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## CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS IN AMERICAN JOURNALISTIC TEXTS

Anatoliy Khudoliy

National University of Ostroh Academy, Ostroh, Ukraine

toliy65@yahoo.com

The article is dedicated to representation and functions of tropes in American journalistic texts, their semantic and cognitive features. The figurative language under analysis is a reflection of American politicians' language, in particular their everyday metaphors. Not only do we examine the main aspects of figurative language associated with aquatic habitat used by American politicians in public discourse, but we also rely upon an approach based on conceptual metaphor theory when we analyse and classify conceptual metaphors related to water. The object of cognitive analysis is political texts in American newspapers and magazines. The author provides a linguistic analysis of conceptual metaphors, their functions and application. Metaphors serve as indicators of functional changes in American English. Cognitive aspects of metaphors are being discussed. According to the theory of cognitive linguistics, a metaphor is an integral part of the cognitive process and an instrument that expresses and forms new notions. American politicians often use metaphors to affect the unconscious minds of the people. The research results show that the most frequently used conceptual metaphors in the analysed corpora are the linguistic realisations of metaphors from the source domain of *aquatic habitat*. All the metaphors of this group are classified into subgroups according to the key semantic component. A deep consideration is given to aquatic metaphors and reasons of their topicality.

**Keywords:** concept; conceptual metaphor; American journalistic texts; function; national picture of the world.

### 1. Introduction

Metaphors make up a considerable amount of the word stock of modern English which is not only flexible, but also dynamic. Easily coined in speech in cases of necessity, metaphoric word combinations reflect changes that occur in the life of society. Constant enrichment of lexicon of American English by means of metaphors serves as an appropriate ground for analysis of language functioning in its connection with society development.

Modern linguistic researches are characterised by complex analysis of nominative units that presuppose studying of cognitive (Christian, 2013; Sternadori, 2008; Gunter, 2015; Andersson, 2011; Gravengaard, 2012; Gibbs, 2017; Ungerer & Schmid, 2015; Krennmayr, 2011), communicative (Sen, 2011; Jiri, 2015; Elleström, 2010; Chadwick, 2017; Graber, Dunaway, 2018; Cohen, 2016) and functional (Bischoff and Carmen, 2013; Gardner and Alsop, 2016; Nuyts, 2012; Liu, 2018) parameters. Orientation of the system of nominative means, especially metaphors, to pursuing communicative goals makes it possible to be explained considering their functions. The first-hand task of the functional approach, applied to the linguistic-cognitive analysis of language, is the studying of changes of their semantic functions. Language units, in the process of their realisation, are potentially capable to demonstrate new characteristics that contribute to the dynamics of the language system.

The premises of functional changes in lexicon are as follows: 1) specificities of the language system that are reflected in the asymmetry of a language sign; 2) a human factor which includes a set of items such as memory functioning of a person, figurativeness of thinking, inclination to psychological reorientation, categorisation and recategorisation of reality, problem of correlation between language and thinking, associative ground for imagery reflection of the world; 3) peculiarities of realisation of language units in the process of communication, i.e. nominative and communicative significance of the word stock units and the action of communicative stereotypes (Levickij, 2001, p. 47).

The purpose of this paper is to provide a comprehensive linguistic analysis of conceptual metaphors and their representation by the concept "**Political and social life – aquatic habitat**". Of primary importance is the metaphor as an indicator of changes in American English. The focus is also on the cognitive aspects of metaphors in journalistic texts. Of special interest is the conceptualisation of reality as a premise of functional changes in American English. The attention is also paid to the conceptual-metaphoric mode of American journalistic texts.

### 2. Data and Methodology

The paper is based on the data from American electronic media "USA Today", "Newsweek", "The Washington Post" and "Wall Street Journal", published in 2017 and 2018. The data of the research comprises 1080 metaphors chosen by complete selection. Among them, there are 153 aquatic metaphors that make up 14,2%. They serve as a basis for our research and the source of examples. The methodology employed in the study is the theory of conceptual metaphor (Lakoff, Johnson, 1980), which presents a basic

framework for the linguistic analysis. Performing cognitive function, metaphors express and form new notions. Besides, they are the means of the language change. As a result of the process of cognition, several referents are compared and it leads to the conceptual anomaly which is characterised by emotional tension. An idea about the metaphor as a language phenomenon that reflects the process of the world cognition underlies the conceptual metaphor. Conceptualisation, resulted in metaphor formation, is based on similar characteristics of referents.

