LEGE ARTIS

Language yesterday, today, tomorrow

Vol. VII. No 1 2022

METAPHORICAL LEXICAL BLENDS RELATED TO *BREXIT*: COGNITIVE PROCESSES OF MEANING CONSTRUCTION AND DISCURSIVE EFFECTS

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Bibliographic description: Jabłońska-Hood, E. & Prażmo, E. (2022). Metaphorical lexical blends related to *Brexit*: Cognitive processes of meaning construction and discursive effects. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow. The journal of University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava*. Trnava: University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, 2022, VII (1), p. 120-156. ISSN 2453-8035 DOI: https://doi.org/10.34135/lartis.22.7.1.04

Abstract: This study analyses three metaphorical lexical hyper-blends: *Brexistential crisis, Brexititis,* and *Brexchosis* with the use of Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Integration Theory. These neologisms and their humorous effects transpire as a consequence of blending, particularly its compression and decompression procedures. Discursive effects, namely, comism and persuasion, are elicited by Critical Discourse Analysis and Incongruity-Resolution Theory of humour.

Keywords: Brexit, Brexit-related discourse, comic effect, conceptual integration, conceptual metaphor, hyper-blend, meaning compression / decompression, metaphorical lexical blend.

1. Introduction

The main intention behind this article is to present the analysis of the metaphorical lexical blends based on the concept BREXIT. The meaning construal of such blends is explained in terms of Conceptual Metaphor Theory by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Conceptual Integration Theory by Fauconnier and Turner (2002). Additionally, the discursive effects of using lexical blends of the kind are explicated by means of Critical Discourse Analysis. The objective of the paper is to investigate the procedure of the

blends' interpretation with recourse to underlying conceptual metaphors, as well as mapping input spaces, producing blending and compressing / decompressing linguistic data, together with the measurement of how such conceptual integration processes arise and what discursive effects they may produce. The expressions under scrutiny are collectively referred to as hyper-blends which arise due to compression/decompression processes of conceptual blending and whose basic meaning is motivated by conceptual metaphors, for instance, BREXIT IS A DISEASE. The discursive effect of these hyper-blends is comism emerging as a result of the duality of their origin. In its turn, this impacts on conceptualisers whose mental models are shaped by the media with the aid of such Brexit-oriented language, which produces an entertaining effect.

Brexit-related vocabulary has been studied extensively in the recent years due to its topicality. However, the present study is innovative within the field since it employs both Conceptual Integration Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis in order to account for the holistic meaning of metaphorical lexical blends pertaining to Brexit, including its sociological background.

The article offers an explanation of the fascination behind the Brexit-related language. It introduces the main toolkit to be used in the analysis, namely, Conceptual Integration Theory with its main tenets, such as mental spaces, mapping, blending, hyper-blends, running of the blend, or compression/decompression. Afterwards, the main postulates of Critical Discourse Analysis are presented, together with the introduction of humour-related concepts to be employed in the analysis, specifically, incongruity and incongruity resolution. Following the theoretical overview is the empirical part of the study, with the in-detail analysis of three metaphors related to Brexit: *Brexistential crisis*, *Brexititis*, and *Brexchosis.* Drawing on the results of this analysis, conclusive generalizations are formulated. In particular, it is established that blending can explain novel renderings of meaning in the metaphorical lexical expressions based on the

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cluster of entities of dual origin, one being linked to Brexit, the other referring to phenomena of everyday life.

Next, it is noteworthy that Critical Discourse Analysis has enabled the authors to draw the inferences concerning social cognition and interpretation of the blends under study. To be specific, it has been found out that the media using Brexit-related linguistic expressions are capable of impacting on their audiences, forming their attitude towards Brexit, for instance, via humour. This explains how emergent social meanings are influenced by the media. Eventually, it is vital to point to the novelty of synergizing conceptual blending and critical discourse analysis, which helps to capture the interpretation of the newly-coined British-oriented linguistic expressions and their impact on the language users and their mental models. To sum up, the combined toolkit may not only offer an extensive explanation of language workings and its processes, but can also relate to the social cognition of language users and the formation of collective mental models as influenced by the mass media which always use original and novel language for a purpose. Thus, the approach that combines the above-mentioned theories deals both with how and why humorous neologism are created and how they function in language use or social cognition.

2016 was a very important year for the contemporary British politics as on June 23 the British decided on their membership in the European Union by participating in a momentous referendum. The proponents of leaving the Union outvoted those, who preferred to remain part of it by a very narrow margin. Nevertheless, politicians decided to "follow the will of the people" and deliver what came to be known as Brexit, as promised. What followed was a long-drawn negotiation process and a lot of political rope-pulling between the UK and the EU. Finally, in 2019, the Withdrawal Agreement was signed and it entered into force on February 1, 2020. Unsurprisingly, all the stages that led to this conclusion were closely followed by journalists and political commentators all over the globe. The discourse narrating the Brexit referendum,

negotiations with the EU, numerous changes in the British government, fluctuations in the public opinion concerning the issue as well as the final withdrawal and all its consequences created an adequately dynamic, innovative, and at times controversial discourse. Multiple heated debates in the British Parliament, a gamut of political speeches and vast media coverage as well as the never-stopping online commentary in various social media and Internet forums have generated a semi-specialised and highly specific Brexit-related terminology. For instance, the infamous phrase uttered by the British Prime Minister Theresa May *Brexit means Brexit* became a soundbite (for a constructionist analysis of the phrase see: Mompean and Manzanares 2019). Later, this tautological pattern appeared in a number of ironically coloured utterances, e.g., *Leave means leave* (Leave means leave, *s.a.*), *Trump means Trump* (Howes 2016), *Eurovision means Eurovision* (Ryan 2018). Due to its association with the precedent utterance *Brexit means Brexit*, the construction *X means X* came to be used humorously or ironically in order to bring the discussion on some thorny subject to an end or avoid answering a difficult question. *Brexit means Brexit* has been called a "meaningless mantra" by the opponents of Britain's leaving the European Union (Brooks 2016) and considered a firm statement of attitude by the Brexit supporters. With some degree of certainty, it can be claimed that even now, after Brexit has taken effect, the term still means different things to different people (Menon 2020).

More importantly, Brexit-related discourse has been a breeding ground for creation of multiple metaphoric linguistic expressions used to better explain and more graphically describe the political situation in the UK. This topic has been studied extensively, but it is beyond the scope of this paper to provide an exhaustive overview of respective studies that have already been published in this domain. It is, however, worth mentioning some of them for illustrative purposes. Musolff (2017) analyses the metaphorical slogan "Britain at the heart of Europe" and its possible role in influencing voters' preferences and shaping the result of the referendum. Bilyk and Pyliachyk (2018) focus on the role of metaphor in describing the experience of modern society.

