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METAPHORISATION OF *BREXIT* IN MODERN POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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The article deals with an interdisciplinary perspective to a political discourse presenting conceptual metaphors as a powerful and effective means for conceptualising life experience of modern society. The focus of the study is on the analysis of topics of intense interest in the political communications and especially the mass media which is considered to be in the centre of political continuum. The research presupposes the analysis the conceptual metaphors which are built up on mappings concerning such source domains as HUMAN BEING, NATURAL PHENOMENON, DISEASE that provides a way to structure target domain of the concept *BREXIT*. Being produced by world politicians and political journalists these conceptual metaphors are both directly and indirectly aimed at distributing political power on perceiving and understanding such a concept as *BREXIT*. Under the Conceptual metaphor theory framework, this paper discusses the dynamic and flexible features of such metaphors as *BREXIT IS A HUMAN BEING*, *BREXIT IS A NATURAL PHENOMENON*, and *BREXIT IS A DISEASE* which can influence the audience and transform themselves into one of the effective tools of conceptualisation of reality. Of special interest is the mapping which is viewed as the sets of systematic correspondences between the source and the target domains.

Keywords: conceptual metaphor, *BREXIT*, mapping, source domain, target domain, political discourse.

1. Introduction

Over time people have been creating new words that express concepts or ideas which may not have existed at all. New words and notions represent the evolving nature of the English language, *BREXIT* being one of such notions. It is a newly coined word that is now commonly used in everyday political life but has yet to be explained and studied.

Once it was first heard, the following question arose in everybody's mind: What does Brexit mean? Structurally it is a word that has come to be used as a shorthand way of saying the UK leaving the EU – merging the words **Britain** and **exit** to get Brexit. Still, Brexit is not just a new word consisting of two parts; it is a concept which meaning is not completely clear as it implies different attitudes and opinions. If an abstract notion is vague and needs more explanations, the matter of the conceptual metaphors is considered since our conceptual system is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. Metaphors are a popular means of simplifying complex concepts. It is better and easier to understand a concept using another concept that is more concrete, physical, or tangible than the former for this purpose. Our experience with the physical world serves as a natural and logical foundation for the comprehension of more abstract domains (Kövecses, 2002, p. 6). The theory of conceptual metaphor has stirred up the world of linguistics, and its applications have been extended to numerous research areas such as discourse analysis, pragmatics and contrastive analysis (Bystrov, 2014, p. 1).

Politics, the media and the public sphere have traditionally been viewed as macro-structural phenomena and much theorising on sociological and media studies and political communication has gone into elucidating the relations between them (Cammaerts, 2013, p. 8). Metaphors are created and disseminated both in the media and through the media. Furthermore, these mediated metaphors contribute to shaping our understanding of politics. The media articles provide “persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation and presentation, of selection, emphasis and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organise discourse, whether verbal or visual” (Giltin, 1980, p. 7).

Thus, this article deals with the conceptual metaphors used in political discourse produced by both politicians and political journalists. Political elites exploit them both to share their attitudinal meaning to Brexit and affect the public and political leaders in the negotiating process, while political journalists tend to use metaphors to make a complicated Brexit process more comprehensive for the audience or to criticise the process. Yet, apart from achieving easy comprehension, the use of metaphors also suggests a certain view on Brexit which politicians are invited to share.

2. Methods

The article is based on the data from the present-day politicians' speeches which were published and analysed in the authoritative media sources taken from Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) and the Internet resources.

The methodology used in the article presupposes the usage of the following methods: narrative – for selecting, ordering and interpreting factual material; descriptive – for analysing excerpts of political

discourse, classification and systematisation – for grouping conceptual metaphors under study on different source domains.

The Conceptual metaphor theory presents a basic framework for linguistic analysis, focusing on Brexit as a target domain. The main attention is paid to mappings which are viewed as systematic correspondences between the source and the target domains (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, Kövecses, 2002, 2015).

