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CONCEPTUALISATION OF COMPANIES IN ENGLISH AND ROMANIAN BUSINESS JOURNALESE ¹?

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to identify and analyse conceptual metaphors of “company” found in Romanian and British journalese. The analysis framework for this investigation is based both on a pragma-linguistic approach, and on the cognitive metaphor theory, as well as on anthropological theories of cultural categories. Traditionally, though rather antagonistically, companies are regarded both as lifeless “machines”, over which mechanistic control may be exerted, and as “living organisms”, and derived from the latter, as “systems of change”: a “lethargic” company may be transformed in an investor. The analysis is carried out on two corpora (British and Romanian), consisting of articles from general audience and financial broadsheets, written during 2002-2015, i.e.: *The Economist*, *The Guardian*, *The Financial Times* and *The Telegraph* for the British corpus; and *Adevărul*, *Adevărul financiar*, *Jurnalul Național*, *Cotidianul*, *Capital*, and *Ziarul financiar* for the Romanian corpus. As a conclusion, it appears that conceptualisations of companies are rather similar in the two corpora, with differences assignable to cultural, social or historical differences.

Key words: Business metaphors; Concordancers; Corpus-based approach; Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT); Conceptualisation of company; Cultural variation; Business journalese.

1 Introduction

The issue of business metaphor has attracted a lot of attention lately, by specialists from a large array of fields, in particular marketing professionals, and linguists (cognitive linguists and psycholinguists). The current study is a result of a larger project, i.e. “Universals and variants of English and Romanian business metaphors. A corpus-based conceptual mapping of contemporary journalese”, financed by the Romanian National Authority for Scientific Research and Innovation. The underlying premise of the project is that cognitive metaphors are instantiations of cultural categories manifested in the language spoken by the community that shares

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a common set of characteristics within a given cultural matrix, and that metaphors clustered in cognitive categories account for cultural categories, both in terms of conceptual universals and variants, resulting in a complex mapping of interrelated cross-connections (Popescu 2012, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c). The theoretical framework is based on the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) propounded by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), which underlines the cognitive, universal and embodied nature of metaphor, the theory of metaphor universality and variation advocated by Kövecses (2005; 2010) and contemporary views on the relationship between culture and embodied experience, promoted by Aitchison (2003) and Wierzbicka (1992). Particular attention in this work will be given to the way in which ‘company’ is conceptualised in both Romanian and English newspaper articles on business topics, published during 2002-2015. *Company* is meant as any organisation that generates economic or public profit (private, non-governmental or governmental). For this reason, I preferred to use the term ‘organisation’ when expressing the conceptualisations identified. However, examples include such terms as firm, (small-size) enterprise, corporation, bank, affiliate, subsidiary, group of companies, conglomerate, trust, etc. or any other term that reflects the meaning outlined above, e.g. investors, as well as metonymical name-for-concept/object figure of speech, e.g. Ernst&Young, etc.

2 Literature review

The basic hypothesis of the larger research is that culture is intrinsically interspersed with linguistic structures, as the mental lexicon of a language reveals the interrelatedness between cognition, knowledge organization and communication (Aitchison 2003, Geertz 1973, Jackendoff 2007, Kachru, & Kahane 1995, Wierzbicka 1992). In Geertz’s opinion, culture “denotes a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which people communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life” (1973:89).

With respect to human cognition, Gibbs, Lima and Francozo (2004) posit that generally speaking, ordinary human cognition is not organised according to propositional and sentential information, it is rather grounded in and structured by different schemata of our perceptual interactions, bodily actions, or handling of objects.

These patterns are experiential gestalts, called ‘image schemas’ that emerge during sensorimotor activity as we manipulate objects, seek orientation spatially and temporally, and direct our perceptual focus for various purposes. (Gibbs et al 2004:1192)

According to the same authors, the embodied nature of metaphoric language use with respect to how people perceive conventional and idiomatic expressions was analysed by various psycholinguistic researchers. Initially, people take cognitive linguistic

analyses to help them discover potential patterns of embodied metaphors. Next, they perform independent inquiries into people's understanding of the source domains for these embodied metaphors, particularly with regard to their embodied understandings of these domains, other than their customary use in linguistic expressions. Lastly, people use the data obtained in order to make predictions regarding the mental mappings of various target domains of conceptual metaphors (Gibbs et al 2004:1195)