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In particular, they consider such conceptual metaphors of Brexit as BREXIT IS A HUMAN BEING, BREXIT IS A NATURAL PHENOMENON, and BREXIT IS A DISEASE and ponder on their role in shaping linguistic metaphors and conceptualisations (see note 0). Đurović and Silaški (2018) investigate the BREXIT IS A DIVORCE metaphor using the critical metaphor analysis approach. Tincheva (2019) focuses of the metaphorical representation of Brexit in the period immediately following the Brexit referendum. Charteris-Black (2019) provides a thorough overview of metaphors used in the rhetorical Brexit-related language and their implications. Finally, for monomodal and multimodal representations of conceptual metaphors of Brexit one can consult Morozova (2017)[0].

Apart from ingenious metaphors, other interesting expressions abound in Brexit-related discourse, for instance novel creations based on blending two or more lexemes. Lexical blends (Kemmer 2003), i.e., combinations of two or more lexemes creating a novel form whose meaning is not a direct derivative from the meanings of its constituent parts, but also includes emergent qualities (see in more detail below), are especially interesting. Lexical blends that are built on the concept BREXIT include, but are not limited to, the following examples:

Braccident (Brexit + accident) (https://comresglobal.com/pollwatch-from-graccident-to-braccident/);

Brangover (Brexit + hangover) (https://businessinsider.com.pl/international/welcome-to-the-brangover/q5hhz4l);

Brapocalypse (Brexit + apocalypse) (https://businessinsider.com.pl/international/there-isnt-going-to-be-a-brapocalypse/mjcwszy);

Brarmageddon (Brexit + Armageddon) (https://finance.yahoo.com/news/isnt-going-brapocalypse-133813818.html);

Bregret (Brexit + regret)

(https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/bregret);

Bremain (Brexit + remain) (https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Bremain);

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Bremorse (Brexit + remorse) (https://www.dailysabah.com/feature/2016/07/02/first-brexit-then-bremorse-is-breturn-possible);

Brenial (Brexit + denial) (https://metro.co.uk/2016/10/16/brexiteers-are-in-brenial-according-to-nick-clegg-6194937/);

Brepression (Brexit + depression) (https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2016/12/22/now-thats-what-i-call-brexit-delving-into-the-brexicon-of-brexit/);

Brevastation (Brexit + devastation) (https://slate.com/human-interest/2016/06/why-has-brexit-sparked-an-explosion-of-wordplay.html);

Brexacerbation (Brexit + exacerbation) (https://ukandeu.ac.uk/brexacerbation-and-the-embedding-of-brexit-in-everyday-family-life/);

Brexcrement (Brexit + excrement) (https://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/miriam-lord-silence-is-the-golden-rule-for-brexit-1.3768458);

Brexenophobia (Brexit + xenophobia) (https://www.theodysseyonline.com/brexit-meme-blowup);

Brexicide (Brexit + suicide) (http://brexicide.org/);

Brexicitement (Brexit + excitement) (https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/brexcitement-polls-show-brexit-momentum/);

Brexicon (Brexit + lexicon) (https://www.theguardian.com/politics/shortcuts/2019/nov/07/the-brexicon-how-well-do-you-know-your-brexit-jargon);

Brexiety (Brexit + anxiety) (https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/brexiety);

Brexiternity (Brexit + eternity) (https://www.arabnews.com/node/1882771);

Brexodus (Brexit + exodus) (https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/brexodus.asp);

Brexplosion (Brexit + explosion) (https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/market-vs-state-conundrum-by-yoon-young-kwan-2016-06);

Brexpulsion (Britain + expulsion) (https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2015/08/05/push-or-jump-why-the-uk-could-be-facing-a-brexpulsion-rather-than-a-brexit/);

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Brextermist (Brexit + extremist) (https://globalnews.ca/news/5848254/brexit-what-does-it-mean/);
Brexthrough (Brexit + breakthrough) (https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/5738996/brexit-guy-verhofstadt-eu-citizen-rights-trade-talks-start-soon/).

There has also been an upsurge in visual as well as multimodal representations of Brexit and Brexit-related phenomena. Lennon and Kilby (2020) conduct a multimodal discourse analysis of Brexit based on a corpus of political cartoons. Oleiwi and Salih (2019) also research political cartoons concerning Brexit in order to account for cohesive ties between them. Dongying (2020) focuses on the JOURNEY metaphor in Brexit-related political cartoons. Apart from cartoons, Brexit-related themes have also been analysed on other types of data found on the Internet in general and in various social media in particular. For instance, Bouko (2020) and Bouko et al. (2021) analyse multimodal semiotic entities as means of representing emotional reactions to Brexit on Flickr. Brexit has also been addressed in an increasingly prolific genre of the Internet memes. Cana Ortiz (2019), among others, studies Brexit-related political memes. Multimodal research concerning Brexit is abundant; however, it is beyond the scope of the present paper to provide a detailed overview of this issue.

2. Materials and methods

The present paper is maintained within the methodological framework of cognitive linguistics as well as critical discourse analysis. Texts have been examined by applying Conceptual Metaphor Theory in order to bring to light conceptual metaphors underlying each hyper-blend, Conceptual Integration Theory, which explicates in detail how the correspondences between input space 1, which is BREXIT in each case, and another input, are attained and in what manner they blend, using compression and/or decompression. Further, the combined theoretical approach is enriched by the incongruity-resolution theories of humour, which start operating once the given blend is being run and its novel meaning interpreted; eventually, the socio-cultural context,

which is elicited with the help of Critical Discourse Analysis, is reconstructed for the new meaning educed.

We find it necessary to point out that the present paper is not a corpus-driven quantitative study, but a qualitative study of a linguistic phenomenon, which is only illustrated here by a selection of examples extracted from Internet sources, including online press articles, blogs, and fora dealing with Brexit-related topics. The data set was sampled manually. First, we selected novel lexical blends prefixed with (*Brexi-*, *Brex-*, *Bre-*, *Br-*, *B-*) from online sources. Pre-selected blends were then verified in various dictionaries to establish their status as neologisms (defined in this article as words which are in the process of entering the more common use, but are not yet established enough to appear in mainstream dictionaries). Finally, we selected three expressions (*Brexistential crisis*, *Brexititis*, and *Brexchosis*) to serve illustrative purposes only. We made use of the intentional sampling method, i.e., the selection of empirical material was done with the purpose of meeting specific prescribed criteria. We believe that the three linguistic expressions subject to analysis are best-fit for showcasing the benefits of the analytical tools that we adopt in this research. Additionally, the above-mentioned expressions are all medically-oriented neologisms, and thus, we limit the scope of discussion to just one conceptual domain, which enables us to maintain the length of this article within publishable limits.

3. Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Conceptual Integration Theory, and Humour Studies Basics

Metaphor has been of interest to numerous linguists and other scholars for centuries. Traditionally, it was perceived only as a linguistic phenomenon, considered a stylistic device used in literary texts and poetry. The publication of Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) milestone book "Metaphors we live by" has challenged and changed this view of metaphor. Metaphors ceased to be perceived as restricted to language alone, but rather began to be conceptualised as matters of thought. "Both everyday language and the

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conceptual system we use for everyday purposes make use of linguistic metaphors and the corresponding conceptual metaphors that underlie them" (Kövecses 2015: ix). This view is known as Conceptual Metaphor Theory (hereinafter referred to as CMT).

Conceptual metaphor, like a traditional poetic metaphor, consists of linking two concepts together, creating correspondences between them in order to facilitate understanding of an abstract entity by structuring it like a more concrete one. In order for this metaphorical pairing to be established, there must be a certain degree of similarity between the two concepts or domains. As Kövecses explains,

> "[i]n *cognitive linguistic view, metaphor is defined as understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain. [...] Examples of this include when we talk and think about life in terms of journeys, about arguments in terms of war, about love also in terms of journeys, about theories in terms of buildings, about ideas in terms of food, about social organizations in terms of plants, and many others. [...] Thus, for example, we have coherently organized knowledge about journeys that we rely on in understanding life*" (2002: 4).

Two domains, the target domain (the more abstract, more complex, and less familiar one) and the source domain (the more concrete, simpler, and more familiar one) are connected by means of correspondences, or mappings, between their similar aspects.

Among the most common source domains, Kövecses (ibid.) mentions the human body, health and illness, animals, buildings and construction, machines and tools, money, light and darkness, heat and cold. They are commonly used because they refer to those domains of our experience that we are familiar with. Humans have life experience of most of them and have respective first-hand knowledge. Also, this knowledge is universal and shared across languages and cultures. Some of the most common target domains, according to Kövecses, are: EMOTION, DESIRE, MORALITY, THOUGHT, TIME, LIFE and DEATH. These are the concepts which are only indirectly accessible to our understanding and thus, "[m]etaphor has the power to create reality for us; it is the major way in which the human cognitive system produces nonphysical reality, that is, the social, political, psychological, emotional, and so on worlds" (2015: 83).

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The importance of conceptual metaphor for analysing the discourse of the media has been already recognised (Kövecses 2018). However, it is also advisable to introduce yet another tool to the methodological toolbox in order to be able to account for a broader scope of discursive phenomena. Another conceptual operation that is frequently manifested in discourses of various sorts is conceptual integration. Conceptual Integration Theory (hereinafter referred to as CIT), also known as conceptual blending theory, has been one of the most influential and widely applied theories in cognitive linguistics in the recent years. It is a useful tool for explaining the creation of novel, unconventional forms with emergent meanings. CIT originates from the theory of mental spaces proposed by Fauconnier and defined as "constructs distinct from linguistic structures but built up in any discourse according to guidelines provided by the linguistic expressions" (1994: 16). The theory of mental spaces has been later developed significantly, however, it still finds its application in modern linguistics and interdisciplinary studies. CIT itself has been further developed (Coulson 2001; Fauconnier & Turner 2002; Grady et al. 1999) and refined (Brandt 2012; Brandt & Brandt 2005) throughout the years and continues to influence the field of cognitive linguistics. CIT postulates the dynamic and emergent nature of meaning creation, and thus can be successfully applied to the analysis of neologisms, occasionalisms, and other nonce formations. Also, contextual modifications of the meanings of compounds can be accounted for by means of CIT (Prażmo 2017; Waszakowa 2017). Additionally, the theory can be successfully applied for explaining the emergent nature of such discursive senses as humour, irony, or sarcasm.

Turner (2014) recognises within CIT the procedure, which he refers to as advanced blending, double-scope blending, or vortex blending. According to Turner, this mental capacity is connected to "[…] a level of blending that seems to be routine for human beings across all domains of thought, and yet, to all indications, unavailable to members of other species" (ibid., 29), which makes it a typically human ability. Advanced blending, then, takes place when we mix the contents of two mental spaces

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that are conflicting and whose organisational structure seems to be in sharp contrast with each other, which results in the production of highly creative blends. A case in point is Turner's statement: "If I were my brother in law, I would be miserable." where we clearly integrate two different inputs: the existence of Turner's and the life of his brother in law's (ibid., 29-30). Furthermore, Turner proposes that it is possible to use an already blended space as a novel input and mix its contents with another input mental space, which might or might not be a blend. This leads us to the origin of the so-called hyper-blend (ibid., 216), for example, the idea of a *selkie* (ibid., 29-30).

Another crucial operation that is needed in CIT is compression, e.g., compression of time, space, or identity, just to mention a few (ibid., 113-135). Interestingly, together with compression come disintegration and decompression as well, since frequently it is impossible for us to perceive the patterns of relations to be blended between two input spaces until we decompress and disintegrate the structure moderately. For instance, in the Buddhist Monk riddle, one decompressed element is the direction of travelling on the part of the monk, i.e., in one input he ascends, in the other he descends. Clearly, without such a mapping, despite the fact that it needs to be decompressed initially, we would not be able to superimpose the two inputs and resolve the riddle (ibid., 119). Further, conceptual blending often leads to the creation of metaphorical conceptualisations as two input spaces are commonly based on two separate domains[1]. Such metaphorical blends (Schröder 2015; Semino 2010) play an important role in structuring discourse.

The two theories depicted above can be used independently to account for the conceptual phenomena manifested in language, it is, however, advantageous to couple CIT with CMT while analysing more complex expressions. Grady et al. (1999) explore the relation between conceptual metaphor and conceptual integration theory. They recognise the existence of "metaphorical blends" in which prominent elements from the input spaces fuse into the blended space and a "single element in the blend

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corresponds to an element in each of the input spaces" (Grady et al. 1999: 114). Specifically,

> "[*M]etaphorical blends [...] involve a different kind of fusion, in which certain very salient aspects of input domain structure are prohibited from entering the blend, and in which some salient structure in the blended space is prevented from floating back to the inputs. That is, there is information from one of the inputs (the target) that must be ignored in the blend*" (ibid., 115).

