



<https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-31509>


EDN: KQNMHU

Research article / Научная статья

## Taking back control: The role of image schemas in the Brexit discourse

Victoria MARTÍN DE LA ROSA  

*Complutense University, Madrid, Spain*

 [mvmartin@ucm.es](mailto:mvmartin@ucm.es)

### Abstract

Can image schemas sustain the discourse on Brexit while building up emotional and evaluative dimensions in the process? This paper analyzes the embodied meaning used in the Brexit discourse as seen through the lens of the pro-leave newspaper (The Telegraph). By way of a discourse-based approach, the main goal of this study is to show the persuasive role that two recurrent image schemas (CONTAINMENT AND FORCE) play in the characterization of the Brexit discourse, which were used to evoke strong feelings of fear and anger to mobilize readers into taking a defensive position against the EU at the time of the referendum. Regarding the material to be analyzed, a corpus of 43,576 words was compiled, distributed in 34 opinion articles and 13 leading articles, from May 22 to June 22, 2016. The data were analyzed from the perspective of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, where the embodiment of the mind plays a key role. The analysis reveals that the use of the metaphor scenario ‘take back control’, bringing together the use of image schemas and conceptual metaphor, galvanizes the readership’s support against the EU through the use of this realistic formula in a less cognitively demanding manner. The study of image schemas seems to provide an important avenue for understanding the representation of complex political issues such as that of Brexit, underpinned by the use of highly compressed and simple information with a deliberate emotional load.

**Keywords:** *political discourse, Brexit discourse, embodiment, image schemas, containment, conceptual metaphor*

### For citation:

Martín de la Rosa, Victoria. 2023. Taking back control: The role of image schemas in the Brexit discourse. *Russian Journal of Linguistics* 27 (2). 276–296. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-31509>

---

© Victoria Martín de la Rosa, 2023




This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/legalcode>

## Возвращение контроля: роль схемы-образов в дискурсе о Брексите

Виктория МАРТИН ДЕ ЛА РОСА  

*Мадридский университет Комплутенсе, Мадрид, Испания*

 [mvmartin@ucm.es](mailto:mvmartin@ucm.es)

### Аннотация

Могут ли схемы-образов служить опорой дискурса о Брексите, при этом придавая ему эмоциональную окраску и оценочность? В статье анализируется концептуализация Брексита в газете *The Telegraph*, поддержавшей выход Великобритании из ЕС. Цель данной статьи, основанной на дискурсивном подходе, – показать, какую роль в дискурсе о Брексите играют две повторяющиеся схемы-образов – СДЕРЖИВАНИЕ и СИЛА, используемые, чтобы вызвать чувства страха и гнева и таким образом заставить читателей занять оборонительную позицию против ЕС во время референдума. Для анализа был создан корпус материалов объемом 43 576 слов, содержащихся в 34 аналитических и 13 передовых статьях (за период с 22 мая по 22 июня 2016 года). Анализ данных проводился на основе Теории концептуальной метафоры. Результаты показывают, что применение метафор, описывающих сценарий «возвращение контроля», в котором соединяются схемы-образов и концептуальные метафоры, способствуют усилению настроений о выходе из ЕС путем использования этой реалистической формулы, не требующей при этом сильного когнитивного напряжения. Изучение схем-образов – весьма плодотворный путь к пониманию репрезентаций сложных политических проблем, таких как Брексит, подкрепляемых использованием в сжатой форме простой, но при этом эмоционально нагруженной информации.

**Ключевые слова:** *политический дискурс, дискурс о Брексите, воплощение, схемы-образов, сдерживание, концептуальная метафора*

### Для цитирования:

Martín de la Rosa V. Taking back control: The role of image schemas in the Brexit discourse. *Russian Journal of Linguistics*. 2023. V. 27. № 2. P. 276–296. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-31509>

## 1. Introduction

This paper is set in the context of Brexit, which is the way the separation process between the United Kingdom and the European Union (UK and EU, henceforth) was commonly referred to. The concept appeared on stage in May 2012, eight months before the Prime Minister David Cameron used it in public for the first time announcing he would be holding a referendum and rethinking the relationship of the UK with the EU. Three years later, on June 23, 2016 the UK held a national referendum to decide whether they wanted to remain a member of the EU or leave it. The election resulted in 51.9 percent of the population voting in favor of leaving the EU, which was the opposite to what many experts had predicted (Jennings & Fischer 2016, Koezler, Malreddy & Tronicke 2020, Lavery 2019). With a few exceptions, such as those of London, Northern Ireland and Scotland, mostly every other region voted to leave. This referendum highlights the Euroscepticism pervading the UK, which was already evident back in 1973 when

this country joined the European Economic Community (EEC, henceforth) mainly “motivated by a narrow economic prospect: to access the benefits of European free trade” (*The Economist*, 3 March 2014). Over time, the perceived increase in the amount of power and regulations coming from European institutions made many British people want to step back, as the presence of the EU was felt to be overwhelming when it came to discussing internal issues such as economic policies, sovereignty or immigration control. Immigration became a particularly hot issue since the 2015 European migrant crisis, when the number of asylum seekers in Europe surged to a record 1.3 million people from 1985 (Pew Research Center 2016). As a result, disapproval of the EU’s management of the refugee crisis was very widespread in the UK (70%) and other EU countries, which very likely marked a change of tide in the relationship with the rest of the EU members (CIDOB 2016).

In such a remarkable political event in Britain’s history, the media, in particular newspapers, took a very active role with an extensive coverage of the issue, through detailed opinion columns and leading articles, discussing the pros and cons of Britain’s membership. In fact, newspapers’ involvement in the coverage of the campaign was felt to be highly influential in the final outcome (Barnet 2016, Khabaz 2018, Seaton 2016). At this point one may wonder how it was possible that such a result occurred when the expected outcome was the opposite: a vote to remain. In order to gain deeper insight into this issue, the language of *The Telegraph*, a right-wing and clearly pro-Brexit newspaper (YouGov 2017), will be analyzed in order to understand why the message conveyed to its readers turned out to be so effective.

Since the analysis will be conducted from a cognitive perspective, the focus will be on the cognitive organization of this kind of discourse to understand some of the thought processes readers are guided through by journalists—all of them columnists of *the Telegraph* in this case—and contributors to the paper—particularly Boris Johnson, as will be seen—emphasizing the special role of image schemas, either working on their own or as part of metaphors. To this end, the focus will be placed on one tenet of this pro-Brexit position, which claimed that, by exiting the EU, Britain would ‘take back control’ of its borders and of its own destiny as a country, while regaining its identity. In other words, this phrase, which compresses much information, works well as a point of access into the cognitive operations of image schemas which will be analyzed.