Three primary functions of lexical metaphors have been identified: “linguistic (naming), conceptual (framing), and communicative (perspective changing)” (Bougher, 2012, p. 149). A metaphor is a cognitive phenomenon which is widely used in journalistic texts. Metaphors perform conceptual function due to their ability to form new concepts on the ground of already existing notions (Chudinov, 2001, p. 48).

In this respect, a theoretical perspective essential for the research is the theory of reference focusing on the correlation between the surrounding and the language. Conceptual metaphor serves as a link between thinking and culture in its national specifics. Besides, conceptual metaphors correlate with the culture of the nation, adding some semantic and cultural background to the research. So, we perceive the metaphor in a wide sociocultural context. There is the relationship between metaphor and culture in its complexity (Covecses, 2010, p. 197). Reflection of the surroundings by means of the conceptual metaphor has specific features typical of certain national consciousness. These culture-specific ideas are congruent with what Bruner (1990, p. 40) calls “folk psychology” which embodies the interpretive principles elaborated by a culture. Thus, given the role of culture in the conceptualisation of abstract matters, it might not be an exaggeration to state, as does Bruner, that culture is “constitutive of mind” (Jing-Schmidt, 2008, p. 246).

In the process of the research, we applied such linguistic methods: conceptual analysis for studying cognitive mechanisms of formation of nominative units; context-situational method useful for understanding and interpretation of the context of nominative units under research.

### **3. Results and discussion**

#### **3.1. Metaphor as an indicator of language changes in journalistic texts**

Language reflects changes in the life of society. It registers changes observed under influence of society development. One of the reasons of language transformations is the asymmetry in the structure and functioning of the language sign (Gak, 1998, p. 106). Characteristic type of the linguistic asymmetry is reflected in polysemantic words which demonstrate the difference between the plane of expression and the plane of context. Polysemantic words are effective means of preserving and accumulation of language and encyclopaedic data due to their characteristics to categorise human experience. As a result of language asymmetry, one and the same unit can be applied for denoting different objects or performing functions, not typical for them before. Language asymmetry as a phenomenon can be explained by the fact that people operate by the notions with blurred, foggy limits which make it possible to denote any object even the one which does not possess any name in the language (Gak, 1998, p. 123). New phenomena and objects get their names as a result of making up new words or adapting of the already existing ones.

Changes in the language of American journalistic texts are represented by metaphors. Metaphor is an important mechanism for language change (Camp, 2006, p. 158). Metaphors create basic schemes which are necessary for the conceptualisation of experience. Metaphor corpus of modern journalistic texts is in the focus of cognitive linguists due to the following reasons: 1) the metaphor represents a potent rhetorical tool for political actors to shape the political minds of citizens (Lakoff, 2008); 2) politicians make frequent use of metaphors as tools of persuasive communication, to bridge gaps; to frame issues; to create, maintain, or dissolve political coalitions; to generate votes and win elections (Beer & Landtsheer, 2004, p. 24); 3) metaphors provide schemes, which bundle together the fullness of details, making them clearer and more manageable (Schmitt, 2005, p. 365).

It is worth mentioning that there is a connection between a metaphor and a journalistic text. Not only a journalistic text affects the comprehension of the lexical unit, but also a lexical unit, in its turn, influences on the process of perception and understanding of the texts. Metaphor is an essential component of a journalistic text, first of all, because it does a text-forming function. Text is a container of lexical units, a source of identification and interpretation of words' semantics and their properties (Poliuzhyn, 1999, p. 23). Metaphors in journalistic texts are interpreted as linguistic units that perform definite functions.

#### **3.2. Cognitive aspects of metaphors in American journalistic texts.**

American journalistic texts are communicatively oriented messages, since journalists do want to inform the readers about something. Each journalistic text is emotionally charged. Communication takes place for

the sake of conveying information. In other words, the purpose of communication and its function is to provoke a reaction either verbal or mental-emotional one of the addressee (Kövecses, 2000, p. 24-25). Journalists choose the most effective means for emotional influence on the recipient, which are supposed to resonate in the hearts of readers, to provoke emotional experience and finally to exert influence. Such a dialogue pursues a goal which is to change the system of views of the recipient and orient him/her to the reception of the author's concept of values and corresponding directions. In this context application of metaphors is an important method of influence on the consciousness of readers via journalistic texts. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) contend that metaphors are discursive instruments for the construction of certain views, ideas, and ways of seeing the world, thereby 'creating social reality and guiding social action' (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 156).

