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The image of Russia through animal metaphors: A diachronic case study of American media discourse

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Abstract

The image of a country has a critical impact on the degree of its political, economic and cultural influence in the world. This indicates a need to understand various perceptions of a country that exist among other nations and mechanisms of their formation and change in an ever-shifting world. This qualitative case study seeks to examine the changing nature of wild animal metaphors employed to model the image of Russia in American media discourse in the XIX–XXI centuries. The study is limited by two source domains, namely, the beast and the bear. They were analyzed within particular contexts: American English, culture and media discourse. The research data were drawn from dictionaries and corpora. The dictionaries included etymological and explanatory entries, as well as those covering idioms, symbols, and metaphors. The corpora research data were collected from the Corpus of Contemporary American English and Chronicling America, a collection of historic digitalized texts. A total of 218 metaphors were selected from 4929 texts. The metaphors were studied through lexicographic, conceptual metaphor, culture-specific, corpus, discourse, and diachronic methods. The findings of this study suggest that the two metaphors "Russia is a beast" and "Russia is a bear" are frequently used in realizing the strategy of 'othering' in XXI century American media discourse. Still, their meanings allowed for variation and modification in the periods of the two countries' amity and cooperation. In the XIX century and in the years of US-Soviet alliance in WWII the metaphors could evoke positive images of Russia, thus, realizing the strategy of 'bridging' or 'belonging'. The contribution of this study has been to confirm that, whatever metaphorical projections exist in language and culture, historical factors determine choices in any sample of discourse. This could be important for understanding the mechanisms involved in modeling the image of modern Russia in foreign media discourses.

Keywords: *conceptual metaphor, animal source domain, country image, image of Russia, American media discourse, diachronic approach*

Зооморфные метафоры в моделировании образа России: диахронический анализ американского медиадискурса

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Аннотация

Образ государства влияет на позиционирование страны в мировом сообществе. Актуальность исследования связана с необходимостью понимания механизмов формирования этого образа и факторов, обусловливающих его трансформацию в условиях постоянно меняющегося мира. Цель исследования – выявить особенности эволюции концептуальных метафор, используемых для репрезентации образа России в американском медиадискурсе XIX–XXI вв. В статье мы ограничились двумя зооморфными метафорами со сферами-источниками «зверь» и «медведь». Смыслы, транслируемые метафорами, анализируются на материале американского английского в рамках американской лингвокультуры и медиадискурса. Источниками материала послужили авторитетные словари: этимологические, толковые, идиоматические, словари символов и метафор и корпусы текстов: COCA – Корпус современного американского английского языка и Chronicling America – корпус исторических оцифрованных текстов. Общее количество метафор, отобранных из 4929 текстов, составляет 218 единиц. Для анализа языкового материала привлекаются метод метафорического моделирования, лексикографический, лингвокультурный, корпусный, дискурсивный и диахронический методы. Результаты исследования показали, что в современном дискурсе рассмотренные зооморфные метафоры реализуют отрицательные смыслы, закрепленные в языке и культуре, и транслируют смыслы чуждости и инаковости. Однако те же метафорические единицы способны развивать дополнительные оценочные коннотации в исторических условиях геополитической дружбы и сотрудничества двух государств. В дискурсе XIX в. и в период союзничества во время Второй мировой войны метафоры моделируют положительный образ России, включают государство в круг «своих», нивелируя различия, существующие между странами. Исследование динамики метафор может дать результаты, важные для понимания особенностей моделирования образа современной России в зарубежном медиадискурсе, поскольку они свидетельствуют о прямой зависимости этого образа, смыслов и коннотаций метафор от экстрадискурсивного контекста.

Ключевые слова: *концептуальная метафора, зооморфная метафора, образ государства, образ России, американский медиадискурс, диахронический подход*

1. Introduction

The image of a country has always played a crucial role in politics and intercultural communication as it affects political, economic, military, and cultural dimensions and can influence decision-making. It remains as important in increasingly globalized media societies as it was centuries ago. As the process of

this image formation is ideological and linguistic in nature, it is a continuing concern within different academic disciplines, with linguistics being no exception. The external image, or how people around the world feel about the country, is a multidimensional concept based on knowledge about the country, cognitive assessments, affective, or emotional evaluation, and the country links, or the relations of the country with other nations (Berács & Malota 2000). Images formed about a foreign country can originate from knowledge that people get either directly from their own experiences or indirectly through various channels, with mass media being one of them.

Existing research recognizes the critical role of media discourse in shaping images of countries (Dolea et. al 2021, Giffard & Rivenburgh 2000, Jenes 2005, Kopylova & Kilina 2020). As noted by Zappettini et al. (2021), one cannot overstate "the role of the media in creating and swaying public opinion" (Zappettini et al. 2021: 589), which relates to modeling the image of a country to the full extent. This image is thought to be a set of salient beliefs which tend to be emotional, subjective, and biased, making stereotypes predominant in shaping perceptions of foreign countries, particularly ones with different political structures and cultural backgrounds (Arendt et al. 2015, Bouchat & Rime 2018, Cuddy et al. 2009, Dovidio et. al).

