



## CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS IN IRONIC REFERENCES: THE CASE OF NEWS HEADLINES OF LITHUANIAN AND AMERICAN WEBSITES

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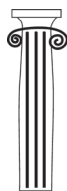
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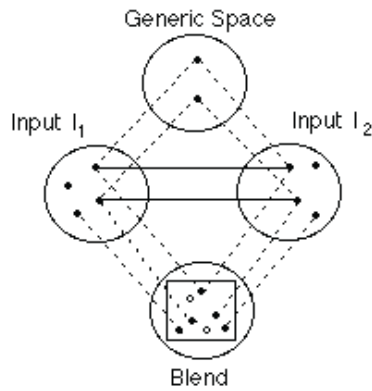
Throughout the centuries irony has been analysed from different perspectives, applying a variety of theories: Echo Mention theory, Pretense Theory, Graded Salience hypothesis, etc. However, being a very dynamic linguistic phenomenon – irony evades all the definitions and still presents a lot of difficulties to analysis. In this study, irony is analysed applying Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner’s theory of conceptual integration, or, as it is more commonly referred to, conceptual blending<sup>1</sup>. According to Evans (2006), the theory of blending developed out of two traditions of cognitive linguistics: the theory of conceptual metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) and the theory of mental spaces (Fauconnier 1985). One of the great achievements of the theory is its contribution to the field of creativity, where it shows how new meanings can emerge from old information. According to Coulson and Oakley (2000), “conceptual blending theory offers a general model of meaning construction in which a small set of partially compositional processes operate in analogy, metaphor, counterfactuals, and many other semantic and pragmatic phenomena” (2000, 2005). The main claims of Fauconnier and Turner’s theory are related to the theory of mental spaces<sup>2</sup>, and the concept of blending is defined as a process of conceptual mapping and integration unique to the human mind. Relying on the theory, a conceptual integration network is built where mental spaces are marked as circles, elements as dots, and relations among different mental spaces are represented by lines. Fau-

<sup>1</sup> This theory, relying on Coulson and Oakley, is also known as “the theory of online meaning construction, the many space model, and the network theory” (2000, 175–196).

<sup>2</sup> Mental spaces are like small conceptual packets interconnected by specific long-term knowledge (e.g. memories that might be activated in certain situations) and formed due to certain thoughts and actions. The network of mental spaces joins together a number of mental spaces. The mental structure of blending is an integration structure which receives input projections (the mental spaces of other networks) and develops a new emergent structure which is not directly inherited from the inputs.



connier and Turner provide the following generalized scheme of the mechanism of blending:



**Figure 1**

Two input spaces containing common elements<sup>3</sup> are connected through a generic space, and having undergone selective projection,<sup>4</sup> elements are transferred to the blended space, which can also be referred to as a “hybrid frame” (Coulson, 2001, p. 115). Selective projection is an indispensable part of the mechanism of blending in which the elements to be projected into the blended space are selected. Sometimes two counterpart elements from input spaces are projected, sometimes one, and in other cases none; an element that has no counterparts in other mental input spaces can also be projected into the blended space. However, it is not only selective projection but also the juxtaposition of elements from the inputs that leads to the “emergent structure” (Fauconnier, Turner 2002). On the basis of their generalized schemes, cross-space relations are detected and more complex schemes are built. One of the typical blending structures involves Single-Scope networks. Single-scope networks have two input spaces with different organizing frames, only one of which is projected into the blend. “Its defining property is that the organizing frame of the blend is an extension of the organizing frame of one of the inputs but not the other” (ibid, 126). Single-scope networks provide “a highly visible type of conceptual clash, since the inputs have different frames” (ibid, 129) and are the prototype of conventional (source-target) metaphors. The input space that provides the organizing frame for the blend can, employing the terminology of Lakoff (1980)<sup>5</sup>, be called the “source”, and the input space that is in the focus can be referred to as the “target”.