The mappings of conceptual metaphors are motivated by image schemas which are pre-linguistic patterns concerning space, time, moving, controlling, and other core elements of embodied human experience.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Political Discourse in media communication

Very often politics is described as interaction – for instance in the form of a debate or a discussion – for resolving disagreements or clashes of interest (MacKenzie 2009, p. 4). It can further be viewed as a “struggle for power” for the purpose of putting political, economic and social ideas into practice (Bayram 2010, p. 24). Political discourse is regarded as a type of institutional communication (Karasik, 2004; Sheigal, 2000; Van Dijk 1997; Chilton, 2006; Wodak, 2007) and is synonymous to the term “political communication”.

Political discourse is a discourse of politicians (Van Dijk, 1997, p. 12). The communication is considered to be political if it takes place in some political institutions (government, parliament, political party etc.). Thus, such an approach deals with the only participant (agent) of institutional communication. However, the main representatives of institutional discourse are both agents and clients (people appealing to them) (Karasik, 2004). The recipients of political information, such as the public, citizens, and voters should also be included.

It appears logical to exploit the broader understanding of political discourse which is viewed as a complex linguistic phenomenon that is directly or indirectly aimed at distributing and exercising the political power (Sheigal, 2000). In this case, political discourse becomes public.

The focus of the study is on the analysis of political discourse in the media which, in mediatised mass democracies, is for most people the only way in which they ever encounter politics. Nowadays, it seems no longer conceivable to analyse the political process of European democracies without taking into consideration not only institutions of political intermediation but also the media of mass communication. The mass media provide citizens with maps of the political world, by having impact on their conceptions of how it is structured, their understanding of the processes going on within this structure, and their evaluations of its elements (policies, processes, events and actors).

The media are necessary in order to communicate with the public but have come under criticism by many theorists for either simply being used by politicians for political gain or for being irrelevant (Mio, 1997, p. 130). Thus, the presentation of politics takes place on the public stage that the media provide.

Due to information-perceiving demands, it is difficult to pay attention to all aspects of political life. That is why, public needs something that would simplify decision making, and metaphor addresses this need. Being an important linguistic device, metaphors give an opportunity for people to grasp the meaning of political events and be a part of the process.

3.2 The Conceptual metaphor theory

For the purposes of the present analysis, metaphors are taken to be those cases of figurative language in which one concept is understood in terms of another and in which features are transferred from one domain to another (Cammaerts & Bart, 2012). A conceptual domain is any coherent organisation of experience (Kövecses, 2002 p. 4). The analysis of metaphors presented in this article is based on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) ground-breaking study “Metaphors we live by”.

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 3), metaphors are pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. They enable us to make sense of abstract concepts by drawing parallels to concepts that are more easily accessible to us: “We typically conceptualise the nonphysical in terms of the physical” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 59).

Using and analysing metaphors enables people to simplify complex and abstract concepts with the help of easily accessible and comprehensive ones. It definitely helps form a certain public view on political events in general and the connotation of such a notion as BREXIT in particular.

The analysis of the political discourse and conceptual metaphors within it presupposes the combination of both discourse and cognitive approaches. Employing this framework, sample texts from the British media are analysed “in order to obtain an understanding of how the metaphor passed between linguistic and political cultures” (Chilton & Ilyin, 1993).

According to cognitive linguistic study, a conceptual metaphor is viewed as the perception of one conceptual domain with the help of another one. Any conceptual domain is taken as people's experience. Thus "conceptual metaphors typically employ a more abstract concept as a target and a more concrete or physical concept as their source" (Kövecses, 2002, p. 6). Freedom, love, idea, social organisation are considered to be more abstract concepts than theatre, journey, family, food, and building. In order to easily understand any nonphysical concept, one should exploit another more concrete and tangible concept than the former one for achieving this purpose. The experiences and connections with the physical world may serve as a natural background for understanding more abstract notions (domains). It explains the fact that in the usage of everyday metaphors the source and target domains are not changeable.

The sets of systematic correspondences between the source and the target in the sense that constituent conceptual elements of *b* correspond to constituent elements of *a* are often referred to as mappings (Kövecses, 2002, p. 6).

