Conceptual Metaphors of Identity in Contemporary Romanian Public Discourse

A Cognitive and Quantitative Approach

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THE SUBJECT matter of this article is the study of the frequency and content of the conceptual metaphors of Romanian and European identity in the Romanian public discourse between 2012 and 2018. Along these lines, the methodology I employ includes, on the one hand, elements of quantitative analysis (corpus-based approach), and, on the other hand, elements of cognitive imagology (understood as a synthesis of cognitive semantics and comparative imagology). At the same time, this study is both a methodological and an empirical extension of an investigation carried out in 2012 for the 2002–2011 timeframe, by using a similar methodology and aiming, by and large, to address the same problems.[1] These similarities will subsequently serve to advance a wider framework, whereby I aim to assess the evolution of the methodology over the last seven years and the shifts in the collective perception of the analyzed phenomenon.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Comparative Imagology, Cognitive Ethnolinguistics

SIMILAR TO the 2012 study, the research herein relies first and foremost on the instruments of cognitive semantics, specifically on **Conceptual Metaphor Theory** (CMT), as substantiated and refined in a process spanning four decades, from the initial theories of the Berkeley School[2] to the newer versions, such as the one proposed by the Pragglejaz Group.[3] One defining trait of this theory is that it rehabilitates the semantic study of the grammaticalized elements of discourse, wherein it sees a modality of expressing a "metaphorical thought": "Contrary to the traditional view that idioms, clichés, and proverbs

are frozen semantic units or dead metaphors, the evidence from cognitive linguistics and psycholinguistics indicate that many of these conventional expressions reflect metaphorical thought that is very much alive and part of our everyday conceptual systems."[4]

According to cognitive semantics, this "metaphorical thought" could be detected through the distinction between conceptual metaphor, structured at the abstract level of cognition (e.g., ARGUMENT IS WAR or ARGUMENTS ARE BUILDINGS), and linguistic metaphor, articulated in the concrete plane of language (e.g., *I attacked her premises* or *She demolished my conclusion*). Therefore, the primary operation of such an approach implies a reconstruction of conceptual metaphors starting from linguistic metaphors. To this end, several features of the two categories of metaphors should be noted: a) a conceptual metaphor could manifest itself in a number of different linguistic metaphors (for example, the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR materializes in linguistic metaphors such as *to attack a premise, to defend a thesis, to win a dispute*, etc.); b) the linguistic metaphors whereby conceptual metaphors are expressed need not be "metaphors" in the rhetorical sense of the word, since "our ordinary conceptual system . . . is fundamentally metaphorical in nature"[5]; c) when they are consistent in relation to each other—the metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR does not exclude the metaphor ARGUMENTS ARE BUILDINGS, as challenging the opponents' arguments may be described as a form of siege—, conceptual metaphors may associate and, thus, build veritable cognitive microsystems.[6]

Based on these methodological premises, in my 2012 study I advanced the term **conceptual metaphor of identity** (CMI), which refers to a type of "ontological metaphor"[7] that helps categorize communities based on stereotypes deemed valid either by said community or other communities. Such metaphors include: AMERICANS ARE MATERIALISTS/WORKAHOLICS/SELF-ABSORBED; GERMANS ARE ORGANIZED/HUMOURLESS/BEER LOVERS; RUSSIANS ARE SENTIMENTAL/ALCOHOLIC/POOR. The fact that, at best, such stereotypes "pass" as true (to some individuals, groups or communities), while they can never be found to *be* true, testifies to their status as mere (inter)subjective images in which **Comparative Imagology** (CI) takes particular research interest. According to one of the most reputed specialists in this field, Joep Leerssen, the images (stereotypes/representations) constituting the subject matter of imagology are classified in two categories: a) *images of Self* or *auto-images* ("we about us"), where the discourse transmitters include themselves in the category of identity specified by the source-term of the metaphor (AMERICANS, GERMANS, RUSSIANS, etc.); b) *images of the Other* or *hetero-images* ("we about Others"), where the transmitters place themselves outside the category in question.[8] Certainly, it should be noted that the pro-forms *we* and *Others* have a variable referent and that therefore their content could feature, in our study, both categories, i.e. *Romanians* and *Europeans*. However, because the generic name *European*—meaning "EU citizen"—refers to a (supra)community amounting to 24 languages and since we cannot say that one of these languages has the upper hand over the others, the present research focuses solely on the discourse produced by Romanians, in Romanian, and the analysis of Romanian auto-images (Romanians about Romanians) and hetero-images (Romanians about Europeans) only.