Metaphorical blends differ considerably from other non-metaphorical cases of conceptual integration. In metaphorical blends, elements from input spaces fuse together without retaining their individual identity. Some blends are figurative, but not metaphorical and allow for the retention of individual identity, such as in the example of the imaginary discussion between a modern-day philosopher and Immanuel Kant (Fauconnier & Turner 1998) or a historical vs modern boat race (Fauconnier & Turner 2003). In these cases, there is no blending of identity, but rather imposition of two elements onto a single frame[2].

3.1 Comism emerging as a result of conceptual integration

Another theory that might prove influential in our research originates within humour studies. Humour is a multi-faceted phenomenon with numerous factors essential for its understanding. It has sparked interest across many different fields since antiquity, and today it is the métier of many. Humour is influenced by such notions as nationality, morality and language, or users of language who create and receive humour, with their individual subjective preferences (Chiaro 1992: 5; Ross 1998: 75-109). Specifically, what different people find amusing is closely associated with their gender, age, or most importantly, their social status and educational background. In addition, different communities and cultures, however, related they may be, usually exhibit a different style of comedy, as is the case with British and American people (Kuipers et al. 2005: 58-59). Thus, humour conveys a firm impression of being a complex notion.

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In the contemporary world, humour plays a special role due to the fact that it is used as a tool to convey messages, communicate, fight politically, raise awareness, or simply amuse. It is almost impossible to provide a short and succinct definition of humour, for the reason that humour is, in itself, an umbrella term (Dynel 2009) pertaining to different fields of study, such as literature, linguistics, or philosophy. As a genre, humour incorporates other related terms, e.g., comedy, joke, cartoon, slapstick, or stand-up, which accounts for the issue of circularity in terms of definition proposing. There are also notions such as 'laughter' or 'sense of humour' that inevitably lead to the definitional confusion. Humour, finally, constitutes such a versatile area of study that it needs a specific lens to be scrutinized under, in order to make sense of it. As this article is restricted to the field of cognitive linguistics and discourse analysis, we presume that the definitional aspect of it ought to be provided by such studies only. In this light, we can observe that humour is regarded as a clash of opposing elements, in alliance with incongruity theories of humour (Attardo 1994: 48-49).

Although the notion of incongruity is vague in itself or ill-defined, its role being greatly overestimated by theorists (Ritchie 1999; 2009; Veale 2004), it can be generally assumed for the purpose of this article that incongruity is synonymous to opposition or clash. The nature of such an opposition can be varied (Samokhina & Pasynok 2017: 286) and it depends heavily on the context of a language user. Yet, the crux of any humour lies in an opposition of a certain kind, which primarily hinges on the violation of what is being expected as contrasted with what actually occurs (Couder 2019: 5). Furthermore, incongruity theories have elicited the so-called resolution theories which entail that the perception of incongruity itself is merely a beginning of a comprehension procedure, and it is not enough for humour to ensue. What is needed is the incongruity resolution (hence the name of these set of theories, i.e., incongruity-resolution theories), which then allows for humour appreciation (Attardo 1994; Ritchie 1999; Rothbart 1976: 38)[3].

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As it happens, the resolution of incongruity goes hand in hand with CIT, for in the blending process, the running of the novel blend necessitates the re-evaluation of the inputs and their contents as well as the reshuffling of the meaningful elements within the blend, together with additional data that does not originate from the matrix of the mental spaces, for instance, the relevant cultural information. All this can be treated as a resolution of incongruous elements within conceptual integration and it ought to be accepted as such. Interestingly, the cultural element in humour also plays a crucial role within discourse analysis, as it constitutes another dimension of communication, namely social cognition. According to van Dijk, what we understand by social cognition pertains to "socially shared representations of social arrangements, groups and relations, as well as mental operations such as interpretation, thinking and arguing, inferencing and learning [...]" (1993: 257). In this manner, it is possible to conclude that humour is part and parcel of social cognition and impacts on the mental models and meaning creation of the social group it concerns. Therefore, humour ought to be regarded as a powerful tool which can be used to control discourse and the management of social representations, i.e., the minds of people and their opinions. Further, it is crucial to observe that conceptual integration facilitates the production of more complex blends on the basis of what seems to be already blended information. Thus, we arrive at hybrid blends which are complicated and which need contextual details in order to be deciphered. Yet in British humour, the more complex the output, the funnier it is found and the better it is received (Jabłońska-Hood 2020). Hence, such advanced conceptual integration, drawing on already blended data, can be said to be one of the fundamental features of the way in which humour operates within the British community. This quality of comedy leads to a competent discourse management to the extent that an individual using humour in discourse is well-perceived and can, via its comical effects, impact their audience (ibid.). For joining in laughter, especially to do with the emotion-inducing issues such as Brexit, enables the joining of the minds. This basic yet successful discourse strategy is noteworthy in politics, as we shall demonstrate below.

A crucial factor that bears an impact on any humour study is the socio-cultural context that aids the comprehension of what is funny. In British humour, social and cultural allusions are of particular significance. Namely, it has been noted (Richards 2009) that humour has shaped the notion of English identity for many years. Whenever one discusses English humour, one must simultaneously refer to the identity of the English who devised it. In fact, it is their identity that has been driving the urge to laugh and to find things amusing. It ought to be, therefore, acknowledged that English people define themselves and their sense of humour via their identity and vice versa. Hence, the question of their sense of humour must always be explicated in connection with their culture and how they perceived themselves through times, especially within the political context of Brexit. This fact should bear a profound consequence for critical discourse analysis (hereinafter referred to as CDA), since the close-knit relationship between comedy and its receivers/audience allows for the inspection of discourse analytical characteristics of neologisms that shape the mental models of their language users in the social, political, and ideological respects.

4. Data analysis

In this part, we put under scrutiny three selected examples of metaphorical blends. All of them are analysed within the theoretical framework of the conceptual integration model. One of the input spaces in all the analysed blends is occupied by the lexeme Brexit[4] which is a blend (or portmanteau word) in its own right, consisting of two parts: *Britain* and *exit*, originally created by analogy to *Grexit* (Greece + exit) (for a detailed analysis of the meaning and history of the word see Charteris-Black 2019). BREXIT appears in input space 1 in all the analysed examples, however, its contribution to the overall meaning of a blend differs significantly. Different elements of the domain are profiled in each case or, in other words, a different semantic potential is highlighted.

Thus, the blends put under the microscope in this part are, in fact, meta-blends, multiple-level blends, or hyper-blends, consisting of BREXIT (BRITAIN + EXIT) in one

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of the input spaces and other concepts, in the second one. Apart from the novel meanings emerging in the blended space, the emergence of discursive effects, namely humour and irony, can also be observed.