The article is based on the Conceptual metaphor mapping theory by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 110) who distinguish such conceptual domains as source domain (the conceptual domain from which we draw metaphorical expressions) and target domain (the conceptual domain that we try to understand).

Many constituents of target concepts come from source domains and are not preceding ones. In order to know a conceptual metaphor, one should analyse the set of mappings applied to a given source-target pairing. Moreover, such an idea of mapping between source and target is employed to investigate analogical reasoning and inferences.

Various conceptual metaphors are usually invoked when a speaker tries to make a case for a certain point of view or course of action. The selection of such metaphors is mentally directed by either the subconsciousness or habitual actions of a person. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 3), a metaphor is prevalent in everyday life, in any language, mind and action. Our conceptual system is considered basically metaphorical in nature.

The aim of this paper is to provide a comprehensive linguistic analysis of the following conceptual metaphors regarding *BREXIT* in modern political discourse: *BREXIT IS A HUMAN BEING*, *BREXIT IS A NATURAL DISASTER*, and *BREXIT IS A DISEASE*.

3.3 *Brexit is a human being*

In order to know a conceptual metaphor, we have to study the set of mappings that applies to a given source-target pairing. On analysing the political discourse in general and the concept of *Brexit* in particular, it is found out that the majority of metaphorical expressions under study are related to a human body or some actions which can be performed by a person. Thus, it allows joining such metaphorical expressions into one group which implies a certain conceptual metaphor: *BREXIT IS A HUMAN BEING*.

As a result, the following expressions are related to a human body: its feelings, emotions and actions were identified: *deal, deny, have a cake, eat, change of mood, pragmatic, hard, calm, divorce, marital separation, velvet divorce, create uncertainty, deter, act, self-harm, resemble, crowd out, solve challenges* etc.

The usage of such a metaphor presupposes that the feelings and actions of a person are shifted to some political events and are used to characterise people's attitude to *Brexit*. The source domain is a human being which helps us understand a non-human target domain – *Brexit*.

The following set of the corresponding conceptual mapping can be seen between the source and target domains, which is presented in Figure 1:

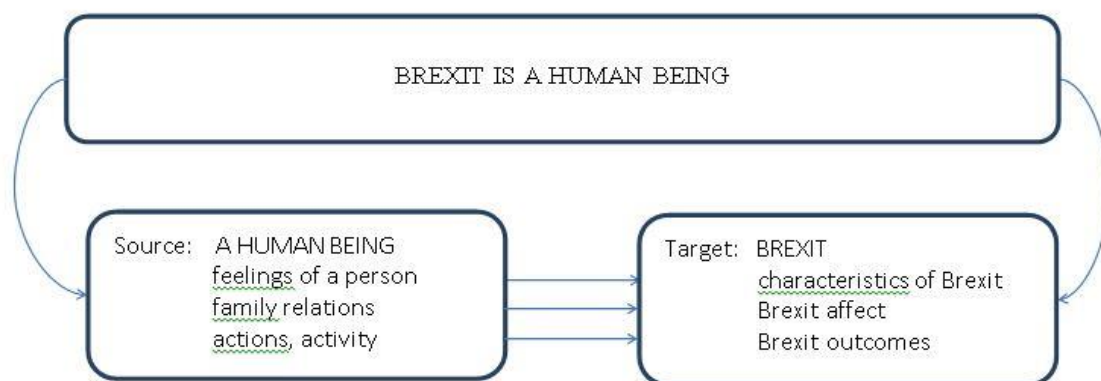


Figure 1. BREXIT IS A HUMAN BEING: cross-domain correspondences

Hence, the examples of the first mapping can be analysed in their presenting:

(1) *But there is what was described by a key minister as a “growing realisation” that thousands of jobs are dependent on us voluntarily following EU rules in key goods sectors, describing the position as a “pragmatic Brexit”* (BBC News, February 23, 2018).

(2) *Campaigners against a **hard Brexit** said the plan amounts to “economic suicide”* (BBC News, August 20, 2017).