From the cognitive point of view, a metaphor is an integral part of cognitive processes and an instrument that expresses and forms new notions. The cognitive potential of the metaphor, peculiarities of its making as a result of matching the semantic components prove its pre-eminent role in resolving non-standard problematic situations (Keefer, Landau, 2016, p. 395). Their solving provides for intensification of the cognitive system during the process of mastering and working out of knowledge in order to develop a certain amount of variants of actions and the selection of correct alternatives. Metaphor making is an indispensable part of the process of cognition, which takes place in the life of an individual in the context of evolutionary development. Metaphor is a key element in the categorisation of the picture of the world.

Metaphors evoke associations. Associativity is a fundamental attribute of human thinking. Every nation has its unique linguistic-creative type of thinking of double character. On the one hand, it is the process of reality reflection, and, on the other hand, it is a re-examination of the available resources in the language. Associations are implemented in the language picture of the world and result in the formation of a powerful corpus of means, for example, transferred names with the key markers of colour, size as well as other characteristics of the analysed words. Associations that underlie semantic transferences, produce certain emotional, expressive and stylistic effects. Indirect associations connect and assess conceptions, reflected in the language picture of the world of American people.

We share the opinion of cognitive linguists that emotive charge and expressiveness are the dominant functions of metaphors, because in journalistic texts they: 1) highlight new peculiarities of a certain phenomenon; 2) manipulate public opinion (Cammaerts, 2012, p. 231); 3) have the power to "define reality" or even redefine it by creating a coherent chain of entailments that stresses some features, but ignores others (Lakoff, 1980, p. 156).

In journalistic texts metaphors are polyfunctional. They are the flexible elements of human thinking, which, to some extent, shape our perception of the world.

### **3.3. Conceptual and metaphoric space of journalistic texts**

Conceiving the world, a man cognises it, identifies and structures objects of his cognition. The structure of the world is represented in the mind in the form of categories, hierarchically arranged conceptual structures. Information is registered on the basis of the existing data. A composed system of information is a conceptual frame, which is a set of ideas about the world (Pavilenis, 1983, p. 101).

The conceptual picture of the world is an inner lexicon, storage of concepts. It is a particular mechanism that registers human experience. Inner lexicon is represented by concepts consisting of words in the form of analytical description. In the process of communication, language units encode a concept connected with the system of concepts. Every new piece of information becomes a part of the conceptual system provided that it is consecutively registered in the existing conceptual system.

The fundamental principle of interpretation of the world demands consecutive formation and registering of concepts, while existing concepts lay the basis for the formation of the new ones. Besides, the conceptual system is being developed all time round. Every concept consists of other subconcepts that fulfil the function of its semantic analysers. The concept is linked to the notion of conceptual structure offered by R. Jackendoff (1990, 1994). The conceptual structure is interpreted by him as the level of mental representation that combines linguistic, sensory and motor data. So, concepts allow us to group objects, which have common properties, and appropriately react to this or that piece of data. Semantic identification of the word or a word combination with the concept depends on the degree of similarity with a particular object class. The more properties this object or event shares with other objects the brighter marker it is.

The language fulfils the functions of encoding and manipulation of concepts in the journalistic text. On the one hand, concepts are encoded by journalists in the texts and, on the other hand, the texts are decoded in the conceptual systems of readers. Singling out a structure of concepts is interpreted by us as a choice of

meaningful text, acceptable for the person. This text lays an orientation basis for the individual in the world, in particular, his definite attitude towards reality (Pavilenis, 1983, p. 209). Journalistic texts by means of metaphors shape attitude of average Americans towards reality and, at the same time, they are encoded messages that activate certain concepts, push into decisions and actions.

Metaphors in American journalistic texts fulfil the function of conceptualisation that is based on its ability to form new concepts. A person cognises the world through channels of sensitive perception, he or she distinguishes and identifies objects of cognition. Information about the world, received this way, is a well-designed conceptual system which embraces certain ideas about the world.