Case study 1: Brexistential crisis

The first element analysed – *Brexistential crisis* – is additionally extended to metaphorically include five different stages of the grief (also here): 1. *Brenial*, 2. *Branger*, 3. *Brargaining*, 4. *Brepression* or *debression*, 5. *Bracceptance* or *euukceptance*.

Examples:

(1) *A Brexistential crisis: So what happens now*? (https://www.thejournal.ie/brexit-what-happens-next-5-4567546-Mar2019/);

(2) *The UK is in Brexistential crisis. Is there a way forward?* (https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jul/01/uk-brexit-brexistential-vote-leave-eu-britain);

(3) *Is Britain having a Brexistential crisis?* (https://graziadaily.co.uk/life/real-life/britain-brexistential-crisis/).

Input space 1: Brexit

Input space 2: Existential crisis

Blended space: Brexistential crisis

In light of CIT, the neologism *Brexistential crisis* rests upon the following mental spaces: input space 1 which concerns Brexit, and input space 2 which pertains to existential crisis. Interestingly, the former is already a blended concept composed of two elements, i.e., Britain and its exit from the EU. This blend has operated as an entrenched concept for a couple of years now, and when used here to make a novel conceptual integration, it functions as a hyper-blend, according to Turner (2014).

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Similarly, due to the complexity of the inputs involved, we are faced with a highly creative neologism constituting an example of an advanced blending technique. Namely, *Brexistential crisis* blends the following: Brexit and the moment in life when a person in a dire predicament questions their life and lifestyle choices, the meaning of their existence and its purpose (input spaces 1 and 2 respectively). Hence, the resultant blended space may well be interpreted as a crisis regarding the moment of Brexit, rather than the sole existence. Further, we can extend the blended content and bring about new socio-cultural associations to it, in other words, the emergent structure allows us to interpret the crisis as regarding the British and their unsure future and fears in the face of Brexit. To be precise, we can presume that the *Brexistential crisis* befalls the British population who are opposed to the idea of leaving the European Union and wish to stay within its structure. What is interesting here is the fact that all the British who are dissatisfied with Brexit seem to be compressed to form one person suffering from the *Brexistential crisis*. Also, it is possible to add to the blend some other related issues, such as the political or economic uproar, instability and chaos within the UK, which would map onto the devastation in the life of the *Brexistential crisis* sufferer. All of this translates into the humorous side of *Brexistential crisis*, too. In particular, the neologism in question links two incongruous concepts: an existential crisis, which is a serious psychological disorder and may be a symptom of an underlying depression, and Brexit, a witty label for Britain leaving the EU. Such a striking mapping between divergent conceptualisations results in humour to the extent that it not only explains the state in which many British people have found themselves, but it also perpetuates comedy by means of the amusing link that gives rise to further associations between the original inputs. Namely, *Brexistential crisis* may well become associated, via the emergent structure, with the grave loss of power, position and benefits that Great Britain held within the EU, as well as with five stages of grief connected with such a loss. What this effectively means is that, again, we could perform a novel act of conceptual integration where loss with its five stages of grief would amount to input space 1, and *Brexistential crisis* (including Brexit) would operate as input space 2. As

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above, the latter is a hyper-blend that makes the whole procedure an act of advanced blending. Within this conceptual integration, we could distinguish a British person in input space 1 who experiences *Brexistential crisis* due to Brexit, which maps onto the person who has suffered from a grave loss of input space 2. Further, we could map *Brexistential crisis* and depressive thoughts and feelings about Brexit from input 1 onto the stages of grief in the following manner: Brexit and the denial of the grave loss equals *Brenial*, Brexit and anger due to the loss means *Branger*, Brexit and bargaining with oneself because of the loss add up to *Brargaining*, Brexit and depression after the loss result in *Brepression* or *Debression*, Brexit and acceptance/ UK or EU acceptance mould into *Bracceptance* or *Euukceptance*. The ease with which novel blended neologisms are formed certainly points towards the creativity of English neologisms, yet it also brings out the comic nature of such blends. They are original, surprising and hence witty, and they give pleasure to the language user who encounters such linguistic expressions. Moreover, their incongruous nature does enhance humour present in the blended space. In addition, it is possible to notice that Brexit and all the matters associated with it, although grave, become the butt of the comedy at hand. This, incidentally, is a very British quality – to amuse oneself at the expense of a painful or even disastrous situation, exaggerating it and laughing at it simultaneously (Jabłońska-Hood 2019, 2020), which in this case is achieved by joining the incongruent inputs of *Brexistential crisis* and a grave loss, namely, death with its grieving process. This socio-cultural referencing, attainable via the emergent structure and extensions to the blend, appears to be at the heart of British political humour, which simultaneously acquires a special rendition for the British public in this way. Namely, using funny neologisms allows for subtle management of society and its cognition, i.e., the access of the media to the public discourse and audience allows for the creation and monitoring of the basic opinions and social attitudes with regard to Brexit. Comedy acts here as a factor that disguises the discourse control and management on the part of the media and makes their social action control appear more subtle or even neutral. Moreover, as in the example above, the grieving person compresses and decompresses

into the discontented British collectively. Interestingly, we can observe the following metaphors at work in this instance: STATE IS THE BODY as well as STATE IS THE MIND, or CONDITION OF THE STATE IS CONDITION OF THE BODY/MIND. In this light, *Brexistential crisis*, with all its stages, collectively pertains to the whole public of the UK, which definitely exaggerates the issue at take as well as enhances humour in this manner.

Case study 2: Brexititis

Examples:

(4) *Brexititis – A malady with no known cure* (https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/voices/opinions/2018/12/20/brexititis-a-malady-with-no-known-cure/);

(5) *Have you got Brexititis? The condition has a nation in its grip and it's spreading fast* (https://inews.co.uk/opinion/have-you-got-brexititis-condition-has-nation-grip-spreading-fast-81531);

(6) *Are you suffering from Brexititis?* (https://www.thearticle.com/are-you-suffering-from-brexititis);

(7) *Brexititis sufferer makes an emotional appeal to European Court of Justice to be allowed to die* (https://chattychimp.co/2018/12/14/brexititis-sufferer-makes-an-emotional-appeal-to-european-court-of-justice-to-be-allowed-to-die/).

