Lithuanian politicians as the target of negative emotions

Lietuvos politikai kaip neigiamų emocijų objektas

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Abstract

The present research lies within the realms of cognitive linguistics, cultural linguistics and computer-mediated communication. It focuses on the negative stances adopted by Lithuanian internet users as a response to certain actions undertaken by Lithuanian politicians. The study seeks to establish the correlation between the negative stances conceptualised in online Lithuanian discourse and the negative emotions rendered by them. On the basis of the analysis carried out, the following conclusion can be drawn: negative stances instantiated in the sample communicate the idea of politicians being unnecessary, harmful to the people of Lithuania, devoid of certain human propensities and lacking certain professional characteristics. The emotions of HATE, ANGER, DISGUST and CONTEMPT appear to be congruent and correlate to the negative stances rendered in the sample. They are conceptualised through one conceptual metonymy and a number of conceptual metaphors, such as POLITICIANS ARE ILLNESSES, POLITICIANS ARE CHILDREN, POLITICIANS ARE ANIMALS, POLITICIANS ARE OBJECTS, POLITICIANS ARE FICTITIOUS CHARACTERS, POLITICIANS ARE ARTISTS, etc. Among the source domains drawn upon in the process of metaphorical and metonymical conceptualisations of the negative evaluative judgements are the BODY, THEATRE, MEDICINE, GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY, etc. domains.

KEYWORDS: negative stance, emotion, conceptualisation, conceptual metaphor, cultural metaphor.

Introduction

The present research lies within the realms of cognitive linguistics, cultural linguistics and computer-mediated communication. The perspective taken in the research is emotion-centred. Despite the fact that being one of the mental faculties of concern to cognitive scientists, emotions have been extensively studied within a wide range of cognitive disciplines, such as philosophy, psychology, cognitive linguistics, cultural linguistics, biomedical engineering (Ekman & Cordaro, 2011; Kövecses, 2010, 2015, 2020; Sharifian, 2017; Wierzbicka, 1999), they still remain a source of inspiration for scholars. Recently there has been a spate of interest in affective computing as a field that could offer devices intended to recognise, interpret, process and simulate human affects (see, e.g., Knickerbocker et al., 2019; Lanata et al., 2019; Olivia & Anikin, 2018).

The present study was motivated by the following factors: first, emotions are an immanent feature of human existence; second, the ephemerality and intangibility of emotions make the issue extremely challenging for the

researcher, as emotionality is stereotypically considered vague and difficult to measure. The research focuses on the conceptualisation of negative emotions instantiated in linguistic online content produced by Lithuanian Internet users on the social media site *Facebook* as a response to certain actions undertaken by Lithuanian politicians. The research aims at 1) identifying the ways negative emotional responses targeted at Lithuanian politicians are conceptualised within the Lithuanian cultural context through the establishment of cross-domain mappings (i.e., the identification of the corresponding target and source domains and the underlying conceptual and cultural metaphors and metonymies) as well as other lexical-grammatical choices that would be indicative of particular negative stances prevalent in the Lithuanian online discourse community; and 2) establishing the correlation between certain negative stances and negative emotions rendered by them. Having in mind the fact that "community" is an inherently abstract concept, shared history and culture are seen as the main criterion applied when defining a virtual community, whose emotional stances are under discussion in the present study. Culture is indexed through the use of group-specific language routines (Herring, 2004). As Kövecses (2009, p. 740) points it out:

> "We have culture when a group of people living in a social, historical, and physical environment make use of their experiences in a more or less unified manner. This means, for example, that they understand what other people say, they identify objects and events in similar ways, they find or do not find behaviour appropriate in certain situations, they create objects, texts and discourses that other members of the group find meaningful, and so forth."

The importance of computer-mediated communication (CMC) for the study of emotions, should not be underestimated as meaningful activities online leave a textual trace making the interactions more accessible to scrutiny and reflection. What is more, the anonymity of CMC, the fact that a person is less easily identifiable and unreachable leads to a greater freedom of expression and higher levels of self-disclosure in conversations as opposed to face-to-face interactions (Herring, 2004). The novelty of the research lies in the fact no similar research delving into negative emotional responses targeted at Lithuanian politicians has been reported so far.