Alice Deignan (2015:13) summarises the main tenets of Conceptual Metaphor theory as follows:

a) Metaphors structure thinking (conceptual metaphors form the background to our conceptual systems, rather than the foreground; "Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature." (Lakoff, & Johnson 1980:4)

b) Metaphors structure knowledge (our own already existing and developing knowledge of the world, how we perceive it, both academically, through science and in our everyday life, through personal experience)

Metaphor has been shown to serve a number of important cognitive functions, including that of making new conceptual domains accessible through metaphorical 'scaffolds' imported from better known domains, such as in the case of metaphors in science, and providing a coherent framework or schema for understanding everyday topics as time, arguments, and emotions (Allbritton 1995:43).

c) Metaphors are central to abstract language (as language itself is abstract in nature, we inherently tend to ease the cognitive tension of abstractisation by assimilating abstract entities to more concrete entities through metaphors.

d) Metaphors are grounded in physical experience (for example, metaphors referring to emotions are motivated by the bodily sensations we experience with those emotions).

e) Metaphors are ideological (metaphors display a certain interpretation of events and situation that is potentially, but unavoidably, biased). According to Hawkes, metaphors have a normative and reinforcing effect, "if [metaphors] seems to sometimes to shake the bars of our cage, it is often only to demonstrate how firmly, how comfortably these are fixed". (1972:89, as cited in Deignan 2005:24)

When discussing business metaphors, one definitely needs to pay heed to the degree of metaphoricity featured by the business language, that is, the extent to which words or expressions are metaphors now, or were metaphors in the past, but lost their metaphorical origin. As very nicely put by Halliday (1994:348), "[m]uch of the history of every language is a history of demetaphorizing: of expressions which began as metaphors gradually losing their metaphorical character". A stock phrase such as "soaring prices" is generally understood as 'quickly rising to a high level' and is hardly ever perceived as a metaphor. Originally, the verb 'to soar' meant 'to rise high in the air while flying without moving the wings', usu. about eagles. It is, in Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) terms, a *dead metaphor*, one that has become

conventionalised and has its own literal meaning. Furthermore, Goatly (1990) identifies five categories of linguistic metaphors along a scale from dead to active, namely 1 - *dead* (GERM – a seed); 2 - *dead and buried* (CLUE – a piece of evidence) (1 & 2 - *DEAD*); 3 – *sleeping* (LEAF – page of a book); 4 – *tired* (SQUEEZE – financial borrowing restriction) (3 & 4 - *INACTIVE*); 5 - *active* (TRACTOR – a vehicle for pulling loads or machinery) metaphors.

Deignan (2005:39) developed her own categorisation of metaphorically-motivated linguistic expression, namely of living metaphors, which she classifies as: *innovative* (...the lollipop trees, Cameron 2003); *conventionalised* (There is no barrier to our understanding, Halliday 1994); *dead* (crane = machine for moving heavy objects, Goatly 1997) and *historical* (comprehend, pedigree, Lakoff 1987). She further claims that both *innovative* and *historical* metaphors can easily be traced with the help of corpora, as they are rather rare nowadays. Deignan brings forth in the analysis of conventionalised and dead metaphors two concepts, i.e. *coreness* and *dependency*. In the case of a conventional metaphor, the metaphorical meaning will bring to mind its literal counterpart, in which the literal meaning is more ‘core’ than its metaphorical meaning, which usually depends on the literal sense. *Coreness* and *dependency* in a series of related meanings can be determined in two ways: ‘through a corpus linguistic study of citations of lexemes and through a semantic analysis of each sense’ (Deignan 2005:42).

3 Research methodology

The process of metaphor identification conjures the “ideational meaning”, through which we need to determine whether metaphors can be identified in a text and if there exists some “tension between a literal source domain and a metaphorical target domain” (Charteris-Black 2004: 35). In Stefanowitsch’s opinion (as cited in Chapeton 2010), one can identify three main strategies for extracting linguistic expressions:

a) The first one relies on looking for source domain vocabulary. This means selecting a potential source domain followed by searching for individual lexical items to be found in this domain through the use of concordancers.

b) The second strategy is based on searching for target domain vocabulary. An analysis that exclusively relies on the above two methods will only result in a subset of metaphorical expressions, i.e. the ones which include specific vocabulary belonging to either the source or target domain.

c) Thirdly, the researcher can resort to manual coding in the extraction of metaphorical expressions. There is one downside to this method in that it reduces the potential size of the corpus, since one has to carefully read the whole corpus. What is more, this strategy entails manual annotation, which is particularly time-consuming. For the purposes of this analysis, I employed a combined method for the identification of metaphorical linguistic expressions, based on keywords belonging to the target domain as well as manual search inside the two corpora.