The above-mentioned examples present the feelings of a person. However, they are used in such a context to characterise and conceptualise the features of Brexit. Through the feelings and emotions of a human being, it is easier to be aware of the other entity using the same lexical unit as it is used to describe people. Humans can conceptualise nonhuman things in terms of a human because it is related to them and is definitely easier to understand what is nearer and familiar to a person’s life and his/her experience.

In example 1 Brexit is presented as a person. The word *pragmatic* is used to describe a very serious matter. It emphasises the importance of the state economy: after leaving the EU, Brexit is *pragmatic* and will employ more practical rather than theoretical rules for the employment of people.

Example 2 contains a word *hard*. It is actually used to speak about one of the strengths in a human character. It characterises Brexit from a very good point of view for those who voted for the EU leaving and points out rather strong and stable position of a free country.

Mappings are grounded in everyday experience and knowledge and they provide us with the meaning of the metaphorical linguistic expressions, so they help us understand a particular conceptual metaphor easily.

Family metaphors are widely used in political discourse they help people understand the problems raised within politics referring to the relations between family members: a husband and wife. Undoubtedly, conflicts often occur in love or marriage, so the fights or contradictions between a husband and wife or lovers can be viewed as battles and problems in a political life:

(3) *European Council President Donald Tusk told PM Theresa May today that “we need an orderly, calm Brexit, something like a ‘velvet divorce’”* (Reuters, July 19, 2016).

(4) *The UK must not be “blackmailed” into agreeing a Brexit “divorce” bill before trade talks begin, Liam Fox has said* (BBC News, September 1, 2017).

(5) *Brexit was compared to **marital separation** because it allowed people to distinguish between Britain's immediate exit from the EU - the “divorce” - and its longer-term trading relations* (BBC News, July 28, 2017).

(6) *The prime minister told MPs in March she did not like the “divorce” metaphor. “I prefer not to use that term with regard to the European Union because often, when people get divorced, they do not have a good relationship afterwards* (BBC News, July 28, 2017).

In these examples, Brexit is conceptualised as a *divorce, marital separation*. Many conflicts or fights between a husband and wife in a marriage are like political battles or parting of political regions which were once united and now want to be separate ones. The aim of the fight between married people is to let one person accept the other’s idea or opinion. Hence, the basic purpose of Brexit is to let the UK be free from the regulations of the EU and not to stay obedient any more.

The next mapping which shows the similarity in the conception of Brexit and human being is actions of a person which correspond to the work of Brexit respectively. The lexical units describing human actions are used for describing the work of Brexit in the following examples:

(7) *A Brexit vote could **deal a fatal blow** to Mr Cameron's career as prime minister, although he has vowed to stay on whatever the outcome* (BBC NEWS, June 24, 2016).

(8) *Insiders say ministers will have to choose between economic interests or sovereignty but Brexit department **denies any change of mood*** (The Guardian, July 3, 2017).

(9) *Gus O'Donnell, the former head of the civil service (2005-11), who now chairs Frontier Economics, told me: “Economists warned that Brexit would **create uncertainty**, which reduces investment, and that a big fall in the exchange rate would lead to higher inflation* (NewStatesman, April 17, 2014).

(10) *Brexit is **detering people** as well as capital from Britain* (NewStatesman, October 27, 2017).

(11) *Brexit, which the electorate narrowly voted for by 52 to 48 per cent in June 2016, ever more resembles **an act of self-harm*** (NewStatesman, October 27, 2017).

(12) *Brexit **has crowded out the space** for transformative economic policy* (NewStatesman, October 27, 2017)

(13) *I'm crestfallen at the time, the money, the opportunity cost of Brexit, when there are so many other challenges that people want us to solve and that **Brexit will not solve**”* (Newstatesman, October 27, 2017).

All the examples describe the actions typical of a human being but at the same time fully demonstrate the work of Brexit and its influence on economy and political events.

In example 7 Brexit votes are so important that may change the political career of David Cameron by dealing a fatal blow, though such an action is usually performed by a person. Brexit cannot do it because it is not actually a person.