Orientation to formation of concepts reflects functional character of metaphors. It means that in the use two functions which they perform coincide. They are nominative and conceptual (Telija, 1986, p. 83). The nominative function is reflected in the process of naming. The conceptual function is realised in the process of conceptualisation. In the process of metaphorisation, the final goal is a new meaning of the word which is an additional component and an extension of the semantic apparatus of language.

Mechanism of conceptual metaphor is connected with the processes of forming new means for more precise reflection of the picture of the world, which is realised not only by a single native speaker, but also the whole language community. This idea about conceptual metaphor is proved by G. Lakoff who claimed that all phenomena of language activity originate from the sphere of subconsciousness (Lakoff, 1980). All language means are stored in the sphere of subconsciousness as a complex set of psychological nature. It consists of various groups of ideas that are closely interconnected.

Metaphors make abstract things easy for perception that's why one of the fundamental ways to metaphoric transference is from concrete to abstract things. For the adequate description of various abstract notions and their characteristics metaphors are combined at different levels of conceptual hierarchy. Conceptual metaphor is used as a means for formation of a paramorphic model, which allows imagining one system by means of the system taken from another sphere of experience, where this element is represented in a clear and understandable way (Gak, 1998, p. 482). Metaphors are special kind of frames that shape the way people think and act.

Language is an efficient means in modelling of conceptual structures, models of the world in the cognitive system of the recipient and they correlate with the models of the world in the cognitive system of the sender. The conceptual system of the recipient as much as author's constitutes the basis which correlates with information elicited from the text. Metaphors perform the roles of peculiar lenses through which we perceive and interpret social reality.

The specifics of the communicative attitude, the sphere of functioning, as well as peculiarities of the language development, lay the foundation for distinguishing conceptual metaphor as a special type, because it sets the goal to verbalise a notion and define the object which has not been verbally represented before.

Conceptual metaphor is intrinsically linked to the construction of the holistic image. It means that in the process of conceptualisation we project one subject domain onto another one. Metaphors are especially efficient for the description of political life according to the fact that language means in the journalistic texts fulfil two most important functions such as to inform and interpret the events (Serazhym, 2002, p. 236). Objects of political life are compared to objects of environment, such as water, road or construction. As a result of overlapping of the sphere of politics with the basic sphere there appear key points of overlapping. Concepts serve as the social-and-cognitive basis of communication for the people with different experience.

Formation of the concept is influenced by the emotional attitude of the speaker. Communicative attitude which combines conceptual and emotional sides, contributes to reservation of a certain amount of imagery in the metaphors. Cognition precedes assessment and is being transformed in estimation. Associations, represented in connotative semes, depend on the conditions of life and traditions of native speakers. For Americans *water* perceives both as a danger and as a blessing: *to calm the waters* (The Wall Street Journal, July 28-30, 2017: A3); *to flood Facebook* (Newsweek, 14.11.2017); *remain dead in the water* (The Wall Street Journal, July 28-3, 2017: B7).

*Turkey has made some efforts to calm the waters in recent days, but tensions continued to run high this week* (The Wall Street Journal, July 28-30, 2017: A3). In June of 2017, Turkish President R. Erdogan had an official meeting with German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel and offered an exchange: to extradite two Turkish generals who had applied for asylum in Germany and get a detained German-Turkish journalist in return. The scandal that erupted led to misunderstanding and mutual accusations. Turkish officials made efforts to find the way out of the situation. So, metaphor *to calm the waters* demonstrates the efforts of Turkey to improve relationships with Germany spoiled after the diplomatic scandal. The metaphor *to calm the water* appeared as a result of reconciling linguistic and extra-linguistic data. So, the metaphor completes

the national-and-linguistic picture of the world, constructed on the knowledge of phenomena and emotional attitude towards them.

Conceptual metaphor is a reflection of an attribute of consciousness to cognise objects on the basis of analogy, which allows crossing the limits of natural categorial substructuring of reality through assimilation. Non material object through the prism of conceptual metaphor is represented as if it is the object of another kind, on the basis of similarity by the limited amount of parameters. The principle of similarity illustrates the idea of modelling as a technique for cognising complex notions, including objects, unattainable for direct observation (Kubriakova, 1986, p.102).

