GOOD BREXIT, BAD BREXIT: EVALUATION THROUGH METAPHORIC CONCEPTUALIZATIONS IN BRITISH MEDIA

NELLY TINCHEVA

Sofia University 'St. Kliment Ohridski', Bulgaria

Abstract. Brexit, i.e. the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, is a major event in European and global politics. It has been debated from a multitude of social, economic, and cultural angles. This paper offers a cognitive linguistic perspective on Brexit, and investigates its metaphoric conceptualization on the first days after the 2016 referendum. That period seems especially important as, arguably, it was then that for many UK citizens, Brexit suddenly became more than just a hypothetical possibility.

The investigation is quantitative and follows Socio-cognitive discourse studies principles. It registers frequencies of source-domain use in UK online media, and traces preferences as to general source-domain semantics. The findings strongly suggest the presence of negative source-domain preferences. This negative metaphoric construal comes in stark contrast with the 3-year par between the Leave and Remain stances in the UK.

To explain that discrepancy, the paper argues in support of the importance of 'levels' in source-domain use. Admittedly, throughout Lakovian works (e.g., Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, 1999), conceptual metaphoric transfer has been argued to take place at what Rosch et al. postulate as basic-level categorization (1973). However, as the present paper suggests, Rosch's 'levels' in prototypology can be seen as functioning through conceptual metonymy. That, in its turn, combined with the all-pervasive cognitive mechanism of spreading activation (first introduced into linguistics by de Beaugrande and Dressler in 1981) suggests all semantic levels can be co-activated in the process of metaphorization, regardless of which level is currently being highlighted and drawn on. As a consequence, different semantic levels are believed here to have the potential to co-influence inferences and connotations resulting from conceptual metaphorization. Thus, the approach adopted in the present study also has the potential to explain why it has been so difficult for scholars to pinpoint and formulate metaphoric transfers. Importantly, the 'levels' proposed here should be differentiated from, although not interpreted as contradicting, the metaphor-relevant levels specified in Kövecses (2010).

Key words: Brexit, referendum, conceptualization, metaphor, media, evaluation

INTRODUCTION

On June 23, at the 2016 referendum, the United Kingdom decided to terminate its membership in the European Union. The decision, however, did not enjoy

substantial domestic agreement. The referendum results revealed only a 51.9 per cent pro-Leave vs. 48.1 per cent pro-Remain difference between the two stances represented at the poll. In reality, that difference stands for less than 2 per cent of the votes cast.

In confirmation of how small the gap between Leave and Remain was, in the first post-referendum days, numerous media (e.g. *the BBC, CNN, The Guardian, The Telegraph, The Independent*) carried interviews and Twitter messages by 'Leave' voters who had not believed their vote 'would actually count' and were subsequently worried by the unexpected success of the contributions they had made. Voices in the media would also propose the way the public voted at the referendum did not actually reflect a lasting political and social preference; instead, there was the possibility that the referendum results were only an anti-system declaration not intended to lead to an actual 'Brexit' (the morphologically-blended word for 'British exit').

Whether or not those media accounts were truly representative of the social situation, more than three years later, the desire to reverse the Brexit decision still thrives. Any review of the British media from November 2017 to May 2019 will register an increase of opinions trying to propel a reversal. What is more, 2017, 2018 and 2019 opinion polls claim that 'up until May 2017, Remain had never been ahead of Leave. However, subsequently, Remain have never been behind. That would seem to suggest there might well have been a small swing in favour of Remain' (Online 1). In other words, for more than three years, Remain refused to accept defeat and Leave did not manage to consolidate its lead.

What is in focus here is that, regardless of which of the two alternatives prevails currently, from mid-2016 to mid-2019, polls consistently registered a less than 2 per cent difference between the two Brexit stances (ibid.). Based on the evidence, it seems safe to generalize that the pro- and against-Brexit UK opinions were on a relative par for almost four years.

Against the background of this sustained social division, a Brexit-related conceptual peculiarity seems to need special attention. That peculiarity concerns the fact that the very notion of Brexit represents a (relatively) newly-emergent social concept. Leaving an international union of this scale and leaving the EU specifically are seen as first-time occurrences in political history. Thus, asking how the public actually 'make sense' of Brexit (i.e. how they conceptualize it), and how the process of conceptualization was reflected in the sustained three-year social tie would seem rather relevant questions.

The present study addresses the issue of how the newly-emergent notion of Brexit is conceptualized. To try and contribute to the understanding of the social peculiarity of an enduring tie between two socio-political stances, the present investigation traces the origins of the BREXIT concept back to the very day of the referendum. The investigation takes special interest in how Brexit was conceptualized metaphorically on the first 4 days after the referendum. That period seems of special significance as, arguably, it was then that for many UK

citizens Brexit suddenly became part of their future reality (Tincheva, 2019a, 2019b). As confirmed by the sudden spike in Google searches from the UK (Online 2), it was on those first post-referendum days that the need to 'make sense of' – i.e. to conceptualize – Brexit became suddenly prominent to the British population.

The specific focus of the present paper falls on UK online media-advocated metaphoric conceptualizations of Brexit on the first 4 days after the referendum (i.e. June 24, 2016, on which the Brexit referendum results were announced, and the following 3 days). The research questions this paper addresses are:

- Which are the metaphoric source domains most frequently employed by UK media in the conceptualization of Brexit on the first post-referendum days?

- Are there any pronounced tendencies as to negative, neutral, or positive connotations of the most frequently used source domains?

