her to steal'. It comes from Italian slang *campane* 'ears', connected with Genoese expression *stà de campana* 'to be on guard'. *Tanga* means 'person who accompanies a pickpocket in order to learn the profession of stealing'. It comes from Spanish slang *tanga* 'accomplice'. *Esparar* means 'to help a *pungista* ['pickpocket'] by distracting their victim'. This verb has its origin in Italian slang *sparà el tir* 'to notify, to warn'. *Entregador* refers to 'a thief's accomplice who gives him information necessary to carry out a theft' or 'an informer'. It comes from the Spanish verb *entregar* 'to give, to deliver'.

There are many words denoting various kinds of picklocks, keys and other tools used by thieves to break into houses, shops etc. However, due to the fact that they are not directly connected to the subject of this paper, they will not be discussed here in detail. This subcategory comprises the following words: *ferramenta*, *jica*, *lanza*, *otario*, *paleta*, *pata de cabra*, *shua*, *torniquete*, *banderita* and *escalera*.

Terms concerning criminal assault

This group of words is not very numerous. It comprises of four words referring to various kinds of criminal assault and some words denoting an action of punching somebody. The word *biaba* means 'violent assault'. Also its diminutive form, *biabusa*, and augmentative one, *biabazo* are used in this sense. Two types of *biaba* are usually distinguished: *biaba caldosa* or *biaba con caldo*, which refers to 'bloodshed', and *biaba seca*, which means 'assault without bloodshed'. This term has a vast metaphoric meaning. It comes from *beava*, a word used in various Italian dialects, in which it means 'food that is given to animals' and, metaphorically, 'beating, punishment'. *Furca* refers to a particular type of an assault. The dictionary describes it as follows: one of the criminals is distracting a victim, while the other attacks him/her from behind by putting his arm around the victim's neck in order to immobilize him/her. It comes from Sicilian *furca* 'gallows'. The term *corbata*, from Spanish *corbata* 'tie', refers to a kind of *furca*.

There is also a group of words concerning criminal assault which denote an action of punching somebody: *boyo*, *cazote*, *miqueta*, *socotroco*, *torta*, *viento*, *cros*, *mamporro*, *contramoco*. *Cazote* comes from Italian *cazotto* with the same meaning. *Miqueta* comes from Genoese *micchetta* 'bread roll'. *Socotroco* is said to be an onomatopoeic word. *Torta* comes from colloquial Spanish, in Buenos Aires it is also used in the augmentative form *tortazo* (*torta* means 'cake' in general Spanish). *Cros* comes from English to *cross*. *Mamporro* refers to 'a violent punch' and comes from Spanish *mamporro* 'not very strong blow or knock on the head'. Only one word referring to rape has been listed in Gobello's dictionary, viz. *becerro* 'multiple violation'.

Others

A group of words which it is difficult to assign to one of the categories presented above, will be discussed in this place. The majority of the words analysed so far refer to rather petty crimes, nevertheless there are three words that are connected with murder, namely: *enfriar* 'to kill', *limpiar* 'to kill' and *achurar* 'to kill using cold steel'. *Achurar* means 'to gut'. *Limpiar* comes from Spanish, in which it means 'to clean'. *Limpio*, 'clean' in Spanish, denotes 'a criminal that is not known to the police yet' in Lunfardo.

There are some words denoting criminals: *malandrino* 'criminal' comes from Italian *malandrino* 'mugger'; *mejicano* 'smuggler'; *levantador* 'someone who steals everything which is not watched over'. *Godino* means 'criminal who abuses minors'. It is derived from José Santos Godino, who was sentenced for life imprisonment in 1914 for four homicides and seven attempts of homicides in which the victims were minors.

There are also some terms referring to fraud. *Guiya* means 'fraud', committed especially during shopping, when one asks for change and in this time replaces one banknote by another, a less valuable one. This term comes from Brazilian Portuguese *guilha* 'fraud'. The noun *cuento*, which means 'story' in Spanish, refers to different strategies used by criminals in order to deceive others and obtain money. *Baratín* means 'a roll of paper resembling banknotes which is used in frauds'. It comes from Italian slang *barattina* 'replacing a thing with a false one'.

Conclusions

The Lunfardo words analysed above refer generally to criminal law. There are only few words, e.g. *confesor* 'judge', that can be associated also with other law disciplines, e.g. civil law. There is quite a numerous group of words referring to the police and imprisonment. As far as terms concerning imprisonment are concerned, various terms for 'prison', 'to imprison' and 'prison guards' were found in the dictionary. However, no other words concern life in prison, especially no word denoting a 'prisoner', can be found there. This confirms the claim that Lunfardo should not be viewed as a prison slang. For comparison, in the analysis of the Polish prison slang, Oryńska notices that the second most numerous group of words concerning person are various terms referring to prisoners (Oryńska 1991, 86).

The majority of Lunfardo lexical units connected to legal matters that have been analysed in this paper concern petty crimes, mainly theft. This group of words is the richest and the most diversified one. It might seem that the results of this analysis support the thesis that Lunfardo was a slang of criminals. Nevertheless, these are not the only categories of words that are present in Lunfardo. Other groups of words that can be found in the dictionary refer mainly to prostitutes, gambling, amorous relations between man and woman, tango and common, everyday activities. The reason for this is that Lunfardo was a slang of street, poor districts and suburbs and that it developed mainly among immigrants, mostly young men, who frequently did not have a stable work and tried to make their living by making the most of every opportunity. On the one hand, in such environment there must have been criminals, but on the other hand, one cannot forget that people tend to stigmatize immigrants and the poor. Over the years, Lunfardo started to permeate the colloquial speech of all social groups and today it forms a part of the identity of the people who use it.

To sum up, it can be said that today Lunfardo is a set of vocabulary of various origin that is used in colloquial speech, parallelly to standard language, and is widespread in all social classes of Argentina (Conde 2007). While being a kind of slang, it is not limited to a particular social group (as it was at the beginning of its history) or age group which would use it in order to distinguish itself from the rest of the society.

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Comparative Legilinguistics vol. 2/2010

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