Society has been forming national stereotypes for centuries. Countries are known for different civilizational traits and peculiar habits or political, social and cultural norms that often tend to crystallize into metaphors that have come to be closely identified with a country or nation over time. Most research has emphasized the use and role of metaphorical framing in structuring and understanding stereotypes (Maass et al. 2014, Ervas 2017). It has commonly been assumed that the power of metaphors in the process of stereotyping is determined by their cognitive and emotional aspects: "since metaphors provide a vivid, condensed and image-evoking medium, the reader draws stronger stereotype-consistent inferences from metaphors than from presumably equivalent literal terms" (Borelli & Cacciari 2019).

Although extensive research has been carried out on understanding the means of the country image formation, few studies exist which focus on development and change of animal metaphors, admittedly used in modeling the image of the 'other / them' and portraying behavioral traits related to countries since ancient times. The study follows a qualitative case-study design, with an in-depth analysis of two fundamental schemas with the target domain 'Russia', namely, the source domains 'the bear' and 'the beast', to provide an understanding of their performance within particular contexts: linguistic (the English language), cultural (the American culture), and discursive ones (media discourse about Russia), with the time period for the latter starting from the XIX century and finishing up with the XXI century. The main reasons for choosing these source domains are their frequency and negative meanings, predicted by revulsion and fear felt toward the animals and by the dehumanizing view of the targets that they imply, with 'beast' being a generic

term for wild animals and 'bear' – a present-day symbol of Russia. The key research questions of the study are whether or not the two source domains that tend to evoke negative perceptions, when used to conceptualize "the other / them", allow for modeling any positive images of Russia, if that is the case, what the reasons influencing these shifts in the meanings are.

2. Theoretical framework

Conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson 1982) has fast become a key instrument in structuring and understanding a real world: one's whole life experience goes into creating and understanding metaphors. There are three things to consider when dealing with a conceptual metaphor: the source, the target, and the ground (what the source and the target have in common). Metaphor sources tend to be common, ordinary, old, prototypical, simple, and concrete aspects of life while typical metaphor targets are abstract, complex, and new. Metaphors give us a way to talk about the unknown through references to the known: "metaphor relies on what has been experienced before; it transforms the strange into the familiar" (Ozick 2021). The metaphor ground is what the metaphor source and the metaphor target have in common. People must see the item being referred to (the target) in relation to the basis of the comparison (the source) and then they must figure out the nature of the grounding, which is what the source and the target have in common.

Over the past decades, numerous studies have attempted to explain both universal and culture-specific nature of conceptual metaphors in language, culture, and discourse (Kövecses 2009, Kozlova 2020, Tran 2022). There is a consensus among scholars that the nature of universal metaphors is panchronic as they come from the collective unconscious, mirror all that man has experienced throughout the history of mankind and reflect similar thinking patterns and universal properties of language. Still, the use of any metaphor in the actual language depends on a great number of factors that affect and alter its meanings across different languages, discourses, and cultures.

Both universality and variation of metaphors fit into the scope of diachronic metaphor research (Allan 2008, Geeraerts 2015, Solopova & Chudinov 2018, Trim 2011). As Anderson states, "the diachronic dimension of metaphor in language offers a fuller understanding of the nature and importance of metaphor and of language itself" (Anderson 2017: 233). Up to now, the diachronic metaphor studies have tended to focus on the problems of historical evolution of figurative language (Díaz-Vera 2015, Smith et al. 1981), the origins of our present-day metaphoric conceptualization (Kövecses 2021, Trim 2007), changes in metaphorical models, clusters, and systems over time (Zeng et al. 2021, Solopova & Chudinov 2018), rationale and patterns of metaphor development in language (Cánovas 2015, Geeraerts 2015), culture (Kövecses 2005, Trim 2015), and discourse (Benczes & Ságvári 2018, Solopova & Kushneruk 2021). Factors thought to be influencing metaphor variations along the diachronic scale are historical

experiences, transmitted through language, social and cultural boundaries, cognitive preferences and patterns, properties of languages, which signals that metaphors greatly depend upon historical, cultural, social, psychological and discourse aspects (Gibbs 2017, Kövecses 2009, Littlemore 2019).

In the new globalized world and modern media societies, modeling and forming images of countries have become a central issue in political and media discourse. The concept of the country image, was first introduced by Boulding (1959) and defined as "the total cognitive, affective and evaluative structure of the behavioral units or its internal view of itself and its universe" (Boulding 1959: 120–1211). Currently, the role, effects, and means to form country images are a major area of interest not only for scholars in the fields of public diplomacy and international relations, but also for various adjacent domains such as discourse analysis (Dolea et al. 2021, Giffard & Rivenburgh 2000, Kopylova & Kilina 2020) and metaphor studies.