All irony might be analysed within the framework of this theory, yet here, in this study, the focus is exceptionally on the cases of irony that is in the mode of metaphor. The very idea of overlapping tropes was presented in the works of Quintilian.

<sup>3</sup> Coulson refers to such input spaces as “established domains” (2001, 115).

<sup>4</sup> Selective projection is discussed in detail by Fauconnier and Turner (2002, 71–73).

<sup>5</sup> For more details see Lakoff and Johnson (1980).



Burke (1969) analyses irony, together with metaphor, metonymy and synecdoche, and defines them as “the master tropes” (1969, 503–17). Analogically, “four master tropes” are analyzed by D’Angelo (1990). D’Angelo describes the text as organized in the mode of metaphor-metonymy, metaphor-synecdoche, metaphor-irony, etc. Each trope is thus defined through the means of another trope. Furthermore, the scholar claims that “discourse which is organized in the mode of irony can encompass such figures as zeugma, litotes, hyperbole, metaphor, periphrasis, paronomasia, antanaclasis, antithesis, paradox, metonymy, oxymoron, and antiphrasis” (1990, 2). However, a pilot examination of ironic headlines revealed that not all of the above mentioned means are equally conventional as the means of expression of an ironic attitude. Metaphor appears to be one of the most popular modes of irony in news headlines. The expression of irony through metaphor could be illustrated with the headline “Seimas: zuikis tas pats, tik varnos nebe tos” (delfi.lt) (“Parliament: the same rabbit, but different crows”), where the members of parliament are metaphorically referred to as crows (fighting for the catch<sup>6</sup>), and acquiring financial benefit for themselves is metaphorically referred to as a rabbit (seeking for benefit is seen as the pursuit of a rabbit<sup>7</sup>).

The academic interest of this study was to detect the patterns of irony in Lithuanian and American headlines (referring to a country) that have the underlying mental structure of conceptual metaphors. For this purpose a variety of headlines of popular internet sites in 2006–2012 were collected focusing on ironic references to Lithuania and America.

Ironic headlines are constructed when a certain topicality is moved from one space (frame) to another. In such cases, Coulson (2001) offers the term frame shifting<sup>8</sup>, which is obvious in metaphor based ironic cases as all the elements from one mental space follow the scenario offered by another mental space. Cibulskienė (2006) claims that all thinking in general is metaphoric, and that discourse is based on conceptual metaphors which are represented by linguistic metaphors at the level of language.

One of the most conventional conceptual metaphors of political discourse, according to Cibulskienė (2006), is POLITICS IS SPORT. Lithuanian ironic headlines appear to have this underlying mental structure as well. Ironic headlines exploit this mental model and focus on negative realia of the country, depicting it as participating in a sports competition for questionable goals. Here the conventionality of the irony is linked not to a specific reference but to the model of the metaphor POLITICS IS SPORT in general. The case could be illustrated with the headline “Lithuania is the Leader of Indifference to its Citizens”. The headline follows the requirements set by the theory of Utsumi (2002) for an ironic utterance, i.e. it presupposes an ironic environment which is made up of the expectations of the speaker (Lithuanians wish to be leaders),

<sup>6</sup> Cf. the Lithuanian saying *supulti kaip varnoms* ‘attack like crows’.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the Lithuanian saying *vienu šūviu du zuikius nušauti* ‘to catch two rabbits at a time’.

<sup>8</sup> Frame shifting theory is compatible with blending theory, though it has a different focus. While Fauconnier and Turner (2002) emphasize the organizing frame in the mechanism of blending, Coulson (especially concerning humorous texts) places emphasis on frame shifting.