Theoretical Background

The collected data sample was analysed in the theoretical framework of Conceptual Metaphor theory, the Metaphor scenario theory, as well as certain insights provided by the philosophical, psychological and bioengineering studies into emotions; within the realms of the latter emotions are viewed through the perspective of the changes in one's cardiovascular, sceletomuscular, neuroendocrine, and autonomous nervous system (Alia-Klein et al., 2020; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lakoff & Turner, 1989; Kövecses, 2020; Mussolf, 2006; Nummenmaa et al., 2013). The interdisciplinary perspective taken will ensure an all-embracing and comprehensive scrutiny of the basic emotions addressed in the study.

The cognitive linguistic perspective taken by cognitive linguists and cultural linguists is of great relevance to the present study. It is the toolkit developed by cognitive linguists and cognitive psychologists that cultural linguists have been drawing upon extensively in their exploration of the subject matter. The analytical framework of cultural linguistics embraces the following analytical tools: *cultural schemas*, *cultural categories* and *cultural metaphors*. *Cultural schemas* are a culturally constructed sub-class of "cognitive schemas". The schema concept underpins a number of terms that have been widely used in cognitive sciences, including a "script", a "frame", a "scenario", etc. (see e.g., Derry, 1996; Minsky, 1975; Sharifian, 2001). In cognitive psychology "schemas" have traditionally been viewed as "building blocks of cognition that help to organise, interpret, and communicate information" (Sharifian 2017, p. 11). In cognitive linguistics the conceptual tools, such as "domains, frames, mental spaces, schemas used to represent categories in the conceptual system are mental representations of coherent aspects of human experience" (Kövecses, 2020, p. 45). The second tool the analytical framework of cultural linguistics embraces is *categorisation*. Being one of the most fundamental human cognitive activities, categorisation is intrinsically cultural, as "categorisation research focuses on the acquisition and use of categories shared by a culture and associated with language. <...> Cultural categories exist for objects, events, settings, mental states, properties, relations and other components of experience" (Glushko et

al., 2008, p.129). *Cultural metaphors* are the third analytical tool designed on the basis of the proposal made by Conceptual Metaphor theory that 1) abstractions (abstract concepts and reasoning) are made meaningful by virtue of connecting an abstract concept with a physical one, and that 2) conceptual metaphor consists of a set of correspondences, or mappings, between a "source" and a "target" domain; i.e., the conceptualisation referred to as a "conceptual mapping" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2020). Very much like conceptual metaphors, cultural metaphors involve a form of conceptualisation across different domains, known as the source and the target domain. Cultural metaphors, however, are devoid of the universalistic undertone conceptual metaphors or metonymies possess, as they are "entrenched in a particular language and culture (certain cultural traditions, such as folk medicine, ancient religion/worldviews" (Sharifian, 2017, p. 18); (see e.g., Sharifian's study of the Persian body part *del,* which instantiates abstract conceptualisations of emotions, feelings, and intellectual and/or spiritual faculties, and the sources they derive from, i.e., spiritual belief systems, such as the Sufi worldview and Iranian Traditional Medicine) (ibid. 2017, pp. 25–40). Later-generation conceptual metaphors are often culturally sensitive, too and, as pointed out by Sharifian (ibid. 2017, p. 18), "much of the more recent work in CMT is culturally aware in the ways the earlier work was not". So, both cognitive linguistics and cultural linguistics explore the relationship between culture and language, since "culture and language are connected in a myriad ways" (Kövecses, 2009). However, it is the issue of culture-specificity or uniqueness that is foregrounded in cultural linguistic research rather than (near)-universality or shared conceptual structures that fall within the scope of cognitive linguistic research. The research toolkit offered by cultural linguistics is viewed as the most appropriate in the context of the present investigation, as it is intended to ensure getting an empirical grasp of an otherwise slippery concept.