Example 8 shows that we only use the same lexis to speak about the influential work of Brexit and the actions performed by a human being who can deny any change of mood. Thus, we conceptualise the work of the EU in terms of the actions of a person. In example 9 Brexit is performing a role of a person who hesitates and may create uncertainty that leads to some problems in the spheres of investments, exchange rates and inflation.

Example 10 demonstrates that human qualities are transferred to an inanimate object. Only people can have such a power to prevent someone from doing something (deter). Example 11 also shows that in the course of life a person may do harm to him/herself and it helps to realise that Brexit resembles a person by the act of self-harm.

Examples 12 and 13 present Brexit as a strong and powerful person having ability to crowd out the space and solve/not solve the problems. Actually, the inanimate objects cannot make any mental activity. So, the above-mentioned examples show the work and the constant activity of Brexit.

Actually, all these examples illustrate the actions of the authority of Brexit. In order not to mention the names or surnames of concrete people it is easier to refer to Brexit as a whole, personifying it at the same time. Consequently, Brexit is described as a human being having some feelings and emotions, being capable of using its power and strengths to perform various actions influencing people's life, the economy and politics of a country.

3.4 Brexit is a disease

The following metaphorical expressions presuppose the existence of the conceptual metaphor BREXIT IS A DISEASE in the political discourse: *pull a tooth, amputation, recovery, recover from, suffer, hurt, cure, pain, disease, depression, tonic, side effects, vaccine, contagious*. The usage of these metaphorical expressions can prove the existence of the conceptual metaphor BREXIT IS A DISEASE in our mind.

The conceptual metaphor of disease contributes greatly to the understanding of the Brexit process since illnesses and medicine are essential parts of people's everyday life. Traditionally, diseases have some symptoms and call for treatment and partial or full recovery is hoped for. In political discourse, social and political problems are often viewed as diseases the cure for which stands for the solutions to the problems.

We can now consider how correspondences, or mappings, make up a conceptual metaphor BREXIT IS A DISEASE. Figure 2 represents these correspondences:

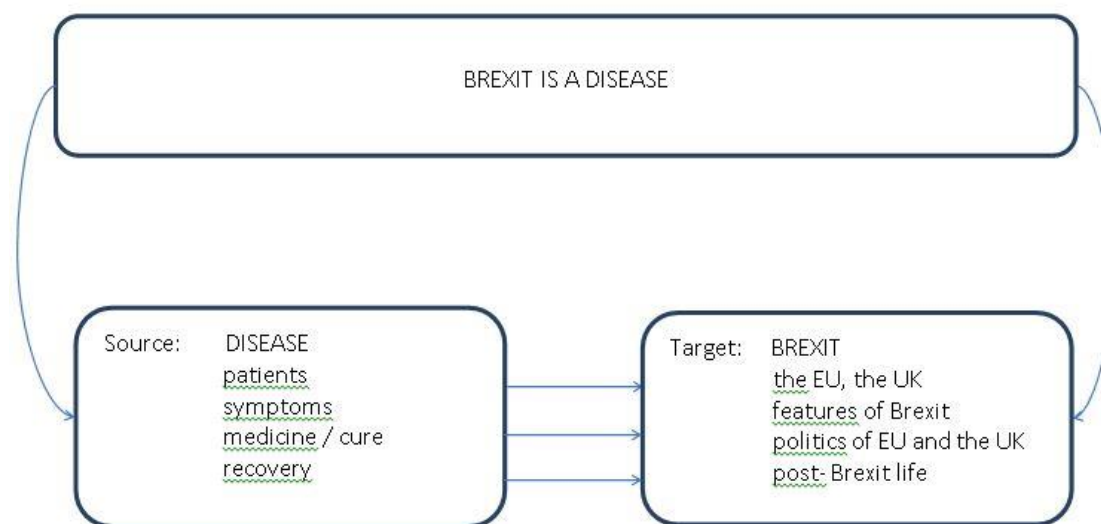


Figure 2. BREXIT IS A DISEASE: cross-domain correspondences

A brief look at some excerpts demonstrates that Brexit is viewed as a disease:

(14) *Still, we consider the Brexit as a political amputation of the first degree. Europe was a model of cooperation and integration for many countries, of how you can achieve peace and stability* (Independent, September 15, 2016).