Metaphor can be perceived as the transference from the source domain to the purpose domain. For example, in the metaphor *political life is an aquatic habitat* an aquatic habitat is a source domain and political life is a target domain.

Each metaphor has its central component, which is an indispensable part that organises the whole word combination. A significant role is played by the thematic indicator, which occupies a dominant position in the corresponding group of metaphors and defines its general content. For instance: *underwater* (Newsweek, November 15, 2017); *the Fox waters* (Newsweek, November 15, 2017); *the water was tainted* (Newsweek, November 15, 2017); *to calm the troubled waters inside* (Newsweek, November 10, 2017). The thematic indicator of this group of metaphors is the word *water*, which is the key one, because it is included into every word combination and it defines its general meaning.

The examples, mentioned above, forming familiar images, make it easier for readers to communicate and perceive the image.

On the one hand, metaphors reflect standard situations of a particular historic period in the life of a language community. On the other hand, they are the expressions of images, connected with knowledge. So, metaphorisation is an important mechanism by which we perceive abstract notions. By its nature metaphor is a conceptual phenomenon, because it is based on our sensory experience.

#### **3.4. The group of conceptual metaphors “Political life is an aquatic habitat”**

The metaphoric and conceptual dimension of modern American journalism embraces several concepts, such as spatial-temporal, anthropomorphic, culinary, zoo and some other continuums. The whole complex of conceptual metaphors is the same on the semantic level, because it describes one and the same object which is the world of political and social life from the human point of view.

Spatial-temporal continuum is a dominant one, it is dictatorial, it shapes the system of values and interprets a text (Civ'jan, 1990, p. 76). Aquatic routes imply movement and implement the idea of time. In the process of studying the language of American journalistic texts, we identified a set of groups of conceptual metaphors.

One of the most numerous is the group of conceptual metaphors *Political life is an aquatic habitat*.

Each language has a need for expressing duration, intensity and direction (Whorf, 1956, p. 77). Aquatic metaphors represent 14.2 % of all the metaphors selected in American journalistic texts.

Initially, aquatic habitat is perceived as a mother's warm attitude, like a cradle. It is a mythological image. Aquatic associations can be partly explained by an embryonic-and-cosmogonic theory grounded on the researches of prenatal consciousness. According to the above-mentioned theory events of prenatal period are registered by fetus (Verny, Kelly, 1981, p. 14-15).

Aquatic metaphors are pragmatically oriented. Metaphoric representation of water is a reflection of personal experience, because it meets the needs of both sides – the writer and the reader. Water is a direct and hidden metaphor in many life situations. Aquatic metaphors serve as universal means of correlation of essential nature and existential being.

Results of our research prove that the lexico-semantic field of water metaphors is one of the most developed and traditional fields in the English language. On the one hand, the symbol of water, rebirth of life, is dominant in all nations regardless of their history, because the original habitat of humanity was the world ocean (Simonovic, 2009, p. 234). On the other hand, ancestors of many Americans lived on the islands, surrounded by water. Within time they travelled to America by sea, so the symbol of water is one of the deepest and basic one in the conceptual picture of the world of American people. English has been found to use many metaphors with a nautical source domain and it is speculated that the reason for this preference is historical – the British Empire was based on maritime dominance (Charteris-Black, Ennis, 2001 p. 262; Esager, 2011, p. 42).

The group of aquatic metaphors is divided into several thematic subgroups:

1. The first group goes under the title **Social and political life is water**. For example: *in the water* (The Wall Street Journal, July 28-30, 2017: B7); *to calm the waters* (The Wall Street Journal, July 28-30, 2017: A3); *to float a plan* (Newsweek, 14.11.2017); *to put a stick in the stream* (Newsweek, 10.11.2017). These examples are associated with the aquatic environment, with the directions such as TOP and BOTTOM: *in the water* (The Wall Street Journal, July 28-30, 2017: B7); a “*watered-down*” *travel ban* (Newsweek, 23.08.2017); *underwater* (Newsweek, 15.11.2017).