Popescu (2012, 2015b, 2015c) stated that cognitive metaphors are instantiations of cultural categories manifested in the language spoken by the community that shares a common set of characteristics within a given cultural matrix. Therefore, metaphors clustered in cognitive categories account for cultural categories, both in terms of conceptual universals and variants, resulting in a complex mapping of interrelated cross-connections. This theory will be tested on contemporary business journales in both English and Romanian and I will endeavour to find universal metaphors and metaphor variations assignable to cultural characteristics of contemporary Romanian and British business reality as it is reflected in the written press.

The quantitative analysis was carried out using different online electronic software, such as electronic dictionaries, lexical datasets, concordancing software, thesauri, etc. Among the research instruments I used for the analysis of the two corpora were Tropes V8.4 (2014)² and Tropes – Romanian full version 8.2³. Tropes is designed for Semantic Classification, Keyword Extraction, Linguistic and Qualitative Analysis. Tropes free software is a perfect tool for Information Science, Market Research, Sociological Analysis, Scientific and Medical studies, and more. For a more specific identification of concordances I used the ConcApp software.

4 Results and interpretation

The application of the Tropes software returned the following classification for the British corpus:

Table 1.	
Class	Instances
'companies' 4749	company 2969
	conglomerate 18
	consulting firm 15
	deloitte touche 33
	ernst&young 7
'consulting firms' 82	peat marwick 27
	corporation

² "Tropes software was developed by Pierre Molette and Agnès Landré on the basis of the work of Rodolphe Ghiglione. All rights reserved. <http://www.semantic-knowledge.com>.

³ "Tropes software was developed by Pierre Molette and Agnès Landré on the basis of the work of Rodolphe Ghiglione. The dictionaries for Romanian version were developed by UEFISCDI. All rights reserved. The dictionaries for Romanian version were developed by Dan Caragea for UEFISCDI, Romania. All rights reserved. <http://www.semantic-knowledge.com> and <http://www.forhe.ro>."

79	
drug company	
10	
enterprise	
42	
investor	
1357	
	mitsubishi
	5
	sharp corp
'japanese trusts'	3
45	sony
	21
	toshiba
	11
operator	
85	
subsidiary company	
59	

As for the Romanian corpus, the application of the Tropes software returned the following results, with less instances of 'company':

Class	Instances
'categorii de societăți' ⁴	companie
3974	2951
companie	companie de servicii
2955	4
filială	
38	
firmă	
815	
grup de companii	
36	
holding	
30	
	întreprindere
	42
întreprindere	întreprinderi mici
81	12
	microîntreprinderi
	23
joint venture	
8	
sucursală	
30	
trust	
7	

⁴ (Transl.) categories of companies.

The software also creates a graphical description of the Relations between References, or between a Word category and a Reference. The numbers indicated reveal the Relations (co-occurrence frequency) existing between the various References. The orientation represents the references on the left of the central Reference are its predecessors, those on the right its successors, as shown in the figure below:

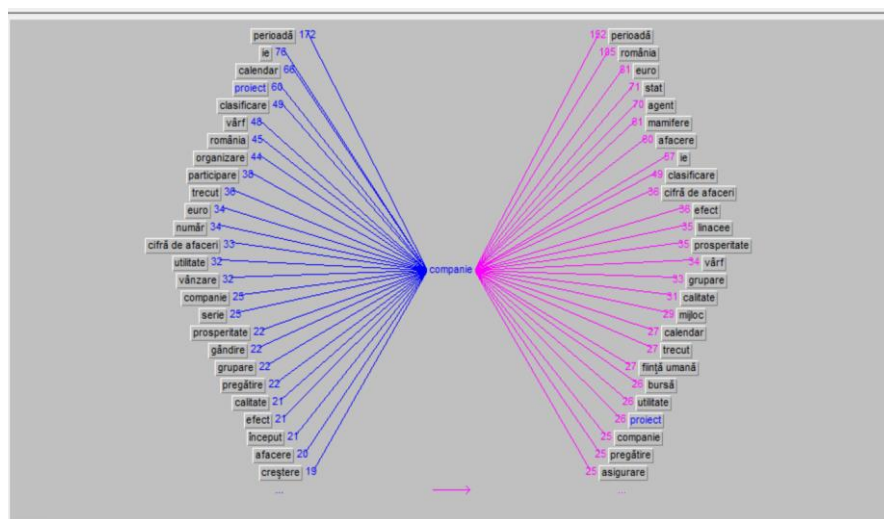


Figure 1. 'COMPANIE' relations

ORGANISATIONS are SYSTEMS OF CHANGE

Companies are systems of change in that they are agents of progress, made up of intelligent human beings who exert their creativity and need for improvement and advancement. In general, company metaphors are strongly metonymised, COMPANY being used to represent the people who make it up, either the managers or the workers, or both. A company, viewed as being made up of interrelated components which work together towards achieving a common goal may represent a system, in which, if one component / function is changed, the whole performance will be affected. Functions / components / people depend on each other and in an overall synergy they can contribute to the advancement of the organisation. The survival of an organisation is a matter of adaptability and anticipating the future helps towards coping with changes in the environment.

- (1) În ceea ce privește minusurile acestei situații, spune că unul dintre dezavantaje este legat de riscul de a trece prea repede peste **adaptare** pentru că angajatul crede că „deja știe cum este acolo“, deși **organizația a trecut printr-o serie de schimbări**⁵. (Business Magazin, 25 June 2015)

⁵ (Transl.) Concerning the drawbacks of this situation, the manager of Fresenius says that one of the disadvantages is the risk to pass too quickly over the adaptation stage because the employee

(2) **Firma** a **evoluat** și, după ce a făcut parte dintr-un joint venture european, a fost vândută către KPNQuest, cel mai mare jucător din industrie, la rândul său format din alte două companii, firma olandeză KPN Telecom și cea americană Qwest Communications⁶. (Business Magazin, 30 July 2015)

(3) Procesul de adaptare la concurență nu s-a încheiat, iar **evoluția firmelor** autohtone nu este lină, ci adeseori în salturi, cu destul de multe colapsuri⁷. (08 October, 2014, Business Magazin)

(4) Lifestyles change, and it's about a **company** constantly **innovating**, looking at what's happening and also predicting what's going to happen. (19 April 2013, The Guardian)

(5) Looking back over his career, the aviation veteran reels off a volley of landmark events that he believes **transformed** the **company** from a no-hoper into arguably the most formidable force in European aviation. (30 November 2014, The Telegraph)

(6) Low-cost **airlines** have **revolutionised** short-haul flying. (29 November 2014, The Economist)

ORGANISATIONS are LIVING ORGANISMS

Following the metonymic load mentioned above, a company is full of life, just as the people in it are alive. A company is born, grows up, matures and dies. Likewise, it can get sick, can recover and become healthy again, can survive, can thrive or be lethargic or immune. Not to mention that both words, *organisation* and *organism* have the same Greek etymological origin, *organon*, meaning *tool*, *organ of the body*, *instrument*. Moreover, a company is resembled to a child that needs to be nurtured and raised by caring parents, and following this, a COMPANY is a HUMAN BODY that undergoes the same states of health as a human being.

(7) Evident, e nevoie de timp pentru a reconstrui rețeaua de magazine (...) **firma** a «**renăscut**». E un **copil**, trebuie acum să-l **creștem**⁸. (01 May 2013, Capital)

(8) Pornite ca afaceri timide în urmă cu trei-patru ani, **spațiile de lucru** la comun (co-working) s-au **maturizat** și sunt pregătite acum să fure o felie din

believes that he already knows what it is like there, although the organisation has undergone a series of changes.

⁶ (Transl.) The company evolved, and, after being part of a European joint-venture, it was sold to KPNQuest, the largest player in the industry, made up itself of two other companies, the Dutch company KPN Telecom and the American one, Qwest Communications.

⁷ (Transl.) The process of adapting to competition has not ended, and the evolution of domestic companies is not smooth, but often in jumps, with rather many collapses.

⁸ (Transl.) Of course, time is needed in order to rebuild the network of restaurants (...) the company is reborn. It is a baby, we now need to raise it.

mult mai larga piață a spațiilor clasice de birouri⁹. (20 February 2015, *Adevărul financiar*)

(9) Peste două sute de **întreprinderi mici și mijlocii** mor zilnic în România, în timp ce alte aproape 70 își declară insolvența intrând, în 95% din cazuri, pe calea falimentului¹⁰. (24 September 2013, *Capital*)

(10) Harf, un neamț de 69 de ani, a condus JAB timp de aproape un sfert de secol, perioadă în care a transformat o **companie** de produse chimice „**letargică**” într-un investitor în sectorul bunurilor de larg consum cu dețineri importante¹¹. (8 December 2015, *Ziarul financiar*)