Input Space 1: Brexit

Input Space 2: Inflammation

Blended Space: Brexititis

Online Urban dictionary defines *Brexititis* as "a neurological condition whereby the patient's real personality is suddenly revealed by their simple loss of ability to accept views different to their own, Leave or Remain, to the point at which they suspend all respect for others and then enter into raised levels of judgement and hatred creating social division" (Urban dictionary, *s.a.*). It is a condition caused by excessive thinking about the political situation surrounding Brexit, which manifests itself with a variety

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of symptoms ranging from simple headache through increased temperature, redness and even "hatred creating social divisions". According to Urban dictionary (ibid.), it can be highly contagious, often contracted in pubs and other places where close circles gather, and is most prevalent amongst people at the ages of 30+. It causes the feeling of general unease and angst. This emergent meaning results from the merger of *Brexit* (input space 1 and already a hybrid-blend) and the suffix *-itis* mostly used in medical discourse to designate inflammations (input space 2) of various bodily parts and organs, such as, for example, *appendicitis* (inflammation of the appendix), *tonsilitis* (inflammation of the tonsils), or *bronchitis* (inflammation of the bronchi). Any inflammation, on the one hand, is a highly undesirable state often accompanied by unpleasant symptoms such as swelling and pain. On the other hand, inflammation is part of the immune response by means of which an organism tries to combat an infection. These two frames, BREXIT and INFLAMMATION, coincide and bring about an advanced blend in which BREXIT is conceived of as a cause of inflammation that generates a number of unpleasant functions and at the same time may be combated by the metaphorical immune system of the state. This Brexit-caused INFLAMMATION is thus based on a very common conceptual metaphor STATE IS THE BODY, where social/political problems are diseases that the state is suffering from. Brexit is a disease, a "malady with no known cure", difficult to treat due to its unprecedented nature; there is a need for a doctor (competent politician) or effective treatment (responsible political decisions and sensible measures) in order to solve the problems caused by imminent Brexit and the current political chaos. STATE IS THE BODY is a very powerful metaphor due to its visceral, heavily embodied nature. It reaches deep into human experience and thus is likely to elicit strong reactions, including an actual reaction of the immune systems of the recipients of this metaphor (for more on behavioural immune system see, for instance, Aarøe et al. 2017; Ackerman et al. 2018; Sawada et al. 2018; Schaller & Park 2011). Along the same lines as in the previous example, the British society is compressed here into the sufferer of the *Brexititis*, and the procedure boosts the comical effects to the extent that it appeals to the particular members of the society, making it

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contextually relevant and hence even more amusing, irrespective of the individual political stance.

Furthermore, the humour of this instance centres upon the surprising and incongruous mapping between a complex socio-cultural phenomenon of Brexit and a malady. Certainly, these two frames do not have too much in common, and their juxtaposition produces a comic effect. Similarly, the strange relation of the incongruous concepts does seem to work for the British public who find the metaphorically-based blend of *Brexititis* amusing, given that there are frequent jokes circulating within the community which are based on the addition of the *-itis* suffix to certain phenomena in order to create a non-existent but funny blend of the name for some social conduct. This practice only strengthens the comism in the case of Brexit, where we encounter a serious political reality with serious consequences for the whole country, which is being made into a joke by comparing it to a disease.

Case study 3: Brexchosis

Examples:

(8) Boris Johnson warns against 'Brexchosis' in key Brexit speech (https://indianexpress.com/article/world/boris-johnson-warns-against-brexchosis-in-key-brexit-speech-5064241/);

(9) A new malady is afflicting the Brits: Brexchosis (http://www.robertfulford.com/2018-04-28-brexit.html).

Input Space 1: Brexit

Input Space 2: Psychosis

Blended Space: Brexchosis

Brexchosis is "a feeling of despair among those who voted to stay in the EU" (Essberger, *s.a.*). The term, like numerous others, was coined by Boris Johnson in one

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of his 2018 "Road to Brexit" speeches. It refers to a dominant, self-deprecating feeling that many people apparently have in regard to leaving the EU. It is the inability to perceive the benefits that would result from liberating the country from the perceived constrains of the EU's bureaucracy. The meaning is constructed on the basis of BREXIT, which functions here as input space 1, and PSYCHOSIS as input space 2, the latter defined as "an abnormal condition of the mind that results in difficulties determining what is real and what is not. Symptoms may include false beliefs (delusions) and seeing or hearing things that others do not see or hear (hallucinations)" (Wikipedia, *s.a.*). In this way, Brexit is represented as an abnormal condition of the state that results in (politicians' and citizens') difficulties in determining what is real and what is not. The so-called "Project fear" and multiple false promises that would never be delivered constitute delusional thinking inherent in *Brexchosis*. *Brexchosis*, similarly to *Brexititis*, is based on an extended version of STATE IS THE BODY metaphor, i.e., STATE IS THE MIND metaphor, or yet more specifically – CONDITION OF THE STATE IS CONDITION OF THE BODY/MIND. The state as well as the citizens are represented as sufferers from this Brexit-induced mental disorder, which leaves them delusional and psychotic. Introducing the concept DISEASE or DISORDER brings about the need for treatment, cure, and medical assistance. The need for cure, in turn, assumes the inadequate state of health and thus automatically activates negative connotations.

Again, in this example we also perceive the strange incongruity between the hybrid-blend *Brexit* and the medical condition *psychosis*, which is responsible for humour. Correspondingly, the public of the UK is compressed here into a person with *Brexchosis*, which reinforces humour via adding to the contextual socio-cultural relevance. Incidentally, based on all the above analyses, we can observe that the British society has a preference for medically-oriented neologisms to do with Brexit, where the idea of leaving the EU is compared to and contrasted with some form of life-threatening illness that affects the general public. What is more, such examples of humorous blending are based on the following metaphors: STATE IS THE BODY, STATE

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IS THE MIND; coupled with BREXIT IS A DISEASE, which appear to be highly productive in case of Brexit-oriented, amusing neologism in the context of the British communicative space.