The metaphoric transference is used with the purpose to characterise the travel ban imposed by the American Governmental institution:

*He also has a long history of lies. Just ask The New York Times. The paper has compiled an up-to-date list of his breathless falsehoods, from the crowd size at his inauguration (it wasn't the largest in presidential history) to his claim that the Department of Justice signed a “watered-down” travel ban (he signed it)* (Newsweek, 23.08.2017). It's all about the current president of the USA and the restrictions of the Department of Justice imposed on the Mr. Trump in order to limit his trips. They are softened, not very strict ones.

In the below given sentence, cable news reminds a spigot and the flow of water which stands for news spreading around. The water running from the spigot has a pejorative connotation because it confuses people providing them with false information. The misinformation evokes an association with flood covering the nation with untruth.

*Fox News is destroying America. Its anchors are humorless propagandists for President Donald Trump, lacking dignity and honesty, humility and heart. The cable news network is a spigot from which right-wing misinformation flows unceasingly, flooding the nation with untruth, making millions wonder whether Barack Obama was born in Hawaii, as he claims, or in Indonesia, behind a mosque where fanatics plotted the destruction of America and the National Football League* (Newsweek, 15.11.2017).

2. The second group of conceptual metaphors is entitled **Political life is a vessel in the sea of life**. For instance: *to rock the boat* (The Wall Street Journal, August 22, 2017: A11); *would chart a course* (The Washington Post, 01.02.2018); *to change course* (Newsweek, 16.10.2017); *steer the nation's policies onto safer ground* (The Wall Street Journal, Tuesday, August 22, 2017: A2); *to change course* (Newsweek, 16.10.2017).

Social-and-political life is perceived as a tangible object, as a vessel. For example:

*Between now and November, when Mr. Xi is scheduled to win his second five-year term in office, China's overriding objective is not to rock the boat* (The Wall Street Journal, August 22, 2017: A11). The relationships between the United States and the North Korea got considerably worse. China plays a role of a mediator between them. The lexeme *boat* is associated with the relationships between Washington and Pyongyang, which are at the crossroads over their ambitions. The situation worsens when the North Korea initiated regular nuclear missile tests and engaged in sabre-rattling. A conflict on the Korean peninsula can lead to a war with the United States and that would pose a danger for China's national security and Mr Xi's dominance of the country's political system.

Every ship, vessel or any other transport needs a course in order to get to the final destination. Every vessel in the sea has its own route. The course of the ship is associated with the following metaphors: *to navigate social issues* (The Wall Street Journal, August 22, 2017: A6); *to ship jobs* (The Wall Street Journal, August 22, 2017: A6); *chart a course* (The Washington Post, February 1, 2018); *to change course* (Newsweek, 16.10.2017); *to steer the nation's policy* (The Wall Street Journal, Tuesday, August 22, 2017: A2); *to steer the network away from the political extremes* (Newsweek, 15.11.2017); *to stay the course* (The Wall Street Journal, August 22, 2017: A10).

Describing political life it is tremendously important to steer the course of the ship, by which the author means the USA. Through failures and conflicts, negotiations and concessions American President leads the country.

*They have helped steer Mr. Trump through a fraught internal debate over military strategy in Afghanistan, in which the President sometimes was battling them as well as himself, culminating in a new policy he is to announce Monday night* (The Wall Street Journal, Tuesday, August 22, 2017: A2).

Steering the ship, as well as ruling the country demands skills and experience not less important than skills of the captain of the ship. Both of them are in charge of the people.

*The social issues became too difficult to navigate* (The Wall Street Journal, August 22, 2017: A6). Metaphoric sentence *the social issues became too difficult to navigate* illustrates the situation in which D. Trump has made a political step (he left the Paris meeting of the countries on the issue of climate treaties) is unable to manage the results of his underestimated decision. The results were appalling, because during the meeting with the President, managers of big companies expressed their disappointment of such a political and economic miscalculation.

Policy and political activity are associated with the ship steered by the captain. Leaders of countries remind captains of the ships. Some of them are skilful, others are losers. North Korean leader, Kim Jong Un pursues the same policy despite sanctions and waits for the change of political regime in the United States.

*Switching from a policy of strategic patience (i.e., endless talks) to strategic accountability is the best of many bad options, but the rational decision for the “irrational” Kim Jong Un is to stay the course and patiently wait for regime change in the U.S.* (The Wall Street Journal, August 22, 2017: A10).