It should be pointed out that a wide spectrum of emotions, e.g., anger, love, pride, fear, happiness, respect, etc. has received considerable attention both from cognitive linguists and cultural linguists and has been amply studied cross-linguistically and cross-culturally (Kövecses, 2015, 2020; Majid, 2012; Mesquita et al., 1997; Ponsonnet, 2014; Šeškauskienė, 2020; Yu, 2002). The present research focuses on the basic negative emotions, such as hate and anger alongside with disgust and contempt being akin to hate and anger (Ekman & Cordaro, 2011; Kövecses, 2004). In the study emotions are approached as "integrated neuro-physiological-behavioral-evaluative-experiential-social phenomenon" (Alia-Klein, 2020). The research resides on a number of assumptions: 1) an emotion is "a psychological state typified by a particular kind of felt experience. This experience is directed towards objects or events in the world and connected with evaluation or appraisals of those objects or events" (Wharton & Saussure, 2023, p. 32); 2) linguistic expressions are part of the human display of emotions; 3) languages instantiate culturally constructed conceptualisations of emotions (Sharifian, 2017, pp. 2–6); 4) different languages may encode the "same" emotions differently (ibid., p. 67).

Materials and Methodology

The data sample is comprised by approximately 8000 comments withdrawn from the social media site *Facebook* posted in the comment sections underneath articles about certain political events and Lithuanian politicians as well as certain policies implemented or steps undertaken by them, e.g., various public and economic measures intended to both mitigate the impact and handle the Covid-19 pandemic, the healthcare reform intended to address numerous deficiencies of Lithuania's health system that is being introduced at the moment. The data sample was comprised in the period from February 2020 to May 2023[1]. It should be pointed out that all comments in the data sample contain offensive and/or abusive language, the patterns employed to convey hate speech. According to Guillén-Nieto (2023, p. 6), offensive language "refers to hurtful, derogatory obscene comments by one person to another", abusive language, in its turn, "refers to harsh, violent, profane, or derogatory language that could demean the dignity of an individual". Despite the fact that linguistic analysis of hate speech, which is no longer regarded unusual, anomalous or deviant, is currently experiencing a boom with more scholarly attention being given to real world examples of hate speech, however offensive they might be (Guillén-Nieto, 2023, p. XI–XII), the examples provided in the article were intentionally impersonalised (i.e., the politicians' names were substituted for personal pronouns) to avoid any malice or offence inflicted on the targets.

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[1] All comments were originally written in Lithuanian. The translation into English has been produced by the author of this article.

The non-experimental method of data collection and the computer-mediated-discourse analysis (CMDA) sampling techniques, that of "by phenomenon" (only the comments reporting a certain negative stance) and that of "by theme" (all messages in a particular thread) were used to collect the data sample. In the course of the investigation the content method embracing the elements of cognitive analysis (CMA in particular) and computer-mediated discourse analysis (CMDA) as an approach to researching online behaviour used to establish recurrent patterns were applied in the research. The research procedure embraced the following steps: first, negative stances instantiated in the data sample were identified; second, the ways the stances are conceptualised through conceptual and/or cultural metaphors and metonymies and certain lexical-grammatical choices were established; third, the correlation between particular negative stances and particular negative emotions rendered by them was found.

Discussion and Results

The research data revealed no instances of negative emotions being labelled explicitly, however, yielded a number of metaphorical and metonymical conceptualisations accordant with certain negative stances or emotional responses targeted at Lithuanian politicians.