an incongruity between the expectations and reality (Lithuanians do not want to lead in the field of indifference), and the negative attitude of the speaker towards this incongruity (his disappointment that Lithuania is the leader in a negative sphere). The ironic environment of the headline is implicitly revealed through the clash between indifference (a negative feature) and leadership (something to strive for). The mechanism of blending exploited by the headline encompasses such elements as leadership and competition. Countries are perceived as participants of sports events, the politics of the countries as a championship, indifference to their citizens as a sports event in which the aim is to win, and Lithuania as a champion of this event. Coulson holds to the idea that in blending, “*phoros*<sup>9</sup> is often modified in the course of analogy in order to facilitate parallels between it and the target” (2002, 199), i.e. we select the elements and the scenario that enable us to disclose and emphasize the desired aspects of the target domain. Within the framework of blending this is seen as a single-scope network that has one organizing frame (in this case, the frame of sport) whose elements are mapped onto the elements of the mental input space of “Lithuania”:

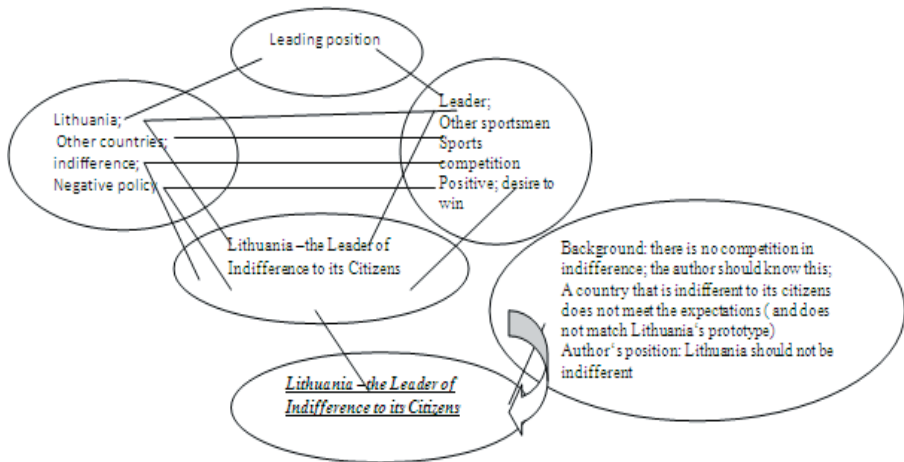


Figure 2

The single-scope network gives an obvious conceptual clash, as the input spaces have different organizing frames. As Fauconnier and Turner put it: “Single-scope networks give us the feeling that one thing is giving us insight into another thing with a strong asymmetry between them” (2002, 129). The clash results not only from the contrasting frames, but also from the incompatibility of the elements of the mental spaces: indifference to the citizens, which is a negative phenomenon to be avoided, is presented as a desired result in connection with the competition frame, as something to aim for. This blended space is used as a separate input in a more complex double-scope network where the other input space is “context/author’s position/background

<sup>9</sup> The term *phoros* was introduced by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969); later the same phenomenon became known as a “source” due to the works of Lakoff and Johnson (1980).



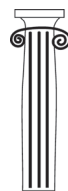
knowledge”. As the first input space is incongruous with common background knowledge (in politics, as in sport, the aim is always something positive, although here a negative aspect is presented as the desired goal), an ironic shift of meaning is generated which restores the logic of the utterance. The mechanism of blending deals with the clash by constructing a blended space where being a leader becomes a negative feature as the competition is held in the wrong field. The vital relations, compressions of Time, Space and simultaneously the scenario inherent in the mental space of “Sport” are all projected into the blended space and applied to the elements of the target (or “focus”) input space<sup>10</sup>, i.e. to the elements of the politics frame.

In this case the outer space vital relations of Similarity, Time, Place, and Analogy/Disanalogy are compressed into the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness. Here we can also talk about the compression of the whole scenario, as the entire political situation of the country is presented, at the human scale of understanding, as a single sports event. However, the most dominant outer space vital relation is that of Intentionality. It undergoes compression and is retained in the blended space, where it gives an insight into the nature of politics as intentionally striving for more indifference. The irony of the headline delivers a critical negative evaluation directed at the politics of the country. The compressions enabled by the mechanism of blending reveal that Lithuania’s leadership in indifference is a negative but intentional activity.