Foreign or domestic policy can be changed under certain circumstances. Reporters of American journalistic texts utilise the metaphor *to change the course* which displays the perception of foreign policy as a course followed by a ship. For example:

*In 1972, when China was desperately poor and largely insular, President Richard Nixon, traveled to Beijing for historic meetings with Mao Zedong. At the time, the U.S. recognized neighboring Taiwan and its leaders, whom Mao had vanquished, as the true rulers of China. But the goal of Nixon’s visit was to change course. As Henry Kissinger, the architect of the president’s strategy later put it: “We wanted to see whether the beginning of reconciliation was possible”* (Newsweek, 16.10.2017).

Symbol of water may be associated with static or dynamic content. It may have a positive as well as a negative connotation. Positive connotations are represented by the words such as *shore, harbour, anchor*, while *wave, tide, sea, and stream* are associated with dynamic events, movement and changes:

*Sometime that day, she spoke to a Clinton critic who may have voted for Trump (he only revealed that he hadn’t voted for Clinton). “I just want to put a stick in the stream,” he told her. The vote a small act of defiance, since New York State was safely Democratic. But even a small vote can be telling. By possibly casting a ballot for Trump, the man indicated his profound exasperation with the political system, as well as his conviction that only a wholesale reimagining of what government did—and how—could make Americans believe in government again* (Newsweek, 10.11.2017). In this context, a stick in the stream indicates participation in election, even if it is a single vote. Metaphoric transference is useful in this case because it helps to depict the process of American presidential election. A stream is associated with changes that follow the election of a Republican representative as a President of the USA.

Along with the above-mentioned groups of conceptual metaphors we came across pejorative metaphoric words.

3. The third group includes metaphors under the common title **Political life is a swamp**. For instance: *the swamp of the future* (Newsweek, 14.11.2017); *“drain the swamp”* (Newsweek, 10.11.2017). It is relevant to note that a news article is not necessarily neutral and objective in its description of events. Since there are often competing conceptual metaphors structuring a field, they can be exploited as a rhetorical device in order to frame the understanding of a situation. Describing a political life in terms of swamp rather than war puts the matter in a different light. This means that the expressive or even the manipulative function may also be present in a news article (Esager, 2011, p. 19).

*I will make our Government honest again – believe me. But first, I am going to have “to drain the swamp” in DC* (Newsweek, 10.11.2017). Like any other president in the United States, Mr Trump promised to improve the activity of the Government in Washington, D.C. The Government functioning for decades without any visible changes reminds the swamp in which the water is still and as a result, it is useless. Typically swamp is a wetland that is forested. It is usually associated with adjacent rivers or lakes. Swamps are characterised by slow-moving to stagnant waters. President Trump meant stagnant water when he was characterising Washington, D.C. as a swamp. Applying the metaphor *to drain the swamp*, American leader stressed that he was going to change the situation with the efficiency of American Government, make it better, and get rid of some negative tendencies.

Even analysing metaphors with the lexeme *swamp* we can identify its different emotive charge, positive and negative ones. For example:

*Even if it wasn’t clear what Trump meant by “drain the swamp,” the image powerfully evoked a righteous cleansing, a renewal of the tired, infertile land* (Newsweek, 10.11.2017). By the sentence *“I just want to put a stick in the stream”* the author means to participate in voting. The symbol of *stream* has a clear image of the voting, elections of the future president of the USA.

In light of the socio-political character of American metaphors, the predominance of negative metaphors of verbal behaviour as reported by Simon-Vandenberg (1995) and in the present study is no longer surprising but seems to have a psychological grounding (Jing-Schmidt, 2008, p. 271-272). Specifically, negative emotions communicate moral discontent, which may serve as a motivation to change undesirable situations and improve social environment (Jing-Schmidt, 2008, p. 272).

Problems accumulated in the economic and political life of the United States evoke the association of the swamp which needs to be drained. Newly elected president of the country has taken the obligation to do the dirty job, i.e. deal with problems. Unfortunately, it turned out to be different. D. Trump didn't manage to sort the things out. What he did was just changing of the staff and it was changing water in metaphoric terms. But there were no considerable changes. These ideas are expressed in the sentence by application of two metaphors, precisely *drain the swamp* and *change the water*.

Is Donald Trump really *draining the swamp*? Not so much. *He's just changing the water. The December holidays are about a month away, but the Republicans are already decorating their bill with trillions of sparkly ornaments* (Newsweek, 14.11.2017).