(11) Pentru companiile solide și cu rezerve de lichidități, noul tablou economic s-ar fi tradus într-o bună oportunitate de a-și crește cota de piață rapid, prin achiziții ale **companiilor** cu probleme de flux de numerar, dar altfel **sănătoase**¹². (20 March, 2015, *Adevărul financiar*)

(12) După dispariția **retailerilor** care nu au **supraviețuit** crizei, jucătorii rămași în piață au început să construiască încet, dar sigur¹³. (12 March, 2015, *Capital*)

(13) Back then he chose **survival** of the **company**. (26 May 2016, *The Telegraph*)

(14) When the original Caesars investment was made, casino **companies** were believed to be relatively **immune** to economic downturns. (23 April 2013, *The Financial Times*)

(15) The official Italian reaction to the stress tests has been to insist that the overall results showed that most **banks** were still **healthy**, regardless of a few weak links, and to point fingers at the ECB for using an “adverse” economic scenario that was disproportionately harsh on Italy. (27 October 2014, *The Financial Times*)

(16) Buyout groups often keep money in reserve from their funds to support **ailing companies** in their portfolios that they believe can be saved. (23 April 2013, *The Financial Times*)

⁹ (Transl.) Started up a shy businesses three-four years ago, the co-working spaces have grown up and are now ready to steal a larger market slice of the classical office spaces.

¹⁰ (Transl.) More than two hundred small and medium sized companies are dying daily in Romania, while some 70 others file for insolvency, in 95% of cases, heading for bankruptcy.

¹¹ (Transl.) Harf, a German man of 69, has led JAB for almost a quarter of a century, during which he has changed a ‘lethargic’ chemicals company into an investor in the durables sector, with significant holdings.

¹² (Transl.) For solid companies, with liquidity reserves, the new economic picture would have been translated into a good opportunity to rapidly increase their market share, through acquisitions of companies facing cashflow problems, but otherwise healthy.

¹³ (Transl.) Following the disappearance of the retailers who have not survived the crisis, the remaining players on the market started to build slowly, but steadily.

(17) The **company** has been **hurt** by the removal of waiting list penalties by Monitor... (3 December 2015, The Telegraph)

(18) An **ailing** Spanish **firm** **finds solace** in Australia. (12 October 2013, The Economist)

ORGANISATIONS are LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Evolution is key to success, and from the conceptualization of organisations as systems of change, the understanding of companies as loci where learning takes place is evident, especially where there exists a corporate culture that allows for individuals to develop and self-improve. Companies have lately been considered as having their own ‘memories’, which helps preserve and transmit certain behaviours, norms and values. Metonymically speaking, the individuals’ ability to synergise theories and models of action contributes to the construction of a ‘learning’ company.

(19) Dacă până în 1989 Arctic era pentru români sinonimul frigiderului sau al congelatorului, după Revoluție consumul de electrocasnice a crescut, iar **compania** a fost nevoită să **învețe** și ea **regulile** unei piețe concurențiale¹⁴. (30 June, 2015, Ziarul financiar)

(20) Two days after the Slater & Gordon disposal was unveiled, trading in Quindell shares was temporarily suspended when the **company** **realised it had made a mistake** in the deal documents. (4 April, 2015, The Telegraph)

ORGANISATIONS are MACHINES

This metaphorical image is rather pervasive in current discourse. We often hear phrases such as ‘he’s just a cog in the wheel’ (= unimportant person without power of decision); ‘well-oiled’ (= functioning well); ‘merge ca unsă’¹⁵ / ‘merge ca pe roate’¹⁶ (= functioning well). This conceptualisation greatly influences the way in which we view companies, and our expectations regarding their performance. This mechanistic perception makes us regard companies as controllable entities that function according to our commands; they are lifeless and consistent in performance – they produce the output set in the operations manual. Whenever it functions abnormally, it must be out of order, therefore no innovations or changes are expected. This view is contrasted by the metaphors COMPANIES are SYSTEMS of CHANGE and COMPANIES are ORGANISMS, when the human element is taken into consideration. The central value to the machine metaphor is control. State-owned companies in former communistic countries promoted this type of control

¹⁴ (Transl.) If up to 1989, Arctic was for Romanians the synonym of the refrigerator or the freezer, after the revolution the consumption of household appliances has increased, and the company was forced to learn itself the rules of a competitive market.

¹⁵ (Transl.) It goes as if oiled.

¹⁶ (Transl.) It goes as if on wheels.

and view of organisations as well-oiled machineries, capable of producing the desired output targets of the planned / command economy. In this scenario, managers are well-organised, level-headed engineers who devise targets, workloads, blueprints, schedules, standards.