This paper is divided into the following sections. Firstly, image schemas and their important role in the conceptualization of the discourse on Brexit are discussed. Secondly, the compilation of the corpus and the methodology used are addressed. The analysis of two particular image schemas, containment and force, and their potential as source domains to structure abstract concepts are detailed in the third section. Finally, some conclusions are drawn in the last section.

## 2. Theoretical framework

Within Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), the embodiment of meaning plays a central role when humans make sense of what goes on around them. This theory, which claims that the mind is inherently embodied and that our thinking will be constrained by basic-level image schemas, was put forward by Lakoff and Johnson in their seminal publication (1980). This was followed by many other writings by Lakoff (1987, 1990, 1993, 2014), Lakoff and Turner (1989) and Johnson (1987), which laid the foundations for this new approach to meaning, where an image schema was portrayed as “a dynamic pattern that functions somewhat like the abstract structure of an image, and thereby connects a vast range of different experiences that manifest this same recurring experience” or as a “continuous structure of an organizing activity” (Johnson 1987: 2, 29).

However, different dimensions of image schemas have been explored over the last two to three decades. From a psychological point of view, evidence has been provided from the field of developmental psychology by different authors, where they rejected that image schemas were only abstract mental entities and called for a distinctive psychological status, as can be seen in the work by Gibbs and Colston (1995), Gibbs and Berg (2002) or Gibbs (2005), when claiming that image schemas are “embodied simulations that are created on-the-fly in the very moment of understanding” (Gibbs 2005: 122). On the other hand, in cognitive anthropology different scholars have taken a more cultural approach to cognition. This is evidenced in the work by Quinn (1991), where aiming at a more discourse-based approach, she studied image schemas in their context of use; along the same lines, Kimmel (2005) argued that the study of schemas had to be combined with a more “context-sensitive vantage point” (Kimmel 2005: 287). Some of these proposals appeared together in the edition by Hampe (2005) *From perception to meaning: Image schemas in cognitive linguistics*, where, as a main line of thinking, Johnson claimed that “additional strata of meaning, such as the social and affective dimensions”, needed to be analyzed (2005: 30) for a full understanding of image schemas instead of focusing on their maximal schematicity and abstract character.

A more “situated” account of image schemas (Kimmel 2005) should provide readers with some insight into the intentionality and emotional character of image schemas in very particular settings. This line of work, where a link-up has been established between image schemas and a specific emotional value, has already been discussed by some authors (Felices Lago & Cortés de los Ríos 2009, Velasco Sacristán & Cortés de los Ríos 2009). Nowadays, the claim of the centrality of embodiment of image schemas and their importance in cognition has continued to be explored and elaborated on by many other authors: Peña Cervel (1998, 1999) in the expression of emotion; Forceville (2006, 2017) and Forceville & Jeulink (2011) in multimodal discourse; Gibbs (2014) in psychological settings; Kecskes (2005) in the field of bilingualism; Yu (2009) in a cross-cultural context; Saslaw (1996) in the field of music, among others.

In this paper the main goal is to show the role image schemas play in the conceptualization of the discourse on Brexit while contributing to the body of literature and provide these schemas with a more contextualized and situated account. In particular, there are two schemas that figure prominently in the data under examination: container and force, which are good evidence of our bodily perception and thinking (with an inside/outside) and our functioning in the environment subjected to all types of forces. Furthermore, as will be seen in the analysis section, some conceptual metaphors where “source domains are structured by ‘image schemas’ that show enduring patterns of bodily experience” (Gibbs 2014: 170) will also be addressed.

While pursuing the main goal mentioned above, some facets of image schemas will be taken into account:

1. Both container and force schemas will be part of embodied source domains in some conceptual metaphors.

2. The intentional and emotional character behind the use of image schemas are likely to boost their psychological reality (Gibbs 2005). Hence, in the case of Brexit, proponents intensified the emotional impact of their discourse through the use of these cognitive devices (Musolf 2021, Dancygier 2021).

3. Making sense of container and force image schemas will involve resorting to cultural knowledge.

### **3. Corpus and method**

#### **3.1. Corpus**

The corpus for this study consists of 34 opinion articles —distributed in two groups of 12 articles in May (11,157 words) and 22 in June (22,939 words)— and 13 leading articles —grouped in five leading articles in May (2,292 words) and eight in June (7,188 words)— amounting to 43,576 words retrieved from *The Telegraph* from May 22 to June 22, 2016. The reason why that period was chosen is because, over the four month-period (21 February to 22 June, 2016) in which EU referendum news was monitored by the Reuters Institute from Oxford University, the last thirty days in that period accounted for about half of all EU referendum news (Levy, Asland & Bironzo 2016). Furthermore, that fourth-week period leading to the referendum was presented, by *The Telegraph*, to the audience as a dramatic moment of rupture, as can be seen in the following headline “Vote leave and help change the course of European history” (22 Jun/ 2016 – Allister Heath) (Breeze 2023).

The criterion to compile the corpus was to include the opinion columns and leading articles that contained any of the following two key words: ‘Brexit’ (as that is the topic of our search) and ‘the EU Referendum’ (as one of the critical moments in the ‘Brexit process’).

### 3.2. Method

The two image schemas that feature prominently in the discourse to be analyzed, as already mentioned, are container and force schemas.

The CONTAINER schema is good evidence of how our embodied perception is projected onto other entities or processes. This container consists of a bounded area made up of an interior, an exterior and a boundary. As part of its logic, it can be said that everything must be either inside or outside the container due to the existence of the boundary, which clearly differentiates the two regions. Furthermore, if something is placed inside it, it will be affected by the rules applying in the interior; whereas if it moves outside, those rules will no longer apply (Johnson 1987, see also Peña 2001). In turn, the space of containers is limited, which means that if an agent or even another container enters inside, the space will be reduced.

On the other hand, the FORCE schema plays a key role “in our efforts at comprehending our experience” (Johnson 1987: 42). The main features highlighted by Johnson (1987: 43) are the following: 1) force is always experienced through interaction, while negotiating the environment; 2) our experience of force involves movement through space in some direction; 3) the object affected by the force follows a path of motion; 4) forces have origins and can be directed to targets by agents; 5) forces have degrees of power or intensity; 6) there is always a structure or sequence of causality involved due to the fact that it is experienced through interaction. Furthermore, Johnson (1987: 45–47) differentiates seven common types of force schemas, which, wherever possible, will be illustrated with examples in the analysis section:

- Compulsion: where an agent or entity is moved by external forces (human or non-human).
- Blockage: an agent or entity encounters obstacles along the way that block the passage.
- Counterforce: an agent or entity collides with a force with the result that neither can go anywhere.
- Diversion: two colliding forces result in a change of direction by the agent or entity.
- Removal of restraint: a potential barrier is removed so that the movement in that direction is allowed.
- Enablement: acts of manipulation or movement are possible due to the power of an agent.
- Attraction: an agent or entity is drawn towards an object or place.