Metaphorical and Metonymical Conceptualisations of the Negative Stances

Politicians are not Needed as they are Harmful and Deadly

The negative stance implying that Lithuanian politicians should be got rid of, since their actions appear to be harmful or dangerous to the people of Lithuania is instantiated in numerous examples of the correspondences between NEGATIVE EMOTION as the target domain and BODY as the source domain with the underlying conceptual metaphors NATION-AS-BODY and NATION-AS-PERSON examples detected in the sample. As pointed out by Sharifian (2017, p. 26), "in recent years, the role of the human body in human conceptualisations has received much attention from within the cognitive sciences. A major strand of research, sometimes referred to as the 'embodiment strand' has explored the numerous conceptual metaphors that use body as their source domain". The relationship between pre- or non-linguistic bodily experience and cognition has been thoroughly examined in scientific literature (see, e.g., Kövecses, 2009, 2014; Nummenmaa et al., 2013). In the data sample Lithuanian politicians are very often referred to as an *infectious disease*, *parasites*. Let us consider the following examples:

    Ex 1   *The Seimas roundworms won't calm down.*

    Ex 2   *Lithuania's tick.*

    Ex 3   *A good repellent is needed for such a parasite.*

Examples 1, 2, 3 definitely imply certain evaluative inferences, i.e., the idea that the politicians have to be treated or eradicated, since they are the diseases Lithuania is ill with. The underlying metaphors are not suggestive of any culture-sensitivity, as "nation-embodiment and personalization have a long conceptual history in English-speaking cultures" (Mussolf, 2020, p. 3). The examples provided above are approached by Mussolf as ILLNESS-DISEASE and MEDICAL TREATMENT sub-themes of the BODY-scenario (ibid.). This alleged necessity to wipe out the agents of illness "fits in with the more 'radical', biologised version of the BODY vs. PARASITE scenario that has been used historically to justify persecution of so-called 'enemies from within'" (Mussolf, 2010). Similar negative evaluative conclusions can be drawn from the following examples:

    Ex 4   *They have to be sent to the landfill.*

    Ex 5   *This dirt has to be dislocated from Lithuania.*

The idea of Lithuanian politicians being unnecessary is conceptualised through the POLITICIANS ARE UNNECESSARY ITEMS/OBJECTS that have to be discarded metaphor. The emotional stances instantiated in the examples provided above appear to be congruent with the emotivational goal of HATE, which is not merely

to hurt, but "to ultimately eliminate or destroy the target, either mentally (humiliating, treasuring feelings of revenge), socially (excluding, ignoring) or physically (killing, torturing), which may be accompanied by the goal to let the wrongdoer suffer" (Ben-Ze'ev, 2007, p. 278; Fischer et al., 2018). It can be claimed that HATE being the target domain is conceptualised through the underlying conceptual metaphors POLITICIANS ARE ILLNESSES/PARASITES, UNNECESSARY ITEMS/OBJECTS which correlate with the negative stance implying the idea that Lithuanian politicians are harmful to the people of Lithuania and should be got rid of.

Politicians Possess Certain Animal Traits

The sample yielded an impressive number of cases when the negative stance implying that the politicians are devoid of certain intrinsic human characteristics is instantiated in a number of underlying conceptual metaphors. First of all, let us deal with the animalistic metaphors abundant in the data sample and certain evaluative conclusions suggested by them. Lithuanian politicians are referred to as creatures that tend to adopt animal rather than human behavioural patterns. Thus, in **Example 6**, they are said to demonstrate the habit of biting, which is deeply ingrained in the predatory instincts of many wild animals. The mention of the habit is allusive of the aggressive style of communication Lithuanian politicians tend to follow:

Ex 6   *They are at each other's throats (lit. biting each other's throats), despite the fact that they've been stealing together.*

In Example 7 Lithuanian politicians develop the animal habit of hibernating and are reproached for inactivity similar to the state of metabolic depression undergone by some animal species, e.g., bears or rodents, during hibernation:

Ex 7   *They have just emerged from bear hibernation, and have realised what is going on in Lithuania.*

What is more, Lithuanian politicians are portrayed as devoid of certain human propensities, and are attributed certain animal traits instead, i.e., *grunting* instead of speaking. Let us consider **Example 8**:

Ex 8   *Leave him alone. He is like a piglet. He'll keep on grunting.*

It is noteworthy that such semantic cues as "a piglet" and "grunting" are alluding to the target's immaturity alongside with the unintelligibility or unimportance of what the politician tends to say. **Examples 6–8** reveal a clear tendency to see Lithuanian politicians as NONHUMAN [emphasis added], which is instantiated in the POLITICIANS ARE ANIMALS metaphor through the attribution of certain animal habits that are not inherently human. Such semantic cues as "piglet", "hibernation", "grunting", "biting" appear to be essential in the construal of the GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY (having in mind certain animal species in particular) source domain.