As answering the research questions depends on frequencies of uses, the analysis conducted here is quantitative. The relation of the quantitative method to the general theoretical framework adopted is discussed in the Section below. The quantitative data reported in this paper are obtained through analysis of a dataset specifically compiled for the purposes of the study, as discussed in the relevant Section. The fourth Section specifies the analysis procedures; the last one systematizes and discusses the results obtained.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHOD

As already suggested in the formulation of the research questions, the present paper relies on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) for its theoretical foundations. More specifically, the paper tackles BREXIT through the notion of 'metaphoric conceptualization' (Glucksberg, 2008) and interprets linguistic expressions as an access point to how BREXIT is constructed conceptually. As Charteris-Black and Ennis argue (2001), some CMT-related research may focus on the conceptual facet of the *metaphor – linguistic expression* interconnection, while other research may prefer the linguistic facet of that interconnection. The present viewpoint targets an understanding of BREXIT metaphoric conceptualizations via the linguistic expressions used to refer to Brexit.

As far as the present choice of specific CMT approach is concerned, it has to be duly noted that the 'pervasive' and 'irreducible' nature (Johnson, 1987: xii) of CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR has opened a vast field of research, which has branched into a number of directions: Lakoff's Neural theory of metaphor (Lakoff and Núñez, 2000; Lakoff, 2009); the methodology-oriented and data-conscious perspectives deriving from the Pragglejaz group's investigations (see, e.g., Deignan, 2005; Cameron and Deignan, 2006; Pragglejaz group, 2007; Semino, 2008; Steen et al., 2010; Kövecses, 2010, 2018); the Cognitive Poetics

text-world-based viewpoint (Semino, 2008); Cultural Linguistics (Sharifian, 2011, 2017; Kövecses, 2017); the Critical Metaphor Theory perspective (e.g., Charteris-Black, 2005, 2014; Musolff, 2006, 2012); the Career of metaphor theory (e.g., Bowdle and Gentner, 2005; Gentner and Bowdle, 2008); the pool of research addressing the (possible) need for a conceptual-metaphor-vs-simile distinction (see, e.g., Coulson and Oakley, 2005; Glucksberg, 2008; Dulcinati et al., 2014), etc. In many aspects, these conceptual-metaphor-centered approaches diverge from each other. In other aspects, however, they do overlap and share both theoretical and analysis-directed viewpoints. It seems safe to argue that, as a typical prototype-like (see below) academic concept, CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR THEORY exists as a conceptual center surrounded by a broad-ranging periphery, along which many approaches overlap and share properties.

Thus, this paper combines theoretically principles of conceptual metaphor operation with principles of prototypology. The latter are prominent for refuting classical-typology and dichotomy-based assumptions on (a) how a category is formed internally, and (b) how a category relates externally to other categories. As research in prototypology has conclusively demonstrated (Rosch, 1973; Lakoff and Johnson, 1999; Taylor, 2003; Ungerer and Schmid, 2006; Hyvärinen, 2012), classical typology, which postulates every category as disparate from others, rarely holds when language is concerned. Language use, according to prototypologists, does not fit within clear-cut category boundaries; instead, fuzzy boundaries between overlapping categories are the norm. Furthermore, in deciding which category member functions as central, which – as peripheral, and which – as a borderline case, prototypology relies on the presence of numerical data from actual language uses and users. The present investigation follows these principles and (a) aims to supply numerical data on actual uses of the prototypically-functioning concept of BREXIT, (b) views CMT branches (as category members) as overlapping and sharing conceptual structure, and (c) interprets the (possibly) negative, neutral or positive connotations of source domains as existing through conceptual overlappings (see the Section below).

Going back to the significance of CMT to the present investigation, it needs to be clarified that the investigation does not seek to advance any of the existing conceptual-metaphor-centered theories, nor further any specific premise(s) of theirs. The on-focus objective of this paper is, first, to provide data concerning the conceptual structure of the politically, socially and culturally significant notion of BREXIT. Second, the present endeavor will try and argue in support of the existence of yet another 'level' of source domain employment, which – on the basis of the general semantics of the domains – can also function evaluatively.

Thus, a cornerstone for the present paper is a central precept upholding all of the approaches above, a precept undisputed by any of them. According to that tenet, metaphor exists as conceptual transfer from one conceptual – 'source' – domain to another conceptual – 'target' – domain. The objective of the study reported here is to provide data on the source domains used in UK online media texts.

The CMT branch the present investigation gravitates closest to is the Socio-cognitive branch of CDA. The present investigation follows van Dijk in his preference for the term of 'Socio-cognitive Discourse Studies' (SCDS) over 'Socio-cognitive Discourse Analysis', a preference based on the fact that SCDS is not a unified method but, rather, a diverse research area (van Dijk, 2018: 28), which allows SCDS to harmonize freely with both quantitative and qualitative analyses (ibid.). Hence the choice of SCDS for the present investigation, which opts for the less frequent, quantitative type of conceptual metaphor analysis.

This choice of theoretical viewpoint and analysis method aims to enhance the perception of conceptual metaphor as a major enabler and perpetuator of socio-political reasoning, beliefs, plans, actions, attitudes, etc. As SCDS research has demonstrated, such interpretations, beliefs, plans, actions and attitudes can be themselves seen as mental representations (van Dijk, 2015, 2018). Importantly, through the crucial role of the human mind functioning as both an information processor and a mediator, those representations can be interpreted as an interface between discourse structures and social structures (ibid.). The present study of the metaphoric conceptualization of BREXIT similarly focuses on BREXIT-related cognitive structures as an interface between social and discursive practices.