The assessment of state politics through the frame of sports can be considered conventional<sup>11</sup>. It is not a particular phrase, but the assessment of politics via the frame of sport that is conventional. The tendency and a similar blending pattern can also be traced in such headlines as: “Lithuania is Europe’s Vice-Champion in Drinking” (“Lietuva – Europos girtavimo vicečempionė”, *delfi.lt*) (in this case, drinking is elevated to the status of a representative feature of the country – which triggers an ironic interpretation), “Lithuania is the Leader of Parallel Worlds” (“Lietuva – paralelių pasaulių lyderė”, *delfi.lt*) (the writer assumes the position of an ironist who sees the rich and prosperous Lithuania promised by politicians as a parallel world to the real Lithuania we live in), “In the championship of alcohol consumption Lithuania takes 8<sup>th</sup> place” (“Alkoholio suvartojimo rungtynėse Lietuva- aštuntoje vietoje”, *zebra.lt*), “The leader of inadequate taxes” (“Neteisingų mokesčių lyderė”, *bernardinai.lt*, *zebra.lt*), “Lithuanians – the champions of self-treatment” (“Lietuviai-savigydos čempionai”, *veidas.lt*), “Lithuanians among the leaders in bribery” (“Lietuviai – tarp kyšininkavimo lyderių”, *delfi.lt*, *15min.lt*), “Lithuanians are the leaders in fake licenses” (“Lietuviai – suklastotų vairuotojų pažymėjimų lyderiai“, *lrytas.lt*), “*Death atlas: Lithuania is among the “leaders” once again*” (“Mirtingumo atlasas”: Lietuva – vėl tarp Europos “lyderių”, *delfi.lt*), “Lithuania – an absolute leader in youth suicides” (“Lietuva – absoliuti lyderė vaikų savižudybėse”, *zebra.lt*). In nearly every one of these cases, the irony results from the clash of a positive sports frame and the negative frame of some social problem.

<sup>10</sup> What Lakoff & Johnson refer to as a “target”, Fauconnier & Turner call a “focus” space.

<sup>11</sup>In Cibulskienė’s dissertation, the metaphor POLITICS IS SPORT is not ascribed to the three most frequent conceptual metaphors but mentioned (among several more) as typical.



Another group of ironic headlines directed at Lithuania often involves an imagined, unreal world, where Lithuania is named as a land of miracles. This field corresponds to the topicality of folklore metaphors analyzed by Pabst (2006), and can be regarded as a certain variant of the POLITICS IS A TALE metaphor. The ironic utterances on their own have not been conventionalized, but the elements of the headline are easily mapped from the space of the unreal into the mental space of the actual Lithuania by relying on common background cultural knowledge.

An implicit reference to Lithuania as a land of miracles appeared in a few headlines<sup>12</sup>, all of which communicate an ironic critical attitude by employing the mental input space of miracles. Miracles, tales, and dragons are commonly associated with folk tales or children's books. Meanwhile, in the news, elements of folk tales are unacceptable, and their deliberate use not only draws the reader's attention, but also signals figurative meanings. In the case of "The Tales of the Land of Miracles: a Dragon and a Boy" ("Stebuklų šalis: slibinas ir bernelis") the motifs of tales are employed to ridicule the political situation in Lithuania. The headline implicitly refers to politicians as naïve children, to magnates of business and the government as story tellers, to the Leo project as a three-headed dragon, etc. Relying on such metaphoric references, it might be assumed that the headline is built on the basis of the POLITICS IS A TALE metaphor. Petraškaitė-Pabst (2006), in her analysis of political conceptual metaphors, ascribes such metaphors to the field of folklore and draws attention to the frequency of these metaphors in the Lithuanian mass media. Therefore it might be said that metaphorical reference to politics as a folk tale is relatively conventionalized; in addition to its appearance in headlines, similar references can be found in articles (e.g. Petraškaitė-Pabst (2006) cites the following cases: "when we join the EU we will see rivers of milk and banks of pudding" ("kai įstosime į ES, paplūs pieno upės su kisieliaus krantais"), "a fairy-tale-like life" ("pasakiškas gyvenimas"), or the EU as "a land of miracles" and "the good fairy"), as well as in the readers' comments on websites.