A similar intention to dehumanise Lithuanian politicians is well-instantiated in the underlying metaphor LITHUANIAN POLITICIANS ARE OBJECTS. Consider **Example 9**:

Ex 9   *We are going to face such a mess in Lithuania unless these ministers-rubbish take responsibility for their actions.*

Ex 10   *This human being is dust/a speck of dust.*

Examples 4 and **5** discussed above could be approached as suggestive of a similar intention; however, what is being foregrounded in **Examples 9** and **10** is the idea that the politicians are nonhuman rather than the idea that they should be got rid of.

Politicians Lack Certain Professional Characteristics

The sample yielded a number of instances when Lithuanian politicians are seen as lacking certain essential professional characteristics. Thus, the idea that Lithuanian politicians have no mental capacity to fulfil their

duties, are insincere and dishonest is conceptualised in animalistic metaphors alongside with the POLITI-CIANS ARE FICTITIOUS CHARACTERS metaphor. Lithuanian politicians are criticised for being not intelligent enough, e.g.,

> **Ex 12**   *He is a donkey with big ears and no brains.*

> **Ex 13**   *Her brain is as that of a hen.*

Example 13 instantiates the conceptualisation, whose roots can be traced back to the Lithuanian paremia *As big as a horse, as thick/stupid as a hen* (Lith. "Didelis kaip jautis, kvailas kaip arklys/ kvaila kaip višta" *(*Rosinienė, 1978; 1982). When it comes to the animal characteristics the politicians are portrayed with in Examples 12 and 13, it should be pointed out that the zoomorphs "hen" and "donkey" are, among many others, used in the Lithuanian language primarily to render negative human characteristics, such as stupidity, foolishness (Rosinienė, 1978; 1982); the instantiations can be regarded as culture-specific and suggestive of certain cultural conceptualisations, since they are rooted in Lithuanian phraseo-paremiology. Apart from being criticised for being not intelligent enough Lithuanian politicians are also castigated for being insincere and dishonest:

> **Ex 14**   *Is his nose growing because of the vaccine, or is it the Buratino syndrome?*

In Example 14, the target is dehumanised, as he is attributed the propensity, i.e., one's nose growing when s/he is lying, not intrinsic to a human being, not to mention the fact that Buratino itself is nonhuman, a wooden doll. It is noteworthy that the Internet user refers to Buratino, the Russian counterpart of Carlo Collodi's Pinocchio[2] created by Aleksey Tolstoy[3]; contrary to the Lithuanian sample Buratino's Italian prototype appears to be popular in the French sample (Kirejeva & Stasilo, 2023, conference materials). The fact could be accounted for by the character's extreme popularity in the soviet period. Buratino can be regarded as an element of one's mindset or worldview developed in the soviet period. Another propensity not innate in humans, but attributed to the target and alluding to certain amoral experiences, is the one the Wildean character possesses:

> **Ex 15**   *He is Dorian Gray who sold his soul to the devil.*

The cases when Lithuanian Internet users trade derogatory remarks suggesting that Lithuanian politicians are not mature enough to fulfill their duties are also plentiful in the sample:

> **Ex 16**   *They (politicians) are playing in the sandbox, the Seimas is not a sandbox. Stop*
> *playing your games and start dealing with the problems of your electorate.*

> **Ex 17**   *They (politicians) should be disciplined and physically punished (lit. given*
> *birch porridge).*

"Beržinė košė" (*lit.* birch porridge) is a phraseological unit meaning a corporal punishment (beating), usually inflicted on children (Lietuvių kalbos institutas, n.d.). **Examples 16** and **17** are suggestive of the fact that Lithuanian politicians adopt patterns of childish or infantile behaviour, which is not accordant with the duties the politicians should perform.