On the issue of whether the BREXIT concept and, more specifically, metaphoric Brexit conceptualizations have already been objects of research, a number of analyses of Brexit-related conceptual metaphors need to be singled out: Morozova (2017); Musolff (2017); Đurović and Silaški (2018). However, what those studies have in common is that they opt for qualitative analysis: they investigate the various ways a specific source domain presents itself through particular conceptual metaphoric transfers. Quite dissimilarly, the present study will try and offer quantitative analysis of metaphoric BREXIT conceptualizations.

Another difference between the investigations cited above and the one presented here is the period of social dynamics selected for analysis. Đurović and Silaški (2018), for instance, focus on BREXIT IS DIVORCE metaphors appearing in the media throughout 2016. Morozova (2017) chooses the first year and a half after the referendum for her analysis of Brexit metaphorizations of different modalities. Musolff (2017) prefers the much broader perspective of the 25-year period leading up to the Brexit referendum. As argued in Introduction above, the present investigation focuses exclusively on the first post-referendum days and bases that choice on socio-cognitive reasons.

DATASET

The results reported here derive from a dataset which had to be compiled specifically for the purposes of the study. True to fact, there exist numerous statistics-based extensive reports and analyses on how UK media covered the Brexit referendum both prior to the vote and succeeding it (see, e.g., Loughborough University Centre for Research in Communication and Culture's

report and the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism's report [Online 7 and 8 respectively]). Moreover, such statistical reports provide wide-ranging information along parameters such as printed vs. online editions, desktop vs. mobile readership, general Brexit stances and media ownership, etc. However, to the best of my knowledge, there is no statistical information available on the top online media preferred by UK audiences specifically on the topic of Brexit around the referendum period. To obtain data which are well-focused on that specific audience preference, the present investigation had to cross-check information from two different types of sources.

The first type of information source further required data from four statistical sources be correlated. That statistical data concern the readership of major online media (i.e. both desktop and mobile outlets) around the referendum period. Four separate sources of different social background were selected for the purpose (Online 3, 4, 5 and 6) in order to avoid possible biases in the reports themselves. The second type of information source was a survey I conducted within the first two weeks after the Brexit referendum. That survey probes 60 respondents (see also Tincheva, 2019a) on the online media outlets they used most frequently around the referendum period specifically on the topic of Brexit. In the survey, the respondents declared they typically would use more than a single media outlet to keep informed on Brexit. None of the respondents reported they used more than 5 outlets on the topic over the period.

Thus, the present dataset is abstracted from five major UK online media. The outcome of the classification procedure led to the selection of the online editions of the following media outlets: *The Guardian*; *the BBC*; *The Independent*; *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Daily Mail* (rated here from predominantly pro-Remain to predominantly pro-Leave). Following Krzyżanowski (2019), 64 relevant and not genre-specific, full texts were abstracted and selected for inclusion and analysis, i.e. both news reports and editorial genres were included (see Tincheva, 2019a).

ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

The first step of the present investigation had the selected media sources' sites searched for all texts containing the word *Brexit*. Texts of a total size of roughly 23,000 words were retrieved. Each text was subsequently analyzed for content, which led to the isolation of linguistic expressions referring to BREXIT. Linguistic expressions were included in the analysis as long as they (a) referred to BREXIT, and (b) characterized one or more aspects of the concept (as in Musolff, 2006). This two-stage procedure follows studies where the search term stands for the target domain, while a subsequent manual search in the texts locates metaphoric linguistic expressions or ones occurring in proximity to non-literal uses (as in, e.g., Deignan, 2005; Stefanowitsch, 2006). This in-text search for (possibly) metaphoric segments was conducted with the full realization that any manual annotation bears a risk of error. To narrow the margin of error, a re-scan of the dataset was conducted about three months after the original metaphor

identification. The re-scan was intended as a verification of the first scan's accuracy.

The next procedural step was to test each extracted text segment for metaphorization. The notion of 'metaphoric segment' was employed here to help account systematically for (a) instances of a single metaphor use, (b) instances of extended metaphors, and (c) instances of the so-called mixed metaphors. The testing procedure applied to any of those types of (potentially) metaphoric segments followed the basic analysis principle of the Metaphor Identification Procedure (Pragglejaz Group, 2007), or MIP. That principle requires a metaphorically used linguistic structure to display a non-literal use. The decision of whether the use was literal or not was based on the linguistic unit's contextual sense in contrast/ comparison to its dictionary meaning (following the MIP, *Macmillan Dictionary* was selected for reference purposes).

Unlike the MIP, however, the present analysis accepts the possibility for the conceptual process of metaphorization to be evident in linguistic segments longer than a single word. Such a choice allows us not to focus disproportionately on issues concerning, for instance, uncertainties in the classification of (a) linguistic units such as phrasal verbs, (b) examples deriving diachronically from conceptual metaphorization, or (c) examples associating with what Cameron terms 'nesting of groups within groups' (1999). Admittedly, on the surface, such a treatment of metaphor may seem less rigorous. Nevertheless, it is the one allowing for the principles of prototypology (Rosch, 1973; Taylor 2003) to be fully operative in conceptual metaphor use the same way they are in research in, practically, all of the humanities (for a discussion see, e.g., Lakoff and Johnson, 1999; Ungerer and Schmid, 2006). In brief, it is my conviction that accepting the principles of prototypology into CMT analysis reflects more adequately the existence not only of typical, unambiguous uses, but also of borderline cases.

The next step in the present investigation had each metaphoric expression classified in accordance with the source domain its underlying conceptual transfer employed. On that basis, in the following procedural step, the total number of uses of each source domain was calculated. In terms of the type-token distinction (Charteris-Black, 2005), what was counted was each time a source domain was revealed to be used regardless of whether a linguistic expression revealing that particular conceptual transfer appeared for the first time or not. Thus, within a metaphoric segment, each overt linguistic expression of a metaphorization processes was counted separately.