In the headline "The Tales of the Land of Miracles: a Dragon and a Boy" the mental input space "Land of Miracles" is a separate multiple blend on its own, which integrates two mental input spaces, land and miracles. In the mental space of miracles, all the elements necessary for the blend are activated. As discussed above, all the mental spaces integrated into the same structure by conceptual blending influence one another. The blended space of the "land of Miracles" undergoes further elaboration and is used as a mental input space in a more complex structure, i.e. in a single-scope network. The second input space of the structure is the implied input space of Lithuania. The author relies on the reader to identify the implied referent by relying on the shared background knowledge, context and vital relations (e.g. the vital relations of Property and Similarity). The matching counterpart elements are projected into the generic space and selectively projected into the mental blended space. As a result, the blended space establishes a scenario in which Lithuania magically mana-

<sup>12</sup> Lithuanian headlines abound in everyday realia defined in terms of miracles; however, at this stage of research only the ironic headlines addressing Lithuania have been selected.



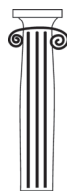


ges to achieve energy independence due to the “Leo” plan and those who designed it. The blended space is integrated into a double-scope network with the input space of ‘context/author’s position/background knowledge’, which contains contradictory information, e.g. that the plan of Leo will not make all sources of energy in Lithuania independent of foreign interests, that VP Market (the designer of the plan) is out to make a profit, and that the members of Parliament voted for the project not because it was reasonable but because they were given “sweets” in the form of 20 million Litas. The contrasting input spaces generate a clash which leads to an ironic shift of meaning: the author looks with irony at the situation in Lithuania and at those who believe in “miracles”. The pretended belief in miracles is incompatible with the actual situation and cannot be interpreted literally. Similarly, the same cognitive pattern is followed in the headline “The Tales of the Land of Miracles. Gediminas’ Dream” (“Stebuklų šalies pasakos. Gedimino sapnas”, delfi.lt), which refers to Prime Minister Gediminas Kirkilas and his plans. The metaphor simultaneously reveals the opposition between Lithuania and a land of miracles while pointing out the incongruity. To communicate the idea, the writer uses a commonly known sphere. As Lassan (2002) argues, the aim to transform an abstract concept, an idea, into an obviously sensual picture poses the necessity to find a metaphor which could equate an ambiguous aspect of an entity to a well-known realia: metaphor is built in such a way as to use a key word as a hint for communicating the subject’s model of behavior in a world where opposing values exist. In this way the author communicates not only how the focus/target space should be understood, but also how the content of the mental focus space should be assessed. In this case the communicated assessment is that of ironical negative attitude.

The double scope integration network, according to Fauconnier and Turner, “provides human beings with the ability to do remarkable compressions” (2002, 353) and enables the reader to build two contradictory scenarios as an inseparable whole while, at the same time, comprehending the input spaces as separate entities. The double-scope mechanism not only achieves the goals defined by Fauconnier and Turner (i.e. to “compress what is diffuse” and to “give the global insight;” (2002, 346)), but also makes the ironic attitude explicit. The ironic attitude is adopted when evaluating both the country (where “miracles” take place) and the Prime Minister (whose ambitions are similar to those of the Grand Duke).

The tendency to give ironic assessment to politics via the frame of tales can also be traced in such headlines as: “The Art of Envelopes and its Interpretation in the Land of the Looking-Glasses” (“Vokų menas ir jo interpretacija krevių veidrodžių krašte”, delfi.lt), “The Agreement of Three Parties or the Swan , Pike, and Crab” (“Trijų partijų sutartis, arba gulbė , lydeka ir vėžys”, delfi.lt), “The Socialdemocratic Tale of Grasshoppers about Getting Ready for Winter” (“Socialdemokratinė žiugų pasaka apie pasiruošimą žiemai”, delfi.lt), “About Tales, Fables, and Story-tellers” (“Apie pasakas, pasakėčias ir pasakorius”, delfi.lt), etc.