The negative stances discussed above definitely imply the tendency to either see the politicians as nonhuman (an object, a fictitious character, an animal), as devoid of certain human propensities or to attribute to them certain characteristic not intrinsic to humans. The LITERATURE, LITHUANIAN FOLKLORE (phraseo-paremiology in particular), GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY (i.e., behavioural patterns and characteristics both animal and human species demonstrate) domains are used to conceptualise the stances discussed above.

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[2] In 1880 Carlo Collodi began writing "Story of a Marionette" (called "Storia di un burattino" in Italian) also known as "The Adventures of Pinocchio" (called "La avventure di Pinocchio" in Italian).

[3] Alexei Tolstoy's novel "The Golden Key, or the Adventures of Buratino" (called «Золотой ключик, или Приключения Буратино» in Russian) was written in 1936.

The THEATRE/CIRCUS domain is another domain used by Lithuanian Internet users to conceptualise certain negative attitudinal preferences. The underlying metaphorical conceptualisations to be discussed below are LITHUANIAN POLITICIANS ARE PRETENDERS/ARTISTS. The Seimas is often referred to as a "theatre" or a "circus", a "chapiteau" and Lithuanian politicians as "actors", "jesters", "clowns", "puppets". Let us consider the following examples:

Ex 18   *The curtain rises, and here appears she, the Queen wearing a crown made of syringes.* (The comment appeared during the COVID-19 pandemic).

Ex 19   *The string holding his ears is going to break. It's tragic when the only gyri he possesses are his eyebrows.*

Examples **18** and **19** should be regarded as the evocation of the venerable POLITICS IS THEATRE or the perennial THEATRUM MUNDI metaphors widely discussed in scientific literature (see, e.g., Pearce, 1980; Blackbourn, 1987). Not only do the metaphors exploit the real-unreal dialectic, but also instantiate the following evaluative interpretations: politicians assume certain roles and their actions are mere pretence.

Ex 20   *She is telling something mystical resembling a fairy-tale that does not correspond the reality.*

The politicians are ludicrous and meretricious, they lack certain professional characteristics and are able just to exhilarate the public, thus both provoking and deserving derision. Concomitant to the evaluative conclusions discussed above is the idea of Lithuanian politicians being submissive to the "puppeteer" and unable to make decisions independently; consider **Example 19** above or **Example 21** below:

Ex 21   *They kneel before the Yankees.*

The THEATRE metaphor can definitely be approached through the prism of domains and image schemas, as, according to Kövecses (2020, p. 68), "the various domains are conceptually supported by image schemas in the sense that the image schemas apply to the various aspects of domains that characterize them." Thus, similarly to the domain of BUILDING discussed by Kövecses (ibid.), which has the aspects of SPATIAL OBJECT, MAN-MADE STRUCTURE, CONSTRUCTION, the domain of THEATRE has the aspects of the MEDIATED REALITY, the aspect of ENTERTAINMENT or AESTHETIC PLEASURE, the aspect of ACTORS uttering the dramatic text that "was written to be spoken" (Short, 1996, p. 174), etc., being the mental representations of coherent aspects of human experience that can differ immensely if approached through the Asian perspective[4], for example; the aspects that can be suggestive of European-culture-sensitivity as opposed to Asian-culture-sensitivity.

The idea of the impaired contact with reality Lithuanian politicians demonstrate is extensively conceptualised through the underlying metaphors POLITICIANS ARE ILL with the MEDICINE and PSYCHIATRY domain in particular being drawn upon substantially. Lithuanian politicians are very often referred to as people unable to make adequate decisions and implement effective measures to combat the virus, for instance, or to deal with other problems Lithuania is facing. Thus, Žiegždriai (a psychiatric hospital) is viewed as a better place for them than the Seimas. Lithuanian politicians are said to be "affected with delirium" and the government is said to have gone "insane". Let us consider the following examples:

Ex 22   *Maybe they should undergo rabies testing.*

Ex 23   *She needs to be vaccinated against psychosis.*

Ex 24   *The Dunning-Kruger effect is applicable to him.*

In **Example 24** the target is regarded as a person with cognitive bias in which people usually overestimate their abilities (Gignac & Zajenkowski, 2020). The minister is also referred to as a person having the Napoleon

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[4] For example, traditional Japanese theatre Kabuki, where all actors are male and *onnagatas* are male actors who play female roles; all actors have to wear *kumadoris,* stage makeup (LNB Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos centras, 2024; Žodynas.lt, n.d.).

complex, or the "short-man complex", a syndrome which is characterized by overly aggressive or domineering social behaviour. In psychology, the "short-man complex" is regarded as a derogatory social stereotype (Sandberg & Voss, 2002). The target is also called a narcissist. Narcissist personality disorder is a mental condition in which people have an inflated sense of their own importance and lack empathy for others (Krizan & Herlache, 2018). Lithuanian politicians are definitely seen as oscillating between the real and the unreal, as lacking adequacy and sincerity.

To sum up, the negative emotional stances instantiated in **Examples 6–24** communicating a clear intention to dehumanize, denigrate, disparage and depreciate the target, his/her professional or personal characteristics appear to be congruent with the motive of HATE based on devaluing the other (Rempel & Burris, 2005). What is more, "the stable and dispositional attribution of negative characteristics to the target of one's emotions can be found in appraisals of CONTEMPT and DISGUST" (Fisher et al., 2018; Russell & Giner-Sorolla, 2011). Thus, it can be claimed that the negative stances discussed above correlate with the emotions of HATE, CONTEMPT and DISGUST, which are conceptualised through the following conceptual metaphors: POLITICIANS ARE NON-HUMAN (ANIMALS, OBJECTS, FICTITIOUS CHARACTERS), POLITICIANS ARE ARTISTS, POLITICIANS ARE ILL with the GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY, LITERATURE, THEATRE, MEDICINE domains drawn upon in the sample.

Let us deal with the instances of metonymical conceptualisations of certain negative stances, which are less frequent in the sample, but definitely lie within the realms of the "embodiment strand":

> **Ex 25** *I feel sick because of these freaks.*

Example 25 should be viewed as a representative case of the general conceptual metonymy EFFECT OF EMOTION FOR THE EMOTION (Kövecses, 2014). Thus, UNPLEASANT VISCERAL SENSATION FOR AN UNPLEASANT EMOTION, or NAUSEA FOR DISGUST, which, in its turn is congruent with the research into emotion-related bodily states reflecting the changes in one's sceletomuscular, neuroendocrine, and autonomic nervous systems which report that sensations in the digestive are indicative of disgust (Nummenmaa et al., 2013).

Lexical-grammatical/Graphological Choices

Apart from a number of metaphorical and metonymical conceptualisations discussed above, the data sample yielded a number of lexical-grammatical choices the Internet users made when rendering their negative emotional stances. The extensive use of pejoratives and obscenities, such as "a fool", "an idiot", "a fag", "shit", "an idiot", "an imbecile" (the two latter come from the sphere of psychiatry, however, are no longer in technical use) serve their over-ridingly emotive function, being used most often to get rid of nervous energy when under stress, especially when one is ANGRY or frustrated (Murphy, 2010, p. 168; Stenström, 1991). Let us discuss **Example 26**, which combines both lexical and graphological means of rendering a negative evaluation and containing a metaphorical conceptualisation as well.

> **Ex 26** *What does this shit (originally in Lith. – SHITas) have to say?*

In **Example 26** the comment contains a homophonic paronomasia based on the phonetic similarity of the English expletive "shit" and the Lithuanian demonstrative pronoun "šitas", which is spelled in English with the Lithuanian inflexion "-as" indicative of the masculine gender being added to it. It should be pointed out that the instances of the use of taboo items alluding to bodily excretion are numerous in the sample; Lithuanian politicians are frequently referred to as "talking shit". The idea of something unnecessary (the waste matter discharged from the body) being got rid of is definitely conceptualised in the example; it is the same idea indicative of DISGUST and HATE discussed above in **Examples 1–5**. Despite the fact that bad smell is not stated explicitly, the metaphor BAD IS SMELLY is definitely implied in the sample. As Kövecses points out (2020, p. 29), "there is general consensus that the sense of smell is one of the most basic ways in which humans (and animals) gather information about reality. For this reason, it serves as a perfect source domain." The faculty of SMELL being a source domain should be viewed through the "embodiment strand" perspective alongside with nausea being a diffuse sensation of unease and discomfort in one's stomach.