For instance, in the metaphoric segment from our dataset stating that '*As the dust settles on the EU referendum war, some 33 million voters await with bated breath to see what the victors will do*', both *war* and *victors* register as separate manifestations of conceptual transfer from the domain of BATTLE. This principle is also applied in accounting for dataset metaphoric segments such as the one stating that Brexit is '*…an amputation, not a death blow*', in which there are also two metaphoric uses registered. Both the uses of *amputation* and *death blow* can be argued to derive from a broader domain such as A (KILLING) BLOW

(TO EUROPE), although the transfer may be less evident than the transfer from the BATTLE domain in our previous example. In a similar vein, in the metaphoric segment from our dataset which states that '*Brexit will be either a wake-up call or the beginning of a dangerous path for European people*', there are two metaphors and two metaphor sources registered: A WAKE-UP CALL and PART OF A JOURNEY.

The logic behind this analytical choice rests on the premise that frequency of a text receiver's encountering a metaphor is crucial for the manipulative, subconscious and – what Lakoff and Turner call – 'automatic' operation of the respective metaphor (Lakoff and Turner, 1989: 129). As it is the major objective of the present analysis to provide a snapshot of the BREXIT metaphors UK media users were exposed to, the analysis conducted here registers any metaphoric instance in circulation on the first post-referendum days. How many of the metaphors encountered were actually absorbed and socially acted upon by the public are issues which, regrettably, lie beyond the verification potential of the present paper. However, as argued above, the present dataset is meant to enable an analysis from the viewpoint of the text receiver, and, consequently, frequency of metaphor reinforcement through recurrence is a crucial analytical issue here.

The last point that may need procedural clarification concerns the paper's objective of establishing the evaluative (i.e. positive, neutral or negative) characterization of Brexit. The present criteria for rating a source domain as negative, neutral or positive associate with the general semantics of each source domain – a principle which, basically, suggests the importance of semantic connotations in our analysis. At present, however, to the best of my knowledge, academically accepted connotation reference sources are hardly available. One option of coping with that absence would suggest the use of concordancers, which display examples of a word in varied linguistic co-textual environments. Through a concordancer, a linguistic structure could be positioned along a scale between a positive and a negative opposite, based on the structure's frequency of occurrence near prototypically positive and prototypically negative lexical units. However, two factors impede the use of such a technique here.

The first one is the fact of BREXIT being a newly-emergent notion, on the variety of whose environments concordancers could not offer sufficient information. This impediment is additionally amplified by the current lack of information about different culture's connotation-related interpretations of the Brexit phenomenon, cultural variation being, to my mind, a major obstacle to the creation of valid connotation dictionaries in general. Furthermore, bearing in mind the two-year sustained social division on the issue of Brexit (discussed in Introduction above), there exists the very likely possibility for no total sum of individual interpretations of Brexit to exceed 50 per cent of the general UK opinion (i.e. the amount of personal interpretations prototypically required (see, e.g., Ungerer and Schmid, 2006) for an opinion trend to become a norm).

Thus, the present investigation resorts to a technique which only derives from principles of concordancing, without using an actual concordancer. As already stated above, the analysis of the dataset employed for present purposes

does not limit itself to the occurrence of a single metaphoric unit. It broadens its scope to encompass 'metaphoric segment' language stretches. In terms of connotation-relevant language stretches, the analysis broadens its scope even further to encompass language segments which would, generally, abide by the norms of a concordancer (such as *Collins COBUILD English Collocations*). In doing that, a particular segment's evaluation of Brexit is seen as dependent on two parallel and correlated factors: (a) the possible positive or negative semantics of the central source domain concept, and (b) the occurrence of prototypically positive or negative concepts in concordance-relevant proximity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were extracted 189 BREXIT-related metaphoric samples from the dataset. The distribution of net totals of metaphoric uses per each day of the period studied as to the number of metaphoric samples is as follows: 15 – for Day 1; 39 – for Day 2; 64 – for Day 3; 71 – for Day 4.

It should be duly noted that these data include quotations from original sources such as, for instance, an address delivered by the UK Prime Minister David Cameron on the day of the referendum. In other words, what is registered here can be the metaphors used by Cameron and cited by journalists a number of times without any alterations. As already argued here, recurrence is a prominent factor in the conventionalization and perpetuation of a metaphor. Hence all the data-set uses of a metaphor are counted here separately.

A first observation on the day-by-day data is that the distribution of metaphoric segments over the four days is rather uneven. What is evident is an increase in the number of metaphors used from Day 1 to Day 4, at that the increase is steep and uninterrupted. A likely explanation of that fact is that the number of metaphors used increases in parallel with the general public's acceptance of BREXIT as part of reality and the consequent need for the public to 'make sense of', i.e. to conceptualize, BREXIT.

Another hypothetical explanation, which does not run counter to the first one, is that the referendum results may have been unexpected to the data-set text producers (i.e. to politicians and journalists, with the latter both citing politicians as well as providing their own commentaries). Support to such an interpretation could be the fact that Day 1, on which the referendum results were announced, not only displays the lowest number of metaphoric BREXIT-related expressions used but the number is several times lower than that on the following days. Arguably, the unexpectedness of the referendum outcome is reflected in the predominantly factual and literal uses on Day 1. That factuality could be seen as avoidance of (early) interpretations and (personal) comments. Once the reality of Brexit becomes indisputable and the unexpectedness is overcome, the number of metaphoric interpretations rises sharply.

The data obtained concerning Day 1 are systematized in Table 1 below. The data are listed in terms of frequency of appearance.