As stated by Johnson (1987: 48), the previous list is just a selection of the most important and recurrent types of image schemas that play a role in our understanding of ‘force’.

### 4. Analysis

In this section, we will focus on the already mentioned slogan ‘take back control’ since it works as the background against which much of the pro-Brexit

discourse is set. In fact, this phrase is a good example of the concept of ‘scenario’ suggested by Musolff (2006, 2016, 2017) to account for the multifunctionality of political metaphor, covering its evaluative, emotional and persuasive dimensions and without losing sight of the context in which they have to be negotiated (Jiménez Yañez & Breeze 2020). Hence, the category of ‘scenario’ is considered as a kind of mini-narrative including a solution that seems to be “ethically correct, self-evident and practicable at the source level” which is projected as equally desirable in the target domain (Musolff 2020: 312). In a highly compressed manner, hearers are presented with a formula which sounds compelling and leads to recommendations for workable and natural solutions resulting from the metaphoric inferences established at the level of the metaphor scenario. In this case, readers are provided with a convincing explanation to vote *leave* in this referendum: the need to take back control both in immigration issues and in their desired destination as a country. Concerning immigration, the container metaphor allows gaining an insight into the issue of the “uncontrolled immigration” coming into the country, in an attempt to show that there is a choice to keep out what is not wanted; whereas to address the issue of their desired destination, inextricably linked to the very sovereignty of the country, the force schema becomes an important element since it offers an understanding of how, by belonging to the EU, the country is moving in the opposite direction they actually want to go.

However, the first thing to lay bare is the implicit presupposition in stating that claim —“as one skillful way by which authors are able to imply meanings” which are not explicitly given (Machin & Mayr 2012: 137)— where a switch is indicated by the use of the adverb ‘back’: if you need to take back control, that will be so because the control you once had has been lost at some point along the way, which explains: a) why the emotion of fear of external dangers is likely to arise (Charteris-Black 2006); and b) why some measures need to be put in place to regain that control, as an object to be grabbed, before it is too late. In the case at stake, this presupposition is repeated so often (32 tokens) that its content —the fact that the control of the country has been lost by current politicians— appears to be naturalized and self-evident (Jakubowski 1992).

This study will proceed by analyzing the two image schemas, container and force, plus a combination of both, frequently found in our corpus, while providing examples to illustrate the points made.

#### **4.1. Container schema**

As has been stated by the Migration Observatory (2022), immigration was clearly one of the salient issues discussed in the EU Referendum held on June 23, 2016. In order to understand why that was the case, it is key to pay attention to a decision taken by the Labor government in 2004, since it had long lasting political implications. In May 2004, the EU was enlarged with the acceptance of ten new member states, the majority from Central and Eastern Europe. The UK was one of the three member states, together with Sweden and Ireland, which did not ask for

any transitional period in the ability of citizens from those newly joined countries to come and work in the UK. While the number of migrants from Central and Eastern Europe into the UK was forecasted to be between 5,000 and 13,000, based on the assumption that other member states would also open their labor markets, reality proved them wrong. Far more citizens went to work in the UK than had been expected. Hence, the final number of immigrants “turned out to be over 20 times higher the upper end of the estimate” and that impacted very negatively how the EU was perceived (Consterdine 2016). Concern over immigration continued up to the Referendum. In fact, the highest concern ever for this issue (56%) was recorded in the month of May, just one month ahead of the Referendum (see Levy, Asland & Bironzo 2016: 8–9). Against this backdrop, it will not be surprising to see that immigration occupies a significant place in the period analyzed.

The following examples, which construct the EU as the institution forcing a large number of the laws that go through Westminster—including those on immigration—refer to the constituent parts of this schema:

- (1) [...] Mr. Wilder added that David Cameron was running a “stupid” campaign by attempting to scare the British into staying in Europe. Britain votes to remain *in the EU*, then we continue to be subject to an increasingly anti-democratic system that is now responsible for 60 per cent of the law that goes through Westminster (22 May/2016 – Peter Foster)
- (2) Britain can be freer and richer *outside the EU*. (11 June/2016 – Leading article)

Although there are many other instances of container image schemas in the corpus collected, the point has been to focus on the EU as a container, with an inside and an outside (examples 1 and 2), as the EU is the institution constraining and limiting many of the UK’s decisions and actions. As previously stated, if something is inside a container, it will be affected by the rules applying inside; whereas if it moves outside, those rules will stop applying. That being the case, it makes sense that the UK should want to abandon the EU and remain outside “as an independent nation, once again free to make its own decisions” (18 June/2016 – Leading article).

- (3) [...] and we have seen – in the absence of *border controls* – how the despair in southern Europe contributes to the substantial *flows of migration*, which show no sign of diminishing. (19 June/2016 – Boris Johnson)

For this example, readers need to conjure up a different container, the UK. In this case, the example is very clearly signaling that they need to have control over their borders, the region separating the inside from the outside; otherwise, the number of immigrants—portrayed as a threatening mass of liquid (Charteris-Black 2006, El Refaie 2001, Hart 2011, Musolff 2015, Ng 2020)—crossing the border and getting into the inside of the container will be just unstoppable as the “flow” moves steadily and continuously.



- (4) [...] [if we vote to leave] we will control our own borders; *we will let in who we want* to come and contribute to our economy. (18 June/2016 – Leading article)

Still focusing on the boundary part of the container schema, example (4) gives readers evidence of what would happen if they moved out of the EU container: being free from the rules that apply inside the EU, they would be able to decide not only who comes into their country but, most importantly, who does not. Furthermore, the real necessity to act upon the topic of immigration is made even more urgent by the fact that it tends to collocate with ‘uncontrollable’, ‘out of control’ or ‘unbalanced’, which reinforces the perception that some real measures need to be taken quickly against external dangers. ‘Take back control’ is presented as a slogan which presents a writer who evaluates key issues such as those of immigration or sovereignty “in a way that conforms to the audience’s view of the world” (Partington 2018: 137)

#### **4.2. Container image + force schema**

Some examples rely on the connection of the two internalized schemas, which reinforces the strength of the embodied meaning and the possible emotional response. Hence, if ‘uncontrolled immigration’ is allowed into the container, projected onto Britain, that will exert force on the walls of the container, resulting in some pressure on some of the country institutions. This can be seen in the following example:

- (5) Well *under pressure* [on the NHS and other services] from *uncontrolled immigration*, that’s exactly what Britain could become [a third world country or something]. (24 May/2016 – Allison Pearson)

There is a salient phrase which appeared a few times in the discourse ‘a city the size of Newcastle’ (5 tokens), viewed as a homogenous container holding about 250,000 inhabitants. This expression depicts the idea that if an extra container, the size of Newcastle, is brought into Britain, the pressure felt by the container (Britain) and the people inside it (British citizens) will be even higher due to the limited space left (Charteris-Black 2006). The following two examples highlight this point:

- (6) At no point did the Remain campaign explain how this country is *going to absorb* at least 250,000 incomers – *a city the size of Newcastle* – every single year for the foreseeable future; how our schools will cope (900,000 extra places needed by 2024); how this land can remain green and pleasant when we must build a new house every six minutes just to keep pace. (21 June/2016 – Allison Pearson)
- (7) [...] said Rudd when we were discussing the vexed issue of how the UK’s public services are going to cope with *the influx of a city the size of Newcastle every single year*. (3 June/2016 – Allison Pearson)

However, in this case there is a further twist in the reasoning used, which may easily pass unnoticed unless the reader thinks about it twice. Interestingly enough,

the projection of a possible flood is prompted in the minds of readers by the use of a number of linguistic choices: “an influx” of a city the size of Newcastle or the need to “absorb” it, which builds on the inflow of a large number of people, portrayed as liquid, as mentioned above (Charteris-Black 2006, Hart 2011, Musolff 2015). This arrival, following the logic of this metaphorical framing, is very likely to cause much pressure on the container, which in turn is expected to overflow as a result of ‘uncontrolled immigration’ into the country. Besides, this phrasing while talking of incomers creates the false perception that British people will receive, all of a sudden, a number of people equivalent to a city the size of Newcastle; that this will happen every year; and that it will continue to happen for the foreseeable future.

In fact, this becomes a prominent example in our corpus, since it is likely to provoke an emotional response of fear or anger (Chilton 2004) as a result of the “embodied simulation used in online thought” that readers are likely to run in their minds while imagining a large number of people (‘influx’) entering the country in a seamless manner (Gibbs 2005). In turn, those emotions involved could well be connected to “protection of the family, protection of the group, protection of territory, fear of aggression, fear of loss of control” (Chilton 2004: 119), which explains the recurrent need conveyed in articles to ‘take back control’. Moreover, this possible sense of insecurity may be heightened by the relationship established between container and disaster metaphors due to the fact that “containers frequently contain fluids, and [that] the most common natural disaster metaphors relate to water [...]”, as pointed out by Charteris-Black (2006: 569). The emotional side in the use of schemas seems to be accompanied by an intentional component, since this possible feeling of fear is likely to be exploited as an element of persuasion into a certain way of thinking: the need to keep ‘uncontrolled immigration’ out of the container.

At the same time, this example serves as good evidence that image schemas may become ‘psychologically real’ (Gibbs & Colston 1995, Gibbs 2005, Kimmel 2005), going beyond an abstract mental representation (Johnson 1987, Lakoff 1987). It is hardly surprising to learn that the two schemas discussed, CONTAINER and FORCE, “play a very important role in the conceptualization of emotion concepts” (Kövecses 2010: 117). Furthermore, the high emotional load of the 2016 EU referendum campaign made it fertile ground for the use of these schemas, which has been addressed by some scholars (Moss, Robinson & Watts 2020).

As stated in the introductory section, some conceptual metaphors draw on source domains which consist of image schemas, a container image schema in this case. Two examples have been selected:

- (8) Leaving will not solve the migration crisis but bring it to *Britain’s doorstep* because border controls [...] (22 May/2016 – Boris Johnson)
- (9) Only those on the extremes of both Left and Right believe in either an *open door*, “come one, come all” approach or a “sorry, *we’re full up*” sign on the *country’s shutters*. (31 May/2016 – Michael Wilkinson)

The image schema is clear in examples (8) and (9), where the country (Britain) is viewed as some sort of container. However, some level of specificity and creativity has been added since the country is construed not as any kind of abstract container, but as a three-dimensional house. In those projections established between a house and Britain (BRITAIN IS A HOUSE), as a ‘primary’ or basic metaphor (Grady 1997), some elements have been highlighted:

In example (8) ‘a doorstep’ is mapped onto the space that lies just before crossing the frontier into Britain. In example (9) we have different realizations of the same metaphor, ‘open door’ versus ‘we’re full up’ and ‘shutters’: in the first place, a difference is established between ‘an open door policy’, where everybody is allowed to come into the country since the door is open and ‘we’re full up’, which refers to the fact that there is no space left for anybody else inside the country; in the second place, the reference to ‘shutters’ creatively expands on the boundary part of the schema, where ‘shutters’ —conveniently closed “protecting what is within from external danger” (Charteris-Black 2006: 563)— trigger the image of the walls of a house.

### 4.3. Force schema

One of the themes which is consistently repeated, in one way or another, is precisely the fact that they are not in control of where they are moving as a country, as a future location —which explains why they need to regain that control:

- (10) If Britain votes to remain in the EU, [...] a phenomenon that contributes so powerfully to the modern voter’s apathy, the sensation that we *are not in control of our destiny*, and that voting changes nothing.  
(19 June/2016 – Boris Johnson)

Examples in this section will be arranged according to the different force types discussed by Johnson (1987: 45), whenever possible. As will be seen, a mismatch between the EU’s interests and those of the UK are clearly rendered.

Regarding compulsion, where an agent or entity is moved by external forces, the following tokens can be singled out:

- (11) *We have felt compelled to go along* with it in order not to rock the boat.  
(14 June/2016 – Philip Johnston)
- (12) The EU is *leading us away* from democratic modernity. There is no evidence that it will change direction. (17 June/2016 – Charles Moore)

In the two examples the situation described is very similar, in the sense that British people feel forced, against their own will, to move in a given direction. This means that their own goals as a nation are being ignored because somebody else, the EU in this case, is taking decisions for them. The portrayal is made even more visual and telling in example (12), where the UK is personified as a traveler who, although intending to reach ‘democratic modernity’, is in fact moving in the opposite direction pushed by the EU. Building on the logic of this scenario, since

as time goes by they are moving away from the pursued target, the longer they wait to do something about it the further away they will be from this destination.