As the country image determines the degree of the country's political and economic influence in the international system, scholars have devoted considerable critical attention to understanding its nature, components, and effects from their areas perspectives. Most scholars, as is shown in (e.g., Kalinin & Ignatenko 2022, Ponton 2020, Solopova & Kushneruk 2021, Solopova & Chudinov 2018, Sun et al. 2021 among others), note that a) being a result of cognitive beliefs, stereotypes, and prejudices that people hold about the country, this image is fundamentally biased: it does not often correspond to or measure any objective reality in the national development, vice versa, this image is based on opinions and illusions, and interpreted through the filter of past experiences and expectations for the future. b) The country image is emotional: it consists of general feelings of liking or disliking, fascination or repulsion for the country. c) The country image, as any other media representation, is always constructed deliberately to convey a certain message, thus, its construction is affected by institutional, social, situational, discursive and even personal contexts. d) The country image is a dynamic concept: it possesses both constant components (a geographical area, population, history) and innumerable variables (a form of government, ideology, economic and technological development, military strength, cultural, social, religious, environmental, and other factors), with the latter influencing its melioration or deterioration at different historical periods. e) The country image influences and shapes the behavior of individuals, social groups and other nationalities towards the country. f) Metaphor is thought to be one of the fundamental and most frequent means of the country image construction.

One of the basic metaphors in classical political writing is thought to be an animal metaphor (Bisschops 2019, Dwyer 1979[2], Goatly 2007, Talebinejad & Dastjerdi 2005). The archetypal nature of the animal metaphor is traced back to

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[1] Boulding, Kenneth E. 1959. National images and international systems. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 3 (2). 120–131.

[2] Dwyer, Peter D. 1979. Animal metaphors: An evolutionary model. *Mankind* 12. 13–27.

ancient myths, tales, fables or legends (Bisschops 2019: 3). The model for metaphorization, developed by Dwyer (1979), accepts that "the domain of animals is more familiar than that of social existence and, thus, the former affords metaphoric possibilities for explication of the latter" (Dwyer 1979: 24–25). Goatly (2007) notes that the metaphor ground here lies in the fact that "humans, along with animals, are basically competitive and selfish; because of this reason and the scarcity of resources, humans, like animals, are involved in a competition for survival of themselves and their progeny" (Goatly 2007: 336). Linguistic or conceptual animal metaphors in English and other languages fall into several categories: a) domestic animals; b) wild animals; c) fish and water animals; d) insects; e) fantastic animals, etc.

Previous studies such as those conducted by Dobrosklonskaya (2021), Lung (2018), Ponton (2020), Solopova & Chudinov (2019) suggest that animals have always been a frequent source domain for modeling images of countries; their meanings and perceptions have constantly evolved throughout history (Dobrosklonskaya 2021, Lung 2018, Ponton 2020, Solopova & Chudinov 2019). A wide range of metaphorical connections and constant associations of a country with stereotypic properties of an animal indicate that this systematic mapping between the two domains of countries and animals is characteristic of political discourse. In her analysis of animal metaphors, Lung (2018) notes that "in the international 'jungle' the American eagle, the Chinese dragon, the Russian bear, the French rooster, and many other large and small beasts can either coexist peacefully or devour each other in a continuous quest to become the king of the jungle" (Lung 2018: 235–236). Considering interactions between humans and animals, DeMello convincingly unpacks the different identities humans fashion for themselves and for others through animals (DeMello 2012).

In the latter case animal names are used to describe characteristics of a country in a derogatory and demonizing manner (Ozyumenko & Larina 2021); animal imagery is then combined with effects of criticism, condemnation, hostility and fear, which results in "othering", i.e., a cross-cultural tendency to conceptualize "other / them" as in some way less than "us", by attributing negative characteristics to this country (Carver 2008: 162–163). The foundation stones of "othering" via metaphorical projections are wild animal metaphors. Amongst the wild animal source domain, the most popular is undoubtedly a large brutal beast. As noted by Lakoff and Johnson (1999), "a wild, unruly, unpredictable person is commonly conceptualized as a wild animal" (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 368), which is equally applicable to modeling a country's image. When a country is viewed as a brutal beast, it reflects both its status as an international pariah and a subconscious reinforcement for its punishment. However, commenting on the use of scary wild animal metaphors, Ponton (2020) points out that they often "represent a nexus of conflicting cultural attitudes, values and themes which cannot be reduced simply to membership of a category of dangerous animals" (Ponton 2020).

In the paper we are interested in the connotations of two wild animal metaphors in the English language and the American culture, and the way these metaphors are used to shape a country's image over time, particularly that of Russia, in American media discourse. The rationale behind concentrating on American media discourse about Russia and diachronic representation of its image is the fact that the current political scenario (the USA versus Russia) and mounting tensions between the two countries are of a primary concern for the public eye today. The image of Russia in modern American discourse is deeply negative (see, e.g., Ozyumenko 2017, Tang 2023, Wood 2023 among others). To better understand the mechanisms of Russia's image formation, it is crucial to look to the past to understand where it came from and whether Americans have always ascribed negative characteristics to Russia.