(21) Exemplul francezilor de la Renault a arătat cum o **companie** care abia mai făcea doi bani a ajuns să fie considerată **motorul** economiei românești¹⁷. (30 June 2015, Adevărul Financiar)

(22) Astfel, LiveRail, **companie de publicitate** online care **funcționează** ca **unealtă** de monetizare pentru diferite site-uri și rețele sociale, devine noul profil al companiei vedetă din piața de M&A¹⁸. (Adevărul Financiar, 20 March 2015)

(23) The US government has ordered Volkswagen to recall almost 500,000 cars after discovering that the **company deployed** sophisticated software to cheat emission tests allowing its cars to produce up to 40 times more pollution than allowed. (18 September 2015, The Guardian)

ORGANISATIONS are INSTRUMENTS OF DOMINATION

This conceptualization probably has its roots since the industrialisation age, when labour intensive factories exploited the human capital in order to achieve productivity. Nowadays too, social inequalities still exist in organisations, born out of the need to control, and especially as a result of the market competition, companies extend their need for dominance over competitors. Nouns such as *control*, *dominance*, *monopoly*, or verbs such as *to dominate*, *to dictate*, *to abuse*, *to command*, *to impose*, *to terminate*, etc. were frequently found in the two corpora.

(24) GDF SUEZ Energy România, **compania** de distribuție și furnizare a gazelor naturale **controlată** de grupul franco-belgian GDF Suez, a ajuns în primul semestru al anului la un profit net de 352,5 milioane de lei¹⁹. (1 September 2013, Ziarul financiar)

(25) **Rewe** a **dominat** până în 2010 piața locală de comerț, la momentul acela în portofoliul grupului, aflându-se și lanțul de cash&carry Selgros cu afaceri de circa 3 mld. lei²⁰. (30 November 2014, Ziarul financiar)

¹⁷ (Transl.) The example of the Frenchmen from Renault, who showed how a company that was almost worthless grew to be considered the engine of the Romanian economy.

¹⁸ (Transl.) Thus, LiveRail, online advertising company which functions as money tool for different sites and social networks, is becoming the new profile of the star company on the M&A market.

¹⁹ (Transl.) GDF SUEZ Energy România, the natural gas distribution and supply company controlled by the French-Belgian group GDF Suez reached in the first semester of this year a net profit of 352.5 million RON.

²⁰ (Transl.) Rewe had dominated until 2010 the local commercial market, at that moment the Selgros cash&carry chain belonged to the group portfolio, with a turnover of approximately 3 billion lei.

(26) Dacă în retailul cu dominantă alimentară **liderul** pare **hotărât** să rămână pe **prima treaptă a podiumului** - poziție pe care și-o menține ajutat de deschiderile de noi magazine -, în retailul de modă se va da o luptă strânsă între Inditex și H&M.²¹ (2 January 2013, Ziarul financiar)

(27) Până nu demult a existat un **monopol** pe piață, nu au fost foarte multe locații în care să putem intra, iar **dezvoltatorii** existenți sunt cei care au **dictat** regulile în piață.²² (16 March 2015, Business magazin)

(28) "The **company** can **terminate** your employment at any time by giving you the statutory period of notice," the contract **dictates**. (26 October 2013, The Guardian)

(29) ... if Glass becomes a raging success then **Google** may one day find itself accused of **abusing** its **dominance** of wearable computing platforms. (20 April 2013, The Economist)

(30) If so, **bosses** should be feeling ever more qualified to **command** their **troops**. (13 December 2014, The Economist)

(31) In September 2012 the commission began an antitrust investigation, to examine whether **Gazprom** was **hindering** the free flow of gas across the European Union, **blocking rival** suppliers in central and eastern member states and **imposing** unfair prices through oil indexation. (4 January 2014, The Economist)

ORGANISATIONS are POLITICAL SYSTEMS

Companies can be seen as systems of political rule, in which power plays a central role, as well as conflicting interests. The main idea is that once you are one component of an organization, you are part of "the system" and you cannot get out of it, moreover, you have to play by the rules imposed by the one in the position of power. In a company seen as a political system, there is discrepancy between what is publicly stated as organisational structure / mapping and the hidden agendas of the bigger agents of power, most often, as it can be seen in the British corpus, the state / the government (there were 1116 instances of government concordances in the British corpus as compared to 406 in the Romanian corpus) is the most important factor in the process of decision making. The meddling of the government or of larger financial institutions (such as the central bank) is seen as unfair, even abusive; however, a knowledge of who really holds the reins and who are the true

²¹ (Transl.) If in food-dominated retail business the leader seems adamant to remain on the first place of the podium – a position it is already keeping, helped by the new shops openings, in the fashion retail business a fierce fight will be fought between Inditex and H&M.