A typical idea of such political ridicule, according to Raskin (1985), is that politics, a political leader or the whole way of life of a certain country are not the way



they should be; the real situation is different from the one portrayed, and this creates the ironic effect.

Similarly to Lithuanian internet news headlines the mental structures of conceptual metaphors can be traced in American ironic headlines. Metaphoric irony in headlines targeted at America most frequently exploits the mental model of such base metaphor as *POLITICS IS SPORT*. In the input spaces, such irony encompasses contrastive elements, the conflict of which signals irony. For example the headline “We are Number 1” precedes an article criticizing America’s military policy, its volumes of armament and large numbers of military bases. The statement “We are Number 1” implies that the USA is winning a competition that has taken place among countries. Here irony makes use of the structure supported by the model of the conceptual metaphor *POLITICS IS SPORT*, which is not explicitly expressed in the form of a linguistic metaphor. As discussed above, the conceptual metaphor of Sports in political discourse highlights the superiority of physical power. In the headline under analysis, dominance and power are emphatically explicated. In this headline irony exploits a single-scope network, which is further integrated into a double scope network. However, the network is not a typical case as discussed in the works of Fauconnier and Turner. The headline explicitly provides only part of the components needed for the structure; the other part (i.e. the second mental input space) is implied. The first input space (sport), which serves as a “source” domain, contains such elements as: a sports match, competition, winning, champions, participants in a sports event, etc. The second input space is referred to by the inclusive pronoun “we”, which does not explicitly indicate the referent, but in this case implies America. It could be argued that, although the second mental input space is indicated by the pronoun “we”, it is still an implicit mental space. It encompasses such elements as: America, America’s military policy, its volumes of armament, other countries, the volumes of armament in other countries, etc. All the elements come from the frame of politics, and the conceptual metaphor that the irony is built on could be identified as *POLITICS IS SPORT*. The cross-space mapping between the elements of the inputs identifies the active relations: America is the winner of the first place, the volume of armament becomes a competitive event, other countries are other participants of a sports event. Due to the clash between the input spaces, an ironic shift of meaning takes place: the ironist looks down on a country that is proud of being number 1 in terms of weapons of war. Contextual knowledge and the decoded implied position of the author (or, in other words, the shared point of view) enables the reader to see the author’s pretense in supporting the pride of being Number 1. Consequently, the irony of the headline is comprehended as a double-scope network in which irony is provoked by the clash between two incompatible scenarios: in the first, politics is sport, and armament is a sports event, a competition to be won as becoming the winner enables the country to feel proud; in the second, increasing the volumes of armament is wrong in itself, and cannot be treated as an achievement to be proud of. The mechanism of conceptual blending enables us to activate both scenarios simultaneously (the outer space vital

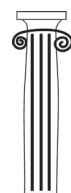




relation of Disanalogy undergoes compression into the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness), to identify the conflict of the scenarios (if the reader shares the same position with the author) and to understand the headline as ironic. The final blended space receives elements and implications from both mental input spaces. Though the mental space of sport is used as a “source” domain, not all of its implications are projected into the blended space (cf. Fauconnier and Turner): the intentionality is projected to the final blend from the input of sports, yet the evaluative attitude (negative) is projected from the input space of “context/author’s position/background knowledge”.