3. Data and methodology

The first reading of our corpus revealed that among animal imagery two metaphors in particular stood out for the frequency with which they occurred, namely, Russia as a BEAST and a BEAR. For this reason, we decided to focus on the specific cases of these metaphors. Methodologically, this case-study combined lexicographic, conceptual metaphor, culture-specific, corpus, discourse, and diachronic analyses. First, lexicographic, conceptual metaphor, culture-specific methods were applied when working with dictionaries. Several types of dictionaries were used to compile a generalized lexicographic (both linguistic and cultural) description of each word chosen as a source domain: a) an etymological dictionary offers a reliable account of the origin and history of the words (Online Etymology Dictionary); b) explanatory dictionaries provide the most comprehensive and accurate coverage of their meanings in present-day American English (New Oxford American Dictionary 2010, The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language 2018); c) dictionaries of idioms show the use of the words under analysis in proverbs, informal phrases, and common sayings in natural American English (Ammer 2013, Spears 1988); d) dictionaries of symbols help to explore their meanings collected from the worlds of mythology, archeology, psychology, literature, and history (Dictionary of Symbolism 1994, Online Symbolism Dictionary); e) metaphor dictionaries list the words in their figurative meanings and explain those basic metaphorical ideas that have influenced the way particular concepts are expressed in everyday contemporary English (Metaphors in English – MacMillan Dictionary, Pasanek 2015); f) a specialized dictionary of animal metaphors includes an illustration of the grammatical use of the animal metaphor; the date it was first recorded as metaphor in English (where possible); the name of the animal (or class of animals) that is the source of the metaphor; the date of the first recorded use of the animal name (Palmatier 1995).

Second, we focused on corpus, discourse, and diachronic analyses of the metaphors. Two representative collections of texts were chosen as sources of the data: the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) and Chronicling America: The National Endowment for the Humanities and the Library of Congress

(CA). COCA is a large and representative corpus of American English, containing texts from 1990 up to 2019 and having (among others) two special sections of popular magazines and newspapers. The range of the queries that we used when working with the corpus, limiting the date range from 2000 to 2019, was a) browsing a frequency list of the top 60,000-word list and searching by individual word (the word that we thought a possible source domain was to be included into the list (Fig. 1: for example, 'bear' as a noun ranks 1982 among top 60,000 lemmas (words) in the corpus), b) analyzing its collocates, clusters, and concordance lines: it was obligatory that some of them (collocates, clusters, or concordance lines) contained 'Russia' or 'Russian' (Fig. 2: for example, 'RUSSIAN BEAR' is registered in clusters for 'bear' as a noun and in concordance lines), c) interpreting its meanings and use in the context of the XXI century media discourse (Fig. 3).
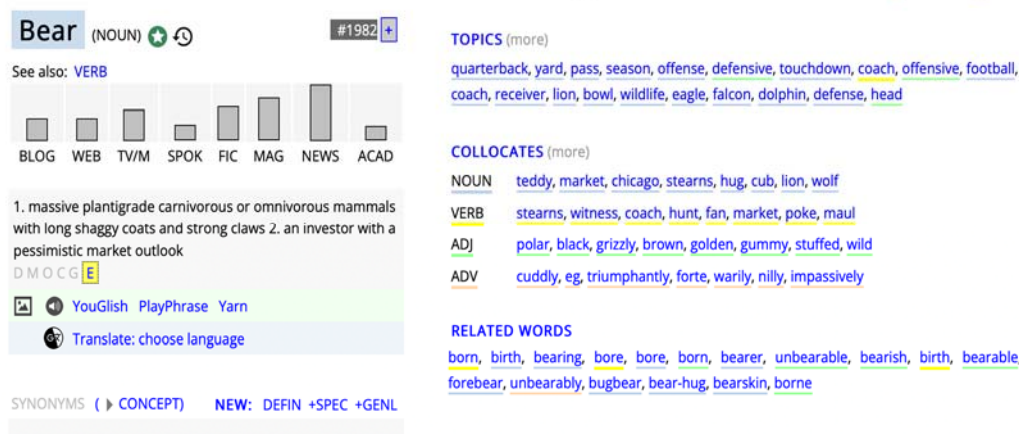

Fig. 1. Fragment of the search by individual word (BEAR as a noun) (COCA)

71	bears need	58	other bears	13	bears are playing
68	bear hunting	58	russian bear	13	bears no yds
67	bears defense	57	berenstain bears	13	bear stearns analyst

Fig. 2. Fragment of clusters for BEAR as a noun (COCA)

Fig. 3. Fragment of contexts for the cluster RUSSIAN BEAR (COCA)

The second corpus, used for collecting the data, CA, is a searchable database of US newspapers with descriptive information and select digitization of historic pages from 1770 up to 1963. The most common formats for storing texts found in

this digital archive are jpg and pdf. For this reason, the only possible way to collect the data from the corpus was to use the Advanced Search engine, limiting the search by language (English), period (1800–1899, 1900–1963), option of searching all the words that included the target domain (Russia) and a source domain (the name of the animal) within 5 words of each other (the fewest possible that the engine allows) (Fig. 4: for instance, the search results with the option of searching all the words (Russia, BEAR) within 5 words of each other in the date range from 1800 to 1899 contain 1739 texts).