These are, in fact, the premises lying at the heart of the 2012 study as well. Yet, the research of the identity phenomenon against the perspective of CMT has witnessed

significant developments since then, both internationally and nationally. This, in turn, calls for an overview of the various categories of research and, at the same time, it raises the question as to whether my early premises should be revised in accordance with newer approaches.

With regard to the studies published internationally, some preliminary remarks are in order: both the use of CMT as tool of analysis and the inquiry into the foundations of ethnic identity are standard practice in the humanistic research of the last decades. Yet, for the abovementioned reasons, I will approach these phenomena only insofar as they interact with each other. Therefore, studies such as those conducted by Razvan Sibii[9] and Matthew Baldwin et al.[10] only intersect this area of interest. For example, even if Sibii focuses on Romanians' stereotypes about themselves and mentions CMT as one of his instruments of analysis, his study verges toward the sphere of cultural studies or, at most, traditional imagology, as his approach does not rest on a linguistic methodology and his selection of conceptual metaphors is not compiled on the basis of a set of rigorous criteria. On the other hand, Baldwin, Landau, and Swanson chose as subject matter for their study a standard conceptual metaphor (LIFE IS A JOURNEY) rather than a genuine CMI, although their empirical investigation was conducted on wide samples of American and German subjects; moreover, the three psychologists seem more interested in the role conceptual metaphors play in the subjects' individual lives than they are in the ethnic differences between the two sample groups.

The theoretical shift most relevant for my present endeavor is therefore Adam Głaz and Katarzyna Prorok's plea for **"cognitive ethnolinguistics,"** which, according the two researchers, aims to attach the concept of "linguistic worldview," put forward by the School of Lublin,[11] to the instruments that cognitive linguistics operates with. The most important representative of this school, Jerzy Bartmiński,[12] carried out a number of inquiries into ethnic stereotypes, starting from premises and using procedures similar to those deployed in my 2012 study. Nonetheless, there is a notable difference between the two: while the latter uses *typical(ly)* as an identity-related marker—e.g., "typically Romanian"—, Bartmiński opts for *true(ly)*—e.g., "true German." The choice of one marker over another may have been influenced by decisions regarding the compilation of the corpus, which the Polish linguist put together following a series interviews with his students. At any rate, the important aspect is that the two options—*typical(ly)* vs. *true(ly)*—are both sustainable and that Bartmiński's analyses do not void my approach.

As for national research, it too can be grouped in two categories. First, there are the theoretical studies in the operation of the conceptual metaphor at the level of discourse. This category includes articles such as Elena Faur's[13] and Maria-Alexandrina Tomoiagă's.[14] The common denominator of such research is that it undertakes a critique of CMT from the viewpoint of Eugenio Coseriu's integral linguistics. Also, Faur seems more interested in how metaphors manifest in poetic discourse, while Tomoiagă focuses mainly on conceptual metaphors in daily discourse. The latter also draws a classification of conceptual metaphors, which could serve as a very useful starting point for various applied studies, but which would have probably been more convincing had it paid greater attention to the characteristics of various communication media also ("official" speeches, press, social media, etc.).

In contrast, the other category of Romanian research, increasingly more frequent in the last years, addresses precisely the particularities of conceptual metaphors in various discourse media and sectors. Take, for instance, the studies published by Doina Butiurcă,[15] Alina Țenescu[16] and Valerica Sporiș.[17] For example, Butiurcă focuses on the analysis of the metaphoric reminiscences of the concepts with which specialized languages such as the medical and computer science jargon operate. Țenescu, on the other hand, analyzes advertising texts, the journalistic discourse and, by extension, the whole online environment, where the author has until now explored a wide range of metaphoric fields, from smell to disease. Last but not least, Sporiș appears to take exclusive interest in television journalism and the conceptual metaphors that reflect various forms whereby power is exercised in politics or war. Studies such as these show that, in contemporary Romanian research, there is constant interest in CMT and significant potential for extension, as is evident from Radu Drăgulescu's research into metaphoric remnants in the Romanian vulgar names of plants.[18]

Conceptual Metaphors of Romanian and European Identity in the Romanian Public Discourse (2012–2018)