Table 1 **Day 1 results**

NET TOTAL OF USES	SOURCE DOMAIN	DATASET SAMPLE
11	(PART OF A) JOURNEY	*I do not think it would be right for me to try to be the <u>captain</u> that <u>steers</u> our country to its <u>next destination</u>.*
2	WAR	*I <u>fought</u> this in the only way…*
2	DIVORCE	*… it feels just as much like a <u>divorce</u> between one Britain and another.*

The most frequently used source domain on Day 1 is the one constructing BREXIT as a part of UK JOURNEY. Moreover, this source domain is employed several times more frequently than the other two source domains (i.e. WAR and DIVORCE). This domain can be seen as deriving from the LIFE IS A JOURNEY complex metaphor (originally discussed by Grady et al. (1996) and later by Lakoff and Johnson (1999)).

In general semantic terms, the JOURNEY domain could not be argued to be characterized either positively or negatively. Its neutral connotations, however, may be overridden in this specific case as all the 11 registered metaphoric instances in the dataset occur in proximity to the text producer expressing regret, uncertainty and a desire to dissociate from the Brexit situation. In other words, in the present dataset, the generally neutral semantics of the JOURNEY source domain can be argued to carry a degree of negative characterization. What is more, the other two source domains employed for BREXIT metaphoric conceptualization on Day 1 also carry negative connotations.

The DIVORCE source domain in particular controls only 3 sample segments on Day 1. Crucially, on Day 1, unlike on the rest of the days in the period under scrutiny, BREXIT is conceptualized as a DIVORCE between 'two Britains', i.e. a divorce 'internal' to the UK 'family'. In other words, it is internal UK socio-political processes which are seen as, or presented as, of greatest concern on Day 1.

Overall, Day 1 is characterized by few metaphoric and few strongly evaluative uses. The number and connotations of the actual uses could be summarized to present a rather cautious metaphoric characterization of the emerging realities as well as a predominant strive for non-metaphorized, connotatively-neutral facts. Such a conclusion seems rather surprising as it appears in stark contrast to the predominant pro-Brexit media bias in the pre-referendum period (Online 8; see also Krzyżanowski, 2019). The existence of that general pro-Leave pre-referendum media dominance has been unanimously verified by a multitude of sources (see, e.g., Online 3 for a summary). With the success of the Leave vote at the polls, the expectation would be for the general media tone on the first

post-referendum days to be positive, if not victorious. Our data on Day 1 after the referendum, however, strongly suggest otherwise.

The data obtained concerning Day 2 are systematized in Table 2 below. The data are listed in terms of frequency of appearance.

Table 2 **Day 2 results**

NET TOTAL OF USES	SOURCE DOMAIN	DATASET SAMPLE
18	DIVORCE	*… political and economic <u>divorce</u> from the EU is negotiated.*
11	(PART OF A) JOURNEY	*… the first <u>steps</u> of the UK withdrawal from the EU.*
6	WAR	*As the dust settles on the EU referendum <u>war</u>, some 33 million voters await with bated breath to see what the <u>victors</u> will do.*
3	NATURAL DISASTER	*…if it <u>erodes</u> EU unity.*

In comparison to Day 1, on Day 2, the total number of source domains employed for BREXIT metaphorization increases. It has to be noted, however, that in terms of their net total of uses, 2 out of the 4 source domains (i.e. DIVORCE and JOURNEY) seem pronouncedly more significant. Moreover, the source domain of JOURNEY is the same source domain which proved most salient on Day 1.

On Day 2, the number of metaphorizations of BREXIT as a DIVORCE is not only considerably higher than it was on Day 1. On Day 2, DIVORCE is the most prominent source domain, at that it holds a substantial lead before the second most prominent source domain for the day. Importantly, in contrast to Day 1, the DIVORCE that BREXIT represents now is not between 'two Britains'. The DIVORCE on Day 2 is seen as taking place between the UK and the EU. This specific mapping was also present on Day 1, but on that day it accounted for only 1 of the 3 uses. It could be argued that the trend is for the DIVORCE structural transfer to be profiled against two different domains: the domain of HOME POLITICS and the domain of the UK FOREIGN POLICY.

The second most significant source domain on Day 2 is the one of JOURNEY. Although still prominent, this domain moves from 1st into 2nd place as a consequence to the abrupt increase of uses of DIVORCE. This trend, combined with the shift in the DIVORCE metaphor from HOME POLITICS to INTERNATIONAL POLITICS, is, arguably, proof of the shift from conceptualizing BREXIT as an internal problem of the UK to a more general EU context as a background domain.

Such an assumption is further supported by the slide of the WAR source domain into 3rd place. In a way, internal British considerations – especially those from before Day 1 – can be claimed to be gradually subsiding on Day 2; the place of Britain on the international map can be claimed to be gradually gaining pace.

One new source domain not present on Day 1 appears on Day 2. It evokes a conceptualization of BREXIT as a NATURAL DISASTER, and, relates semantically to life-threatening events. Thus, it can be argued to carry a strong negative connotation, and to contribute to the overall negative construal of BREXIT on Day 2.

The data obtained concerning Day 3 are systematized in Table 3 below. The data are listed in terms of frequency of appearance.

Table 3 **Day 3 results**

NET TOTAL OF USES	SOURCE DOMAIN	DATASET SAMPLE
21	NATURAL DISASTER	… the <u>seismic</u> event of… … sends <u>shockwaves</u>…
14	(KILLING) BLOW	… an <u>amputation</u>, not a <u>death blow</u>. … will <u>kill</u> off the EU.
11	DIVORCE	If you are going to <u>divorce</u>, it is better to get it over and done with, … European leaders are divided over a quickie <u>divorce</u>.
6	MECHANICAL FAILURE	… may result in the <u>disintegration</u> of the EU.
5	(PART OF A) JOURNEY	… as the UK is <u>heading</u> for the door…
5	LIFE-THREATENING EVENT	… the Brexit <u>fallout</u> will take hold. How horrific the <u>fallout</u> will be …
1	ENEMY	… Parliamentary <u>fightback</u> against Brexit …
1	WAKE-UP CALL	Brexit will be either a <u>wake-up call</u> or the beginning of a dangerous path for European people.