Fig. 4. Fragment of the search results with the option of searching all the words (Russia, bear) within 5 words of each other (1800–1899) (CA)

The reader should bear in mind that there are some limitations, concerned with and determined by working with the corpora: a) not each wordform, found in the corpora, can be taken as an expression of the analyzed conceptual metaphors; b) not any target-source pairing, fixed in the corpora, can count as metaphorical; c) another limiting case concerns COCA: the search by individual word (Fig. 1) comprises the information about a lexeme (taken as a source domain in the research) in both direct and indirect meanings; only further analysis of its collocates, clusters, concordance lines (Fig. 2), and contexts (Fig. 3) allows for differentiating direct meanings of a lexeme from its specific, situated, metaphorical meanings; d) some limitations are imposed by CA corpus as well: as it stores digitalized documents of the XVIII–XX centuries, the quality of the text, processed by the Optical Character Recognition technology (OCR), greatly depends on the physical condition of the original source, including paper quality, color, fading and damage defects, which might affect the search results (for example, processed by OCR 'dear', 'fear', 'pear', etc., can be taken for 'bear'); e) another potential problem lies in the fact that CA does not have any linguistic mark-up (no grammatical tagging), thus, the search results could comprise all the homonymous lemmas (for instance, 'bear' as a noun and 'bear' as a verb), f) differences in time periods (the XIX century (1800–1899), the XX century: 1900–1963, the XXI century: 2000–2019) can also be accounted by the data, stored in the corpora.

These limitations made us forgo quantitative analysis in favor of qualitative: rather than discuss findings in terms of statistical patterns or trends derived from a

large sample, we focused on analyzing two conceptual source domains, following a number of procedures: a) based on the data, enlisted in the dictionaries, we compiled a generalized lexicographic (both linguistic and cultural) description of the words that comprises the scope of their rich and varied meanings in the language and shows the symbolic and cultural significance of each metaphor. b) Using the corpora data, we followed a reversed chronological order listing illustrative examples from newest (2000–2019) to oldest (1900–1963, 1800–1899): we started with the most recent data, as it is quite obvious that in the XXI century American media discourse about Russia the two metaphors should be quite negatively loaded, and moved backwards to fix the shifts in their meanings (if any) over time. c) All the texts were manually searched for metaphors. Besides the limitations listed above, it must be noted that a conceptual metaphor is not always expressed within the boundaries of a word or an expression; it is not necessarily dead or conventionalized; on the contrary, it is often live and novel. Moreover, it can be extended over several sentences or throughout the text, which proves the necessity to process the initial results of the corpus searches manually. The metaphors were identified and extracted from the metaphorical expressions with the help of metaphorical modeling method, following the procedures proposed by Chudinov et al. (2020, 2023). d) We examined both synchronic and diachronic instantiations of the two metaphors with the target domain 'Russia' in contexts of American media discourse, fixing their conceptual, cultural and discourse constancy or variation over time, and explaining those factors that underlie them.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. RUSSIA IS A BEAST *metaphor*

Turning now to the experimental evidence, it must be stated that the noun 'beast' originated from Middle English beste, from Old French, from Latin bēstia, which is of unknown origin (Online Etymology Dictionary). In Modern English it is used to denote "a) an animal other than a human, especially a large four-footed mammal; b) an animal, especially a dangerous or strange one; c) animal nature as opposed to intellect or spirit; d) a very large or powerful person or thing; someone brutal and contemptible (New Oxford American Dictionary 2010, The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language 2018). The meanings of many English idioms are driven by explicit and implicit understanding of the conceptual metaphor: *a whole different beast, feed the beast, in / into the belly of the beast, be no good to man or beast, a beast of burden, a beast with two backs, the nature of the beast*, etc. (Ammer 2013, Spears 1988). The complicated etymology underscores the ambiguous status of 'beast' in the metaphors of mind, and Old English shows the adjectival use of 'animal' mixed up with the attributive uses of the noun, with the medieval usage of 'animalis' varying from 'bestial' to 'spiritual'. Thus, metaphorically and symbolically 'beast' is assigned two meanings: "a brute creature, void of reason; a lewd, filthy, or inhuman person" (Metaphors in English

– MacMillan Dictionary, Pasanek 2015, Dictionary of Symbolism 1994). The Dictionary of Animal Metaphors lists the following meanings of 'beast': "a (human) beast is brutal, coarse, contemptible, cruel, and lacking in intelligence, morality, reason, and self-control (the XIV century) – i.e., is bestial or displays signs of bestiality, although such qualities are sometimes excused as being the nature of the beast (Palmatier 1995: 20).

Thus, there's sufficient similarity in basic, contextual and metaphorical meanings of 'beast' as recorded in the dictionaries: brutality, oddity, immorality, unpredictability, power, and a large size. As the source and the target must have much in common, BEAST, used with the target domain A COUNTRY, should represent a state, large in size (either in terms of its geopolitical power or territory), whose conduct on the global stage is seen as immoral, dangerous, strange, impulsive, and uncontrollable, which makes other actors in world politics either oppose this state or isolate it from the rest of the world. As noted by Steel (2020), "to be a beast is to be outside of all categories of custom or society" (Steel 2020), thus, the use of the metaphor representing a country as a demonic monstrosity of animals is likely to make one believe that it should be dealt with by using punitive measures.

Regarding the corpora data, it must be stated that BEAST as a noun ranks 3575 in COCA, it is found with the target domain RUSSIA in concordance lines (35 texts). In CA there are 37 search results for the period of 1800–1899 and 96 search results for the period of 1900–1963 (see the limitations in section 3). A total of texts selected for analysis is 168, with a number of metaphors being 53.