- (13) If we stay, we will find our global influence and weight not enhanced, but diminished – as the *EU ruthlessly cuckoos us aside* from our seat on international bodies [...] (19 June/2016 – Boris Johnson)
- (14) We are being *bullied and brow-beaten* into remaining in this failing system – and I think the public can see through it. (12 June/2016 – Boris Johnson)

Taking things a step further, the rendering given of Britain in examples 13 and 14 conveys a real sense of urgency and call for immediate action to be taken, since it involves physical abuse and mistreatment by somebody stronger and more powerful. Feelings such as those of anger and frustration are likely to be found among readers, as a natural reaction to the description of how Britain is being treated. In other words, Britain is portrayed as some kind of victim, which needs to defend itself to avoid this unfair and discriminatory treatment from the EU (Andrews 2021, Zappettini 2021). The use of these hyperbolic scenarios proved to be in line with the emotionalized rhetoric of the Brexit debate in an attempt to mobilize the emotions of their followers to a maximum (Musolff 2021)

As an illustration of removal of restraint, where a potential barrier is removed so that the movement in that direction is allowed, the following example is given:

- (15) If the *regulatory burdens were lifted* only marginally, businesses would be liberated to create thousands of new jobs. (18 June/2016 – Leading article)

The situation presents a scenario where regulations are metaphorically described as burdens. This means that if a burden is lifted, the agent will be able to move (and act, as a result) more freely: if those burdens are removed from businesses (personified as agents), that latter circumstance will set them free to act as they please, in this case by allowing them to create thousands of new jobs. It is likely that once the physical load is taken off the agent it will translate into some type of psychological relief, which is a good instantiation of the embodied metaphor MIND AS BODY (Ibarretxe-Antuñano 2002).

As a counterforce token, the following example can be singled out:

- (16) Mrs. Thatcher continued to insist that she *would block things that are not in Britain's interests*". But she never got the chance. Within a month of that fateful meeting, she was turfed out of Downing Street. (14 June/2016 – Philip Johnston)

This shows Mrs. Thatcher as a politician who spoke on behalf of Britain's interests and who was completely opposed to giving up some power to EEC institutions, the embryo of what was to become the European Union, while she was in office, as evidenced in her well-known speech in Bruges on 20 September 1988 (Palmer 1988). This means that in order to have a viable and successful EEC, she

considered that every country needed to preserve its different traditions, parliamentary powers and sense of national pride without “having a European superstate exercising a new dominance from Brussels” (Mudge 2018).

Within acts of enablement, which play an outstanding role in the discourse on Brexit and which are possible due to the very muscle power of an agent, the following tokens can be mentioned. They all entail acts of manipulation while negotiating with the environment:

- (17) *But we will take control of our own borders.* (18 June/2016 – Leading article)
- (18) I can tell you that the number one issue was control – a sense that British democracy was being undermined by the EU system, and that we should restore to the people that vital power: *to kick out their rulers at elections*, and to choose new ones. (19 June/Boris Johnson)
- (19) On Thursday, the country has another opportunity *to lift the clouds*. We must take it. (20 June/2016 – Leading article)

All the instances retrieved from the corpus, under the enablement type of force schema, touch on the same issue: agents who feel empowered and have the means to act on the situation presented to them; in the case of example (17), even though control over the running of the country does not seem to be in the hands of voters any longer, there is a way to reverse such a situation and let British people decide who is to be allowed into the country: a vote to leave in the referendum to be held on June 23 (2016). The token in example (18) emphasizes the ability of voters to have a real say in the running of the government in a very visual manner: ‘kicking them out’ if their performance is not as expected. The important idea conveyed through the example is that close distance is a necessary element to make politicians accountable, since if politicians are far away (i.e. in Brussels) there is no way for electors to keep a check on them. Hence, closeness becomes necessary for a fair assessment of politicians. Finally, in example (19) voters are granted the ability “to lift the clouds”, where ‘clouds’ stand in a metonymic relationship to ‘bad weather’; and ‘bad weather’, in turn, stands in another metonymic relationship to ‘things not functioning well’. However, voters are enabled to lift the clouds and bring back the bright and clear skies, which metonymically stand for ‘things working well’ through their self-propelled motion of stretching their arms and pushing clouds away.

Regarding attraction, where an agent or entity is drawn towards an object or place, the following instance can be given:

- (20) At every stage of its development since the Maastricht Treaty established the European Union in 1991, Britain *has been drawn deeper* into a set of supranational governmental and judicial structures, against our better judgment. (14 June/2016 – Philip Johnston)

In example (20), the focus is placed on the fact that Britain has not made a decision to be at the present location, but rather it has been pulled by an external

force (the EU). Again, a solution is offered as a way out: voting to leave the EU. Thus, for every problem encountered, the reader is presented with the solution: vote *leave* (in the typical arrangement of presenting the problem first and then offering the solution (Partington 2018).

As previously with the container schema, it can be seen how the force schema can be used as a source domain to help structure target domains (Johnson 1987, Forceville 2017). In particular, this schema plays a central role both in the development of ‘primary’ metaphors such as CHANGE IS MOTION and CAUSES ARE FORCES, and even more ‘complex’ metaphors such as LONG-TERM PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY IS SELF-PROPELLED MOTION TOWARD A DESTINATION (Grady 1997). One example has been chosen to illustrate the metaphorical potential of this schema:

- (21) If we vote Remain, *we stay locked in the back of the car*, driven by someone with an imperfect command of English, and *going in a direction* we don’t want to go. (19 June/2016 – Boris Johnson)

This example is built upon two schemas: the force schema, as they [British people] are forced to go in a given direction, plus a path schema—an essential part of the force schema since there is always a path of motion in all force types (Johnson 1987), which is clearly invoked in the minds of readers since they are traveling on a given pathway. Moreover, the path schema allows metaphorical mappings on the PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY domain, which could be worded in the following manner, THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE EU IS A JOURNEY (see Martín de la Rosa & Lázaro 2017, 2022). In this metaphor travelers would be mapped onto the different member countries in the EU project; the vehicle would be the very institution of the EU; and the direction would be the objectives pursued along the journey. However, there is a creative mapping projected in this metaphor such as the location where each of the travelers are riding in the car, since that position will give them more or less voice when it comes to making decisions as to the route to follow. In their case, as British people are riding in the back, they will have more difficulty in having their voice heard than if they were riding in the front, closer to the person in charge of driving the car. This all means that the situation is already as bad as it can be. Interestingly, this same image of countries conceptualized as passengers in the framework of the EU was invoked in British Parliamentary speeches (see Räikkönen 2020).