(15) *In an interview with RTÉ following an event at the Edinburgh Festival, she described Brexit as like “pulling a tooth with 10,000 roots”* (BBC, August 25, 2017).

(16) *But whether Trumpism captures the White House or not, it is virtually certain that **Brexit is a contagious political disease*** (Daily Reckoning, June 28, 2016).

(17) *Now how's that for a **tonic for Brexit depression?*** (The Huffington Post, July 8, 2017).

All the metaphorical expressions that make up the metaphor of disease describe Brexit as a negative phenomenon. European leaders view Brexit as *a political amputation of the first degree* which implies that this process is very difficult and will have serious outcomes since a person with an amputated part is handicapped and cannot function to the full strength. *Pulling a tooth with 10,000 roots* indicates a painful process which maps onto the process of Brexit. Besides Brexit is perceived as a disease that can be *contagious* and other members of the EU can catch it (*Frexit, Spexit, NExit, Grexit, Italxit, Hungexit and more centrifugal political emissions will next follow*). The negative meaning of Brexit is also implied in the metaphorical expression *a tonic for Brexit depression* but this time the author offers some steps how to overcome it and therefore suggests that it can be cured.

In the context of employment Brexit is described as a serious disease that hurts psychologically and has five stages: shock, denial, anger, depression and acceptance:

(18) *He talks about the **“five stages of Brexit.”** ...But Brexit has made many European employees reconsider. If anger was the third stage of Brexit, and depression was the fourth, Dr Noël said he had now reached the final stage, acceptance* (The New York Times, November 21, 2017).

The following examples present the patients suffering from the Brexit disease:

(19) *Hans-Olaf Henkel, Vice-Chair of the European Conservative and Reformists Group, claimed MEPs were enjoying the fact that there were lots of **negative effects of Brexit** on the UK economy* (Express, December 13, 2017).

(20) *That image of a strong **Europe is tarnished a lot after Brexit*** (Independent, September 15, 2016).

(21) *Germany will experience trade difficulties due to Brexit but **Britain will suffer more than the remaining European Union members** when it leaves the bloc* (REUTERS, October 11, 2017).

It follows from the metaphor that the UK and the countries of the EU are viewed as patients that suffer from Brexit. The phrase *tarnished a lot* implicates that Europe will face difficulties after Brexit but still it is Britain that will experience the most of *negative effects* of the disease and therefore will suffer more than other European Union members. That is why German MEP Hans-Olaf Henkel offered to avoid Brexit:

(22) *“It must be Mr Tusk himself who should try to offer Britain a new deal. A new deal to **avoid Brexit**”* (Express, December 13, 2017).

The next mapping deals with the process of recovering or in other words after-Brexit life. The examples are the following:

(23) *Stock markets are extending their **post-Brexit recovery** as the pound steadies and government bond yields hold near record lows* (Financial Times, July 4, 2016).

(24) *A **post-Brexit recovery** can never happen if we don't tackle debt among the young* (Independent, October 16, 2017).

(25) *The North East, which mostly voted in favour of leaving the EU, would not be as hit as badly as the South in the decade after Brexit. ...The North East will be less able to adapt to the shock to their economies and will find it **harder to recover** afterwards* (The Journal, July 29, 2017).

As it can be seen from the examples, the recovery from Brexit mostly concerns Brexit-Economic aspects. The experts fear that the recovery will be hard and there are some conditions under which it *can never happen* which implies that the disease itself is serious (*shock, badly hit*).

There were some rare examples of metaphorical expression that can render speaker's positive stance on the Brexit issue:

(26) *European Parliament spokesman and communications chief Jaume Duch insists that fears **Brexit would be a “disease” have not materialised and that it is, in fact, a “vaccine”*** (Euractiv, May 9, 2017).