The very senses of the source domain BEAST with the target RUSSIA are actualized in examples 1–2:

(1) ***Russia* is *a rapacious beast*** *that seeks to expand its borders at the expense of its neighbors. It suffers from extreme paranoia and has done for centuries* (COCA: Aviation week, April 16, 2021).
(2) ***Russia is a cantankerous beast of a Nation*** *– and everybody in the United States seems to know that that's what is the trouble with the old bear. Maybe patience is a virtue after all, inasmuch as Russia is being pushed behind the Iron Curtain* (CA: Milford Chronicle, March 11, 1949).

In (1), the image of Russia is modelled through the BEAST metaphor that retains its negative meanings, registered in the dictionaries and accentuated by the attribute *rapacious* in the co-text: the country is seen as aggressive and greedy, living by "killing and eating" other states, having a huge appetite and a selfish desire for territorial possessions, with this irrational and persistent anxiety making it paranoid. Moreover, the country's thinking and behavior patterns are considered to have been invariable for centuries, which is explicitly represented by the tense and aspect verb-forms (Present Simple, denoting typical states, conditions, and actions, or something which is always true, and Present Perfect, expressing states or actions that started in the past and are still going on). The metaphor not only activates the

reader's fear of Russia, it provokes processes of exclusion and dehumanization. In (2) the senses of BEAST are approximately the same, accentuated by the attribute *cantankerous,* modeling Russia as an ill-tempered and uncooperative country. Compared with (1), example (2) contains an explicit marker of 'othering': a conscious assumption that the country poses a threat, and, thus, an unambiguous call to exclude it – *to push behind the Iron Curtain*. The use of RUSSIA IS A BEAST metaphor in examples (1–2) is highly affected by largely adversarial US-Russian relations in the current century and after World War II.

One interesting finding is that the negative meanings of RUSSIA IS A BEAST metaphor, which tends to symbolize evil, darkness, and violence, suggesting carnage and destruction (as has been shown above in the generalized lexicographic description of the word), are dramatically transformed and ameliorated under different geopolitical conditions: example (3) is from the XIX century American media discourse when American-Russian relations were in the period of mutual admiration and cooperation:

> (3) *Probably, it is something in our very dissimilarity that makes us have a friendly regard for each other. "Like seeks unlike," they say. Perhaps surly old* **Russia***, like* **the good-natured beast of the fairy tale***, is attracted toward America by her brave beauty. Perhaps fair and light-hearted America loves Russia on account of* **that giant strength which she uses so little like a giant***. But whatever the underlying reason may be, it would seem that international sympathy, like kissing, goes by favor, and, like love, "comes without thy call."* (CA: The New York Herald, October 22, 1871).

The names of both characters – Beauty (America) and the Beast (Russia), presented in (3) – are retained from the fairytale. In the original tale these "talking names" identify the characters with their most important traits, similarly, in the context of the XIX century media discourse America was thought to be beautiful, brave, fair, and light-hearted, while Russia was seen as old and surly, but good-natured and having immense strength. While recognizing and celebrating the differences between the countries (*like seeks unlike*), the journalists actively participated in co-creating a world, or an international society based on amity, mutual understanding and cooperation, which the two countries could both belong to (*a friendly regard, international sympathy, kissing* that *goes by favor, love* that *comes without thy call*). Quite remarkable in (3) is the intertext *love "comes without thy call"*[3] that underlines not only the senses of America's deep affection for Russia

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[3] What love is, if thou wouldst be taught,
Thy heart must teach alone, –
Two souls with but a single thought,
Two hearts that beat as one.
And whence comes **love**? Like morning's light,
It **comes without thy call**.
And how dies love? A spirit bright,

but also the two countries' solidarity (*Two souls with but a single thought, two hearts that beat as one*) and shapes their ideal relationships in the future (*Love never dies at all*), which alludes to the most popular endings in fairytales (*and they lived happily ever after*). Both the senses rendered by RUSSIA IS A BEAST metaphor of that period and the rhetoric about Russia were extremely different: instead of breaking and pulling away from it – a strategy of 'othering', typical of the XXI and XX centuries American media discourse, there was a tendency to use a strategy of 'bringing' and 'belonging', reaching across to Russia and towards shared interests and connection.