5. Conclusions

The present study investigates the emergence of semantic values as well as discursive effects in selected products of the process of conceptual integration. The object of this article pertains to the novel formations which were coined in Brexit-related discourse in the years following the Brexit referendum (June 23, 2016) and preceding the actual day when the UK has officially left the EU (January 31, 2020). From the wealth of linguistic hyper-blends of interest, i.e., those, which comprise the lexeme *Brexit* or its part, only three linguistic expressions have been selected for the in-depth analysis. They serve illustrative purposes and are meant shed light on the mechanism of conceptual integration and its potential in bringing about not only novel semantic qualities, but also producing specific discursive effects, such as humour via the emergent structure of the blended space as well as having socio-cultural implications. The benefits of combining CMT with CIT cannot be overestimated. Whereas both theories can be applied to successfully account for meaning creation, each of them focuses on different aspects of this process. Both metaphor and blending as cognitive phenomena facilitate understanding of complex social issues and the ways in which they are represented in linguistics discourse. Metaphors are relatively stable conceptual structures that only evolve to reflect human knowledge and understanding of the surrounding world. Thus, they are conventionalised products of social cognition that tend to preserve and perpetuate certain patterns, meanings, and values. Metaphors are well-entrenched and deeply-rooted in a particular community and are relatively slow to change. By contrast, conceptual integration is more dynamic and prone to change. It is better fit for accounting for on-line meaning creation in specific contexts and for specific purposes. Combining the two, thus, produces a synergistic effect in which both stable and flexible aspects of meaning can be accounted for. Additionally, conceptual

blending – unlike metaphor – also makes it possible to explain non-derivable, emergent meanings and other extra-semantic qualities like humour. In a similar fashion, compression and/or decompression lead to the humour enhancement by making the comedy contextually more relevant for the humour receiver, i.e., a British person. In line with Conceptual Integration Theory, compression secures the linking of a Brit with the whole British society or nation for that matter, such a merger generating a closer relationship between the two. In this manner, the phenomenon of Brexit becomes more relevant for each individual UK resident. Also, the link itself and the possibility of its decompression empowers a straightforward switch between the two identities, the singular and the collective ones, thus exerting a more substantial impact on the humour receiver in shaping their attitude towards Brexit not only as a state concern, but predominantly as a personal affair. In spite of the possibility of both input spaces being negatively charged, the resultant blend possesses humorous and jocular tone since it is incongruous, and its striking incompatibility is usually medically-oriented and in a metaphorical fashion plays upon the convention of treating Brexit as a disease (BREXIT IS A DISEASE) that affects the British (STATE IS THE BODY/STATE IS THE MIND), making it even more relevant and hence funnier. This corporeal imagery produces a particularly strong response in the receiver, further enhancing the impact that metaphorical blends have on the conceptualisation of certain socio-political problems. Thus, both *Brexititis* and *Brexchosis* activate the visceral metaphorical framing by being based upon STATE IS THE BODY and STATE IS THE MIND metaphors respectively. These metaphors presuppose axiological evaluation (based, in turn, on highly embodied image schemas such as HEALTH IS GOOD, DISEASE ID BAD) and as a result, the blends clearly point out to the negative attitude towards Brexit by merging this concept with the concept of physical or mental disorder respectively. This negative evaluation does not hinder the emergence of humour, which appears as a result of incongruity between the input spaces (health-related vs politics-related domains) and the clash that this juxtaposition produces. The *Brexistential crisis* and Brexit five stages of grief exemplify the procedures of advanced blending and hyper-blending, basically referred to as creative

procedures that scrutinize humour present within the neologisms.

In respect of CDA, it is necessary to conclude that since neologisms constitute a crucial part of text and communication within the mass media, their study must be related to social context. To be specific, the media that possess a direct access to the public domain discourse will create the novel interpretations and thus influence the minds of the British society with the use of humour and the above-mentioned metaphors, so as to produce a negative picture of Brexit. This will, on the other hand, become part of the social cognition for the British. Further, humour will also operate as an access route to manage social discourse and reinforce the negative attitude towards Brexit, too. Additionally, CDA together with CIT, and especially its emergent structure and compression, provide a cognitive toolkit, which is capable of explaining linguistic comedy in novel lexical phrases via its reference to social discourse practices. What is more, politically related, Brexit-oriented neologisms seem to bear a fair number of references to the socio-cultural arena of the British in order to enhance the comic effect and simultaneously gain access and shape the social cognition as well as mental models of the British, with the use of the already entertaining, incongruity-based neologisms. Hence, CIT and CDA ought to be collectively viewed as significant linguistic operations/procedures, which not only shape the social cognition and impact the mental models of language users, but also explicate how discourse may or may not create social emergent meanings and attitudes.

Notes

0. Brexit-related discourse is rife with texts structured upon very elaborate conceptual metaphors (BREXIT IS A DIVORCE, BREXIT IS A GAME, BREXIT IS A DISEASE), other metaphoric linguistic expressions based on orientational metaphors and image schemas (*to stay in the EU, to be out of the EU*) as well as objectification (here understood as the representation of a non-physical entity in terms of a physical one, e.g., describing the "abstract" political phenomenon as a tangible object, in expressions such as: *hard*,

soft, *smooth*, *clean*, *messy*, *dirty*, *rough*, *spicy*, *mild*, or *hairy* Brexit). It is vital to distinguish between conceptual metaphors and linguistic metaphor. The former concerns two different domains that are brought together in order to create correspondences and help language users conceptualise a more abstract entity in terms of a basic and simpler one, e.g., TIME IS MONEY. The latter is concerned with linguistic expressions that exemplify the conceptual metaphor; here a case in point might be *You're wasting my time* (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 7).

Other examples of common Brexit-related conceptual metaphors include: BREXIT IS A BATTLE, BREXIT IS A BOXING MATCH, BREXIT IS A CAKE, BREXIT IS A DISEASE, BREXIT IS A DIVORCE, BREXIT IS A GAME OF CARDS, BREXIT IS A GAME OF DICE, BREXIT IS A JOURNEY, BREXIT IS A LEAP (IN THE DARK), BREXIT IS A PRIZE, BREXIT IS A TRAIN CRASH, BREXIT IS A WAR, BREXIT IS AN OBJECT, BREXIT IS BUYING A NEW HOUSE (Charteris-Black 2019).

1. For instance, lexical blends such as *Brexititis* or *Brexchosis* create metaphorical mappings between two disparate domains – the domain of politics and the domain of medicine. Brexit is represented as a disease, and this conceptualisation, in turn, creates metaphorical framing underlying a text and provokes other metaphorical extensions (state as the body, politicians as doctors, policies as treatments, etc.). Incidentally, this metaphorical framing (STATE IS THE BODY) is very common, especially in the British political discourse. According to Musolff (2012), this framing has a number of implications including the entailment that a state can be healthy or ill, when it is ill, it suffers from certain diseases and needs therapy, and finally, the illnesses which devour the state may eventuate from various disease-carrying and disease-spreading agents (e.g., germs, parasites). He further explains the underlying mechanisms of this process in the following way:

"*What is relevant in this analysis from a CDA viewpoint is the argumentative advantage that the metaphor gives its users when they want to (dis-)qualify political developments, social groups or even individuals as threatening the identity or continued existence of a nation state. Instead of laboriously*

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having to demonstrate and back up their claims with facts, which could be critically tested and challenged, the speaker/writer invites the hearer/reader to access knowledge about the undesirability of illness and the necessity for therapy by referring to generally known illnesses and agents of disease. The respective conceptual items (cancer, parasites, decomposition) also carry social, emotional and aesthetic values that influence the interpretation of the utterance" (ibid., 303).