The word *vaccine* has a positive meaning as it is supposed to prevent some disease or at least make its effects less harmful. But even though European Parliament spokesman Jaume Duch called the Brexit a vaccine because the issue is at least something that will bring the member states together he considers Brexit to be bad for both the UK and Europe. Thus, despite the positive meaning of the metaphorical expressions the perception of Brexit is negative.

The analysis demonstrates that most metaphorical expressions that make up the conceptual metaphor BREXIT IS A DISEASE have a negative semantic loading and highlight the disadvantages of the UK's leaving the EU. Therefore, the metaphor of disease presents Brexit as a harmful process which will have serious effects on different aspects of life in both Britain and the remaining members of the EU. It is feared that some other countries can think about the departure from the EU, that the economy will be damaged and that the process of recovering after Brexit will be long and difficult.

3.5 Brexit is a natural phenomenon

People living in different physical environments perceive and conceptualise the physical environments differently, and the metaphors they use vary, though we can also mention the universal embodiment associated with the components referring to both a target and source domains. For the convenience of analysis, we use the notion of natural phenomenon as one of the most important and conventional subcategory of the environment for a source domain.

It can be presented in the following set of the corresponding conceptual mapping between the source and target domains which can be seen in Figure 3:

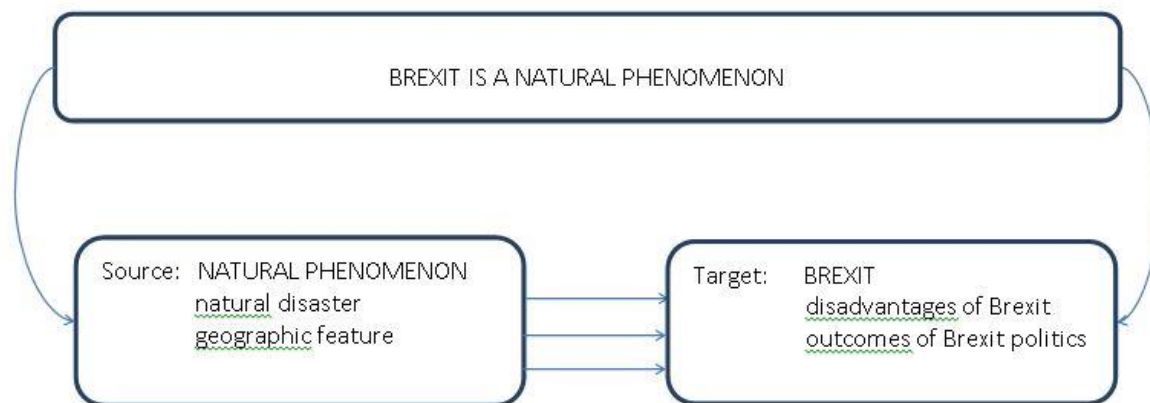


Figure 3. BREXIT IS A NATURAL PHENOMENON: cross-domain correspondences

The knowledge that natural disasters cause brings serious changes in the environment provides an effective metaphorical representation of the change of social and economic conditions in the country:

(27) *One thing everyone involved agrees on, get this (Brexit) wrong and, 'we will see another even bigger seismic change in this country's politics'* (The Guardian, July 28, 2016).

(28) *Inside Europe, the political earthquake is receding...* (The Guardian, July 28, 2016).

(29) *Mr Juncker described Brexit as a "catastrophe" and a "lose-lose situation" for both Britain and the EU* (The Sunday Times, January 17, 2018).

From examples 28, 29 and 30 it is obvious that metaphors that are associated with changing conditions are more common than those associated with stable ones. Thus, the conceptual metaphor BREXIT IS A NATURAL PHENOMENON is proposed. While sunshine may indicate some favourable economic and political conditions, *storm*, *seismic change*, *earthquake*, and *catastrophe* imply an unpleasant condition, affecting people and their country.

Describing the geographical features of the mountainous UK presupposes the outcome of Brexit in the political life. Being *at the edge of the cliff* can yield some negative economic results:

(30) *Though Theresa May has proposed a transition period of two years, during which the UK would remain in the single market and the customs union, this risks merely delaying, rather than avoiding, the "cliff-edge" Brexit that business fears* (NewStatesman, October 27, 2017).