4.2. RUSSIA IS A BEAR metaphor

The origin and historical development of the noun 'bear' can briefly be described as follows: Old English *bera* originated from Proto-Germanic *bero*, literally 'the brown'. Some etymologists connect the Germanic word with Latin *ferus* 'wild', as if it meant 'the wild animal of the northern woods'. It is noted that 'bear' has been symbolic of Russia since 1794 (Online Etymology Dictionary). Currently, 'bear' is a polysemous word, having multiple meanings; among them are "a) any of various usually omnivorous mammals of the family Ursidae that have a shaggy coat and a short tail and walk with the entire lower surface of the foot touching the ground; b) large, clumsy, or ill-mannered person; c) something difficult or unpleasant" (New Oxford American Dictionary 2010, The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language 2018). Modern English offers many examples of bear-related idioms and phrases: *angry / cross / hungry / gruff as a bear, cranky as a bear with a sore paw, like a bear with a sore head, bears in the woods, to growl like a bear, to have a bear by the tail, a bugbear*, etc. (Ammer 2013, Spears 1988). Native American teachings emphasize the spiritual or symbolic value of animals. Of all the animals, it is the bear that they hold in highest regard. There is a duality or ambivalence that adds power to the symbol. In Native American mythology, the bear characteristics range from "wise and noble, morally upright but somewhat stupid and gullible, to aggressive and intimidating, but in most cases, bears do not bother and harm people who have not done anything wrong" (Native American Bear Mythology)[4]. Symbolically and metaphorically, it is stressed that the bear is a creature of contrasts: it possesses enormous strength and yet generally thrives on fruit and honey. Because of its habit of hibernation during winter months, it can stand for resurrection. In Jungian psychology, the bear represents danger caused by the uncontrollable content of the unconscious and is associated with someone or something cruel and crude. It was the emblem for the kingdoms of Persia and Russia, and appeared on the flags of Russia and California (Dictionary of Symbolism 1994, Metaphors in English – MacMillan Dictionary, Online Symbolism Dictionary, Pasanek 2015). The Dictionary of Animal

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Love never dies at all! (Halm 1997)

[4] *Native American Bear Mythology.* http://www.native-languages.org/legends-bear.htm (accessed 23 April 2023).

Metaphors defines 'bear' as "a) an animal that has a huge size, great strength and endurance, b) a carnivore that relentlessly pursues its prey and is extremely difficult to stop, even with a high-powered rifle" (Palmatier 1995: 18).

As can be noted from the definitions above, the components constituting the meanings of 'bear' are contradictory: an incredible size, strength, power, endurance, ferocity, danger, clumsiness, stupidity, and crudeness. Having A COUNTRY as its target domain, BEAR should represent a mighty, sizable, formidable state, a 'master of survival', and a 'powerful hunter' that is extremely difficult to stop when it pursues its aims.

If we now turn to the data obtained from the corpora, it must be stated that BEAR as a noun ranks 1982 among top 60,000 lemmas (words) in COCA. RUSSIAN BEAR is registered in clusters for BEAR as a noun, and in concordance lines (100 texts). In CA there are 1739 search results for the period of 1800–1899 and 2922 search results for the period of 1900–1963 (see the limitations in section 3). A total of texts selected for analysis is 4761, with a number of metaphors being 165.

The results of the study show that BEAR is often used as a source domain of metaphors when referring to the image of Russia, which supports the idea that it has been a symbol of Russia in American media discourse for centuries. As the bear is among the most dangerous creatures in the wild, it is conceptually quite natural to see "elements of (this) animal anatomy as types of (the country's) weapons and armor, performing the same basic functions" (Izdebska 2016) as illustrated in (4–6):

(4) ***The bear's teeth and claws*** *were Russia's nuclear arsenal* (COCA: Time, August 3, 2022).

(5) *I sincerely hope that soon **the Russian Bear** will **stick his sharp pointed paws** in Hitler's assets* (CA: The Apache Sentinel, February 16, 1945).

(6) *THE EASTERN QUESTION by Lillian H. Picken*
The Russian Bear *is gaunt and long.*
*His scent is keen, **his paw is strong**:*
The Chinese Empire rubs his flanks;
*His **back** scrapes all the Arctic banks;*
His tracks are swashed on Okhotsk beach;
Two continents within his reach:
He drinks from Black and Baltic Seas,
*Poor Poland crushed between **his knees**…*
The Russian Bear *is gaunt and strong,*
His patience great, his future long:
No Christian rite will he revoke.
He'll gently hold Mahomet's yoke.
He's laid his jaws *in Turkey's lap:*
He's put his paws *on Turkey's map.*
No hostile declaration tells –
He means to use the Dardanelles
                      (CA: The Iola Register, November 13, 1896).

The most obvious finding to emerge from the analysis is that RUSSIA IS A BEAR metaphor as well as the bear body parts metaphors (a paw, a jaw, a back, a knee, etc.), which activate related concepts and images, does not focus only on "Russia's barbarism and unpredictable behavior" or serve as "tacit acknowledgement of the possibility that the Russian bear may turn aggressive when it feels threatened" as was shown in earlier findings (Pynnöniemi 2015: 2, Solopova & Chudinov 2019: 59) and represented in (4) in the XXI century American media discourse.

In contrast to that, in (5) the use of the metaphor realizes positive senses: the Russian bear is expected to successfully use its powerful armaments against the common enemy and to defeat him. A possible explanation for the positive senses of the metaphors might be that example (5) is dated February 1945, when the two countries were allied in World War II to oppose the Axis powers. In (5) the efficiency of the Russian Bear's weapons – its strong paws with enormous claws – is accentuated thrice: in the meaning of the verb-predicate *will stick* (*pierce* with a *pointed* instrument, to kill by *piercing*) and the attributive use of two closely related synonyms expressed by the adjectives *sharp* (adapted to cutting or *piercing*, having a thin keen edge or fine *point*) and *pointed (sharp,* obviously directed to a particular person or thing) (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language 2018).