The implicit mental space of America facilitates the assumption that not only has the metaphor of sport been conventionalized in political discourse, but the utterance itself has become conventional. As mentioned above, the utterance could be considered at least partially conventionalized, as other headlines have been found following the same idea: “America Is Country Number 1” and “U.S. Takes Gold in Arms Olympics”. Such ironic utterances can be regarded as conventionalized from a few perspectives: first, due to the conventionalized linguistic metaphors based on the cognitive model of POLITICS IS SPORT in political discourse; second, due to the structure of the headline, which could be considered a template for ironic references, e.g.: “U.S. Takes Gold In Couch Potato Olympics” (mlive.com), “US Takes Gold at Computer-gaming ‘Olympics’” (newscientist.com), “USA Takes the Gold... In Whining” (*blogcritics.org*), etc. However, the use of such ironies is not limited to references to American realia. In headlines, the slot of America can also be filled by the name of any other country without losing any ironic implications. Analogical headlines with reference to Lithuania have already been discussed above.

Another conventional model of ironic headlines referring to America is based on the conceptual metaphor POLITICS IS BUSINESS. For example, the headline “This is America, Even Cancer Should Make a Profit” ridicules the tradition of a materialistic culture and way of thinking. Such irony is also ascribed to the category of literalness by Barbe (1995), as the irony of the headline coincides with the explicit non-ironic level of the utterance. The headline is treated as explicitly marked for irony (by the reinforcing words “even” and the modal “should”). Though, according to Muecke (1978, 365), “the markers of irony cannot be defined as infallible pointers to irony” and irony should be defined relying on “intention and communication” (*ibid.*), the explicit use of markers facilitates the decisions of the reader. The frames of the headline are structured along the pattern of the conceptual metaphor POLITICS IS BUSINESS which incorporates the mental structure of the conceptual metaphor ILLNESS IS A BUSINESS. The blending mechanism employed by irony in this case is a megablend that encompasses a few integration networks. “Cancer Should Make a Profit” follows a single-scope structure. The blend is based on metaphoric reference to an illness as a business, and integrates two mental input spaces: “Illness” and “Business” which undergo cross-space mapping to detect counterpart elements: illnesses – profitable business, sadness – happiness, expenses – profit, bad – good, etc. One element of both mental input spaces – money is projected into the generic space. Selective pro-



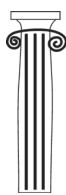
jection allows the elements – illness, profit, obligation, business – to be moved to the blended space. The integration follows a single-scope model, as the structure shares one organizing frame (the frame of business) which is carried to the blended space. As already mentioned, this integration structure is common to metaphoric irony, and here the mental input spaces correspond to the functions of “source” and “target” in metaphor theory. The blended space, relying on the headline, is understood as a constituent part of the “America” frame and is further integrated into a double-scope network, together with the input space of “context/background knowledge/author’s position”. The inputs in the structure do not share a generic space and communicate conflicting information. Yet, as Fauconnier and Turner (2002, 131) put it, “double-scope networks can operate on strong clashes between the inputs”. Instead of blocking the comprehension of the headline, the conflict of meanings gives a deeper insight into the meaning of the utterance and does not sound strange or inappropriate in the context. The double-scope network enables the reader to see two scenarios simultaneously (a negative America where even cancer should bring profit, and a positive prototypical America where profiting from a tragedy is inappropriate) as a single entity and at the same time to accept the ironic evaluative attitude communicated by the ironist. Here the evaluative attitude is based on the model of ILLNESS IS A BUSINESS, which, though infrequent, can also be traced in a few other headlines, e.g.: “Should Nursing Homes Be for Profit?” (altnet.org) and “How Breast Cancer Became Big Business” (altnet.org). Much more frequently, however, the headlines are organized along the model of the conceptual metaphor POLITICS IS BUSINESS, e.g.: “How Marketing The American Dream Caused Our Economic Crisis” (www.inc.com), “The American dream, for sale” (catholicjournal.us),

“Politicians For Sale – At Low Prices” (baltimoresun.com), “*American Dreams: Over Sold and Over Bought!*” (econintersect.com), etc. Such patterns are typical of the political discourse of the USA, Lithuania (Makarova, 2008), and the UK (Arcimavičienė, 2010).