The combination of the concept of *Brexit* with the adjective *green* speaks for itself:

(31) *Last week, Michael Gove described "Green Brexit" as "our chance to give the environment a voice in this time of national renewal"* (Politico, January, 2, 2018).

The problem of Great Britain's environment has been discussed for years. In the European environmental policy, Britain is known as a "dirty man of Europe". So, on the one hand, Brexit will cause vulnerable consequences for nature:

(32) *"Brexit is the most dangerous political threat to the environment that we are facing in the UK," said Thornton* (The Guardian, April 4, 2016).

On the other hand, some politicians believe that Brexit will solve this problem by strengthening its environmental standards, giving a chance to a national renewal:

(33) *"Let me be very clear," May said in a speech last month. "Brexit will not mean a lowering of environmental standards"* (The Guardian, February 14, 2018).

(34) *"We will use the opportunity Brexit provides to strengthen and enhance our environmental protections – not to weaken them"* (Gov.UK, January 11, 2018).

Consequently, the more severe the nature conditions are, the more intense the change is implied. It is generally based on source knowledge of the destructive weather potential which is so common in our life. On

analysing natural environment metaphors, it becomes obvious to say that they evoke either a positive or a negative evaluation.

4. Conclusions

The concepts of society and politics are extremely complex, and this complexity calls for metaphorical understanding. The study was focused on the metaphorical representation of the concept *BREXIT* in the political discourse. Having analysed a corpus of data comprising more than 580 lexical units (from COCA) and 183 units (from media resources online) which are metaphorical linguistic expressions, the conceptual metaphors *BREXIT IS A HUMAN BEING*, *BREXIT IS A NATURAL PHENOMENON*, and *BREXIT IS A DISEASE* were studied. The key examples (34) of the above-mentioned metaphors have been discussed in this research.

The major metaphor for the comprehension of Brexit is one according to which Brexit is a person that can think, move, has emotions and feelings. The conceptual metaphor *BREXIT IS A HUMAN BEING* is made up by a wide range of metaphorical linguistic expressions with both positive and negative attitudinal meanings. Though Brexit can be *pragmatic* and *hard* but the *uncertainty* it can *cause* and *incapability to solve major problems* may lead to *destroying* the family unity which is mapped onto the EU and Britain relations.

It should be concluded that the metaphor of disease evokes negative associations concerning Brexit and focuses on problems and difficulties connected with the process of Britain's leaving the EU. Conceptualisation of Brexit in terms of illness shows that it is viewed as a disease that hurts, causes suffering, and has side effects. However, this process is inevitable because of the recovery which is mapped onto the after-Brexit life.

Common ways of comprehending Brexit involve the source concepts of nature and disaster. With the help of the metaphor, *BREXIT IS A NATURAL PHENOMENON* the political leaders supporting Brexit try to convey the message that one of the ways out of environmental problems for Britain is leaving the EU. Britain itself is capable of *strengthening its environmental protections*. On the other hand, Brexit is perceived as a negative phenomenon because it is a *political threat* to the life of the European community.

From the research, it is clear that such source domains as *human being*, *natural phenomenon*, *disease* are closely related to our daily life and experience which make these metaphors understandable and persuasive. The results of the analysis show that the metaphor *BREXIT IS A HUMAN BEING* is most frequently used in modern political discourse (41%). In the course of daily life, a person suffers from a number of diseases marked by some symptoms which explains the active usage of the conceptual metaphor *BREXIT IS A DISEASE* (35%). Due to the inevitable environmental problems existing at present times the metaphor *BREXIT IS A NATURAL PHENOMENON* is widely exploited (24%).

Being new in modern political discourse the concept *BREXIT* calls for detailed study. It is obvious that Brexit is a complex notion and there are more conceptual metaphors that can reveal its aspects. Further analysis of other source domains in terms of which Brexit can be understood is relevant.

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