Apart from the negative metaphor *drain the swamp*, another metaphoric transference is used and it is the sentence *the swamp has grown into a sinkhole* which illustrates worsened situation in Washington, D.C. after a year of Trump's presidency. Numerous cases of lawsuits and investigations are in the spotlight of mass media when not only administration members, but also the President is involved in the scandalous events undermining the reputation of American establishment.

Now, a year after the election - and more than a year after Trump first made that pledge to the American people - many observers believe *the swamp has grown into a sinkhole that threatens to swallow the entire Trump administration. The number of White House officials currently facing questions, lawsuits or investigation is astonishing: Trump, being sued for violating the "emoluments clause" of the U.S. Constitution by running his Trump International Hotel in Washington, D.C.; Paul J. Manafort, the second Trump campaign manager, indicted on money laundering charges in late October; Flynn, for undisclosed lobbying work done on behalf of the Turkish government; and at least six Cabinet heads being investigated for or asked about exorbitant travel expenses or business dealings* (Newsweek, 10.11.2017).

4. The fourth group embraces word combinations under the title **Political life is a wave**. In American English aquatic metaphors are used for denoting such notions as intensity and direction. Aquatic habitat is represented by the following word combinations: *a wave of possible changes* (The Wall Street Journal, July 28-30, 2017: B5); *the tide of far-right and populist parties* (The Wall Street Journal, August 22, 2017: A8); *antiestablishment wave* (The Wall Street Journal, August 22, 2017: A8); *the largest wave of asylum seekers* (USA Today, 02.03.2018).

Water storm and waves are associated with a complicated situation that poses danger for people and requires tremendous efforts to survive. Economic and political problems are associated with aquatic habitat. For example:

*The U.K's Brexit vote and Mr. Trump's November victory, they said, heralded an antiestablishment wave that would sweep them into power or close to it, while bringing about the end of the EU in today's form* (The Wall Street Journal, August 22, 2017: A8). The well-known political event (Brexit) is associated with the sea, where the change of the political situation is compared to the change of the weather condition in the sea. The opponents of the European Union saluted the changes in the policy of the UK which together with Trump victory may undermine the even foundation of the EU.

The metaphor *the largest wave* has a tremendous emotional charge and it denotes a threat and danger for Europe. It is an uncontrollable influx of emigrants who are looking for jobs and shelter and who fled ruined countries of the Middle East and the Northern Africa.

*Fayyad's story is a new twist in the largest wave of asylum seekers to enter Europe since World War II: He is one of a handful of Syrians who found Europe too stifling for their creative and professional ambitions* (USA Today, 02.03.2018).

We conclude that the concept *Political life is an aquatic habitat* plays a significant role in the picture of the world of American society. Out of 1080 metaphors, selected from the American journalistic texts, 153 are aquatic ones.

#### 4. Conclusion

Changes in reality whether they are societal or natural are reflected in the structure and semantics of lexical units. The brightest examples of dynamics in the sphere of lexical semantics serve metaphors as far as they illustrate basic schemes of conceptualisation of human experience and reality.

Conceptual metaphor is a considerable element of persuasion and influence on readers because it is a landmark in the perception of reality. Metaphors in American journalistic texts fulfil quite an important function of forming concepts.

The group of metaphors under the title *Political life is an aquatic habitat* is quite big. Units of this group make up 14.2 % of the whole amount of metaphors identified in American journalistic texts. Identified



and described concepts such as aquatic metaphors make up an indispensable component of the model of the inner world inseparable from American culture, in terms of which American people think and act. The concepts represented in the article display typical ideas of Americans about the world and their place in it.

Politics is a complicated sphere where certain notions are difficult for interpretation, so journalists apply to using aquatic metaphors in order to use non trivial means. Aquatic metaphors with strong vectors of anxiety and aggression affect the social assessment and behaviour of Americans. Politicians disseminate and implement the idea that society reminds a sea, it is unstable. Conceptualising events in terms of aquatic habitat reinforces negative assessment of reality and provokes tension in society.

It is evident that water metaphors are just images, but at the same time, they help imagine political and social life of the USA in a much more detailed way, they expose certain aspects of political life and hide other ones in order to make them less noticeable.

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