There are certain similarities between the connotations of the bear-related metaphors in (5) and (6). In the latter case a 64-line poem made up of eight stanzas (400 words), is built around extended metaphorical mappings. The opening line sets up the metaphor (*the Russian Bear*) for the entire poem. Its anaphoric use at the beginning of each stanza emphasizes and reinforces the metaphorical ideas, with the content of each stanza serving as an extended metaphor meant to enhance the poem's premise: *the Russian Bear* is a highly capable and opportunistic hunter. The country's foreign policy and territorial expansion evoke a broad set of associations with the way bears hunt. The image of the Russian Empire is modelled as that of a hungry, strong, and heavily armed bear that uses everything to spot, chase and capture its prey (*a keen scent, strong paws, a right hind paw, a left hind paw, wily claws, jaws, knees, etc.*). Still, the Russian Bear's assertive behavior on the international stage doesn't seem to evoke a negative emotional response. Russia's ambitions and desires are considered justified and undisputable (6): *And who shall dare his right impeach?* Its manners and approaches in solving international problems are seen as direct, acceptable and worthy of respect (6): *The Great Bear growled – Japan retired.* Moreover, the future of the country is modelled as full of new opportunities to satisfy its urges, needs, and desires (6): *His need is great; his hope is strong; His envy keen, desire is strong; His patience great, his future long.* The power of the Russian Bear is the very recurring idea that ties together all the stanzas of the poem. The positive senses of the BEAR metaphor in the XIX century American media discourse are consistent with those of the BEAST metaphor, analyzed in 4.1. These wild animal metaphors are not used to demonize Russia and create fear around the perceived "Other", on the contrary, they activate positive

meanings, portraying Russia as a strong and powerful ally, recognizing its needs and goals, and understanding its perspective.

Thus, when Russia was a close US ally, it was metaphorically 'rated' in a favorable light in American media discourse; when it had tensions with the USA, it was viewed overwhelmingly negative as a critical threat. With respect to RUSSIA IS A BEAR metaphor, the present findings partly mirror those observed in earlier studies. They further support the idea that the XIX century American media discourse about Russia primarily centered on the country's power, strength, support and friendliness that were positively evaluated (Solopova & Chudinov 2019). The same holds true for the image of Russia and the Soviet Union in the WWII media discourses of the Allied powers: America, Britain, and France (Dobrosklonskaya 2021, Solopova 2019, Solopova & Saltykova 2019). In the case of RUSSIA IS A BEAST metaphor, prior studies have noted neither its use in modeling the image of the country nor variations of its senses across time.

5. Conclusion

Metaphor offers a fascinating study of the way in which language, culture and discourse are structured and work. As the international country image, transmitted via mass media, often influences and shapes the behavior of other nations towards the country, the means used to form it, including the conceptual metaphor, remain one of the most significant current discussions in various areas of research. This qualitative case study presented two contextualized profiles of the metaphors, namely, RUSSIA IS A BEAST and RUSSIA IS A BEAR, and traced the developmental pathways of strong animal (beast) imagery to develop both positive and negative qualities in American English, American culture and American media discourse about Russia (XIX–XXI centuries). The findings suggest that Americans have conceptualized Russia as a bear and a beast, cognitively applying all the connotations of the animals to the Russian nation, so that they might have a framework for understanding the way Russia behaves. The two metaphors have been used to represent Russia in American media discourse over centuries. It can be explained by two core reasons: first, by the common ground between the source and the target domains as the country whose image is modeled is a very strong and assertive nation; second, by the extensive use of these metaphors in realizing the strategy of 'othering', which makes it easy to tell and believe stories of 'us versus them', consequently, supporting practices that dehumanize 'the Other / them'. Because of the competitive nature of strong nations, most of this imagery tends to be negative, but at the same time respectful.

Although the current study is based on the analysis of a small sample of animal metaphors, it contributes additional evidence that suggests that metaphor is a malleable tool in producing the image of the country: when the meanings of the source domain, that primarily tends to evoke negative associations and images in language and culture are ambiguous (as is the case with the BEAR metaphor), and even when they are not (as is the case with the BEAST metaphor), in discourse the metaphor can still realize explicit positive connotations and build geopolitical

'bridges' across differences between the countries. Whichever negative metaphorical projections exist in language and culture, the one, chosen in discourse, is influenced by the historical context: positive meanings of the two metaphors are found in the XIX century media discourse (in the time of America's longest and perhaps most important international friendship when the United States and Russia supported each other in the international arena), and in the years of World War II which forged an alliance between the once-opposing countries to overcome a history of ideological conflicts and work toward a common goal (1941–1945).

The evidence from this research provides an opportunity to advance our knowledge of metaphors used to form the image of Russia abroad. It can be seen that, when analyzed diachronically, the senses and connotations of one and the same metaphor with RUSSIA as its target domain vary across time in American media discourse. This is evident in the case of the two metaphors analyzed in the paper. These shifts are not gradual (from negative to positive or, vice versa, from positive to negative) but situationally conditioned, resulting from deliberate choices of media professionals, influenced by a complex combination of historical circumstances.

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