Day 3 confirms the trend for increase in the number of source domains used in the metaphoric conceptualization of BREXIT. In contrast to Day 1, on which only 3 source domains were employed, Day 3 uses 8 source domains for the metaphoric conceptualization of BREXIT.

The most prominent source domain on Day 3 is the one of NATURAL DISASTER, which did not appear on Day 1, and which registered a rather humble number of uses on Day 2. The growing importance of this domain can be argued to be even greater as NATURAL DISASTER can be seen as related to (and overlapping with) the domain of A LIFE-THREATENING EVENT which in its turn appears for the first time on Day 3. If added, the uses of these two related source domains would amount to a total of 36 per cent of all metaphorizations on Day 3. Both metaphorizations, by being related semantically to life-threatening events, can be argued to carry strong negative connotations. Both contribute to the predominantly negative construal of BREXIT on Day 3.

Two source domains share the second place on Day 3: the domain characterizing BREXIT as A (KILLING) BLOW to Europe, and the domain

structuring BREXIT as a DIVORCE from Europe. While the DIVORCE source domain remains strong for yet another day, the (KILLING) BLOW appears for the first time on Day 3, which makes its prominence even more pronounced. Moreover, both domains share the same point of orientation (or deictic center) and that is EUROPE.

The 4th place on Day 3 is again occupied by a metaphor relating to Europe or, rather, to its MECHANICAL FAILURE (it can be seen as a result of chain metaphorization in which EUROPE is construed as a MACHINE). Additionally, the most frequently used source domain on Day 1 (i.e. the one of the UK's JOURNEY) continues to lose its significance. This general trend, arguably, is proof of the shift from conceptualizing BREXIT as merely an internal problem of the UK to a broader EU context. In other words, on Day 3, BREXIT tends to be defined through its influence on Europe and not that much through its impact on the UK alone.

Overall, the top three source domains used on Day 3 have strongly negative general connotations. Day 3 can be argued to continue the negative-connotations trend, which already started to gain prominence on the previous two days.

The data obtained concerning Day 4 are systematized in Table 4 below. The data are listed in terms of frequency of appearance.

Table 4 **Day 4 results**

NET TOTAL OF USES	SOURCE DOMAIN	DATASET SAMPLE
20	LIFE-THREATENING EVENT	*… the fallout for EU citizens living in the UK …*
16	DIVORCE	*Last Thursday's momentous vote was a vote to begin divorce proceedings. Or, if you like, to move out of the house we share with 27 other countries.*
13	NATURAL DISASTER	*the aftershock of an epoch-defining referendum reverberates in every corner of the land.*
9	(PART OF A) JOURNEY	*… tortuous path towards a bright utopia.*
4	(KILLING) BLOW	*… a blow to Europe and to the European unification process.*
4	EXAMINATION/ TEST	*… is a tough test for Europe.* *Both face the test of…*
2	MECHANICAL FAILURE	*… whether it will mean an EU break-down.*
2	RUIN OF THE UK'S HOUSE	*… that the pillars of the British establishment have been damaged.*
1	FOOD	*… digesting the UK's choice to leave the EU.*
1	DIVIDING LINE	*Brexit is a difficult watershed with many consequences.*

Day 4 confirms the trend for increase in the number of source domains used in the metaphoric conceptualization of BREXIT: the source domains employed now amount to 10 versus the 3 source domains evident on Day 1. On Day 4:

a) The most prominent source domain from Day 3 (i.e. A NATURAL DISASTER) drops to 4th position.

b) The most prominent source domain for Day 4 is the FALLOUT one, which originally appeared on Day 3. However, on Day 3, it registered considerably fewer uses.

c) The JOURNEY-related conceptual metaphorizations also register an increase on Day 4.

d) Due to the co-textual environments in which they appeared, the top two metaphor source domains for this day (i.e. DIVORCE and FALLOUT) can be argued not to be as strongly negative as the top-most ones on Day 3.

e) Day 3 can be seen as focusing on a NATURAL DISASTER in its progress, while Day 4 focuses on the RESULT from the DISASTER and/ or turns to the future of Brexit.

Overall, the top three source domains on Day 4 (i.e. A LIFE-THREATENING EVENT, DIVORCE, and A NATURAL DISASTER) carry negative connotations. The three metaphoric conceptualizations account for approximately 69 per cent of all uses on that day.

Out of the 10 source domains on Day 4, only 2 are semantically neutral (i.e. (PART OF A) JOURNEY and DIVIDING LINE) and 2 could be argued to rate as neutral to negative (i.e. EXAMINATION/ TEST and (HARD TO DIGEST) FOOD). None of those source domains, however, classifies among the top three for the day. Furthermore, the total number of uses of the 4 semantically neutral source domains amounts only to 21 per cent. The remaining 79 per cent of the source domains used for metaphoric conceptualizations on Day 4 carry negative connotations.

In conclusion, the data in Tables 1 – 4 reveal that on the first days after the referendum in the online versions of the top 5 UK media preferred by UK users, there appear a total of 13 BREXIT-related metaphor source domains.