²² (Transl.) Until not long ago, there existed a market monopoly, there were not many locations we could enter, and existing developers are those who dictated the market rules.

beneficiaries of changes will ensure success. Scheming, plots, alliances are all elements that need to be taken into consideration on the political theatre of business.

(32) Ca și cum birocrația nu ar fi fost de ajuns, există situații în care **reprezentanți ai statului** abuzează de **IMM-uri**, de exemplu prin **controale** de o frecvență și o duritate aberantă²³. (2 September, 2013, Capital)

(33) Impulsul de scădere a inflației pe care îl poate da aprecierea rapidă a leului ar putea oferi **băncii centrale** un spațiu de manevră neașteptat pentru reluarea ciclului de **relaxare a politicii monetare**²⁴. (10 January 2013, Ziarul financiar)

(34) Anul trecut **guvernul** a **oprit** pe ultima sută de metri **oferta** de la **Transgaz** pe fondul incertitudinilor cu privire la alegerile care urmau să aibă loc în toamnă²⁵. (2 January 2013, Ziarul financiar)

(35) Șeful **Guvernului** a cerut atunci ca vânzarea **companiei** să fie **reavizată** de Consiliul Suprem de Apărare a Țării, condus de Băsescu, iar președintele a solicitat ca Ponta să își asume răspunderea pentru privatizare. (9 February 2015, Adevărul financiar)

(36) Internet **giants** have been encouraged to expand into **the provision of government-related services**, such as booking hospital appointments and processing utility bills. (24 October 2015, The Economist)

(37) Oil **producers**, meanwhile, are starting to publish more details of production-sharing contracts with governments. This is “good for companies because it will show how [the contracts] are weighted, which contrary to common perception is usually in the government’s favour,” says George Cazenove of Tullow Oil. “That’s why it’s more often the **governments** than the companies that **want the terms kept quiet**.” (13 December 2014, The Economist)

(38) Luxembourg’s **finance sector** has **set out plans** to become Europe’s leading financial centre in the next five years, **plotting** to attract business in areas from global banking to fintech startups – at a time when Britain is worrying about its own place in the financial world. (03 December 2015, The Telegraph)

(39) Some see this as a **worrying commingling** of **government** and corporate debt. (20 December 2014, The Economist)

²³ (Transl.) As if bureaucracy hadn’t been enough, there are situations in which state representatives abuse SME’s, for example through controls that are abnormally frequent and tough.

²⁴ (Transl.) The spur to inflation decrease that rapid depreciation of the RON can bring about might allow the central bank unexpected room for manoeuvre in order to resume the cycle of monetary policy relaxation.

²⁵ (Transl.) Last year, the government halted in the last hundred metres the bid from Transgaz due to uncertainties regarding the elections which were to take place in autumn.

COMPETITION between ORGANISATIONS is WAR

Competition itself in the business arena is like taking part in war that has to be fought, and won, if one is to stay afloat. Such competition entails the deployment of war-like tactics: planning offensive, studying the enemy's strategy; calculating one's energy and resources, assessing one's strengths and weaknesses, etc. Therefore, one often comes across vocabulary from the semantic field of *war*: *battle*, *rival*, *to attack*, *to outmanoeuvre*, *to threaten*, *to win*, etc.

(40) **Disney** are în faţă propriul **război** „galactic” cu autorităţile antitrust din Uniunea Europeană. Prima **luptă** s-ar putea da luna viitoare, notează Reuters²⁶. (20 December 2015, Ziarul Financiar)

(41) Nu există nicio altă modalitate pentru **comercianţi** să **câştige** cotă de piaţă suplimentară decât dacă **atacă** alte formate de comerţ²⁷. (21 January 2015, Ziarul financiar)

(42) În vreme ce poziţia sa de lider este **ameninţată** de **Albalact**, **Danone** preferă să poarte **bătălia** pe terenul cel mai familiar, **dominând** clar, cu o cotă de 50%, segmentul de iaurturi²⁸. (30 April 2015, Business Magazin)