Conclusions

On the basis of the analysis carried out the following conclusions can be drawn: 1) Lithuanian Internet users feel unconstrained when giving vent to negative emotions targeted at Lithuanian politicians; 2) the negative stances instantiated in the sample communicate the idea of the politicians being unnecessary, harmful to the people of Lithuania, as devoid of certain human propensities (e.g., sincerity, maturity, honesty) and lacking professional characteristics (e.g., mental capacity). The emotions of HATE, ANGER, DISGUST and CONTEMPT appear to be congruent and correlative to the negative stances rendered in the sample. They are conceptualised through one conceptual metonymy and a number of conceptual metaphors, such as POLITICIANS ARE ILLNESSES, POLITICIANS ARE CHILDREN, POLITICIANS ARE ANIMALS, POLITICIANS ARE OBJECTS, POLITICIANS ARE FICTITIOUS CHARACTERS, POLITICIANS ARE ARTISTS, etc. Among the source domains drawn upon in the process of metaphorical and metonymical conceptualisations of negative evaluative judgements are the BODY, THEATRE, MEDICINE, LITERATURE, GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY, etc. domains; 3) the instances of culture-specific conceptualisations are scarce in the data sample and just a few examples can be suggestive of a certain degree of Lithuanian-culture-specificity or European-culture specificity; 4) the extensive use of obscene vocabulary alongside with the numerous cases of paronomasia should be attributed to the lexical means employed by the Lithuanian internet users quite often. The issue discussed in the article is vast and definitely cannot be fully approached within the realms of one article, which represents just a tentative attempt to delve into the intricacies of human emotions.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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Santrauka

Jelena Kirejeva
Lietuvos politikai kaip neigiamų emocijų objektas
Tyrimas yra atliekamas atsižvelgiant į kognityvinės ir kultūrinės lingvistikos bei kompiuterinės komunikacijos kontekstą ir nagrinėja negatyvų emocinį interneto vartotojų atsaką į tam tikrus Lietuvos politikų veiksmus. Tyrimu siekiama nustatyti neigiamo emocinio atsako konceptualizavimo būdus per konceptualiųjų ir kultūrinių metaforų ir metonimijų rekonstravimą bei kitų gramatinių ir leksinių resursų apibūdinimą, taip pat nustatyti koreliaciją tarp tam tikro neigiamo emocinio atsako bei tam tikros konceptualizuojamos emocijos. Remiantis atlikta analize, galima padaryti tokias išvadas: 1) Lietuvos interneto vartotojai jaučiasi nevaržomi

išliedami negatyvų požiūrį į politikus. Manoma, kad politikai yra nereikalingi, žalingi Lietuvos žmonėms; kad jie neturi tam tikrų žmogiškų arba profesionalių savybių (pvz., nuoširdumo, brandumo, sąžiningumo, yra neprotingi). Išreiškiamos negatyvios nuostatos koreliuoja su tam tikromis emocijomis, pavyzdžiui, neapykanta, pykčiu, pasišlykštėjimu, kurios yra konceptualizuojamos šiose konceptualiosiose metaforose: POLITIKAI YRA GYVŪNAI, POLITIKAI YRA AKTORIAI, POLITIKAI YRA LIGOS, POLITIKAI YRA DAIKTAI ir t. t. pasitelkiant šias ištakos sritis: KŪNAS, TEATRAS, MEDICINA ir kt. Obsceniška leksika ir paronomazijos atvejai yra leksinės priemonės, plačiai vartojamos negatyvioms nuostatoms reikšti.

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