The source domains employed for the 13 metaphoric conceptualizations rank as follows in accordance with the net totals of their uses over the period analyzed:

1. DIVORCE (47)
2. NATURAL DISASTER (37)
3. (PART OF A) JOURNEY (36)
4. LIFE-THREATENING EVENT (25)
5. (KILLING) BLOW (18)
6. MECHANICAL FAILURE (8)
   WAR (8)
7. EXAMINATION/ TEST (4)

8. RUIN OF THE UK'S HOUSE (2)
9. ENEMY (1)
   WAKE-UP CALL (1)
   FOOD (1)
   DIVIDING LINE (1)

The data obtained demonstrate that the most prominent BREXIT-related source domains UK online readers were exposed to on the first post-referendum days are those of DIVORCE, A NATURAL DISASTER and (PART OF A) JOURNEY. These source domains display the greatest numbers of total uses over the period analyzed.

The DIVORCE and (PART OF A) JOURNEY conceptual metaphorizations of BREXIT are present on all of the 4 days analyzed. The NATURAL DISASTER metaphorization appears on 3 out of the 4 days in the period. Thus, it could be argued that the two most significant BREXIT source domains on the first post-referendum days are those of DIVORCE and (PART OF A) JOURNEY.

Out of the remaining 10 source domains, 4 appear on 2 days in the period analyzed: A LIFE-THREATENING EVENT, A (KILLING) BLOW, MECHANICAL FAILURE and WAR. The remaining 6 source domains appear on a single day and with a frequency of less than half a percent, which could not be considered significant.

It should be noted that the LIFE-THREATENING EVENT source domain stands out in the list, as on the two days it appeared, it accumulated a number of uses comparable to the number of the uses of the top metaphorizations over the whole four-day period. Moreover, A LIFE-THREATENING EVENT displays the highest average frequency of uses per day, although it does not appear on all four days but only on the last two days of the period.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study has offered, first, a snapshot of media-advocated conceptual metaphorizations of BREXIT to which UK online media users were exposed during the first days after the 2016 referendum. The data demonstrate that there are three top source domains most frequently used for metaphoric conceptualization purposes in that period: DIVORCE, NATURAL DISASTER and (PART OF A) JOURNEY.

As far as achieving the second main objective of this investigation is concerned (i.e. the objective concerning the possible presence of evaluation-relating general connotative regularities in the source domains used), the analysis of the dataset reveals a preference for negative source domain general semantics. It is not only that the source domain uses over the whole period rate from strongly negative to neutral, with the 'neutral' part of the scale displaying considerably fewer uses than the 'strongly negative' one. Each of the days in the period separately also rates

from strongly negative to neutral, with the 'neutral' part of the scale displaying considerably fewer uses than the 'strongly negative' one. Furthermore, none of the days displays metaphorization from prototypically positively characterized source domains. The most positively tinged neutral source-domain general semantics for the whole period would be the WAKE-UP CALL ones. However, that source domain appears only once over the whole period and, consequently, could not be considered prominent.

This predominantly negative evaluative potential of the connotative aspects of the BREXIT source domains used on the first post-referendum days proves in stark contrast to the near-par between Leave and Remain at the referendum. Crucially, the negative slant runs against the overwhelming pro-Leave media bias registered in the pre-referendum period. That bias would have suggested a generally victorious (or at least emphatically positive) post-referendum source domain choices.

Truly, employing a negative source domain does not necessarily lead to an overall negative interpretation of the metaphorized phenomenon. On the contrary, positioned within the context of the whole text, the use can support a rather positive attitude on the part of the text producer. For instance, in our dataset, BREXIT as a DISASTER tends to be represented positively, as happening to the hateful (to the author) EU (e.g. *...erodes EU unity)*. Similarly, BREXIT can be a KILLING BLOW to the author's ENEMIES (e.g. *a death blow to Europe)*, or a most-welcome AMPUTATION to the EU BODY. Analysis of such metaphoric 'scenarios' and their evaluative power have been long established in CMT and CDA literature (see Musolff, 2006, 2017). The present endeavor, however, argues in support of the existence of yet another 'level' of source domain employment, which – on the basis of the general semantics of the domains – can also function evaluatively. This premise is crucial to fulfilling our second objective.

Thus, the negative Brexit source-domain characterization, however sub-consciously enacted, could be seen as a factor enabling the thriving desire to reverse the Brexit decision. It could also be related to the fact that, for the last three years, Remain have not been behind Leave in the social opinion polls.

Admittedly, as the present study focuses only on the first four days after the referendum, claiming general validity of the data would be somewhat farfetched. However, the end results of the present investigation are so definitive that it seems safe to argue that, even if they do not represent generally valid and precise statistical data, they do represent strongly-pronounced general trends.

REFERENCES

Bowdle, B. F. and Gentner, D. (2005) The career of metaphor. *Psychological Review*, 112 (1): 193-216.

Cameron, L. (1999) Identifying and describing metaphor in spoken discourse data. In L. Cameron and G. (eds.) *Researching and Applying Metaphor* (pp. 105–132). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cameron, L. and Deignan, A. (2006) The emergence of metaphor in discourse. *Applied Linguistics*, 27 (4): 671-690.

Charteris-Black, J. and Ennis, T. (2001) A comparative study of metaphor in Spanish and English financial reporting. *English for Specific Purposes*, 20 (3): 249-266.

Charteris-Black, J. (2005) *Politicians and Rhetoric. The Persuasive Power of Metaphor*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Charteris-Black, J. (2014) *Analysing Political Speeches: Rhetoric, Discourse and Metaphor*. Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Coulson, S. and Oakley, T. (2005) Blending and coded meaning: Literal and figurative meaning in cognitive semantics. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 37: 1510–36.