(43) Într-un **război** dur cu grupurile germane din comerţ (**Lild&Schwarz** şi **Metro**), dar şi după consolidarea **rivalilor** de la **Auchan** prin preluarea **Real**, francezii de la **Carrefour** au devenit prima reţea din comerţul modern care acoperă toate formatele de magazine: hipermarketuri, supermarketuri, proximitate, online, discounter (Supeco) şi de anul trecut cash&carry²⁹. (21 January 2015, Ziarul financiar)

(44) Three years ago, ACS, a big Spanish **construction group** of which Mr Pérez is also chairman, **put a strain** on its balance-sheet to buy Hochtief, a bigger German **rival**. (12 October 2013, The Economist)

(45) Although they may seem to be **winning** the **battle**, **Gazprom** could yet **outmanoeuvre** its customers. (4 January 2014, The Economist)

(46) AROUND the world, governments and **beverage makers** are locked in **battle** over taxes on sugary drinks. (26 November 2015, The Economist)

²⁶ (Transl.) Disney is facing its own “galactic” war against the antitrust authorities in the European Union. The first battle might be fought next month, according to Reuters.

²⁷ (Transl.) There is no other way for traders to gain an extra market share unless they attack other commerce formats.

²⁸ (Transl.) While its leader position is threatened by Albalact, Danone prefers to lead the battle on the most familiar ground, clearly dominating the yoghurt segment by a 50% market share.

²⁹ (Transl.) In a tough war with German commercial groups (Lild&Schwarz and Metro), but also after the consolidation of rivals from Auchan (through takeover of Real, the French from Carrefour have become the first network in modern commerce who covers all shop formats: hypermarkets, supermarkets, proximity, online, discounter (Supeco) and starting with last year, cash&carry.

(47) The big-picture story is a **titanic battle** between the **giants** of iron-ore mining – a business in which BSGR is a minnow – for **control** of the world's richest deposits. (6 December 2014, The Economist)

COMPETITION between ORGANISATIONS is GAMBLING

Given the fact that competition between companies can be unpredictable and the outcome can be uncertain, there is no wonder it can be regarded as a game, and the ensuing metaphor is then COMPETITION between ORGANISATIONS is GAMBLING, as in the following examples found in both Romanian and English corpora:

(48) Spre deosebire de anii anteriori însă, când **mizau** pe formatele deja consacrate, în acest an **companiile** vor **paria** pe magazine mici, de proximitate, cu care să concureze direct magazinele de cartier de la parterul blocurilor³⁰. (2 January 2013, Ziarul Financiar)

(49) Anual, **jucătorii** din comerțul modern deschid 200-250 de magazine pentru a acoperi toate locurile rămase libere în piață și pentru a câștiga o felie tot mai mare din piața de circa 7 mld. Euro³¹. (15 March 2015, Ziarul financiar)

(50) Chinese **investors** who lend money to heavily indebted miners or property developers are not crazy. They are making a calculated **gamble**. (31 January 2014, The Financial Times)

“The smaller **players** are arguing very vociferously that they don't want to be treated the same way as their larger **competitors**,” Mr Beale said. (3 May 2013, The Financial Times)

5 Conclusions

All in all, conceptualisations of companies in both English and Romanian are rather similar, considering the process of business globalisation in general, which indicates that these are primary metaphors, originating in our experience and understanding of the world. However, there exist cultural variations, embodied in various linguistic expressions of the same conceptual metaphor, or different meaning broadening of the same words. This is mostly apparent in the case of the conceptualization of COMPANY as a MACHINE in the Romanian corpus, which outnumbers the occurrences in the British one. This may account for the fact that the Romanian

³⁰ (Transl.) Unlike in the past years, when they were counting on already established formats, this year companies will bet on small, proximity shops, with which neighbourhood shops from blocks ground floor will compete.

³¹ (Transl.) Annually, the players in modern commerce are opening 200-250 shops in order to cover all the market openings and to gain an ever larger slice of the market, in amount of approximately 7 billion Euros.

economy was for a very long time state-owned, highly centralized and the locus of control was at the upper end of the hierarchy and the view of companies was that of a well-oiled, well-functioning industrial mechanism. The more humanistic view of the company as a caring entity or a learning environment, which allows for the moral and professional development of the employees has entered the Romanian conscience at a later stage. Despite much discontent with the meddling of government in the Romanian public and private business, the word ‘Government’ occurred almost three times more in the British corpus than in the Romanian one, assignable probably to the current concern of the British with politics (22 instances) and politicians (80 instances) or with antitrust (19 instances) / monopoly (16 instances) cases. The co-existence of the two apparently antagonistic views on management (the autocratic style versus the democratic one) is a characteristic of the individual corporate culture where these style are manifested.

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