## 5. Discussion

The phrase ‘take/taking back control’ became a catch-phrase which agglutinated the use of two different schemas, container and force. They served as the two main pillars sustaining the discourse on Brexit narrated from the point of view of *The Telegraph*. In the case of the container schema, ‘take back control’ evokes a two or three dimensional space (a country seen as a vehicle or a house) where: 1) immigrants have to be kept out due to the lack of space and resources;

2) decisions need to be taken following their own interests and not those imposed on them by the EU. Regarding the force schema, this phrase is a token of the enablement type, as stated before, where agents are empowered to act on a situation. In the case at hand, there is a sense of urgency for ‘taking control’ of the situation, since unless a solution is adopted very quickly, the container will overflow in the near future causing a natural disaster —where both image schemas can be seen at work.

Confronted with the representation of the UK as a country ‘subject’ to the EU’s wishes, even as a victim of physical aggression — evoking contrasting evaluations between the good side of (pro-) Brexit Britain and the evil force of the EU (Musolff 2021), it is only to be expected that the emotional reaction from readers will be that of disappointment and frustration. Furthermore, such portrayal served a very important goal: to legitimize a Eurosceptic sentiment among the British population in order to ensure they would be strongly opposed to staying in the EU at the time of the referendum. Accordingly, bringing in again that intentional element, it only makes sense that any British citizen, following the logic of this metaphorical framing, will just want to walk out of this institution to search for new avenues as “a world of opportunity is waiting” (20/June/2016 – Leading article). In other words, image schemas and metaphors are powerful cognitive devices typically found in political discourse to present solutions to complex political issues (Breeze 2020, Räikönen 2020, Viola 2020).

So far all the facets of schemas mentioned in the theoretical framework have been covered, that is, except for cultural knowledge. Hence, since image schemas are applied in a given context, looking at how they have unfolded in the discourse on Brexit will provide good evidence of the values and the ideology that are present in the particular community where they are used. For instance, folk knowledge (‘lifting clouds’ because bad weather stands for things not working properly), daily practices (‘exiting a place’ when another destination is pursued), ‘taking control’ of a situation (to make sure things run smoothly) or cultural symbols (the mention of ‘Newcastle’ as a medium-sized city, which is certain to be known to every British citizen).

Looking at the work conducted by researchers in the field of populism and discourse, it is interesting to see that the representation of the EU as an entity accountable for many of the troubles suffered by some European countries has already been addressed by a number of scholars: in a study conducted in British Parliamentary debates between 1973 and 2015, Riihimäki (2019) showed that the EU was represented as preventing the UK from taking its own decisions (see Räikkönen 2020); in the same vein, Viola (2020: 119) revealed that Matteo Salvini—in his 2018 end-of-the-year speech, while he was Minister of the Interior—blamed the European Union “as the real cause for Italy’s troubles”. In turn, this attempt by Salvini to reposition Italy in the context of the European Union echoed Trump’s “America First” policy, as stated by Viola (2020), while trying to

reorient its role in the world by withdrawing from international treaties and organizations.

Not surprisingly, the use of this type of persuasive language in political discourse, where the EU was made the scapegoat for the failures experienced by Britain, seems to have added to the escalation of anti-European sentiment among the British people, which partly explains why the UK voted to leave the EU by 51.9% to 48.1% in the referendum held on 23 June 2016. Likewise, an anti-European position became more widespread at the time that Salvini's political party, the *Lega*, became more explicitly anti-European (see Viola 2020: 115).

## 6. Conclusions

The main contribution of this paper was to show the important role of embodiment in the discourse on Brexit since it provides a means to better grasp complex political issues by turning them into simple and straightforward metaphor scenarios. As a result, a historic moment in British history was psychologically and cognitively reduced to a few embodied metaphors, with the body, although not limited to it, giving shape to cognition.

With regards to the main goal of the paper, it was argued that the framing of the Brexit debate by *The Telegraph* highlighted those issues which would bring about strong emotions on the part of the audience: fear that the large number of immigrants, coming into a highly pressured container, would destabilize the regular running of key institutions for the country such as the NHS; frustration and anger at seeing how, in a repeated manner, the UK was badly treated to the point that it was physically abused by a stronger and more powerful agent, the EU. Building on those feelings, which are part of the long-standing anti-EU rhetoric in the UK, the paper pushed forward a proposal for their readership not to allow the EU to show this kind of anti-democratic and bullying behavior, but rather to oppose it and go for a new beginning where different trade agreements could also be signed with NATO and Commonwealth members. In the development of this narrative, where clear roles were assigned to the EU (*them* – as the abuser) and to the UK (*us* – as the person trying to escape captivity and regain freedom), that dichotomy served the purpose of legitimizing the option of leaving the EU in order to preserve their well-being and national interests (see Zappettini 2021).

Concerning the findings unfolded by the metaphor scenario 'take back control', it worked as the overarching message running the corpus analyzed. Faced with the cognitively demanding decision to be taken (whether to stay or leave the EU), the audience was offered, as an answer, very readily available actions in their collective consciousness: closing a container if everything else is to be kept out (CONTAINER schema), or acts of enablement, such as exiting a place if it is not welcoming and secure any longer (FORCE schema).

Finally, addressing the question posed at the beginning of this paper, the intersection of emotional and evaluative dimensions in embodied cognitive devices, as seen so far, does allow for the construction of a persuasive narrative where



British people were reminded of the pressing need to come to terms with a situation where the very sovereignty of the country was at stake, all of it compressed in the meaningful expression ‘take back control’.

### Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to the editors and anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments.