Deignan, A. (2005) *Metaphor and Dataset Linguistics*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Dulcinati, G., Mazzarella, D., Pouscoulous, N. and Rodd, J. M. (2014) Processing metaphor: The role of conventionality, familiarity and dominance. *UCL Working Papers in Linguistics*, 26: 72-88.

Đurović, T. and Silaški, N. (2018) The end of a long and fraught marriage: Metaphorical images structuring the Brexit discourse. *Metaphor and the Social World*, 8 (1): 25-39.

Gentner, D. and Bowdle, B. F. (2008) Metaphor as structure-mapping. In R. W. Gibbs (ed.) *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought* (pp. 109-128). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Glucksberg, S. (2008) How metaphors create categories – quickly. In R. W. Gibbs (ed.) *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought* (pp. 67-84). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Grady, J., Taub, S. and Morgan, P. (1996) Primitive and compound metaphors. In A. Goldberg (ed.) *Conceptual Structure, Discourse and Language* (pp. 56-91). Stanford: CSLI.

Krzyżanowski, M. (2019) Brexit and the imaginary of 'crisis': A discourse conceptual analysis of European news media. *Critical Discourse Studies*. Available from https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17405904.2019.1592001 [Accessed on 2 July 2019].

Kövecses, Z. (2010) *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction,* 2nd ed.. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kövecses, Z. (2017) Context in cultural linguistics: The case of metaphor. In F. Sharifian (ed.) *Advances in Cultural Linguistics* (pp. 307-25). Singapore: Springer.

Kövecses, Z. (2018) Metaphor in media language and cognition: A perspective from conceptual metaphor theory. *Lege Artis. Language Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, III (1): 124-141.

Lakoff, G. (2009) *The Neural Theory of Metaphor*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M. (1980) *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M. (1999) *Philosophy in the Flesh*. London: Basic Books.

Lakoff, G. and Turner, M. (1989) *More Than Cool Reason*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lakoff, G. and Núñez, R. (2000) *Where Mathematics Comes from: How the Embodied Mind Brings Mathematics into Being*. New York: Basic Books.

Morozova, O. (2017) Monomodal and multimodal instantiations of conceptual metaphors of Brexit. *Lege Artis. Language Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, II (2): 250-283.

Musolff, A. (2006) Metaphor scenarios in public discourse. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 21 (1): 23-38.

Musolff, A. (2012) The study of metaphor as part of critical discourse analysis. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 9 (3): 301 –310.

Musolff, A. (2017) Truths, lies and figurative scenarios – Metaphors at the heart of Brexit. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 16 (5): 641–657.

Pragglejaz Group (2007) MIP: A method for identifying metaphorically used words in discourse. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 22 (1): 1–39.

Ritchie, L. D. (2013) *Metaphor*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rosch, E. (1973) Natural categories. *Cognitive Psychology*, 4: 328-50.

Semino, E. (2008) *Metaphor in Discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sharifian, F. (2011) *Cultural Conceptualisations and Language: Theoretical Framework and Applications*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Sharifian, F. (2017) *Cultural Linguistics*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Steen, G, Dorst, A. G., Herrmann, J. B., Kaal, A., Krennmayr, T. and Pasma, T. (2010) *A Method for Linguistic Metaphor Identification: From MIP to MIPVU*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Stefanowitsch, A. (2006) Dataset-based approaches to metaphor and metonymy. In A. Stefanowitsch and S. Th. Gries (eds.) *Dataset-based Approaches to Metaphor and Metonymy* (pp. 1-16). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Taylor, J. R. (2003) *Linguistic Categorization,* 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tincheva, N. (2019a) Conceptualizing Brexit: First post-referendum days' dynamics in metaphorization. *International Journal of Language and Culture*, 6 (2): 255–278.

Tincheva, N. (2019b) 'Brexit means…': UK vs. continental online-media users and English-language metaphoric conceptualizations. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 18 (6): 848–869.

Ungerer, F. and Schmid, H-J. (2006) *An Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics,* 2nd ed.. London: Longman.

van Dijk, T. A. (2015) Critical discourse studies: A sociocognitive approach. In R. Wodak and M. Meyer (eds.) *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, 3rd ed. (pp. 63-85). London: Sage.

van Dijk, T. A. (2018) Socio-cognitive discourse studies. In J. Flowerdew and J. E. Richardson (eds.) *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Discourse* (pp. 26-44). Routledge: New York.

INTERNET SOURCES

1) [Online 1] Available from https://whatukthinks.org/eu/are-voters-changing-their-minds-about-brexit/ [Accessed on 1 June 2019]

2) [Online 2] Available from https://trends.google.com/trends/story/GB_cu_gUyXbFUBAABDoM_en [Accessed on 1 June 2019]

3) [Online 3] Available from https://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/policy-institute/CMCP/UK-media-coverage-of-the-2016-EU-Referendum-campaign.pdf [Accessed on 1 June 2019]

4) [Online 4] Available from https://pamco.co.uk/ [Accessed on 1 June 2019]

5) [Online 5] Available from https://www.newsworks.org.uk [Accessed on 1 June 2019]

6) [Online 6] Available from https://yougov.co.uk [Accessed on 1 June 2019]

7)   [Online 7] Available from http://blog.lboro.ac.uk/crcc/eu-referendum/ [Accessed on 1 June 2019]

8)   [Online 8] Available from https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/our-research/ uk-press-coverage-eu-referendum [Accessed on 1 June 2019]

Nelly Tincheva (Ph.D., Assoc. Prof. in Text Linguistics and Discourse Analysis) is currently working at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Bulgaria. Her research interests include cognitive studies, text linguistics, political discourse analysis, language gaffes. Email: nelitinch@yahoo.com.