In conclusion it should be said that both Lithuanian and American ironic headlines make use of a metaphoric mode, as the integration structures exploit the mental models of conceptual metaphors. Such headlines follow double-scope integration, which according to Fauconnier and Turner (2002) “is the hallmark of cognitively modern human beings” and has “the capacity for the strongest form of conceptual integration” (Turner, 2004, 90). Here the use of the conventionalized models of metaphors enables irony to be accessible even without its context.

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## KONCEPTUALIOSIOS METAFOROS IRONIŠKUOSE PASAKYMUOSE: INTERNETINĖS LIETUVOS IR AMERIKOS NAUJIENŲ ANTRAŠTĖS

Santrauka

**Pagrindiniai žodžiai:** *konceptualusis derinimas, ironija, konceptualiosios metaforos, integracinės struktūros, antraštės.*

Straipsnyje analizuojama 2006–2012 metų internetinių Lietuvos ir Amerikos naujienų antraščių ironija, kurios mentalinė struktūra pagrįsta konceptualiųjų metaforų modeliu. Taikoma G. Fauconnier ir M. Turnerio (2002) konceptualiojo derinimo teorija (jos teiginiai sietini su mentalinių erdvių ir konceptualiųjų metaforų teorijomis), leidžianti į

ironiją pažvelgti kaip į mentalinių erdvių derinimą. Remiantis šia teorija, atskleidžiama, kaip iš *įvesties* erdvių per atrankiąją projekciją kuriama nauja, ironiška prasmė. Atliekant lietuviškų ir amerikietišκών antraščių tyrimą pastebėta, jog antraštėms yra būdinga mentalinė konceptualiųjų metaforų struktūra. Metaforomis pagrįstose *įvesties* erdvėse esančių priešingų elementų susidūrimas lemia ironišką prasmės perkėlimą. Lietuviškos ir amerikietiškos antraštės būdinga ironija, pagrįsta POLITIKA yra SPORTAS ir POLITIKA yra PASAKA modeliais. Amerikietiškos antraštės dominuoja ironija, pagrįsta konceptualiųjų metaforų POLITIKA yra SPORTAS ir POLITIKA yra VERSLAS modeliais. Politiniame diskurse konvencionalizuotų konceptualiųjų metaforų modeliu grindžiama ironija užtikrina sklandesnį tiek implikuotų mentalinių erdvių, tiek viso ironiško pasakymo suvokimą net tais atvejais, kai nėra pateikiamas kontekstas.

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## CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS IN IRONIC REFERENCES: THE CASE OF NEWS HEADLINES OF LITHUANIAN AND AMERICAN WEBSITES

### Summary

**Keywords:** *blending, conceptual metaphors, irony, integration networks, headlines.*

In this study, irony is analysed applying the theory of Conceptual Blending, developed by G.Fauconnier and M.Turner (the theory developed out of two traditions of cognitive linguistics: the Theory of Conceptual Metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) and the Theory of Mental Spaces (Fauconnier, 1985)). Blending has been presented as a scientific model which encompasses and explains a variety of divergent phenomena, and shows how new meanings can emerge from old information. It claims to be capable of accounting for such a dynamic phenomenon as irony and treats irony as a complex mental operation, which exploits the mechanism of Conceptual Blending. In the analysis of Lithuanian and American news headlines it has been noticed that both Lithuanian and American ironic headlines make use of a metaphoric mode, as the integration structures exploit the mental models of conceptual metaphors, e.g., POLITICS IS SPORT or POLITICS IS A TALE in Lithuanian ironic headlines and POLITICS IS SPORT or POLITICS IS BUSINESS in American ironic headlines. The analysis shows that the use of the conventionalized models of metaphors enables irony to be accessible without its context. Irony, in its own way, exploits metaphors which have been conventionalized in political discourse in general. Metaphor-based input spaces (target and source) contain cardinaly contrary elements, the clash of which supports the ironic shift of meaning. Though certain common patterns of metaphor-based ironies in news headlines are detected, it should be mentioned that each country retains its idiosyncrasy.