### REFERENCES

- Andrews, Kehindre. 2021. *The New Age of Empire: How Racism and Colonialism still Rule the World*. New York: Bold Type Books.
- Breeze, Ruth. 2020. Introduction: Approaching metaphor in political discourse. In Ruth Breeze & Carmen Llamas Saíz (eds.), *Metaphor in political conflict. Populism and discourse*. Navarra: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra (EUNSA). ISBN 978-84-313-3467-3
- Breeze, Ruth. 2023. Time for Brexit? Temporalities in the 2019 UK European election campaign. *Text & Talk*. <https://doi.org/10.1515/text-2022-0004>
- Charteris-Black, Jonathan. 2006. Britain as a container: Immigration metaphors in the 2005 election campaign. *Discourse and Society* 17 (5). 563–581. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926506066345>
- Chilton, Paul. 2004. *Analysing Political Discourse*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Dancygier, Barbara. 2021. Narrativised simile and emotional responses to Brexit. *Russian Journal of Linguistics* 25 (3). 663–684. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-2021-25-3-663-684>
- El Refaie, Elisabeth. 2001. Metaphors we discriminate by: Naturalized themes in Austrian newspaper articles about asylum seekers. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 5 (3). 352–371. <https://10.1111/1467-9481.00154>
- Felices Lago, Angel M. & Enriqueta Cortés de los Ríos. 2009. A cognitive-axiological approach print eco-advertisements in the economist: The energy sector under scrutiny. *Revista de Lingüística y Lenguas Aplicadas* 4. 59–78. <https://doi.org/10.4995/rlyla.2009.735>
- Forceville, Charles 2006. Non-verbal and multimodal metaphor in a cognitivist framework: Agendas for research. In Gitte Kristiansen, Michel Achard, René Dirven, & Francisco Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez (eds.), *Cognitive linguistics: Current applications and future perspectives*, 379–402. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Forceville, Charles. 2017. From image schema to metaphor in discourse: The FORCE schemas in animation films. In Beate Hampe (ed.), *Metaphor: Embodied cognition and discourse*, 239–256. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/1108182324>
- Forceville, Charles & Marloes Jeulink. 2011. The flesh and blood of embodied understanding: The source-path-goal schema in animation film. *Pragmatics & Cognition* 19 (1). 37–59.
- Gibbs, Raymond W. 2005. The psychological status de image schemas. In Beate Hampe (ed.), *From perception to meaning: Image schemas in cognitive linguistics*, 113–136. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110197532>
- Gibbs, Raymond W. 2014. Embodied metaphor. In Jeannette Littlemore & John Taylor (eds.), *The Bloomsbury companion to cognitive linguistics*, 167–184. London: Bloomsbury.
- Gibbs, Raymond W. & Eric A. Berg. 2002. Mental imagery and embodied activity. *Journal of Mental Imagery* 26 (1–2). 1–30.
- Gibbs, Raymond W. & Herbert L. Colston. 1995. The cognitive psychological reality of image schemas and their transformations. *Cognitive Linguistics* 6 (4). 347–378. <https://doi.org/10.1515/cogl.1995.6.4.347>
- Grady, Joe. 1997. Theories are buildings revisited. *Cognitive Linguistics* 8 (4). 267–290.

- Hampe, Beate (ed.). 2005. *From Perception to Meaning: Image Schemas in Cognitive Linguistics*. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter Mouton. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110197532>
- Hart, Christopher. 2011. Force-interactive patterns in immigration discourse: A cognitive linguistic approach to CDA. *Discourse & Society* 22 (3). 269–286. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926510395440>
- Ibarretxe-Antuñano, Iraide. 2002. Mind-as-body as a cross-linguistic conceptual metaphor. *Miscelánea. A Journal of English and American Studies* 25. 93–119.
- Jakubowski, Lisa. 1992. ‘Schooling’ and the ‘Naturalization’ of racial injustice. *The Journal of Human Justice* 4. 77–88.
- Jiménez Yáñez, Ricardo-María & Ruth Breeze. 2020. Eleven eventful days in Cataluña: Metaphor scenarios in the media. In Ruth Breeze & Carmen Llamas Saiz (eds.), *Metaphor in political conflict. Populism and discourse*. Navarra: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra (EUNSA). ISBN 978-84-313-3467-3
- Johnson, Mark. 1987. *The Body in the Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Johnson, Mark. 2005. The philosophical significance of image schemas. In Beate Hampe (ed.), *From perception to meaning: Image schemas in cognitive linguistics*, 15–34. New York: De Gruyter Mouton. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110197532>
- Keckes, Istvan. 2005. Cognitive approaches to bilingualism: Introduction to the special issue. [Special issue]. *International Journal of Bilingualism* 9 (1). 1–6.
- Khabaz, David. 2018. Framing Brexit. The role, and the impact of the national newspapers on the EU Referendum. *Newspaper Research Journal* 39 (4). 496–508.
- Kimmel, Michael. 2005. Culture regained: Situated and compound image schemas. In Beate Hampe (ed.), *From perception to meaning: Image schemas in cognitive linguistics*, 285–311. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110197532>
- Koehler, Caroline, Pavan Malreddy & Marlina Tronicke. 2020. The colonial remains of Brexit: Empire nostalgia and narcissistic nationalism. [Special issue]. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 56 (5). 585–592. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2020.1818440>
- Kövecses, Zoltan. 2010. *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lakoff, George. 1987. *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, George. 1990. The invariance hypothesis: Is abstract reason based on image-schemas? *Cognitive Linguistics* 1 (1). 39–74. <https://doi.org/10.1515/cogl.1990.1.1.39>
- Lakoff, George. 1993. The contemporary theory of metaphor. In Andrew Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and thought*, 202–251. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lakoff, George. 2014. Mapping the brain’s metaphor circuitry: Is abstract thought metaphorical thought? *New Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* 8. 958. <https://doi.org/10.3389.fnhum.2014.00958>
- Lakoff, George & Mark Johnson. 1980. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, George & Mark Johnson. 1999. *Philosophy in the Flesh. The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*. New York: Basic Books.
- Lakoff, George & Mark Turner. 1989. *More than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Machin, David & Andrea Mayr. 2012. *How to Do Critical Discourse Analysis: A Multimodal Introduction*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Martín de la Rosa, Victoria & Luis M. Lázaro. 2017. A cognitive-based approach to President Obama’s educational discourse through the lens of his State of the Union addresses (2009–2016). *Ibérica* 33. 191–211.