In this way, a certain metaphorical framing may influence the structure of discourse to a great extent, and for this reason neither conceptual metaphors themselves, nor metaphorical blends can be ignored in a comprehensive critical discourse analytical study.

2. Berberović and Mujagić (2017) claim that BREXIT IS A DIVORCE is a metaphor (see also Đurović & Silaški 2018) which gives rise to numerous creative metaphorical blends manifested in language in expressions such as *divorce bill* (financial obligations that the UK has to fulfil in order to leave the Union), *European family* (all the member states), *marriage of convenience* (UK's belonging to the Union), *open marriage* (the deal the UK apparently wanted, but the EU did not accept) and many others. In this blend the UK is represented metaphorically as one of the partners initiating divorce proceedings in order to end a marriage (UK's membership in the European Union represented as marriage of the UK and the EU). The generic space provides a schematic model for being in a relationship. Input space 1 contributes information concerning divorce proceedings and its implications. Input space 2 contains information about the functioning of the European Union and the UK's role in it. What emerges in the blended space is Brexit (Britain's exit from the EU) represented as a divorce. It melds together information from both input spaces and as a result creates a metaphorical blend in which unreal scenario (nation states behaving like humans, having personal relationships and problems, and eventually deciding to file for divorce) becomes possible to be conceptualised. Emergent scenario adds certain emotional colouring to the event (the UK leaving behind an increasingly possessive and abusive partner and terminating a dysfunctional relationship can be perceived as a good thing, even at the cost of a high divorce bill) and as a result may shape public opinion about an event in a certain way.

3. Another interesting perspective that seems to work well alongside incongruity is Koestler's idea of bisociation: "[…] humor results from bisociation – the perceiving of a situation or idea in two habitually incompatible frames of reference. The bisociation causes an abrupt transfer of the train of thought from one matrix to another governed by a different logic or rule of the game" (after Suls 1983: 40). However, Koestler thinks of bisociation as a characteristic of creativity, of which humour is one kind only (Levine 2006: 6). This means that there is no distinction between any other creative incongruity and humour (Suls 1983: 40), and such reasoning may be viewed as problematic in humour studies. Therefore, it is advocated that we veer towards the resolution of incongruity as the theory which will enable us to perceive humorous incongruities and resolve them in an attempt to understand and appreciate humour (for a detailed discussion of humour theory see the following: Attardo 1994; Chapman & Foot 1976; Jabłońska-Hood 2015; Martin 2006; Raskin 1984; Ross 1998).

4. Consider the following passage as an illustration of an exceptional morphological productivity of Brexit and prefixes that derive from it in English:

"*Many U.K. citizens who voted to Bremain bemoaned the brevastation this brexplosion detonated. Assessing the damage, some Brexiteers now expressed bremorse and bregret, or regrexit, over the results. These Bracksies wondered how the U.K. might stage a breturn. Brecriminations in Parliament began to fly. Some who were in-bretween wished they hadn't skipped the polls on voting day. Dismayed and afraid, immigrants, urbanites, and businesses weighed a brexodus from the U.K. Plenty of brexperts weighed in. A number of tweeters have summed up this brexistential crisis with a tour de force take on Kübler-Ross' classic five stages of grief: brenial, branger, brargaining, brepression or debression, bracceptance or even euukceptance*" (Kelly 2016).

Brexit has provoked a number of forms of prefixes (*Brexi-*, *Brex-*, *Bre-*, *Br-, B-*) which continue to be quite productive in contemporary British political discourse, giving rise to numerous neologisms. Neologisms are understood in this article as novel linguistic formations, which are in the process of entering common use, but have not yet entered mainstream dictionaries. They are, however, used more than just once (unlike occasionalisms or nonce formations) and appear independently of their original place of coinage, e.g., on websites, blogs or in press. We argue that proliferation of such new forms accompanied by the creation of novel meanings and the corresponding

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expansion of the lexicon underpinned with one and the same cognitive mechanism: conceptual integration. This mechanism also accounts for humour, irony and sarcasm emerging in novel creations.

Abbreviations

CDA – Critical Discourse Analysis

CIT – Conceptual Integration Theory

CMT – Conceptual Metaphor Theory

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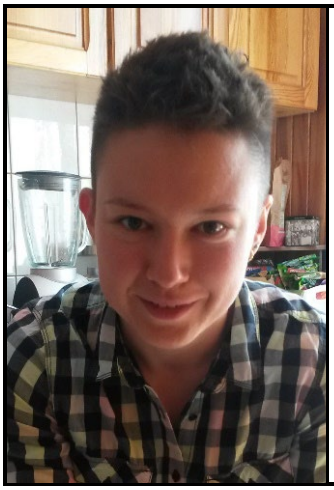

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Résumé

This paper focuses on Brexit-oriented language as inspected from the cognitive linguistic perspective. It is maintained within the methodological framework of conceptual integration theory and critical discourse analysis. The aim of the article is to demonstrate that the English neologisms pertaining to Brexit are based on the following set of metaphors: STATE IS THE BODY, STATE IS THE MIND, and BREXIT IS A DISEASE. Additionally, the research is to prove the hypothesis that such novel expressions can be evaluated linguistically with regard to conceptual integration theory and critical discourse analysis. The study aims to convey that the Brexit vocabulary rests upon the hyper-blend BREXIT (which operates as input space 1) as intertwined with MALADY (which functions as input space 2). The negative connotations resultant from that are significant in terms of the attitudes of the British public. In accordance with the Critical Discourse Analysis, the mass media who propagate such phraseology induce the British to display negative emotions towards Brexit, consequently impacting the social cognition. Nonetheless, such negativity does not seem to disturb the comic effects which are simultaneously generated by the inherent incongruities arising from Conceptual Integration Theory. Thus, Conceptual Blending can be considered a valid tool for accounting for the emergence of discursive effects (such as humorous, ironic,

 ISSN 2453-8035

or disparaging overtones). More importantly, it is the blending that becomes the source of social influencing for it sanctions the compression/decompression of a British language user with the whole nation as taken collectively. In general terms, the analysis of Brexit-related vocabulary exemplifies the intrinsic mechanisms of conceptualisations rendered via Conceptual Integration Theory, Critical Discourse Analysis, and humour research.

Keywords: Brexit, Brexit-related discourse, comic effect, conceptual integration, conceptual metaphor, hyper-blend, meaning compression / decompression, metaphorical lexical blend.

Article was received by the editorial board 14.08.2022;
Reviewed 29.03.2022 and 04.04.2022.
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