- Martín de la Rosa, Victoria & Luis M. Lázaro. 2022. Legitimizing Meritocracy as part of the American dream through the ritual of commencement speeches. *Linguistics and Education* 72. 101117. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2022.101117>
- Moss, Jonathan, Emily Robinson & Jake Watts. 2020. Brexit and the everyday politics of emotion: Methodological lessons from history. *Political Studies* 68 (4). 837–856. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032321720911915>
- Musolff, Andreas. 2006. Metaphor scenarios in public discourse. *Metaphor and Symbol* 21 (1). 23–38.
- Musolff, Andreas. 2015. Dehumanizing metaphors in UK immigrant debates in press and online media. *Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict* 3 (1). 41–56.
- Musolff, Andreas. 2016. *Political Metaphor Analysis*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Musolff, Andreas. 2017. Truths, lies and figurative scenarios: Metaphors at the heart of Brexit. *Journal of Language and Politics* 16 (5). 641–657. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.16033.mus>
- Musolff, Andreas. 2021. Hyperbole and emotionalisation: Escalation of pragmatic effects of proverb and metaphor in the “Brexit” debate. *Russian Journal of Linguistics* 25 (3). 628–644. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-2021-25-3-628-644>
- Musolff, Andreas. 2020. Metaphor and persuasion in language. In Elena Semino & Zsófia Demjén (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Metaphor and Language*, 309–322. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Ng, Carl J. Way. 2020. Metaphor. In John Flowerdew & John E. Richardson (eds.), *The routledge handbook of critical discourse analysis*, 215–227. New York: Routledge.
- Partington, Alan & Charlotte Taylor. 2018. *The Language of Persuasion in Politics. An Introduction*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Peña Cervel, Sandra. 1998. Conceptual Projection and image schemas. *Epos: Revista de Filología* 14. 451–461.
- Peña Cervel, Sandra. 1999. Subsidiarity relationships between image-schemas: An approach to the force schema. *The Journal of English Studies* 1. 187–207.
- Peña Cervel, Sandra. 2001. A cognitive approach to the role of body parts in the conceptualization of emotion metaphors. *Epos: Revista de Filología* 17. 45–60.
- Quinn, Naomi. 1991. The Cultural Basis of Metaphor. In James W. Fernandez (ed.), *Beyond metaphor: The theory of tropes in anthropology*, 56–93. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Räikkönen, Jenni. 2020. Metaphors separating the United Kingdom from the EU in British Parliamentary debates from 2000 to 2016. In Ruth Breeze & Carmen Llamas Saiz (eds.), *Metaphor in political conflict. Populism and discourse*. Navarra: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra (EUNSA). ISBN 978-84-313-3467-3
- Riihimäki, Jenni. 2019. At the heart and in the margins: Discursive construction of British national identity in relation to the EU in British parliamentary debates from 1973 to 2015. *Discourse & Society* 30 (4). 412–431.
- Saslaw, Janna. 1996. Forces, containers and paths: The role of the body derived image schematas in the conceptualization of music. *Journal of Music Theory* 40 (2). 217–243.
- Seaton, Jean. 2016. Brexit and the Media. *The Political Quarterly* 87 (3). 333–337.
- Velasco Sacristán, M<sup>a</sup> Sol & M<sup>a</sup> Enriqueta Cortés de los Ríos. 2009. Persuasive nature of image schematic devices in advertising: Their use for introducing sexism. *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses* 22. 239–270. <https://doi.org/10.14198/raei.2009.22.15>
- Viola, Lorella. 2020. Populism and social media: Populist ideology, eurosceptic agenda, and Trump’s echoes in Salvini’s 2018 end of the year Facebook speech. In Ruth Breeze & Carmen Llamas Saiz (eds.), *Metaphor in political conflict. Populism and discourse*. Navarra: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra (EUNSA). ISBN 978-84-313-3467-3

- Yu, Ning. 2009. *From Body to Meaning in Culture: Papers on Cognitive Semantic Studies of Chinese*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Zappettini, Franko. 2021. The UK as victim and hero in the Sun's coverage of the Brexit 'humiliation'. *Russian Journal of Linguistics* 25 (3). 645–662. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-2021-25-3-645-662>

### Other sources

- Barnett, Steven. 2016. How our mainstream media failed democracy. <https://www.referendumanalysis.eu/eu-referendum-analysis-2016/section-4/how-our-mainstream-media-failed-democracy> (accessed 12 December 2021).
- CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs). 2016. Brexit and its consequences. [https://www.cidob.org/publicaciones/serie\\_de\\_publicacion/notes\\_internacionales/n1\\_159/brexit\\_causes\\_and\\_consequences](https://www.cidob.org/publicaciones/serie_de_publicacion/notes_internacionales/n1_159/brexit_causes_and_consequences) (accessed 2 April 2022).
- Consterdine, Erica. 2016. The huge political cost of Blair's decision to allow Eastern European migrants unfettered access to Britain. *The Conversation* 30 March. <https://theconversation.com/the-huge-political-cost-of-blairs-decision-to-allow-eastern-european-migrants-unfettered-access-to-britain-66077> (accessed 4 April 2022).
- Jennings, Will & Stephen Fischer. 2016. Expert Predictions of the 2016 Referendum outcome. Available at: <https://www.psa.ac.uk/sites/default/files/PSA%20EU2016%20Report.pdf>
- Lavery, Ian. 2019. Speech given at Labour Party Conference. <https://labour.org.uk/press/ian-lavery-speaking-labour-party-conference/> (accessed 15 March 2022)
- Levy, David, Aslan Billur & Diego Bironzo. 2016. UK Press Coverage of the EU Referendum. [https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2018-11/UK\\_Press\\_Coverage\\_of\\_the\\_%20EU\\_Referendum.pdf](https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2018-11/UK_Press_Coverage_of_the_%20EU_Referendum.pdf) (accessed 2 March 2022).
- Migration Observatory. 2022. <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/projects/migration-and-brexit/> (accessed 14 April 2022).
- Mudge, Rob. 2018. Would Margaret Thatcher be in favor of Brexit? DV Made for Minds April. <https://www.dw.com/en/would-margaret-thatcher-be-in-favor-of-brexit/a-43252699> (accessed 25 April 2022).
- Palmer, John. 1988. Thatcher sets face against united Europe. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/1988/sep/21/emu.theeuro> (accessed 5 May 2022).
- Pew Research Center. 2016. <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2016/08/02/number-of-refugees-to-europe-surges-to-record-1-3-million-in-2015/> (accessed 25 April 2022).
- The Economist. 2014. Why Britain is so Eurosceptic? <https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2014/03/03/why-britain-is-so-eurosceptic> (accessed 1 February 2022).
- YouGov. 2017. How left or right-wing are the UK's newspapers? <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2017/03/07/how-left-or-right-wing-are-uks-newspapers> (accessed 15 April 2022).

### Article history:

Received: 11 July 2022

Accepted: 15 March 2023

**Bionote:**

**Victoria MARTÍN DE LA ROSA** is Associate Professor in the Department of English Studies: Linguistics and Literature at the Complutense University of Madrid (Spain). Her main field of research lies in exploring the use of critical metaphor in different areas, particularly North American educational discourse. Her recent publications include articles in national and international peer reviewed journals such as *Linguistics and Education*, *Journal of Pragmatics*, *Intercultural Pragmatics*, *Journal of Gender Studies* among others.  
*e-mail:* mvmartin@ucm.es  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3720-5240>

**Сведения об авторе:**

**Виктория МАРТИН ДЕ ЛА РОСА** – доцент кафедры английского языка и литературы Мадридского университета Комплутенсе (Испания). Основная сфера ее научных интересов связана с изучением критической метафоры в различных контекстах, в особенности в американском образовательном дискурсе. Она автор ряда публикаций в испанских и международных рецензируемых журналах, в частности *Linguistics and Education*, *Journal of Pragmatics*, *Intercultural Pragmatics*, *Journal of Gender Studies* и др.  
*e-mail:* mvmartin@ucm.es  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3720-5240>