THE SURVEY above demonstrates that the evolution of cognitive research in the last years does not invalidate the methodological premises of the 2012 study. Actually, quite the contrary, as it appears, most of the times, to directly or indirectly emphasize their viability. For this reason, I have decided to resort to the same methodological approach, the sole major difference being that I have tried to refine my classification instruments with a view to reducing as much as possible the indeterminate "other" category. Similar to the 2012 study, I have started from the finding that, syntactically speaking, CMIs witness two distinct manifestations: a) predicative (*Germans are meticulous*) and b) attributive (in constructions such as *[She is/has a]* **typically/specifically/characteristically** *German meticulousness*). Nevertheless, as in the case of the previous article, I advocate the elimination of the predicative CMIs from the analyzed corpus, at least for two reasons:

• in the written press in particular, predicative metaphors such as *Romanians are...* are usually employed following the publication of findings from statistics, investigations and questionnaires that are more or less "objective" (for example: *Romanians rank lowest in the EU in terms of professional training of adult population*, https://edu-news.ro/, 10 Dec. 2018); however, these do not reflect "essential" ethnic traits of the Romanians, but mere contingent traits, valid exclusively by reference to a specific context;

• no matter how "objective" observations such the one above are, they are relevant only to the extent to which Romanians take them as defining qualities for their ethnic identity; yet any analysis can confirm that, at least at present, the "professional training of the adult population" does not feature among the traits Romanians themselves selected as characteristic of their own identity.

Subsequently, the present research puts forward a quantitative study of the occurrences of attributive CMIs in the Romanian public discourse spanning the period between 1 January

2012 and 31 December 2018. The selection of these occurrences was made possible via the Google search engine, which also dictated the breadth of the corpus. Yet, in singling out the instances of CMIs to be studied, I have also applied the three following criteria:

a) the elimination of (declared or not declared) "citations", i.e. of the texts retrieved by a website from other websites; in these cases, I have taken into account a single occurrence;

b) the elimination of truistic occurrences (which express obvious truths about names of people, localities, objects, etc.; e.g., *Bucharest is a **typical Romanian** city*) and occurrences of an advertising nature (e.g., *Restaurant Perla welcomes you with **typical Romanian** food*), as both categories breach the imagological principle of (inter)subjectivity;

c) the elimination, for reasons similar to those above, of the occurrences obtained with the determinants *characteristic(ally)* and *specific(ally)*—e.g., ***specific(ally)** Romanian restaurant/ pub/ souvenir*—, which, in turn, reduced the area of my research to the phrases ***typical(ly) Romanian*** and ***typical[ly] European,*** with their inflectional variations.

I. Conceptual Metaphors of Romanian Identity

In the case of the CMIs describing **images of the Self** (Romanians about Romanians), between 1 and 10 January 2019, Google returned, for the period spanning 1 January 2012–31 December 2018, **743 relevant occurrences** of the phrase *typical(ly) Romanian* (with all its three inflectional forms for the masculine, feminine and plural). These occurrences cover the following conceptual spheres:

a) Anomalies affecting the life of the community: 174 occurrences (23.41%), of which:

• legislative anomalies (defective or contradictory laws and regulations): 17 occurrences (2.29%);

• professional anomalies: 50 occurrences (6.73%); they include: household improvisations (13 occurrences), incompetence in building practices (10), malpractice (6), lack of professionalism in education (5), in football (5) or even in theft cases (3), other (8);

• institutional anomalies: 96 occurrences (12.92%), comprising: institutional quandaries (absurdities, aberrations, abuses, inefficiency, etc.: 52 occurrences, of which 36 regarding motorways, traffic rules, parking, etc.), corruption (scam, bribery, influence peddling: 24 occurrences), bureaucracy (12), other (8);

• other: 11 occurrences.

b) Products and/or technologies characteristic of Romanians: 196 occurrences (26.38%), of which:

• food (63) and drinks (21): 84 occurrences;

• architecture, town planning and interior design (types of cities; types of villages; types of housing; manners of home fit-out): 55 occurrences;

• cultural products: 18 occurrences (of which 11 for films and 4 for TV shows);

• idioms, expressions, proverbs: 10 occurrences;

• other: 29 occurrences.

c) Social structures and behaviors: 60 occurrences (8.07%), of which:

• customs (holidays, rituals, forms of socialization): 28 occurrences;

• family: 14 occurrences;

• other: 18 occurrences.

d) Moral traits: 231 occurrences (31.09%), of which:

• negative traits: 170 occurrences (22.88%); of them: passivity/defeatism (38 occurrences), envy (23), "contrivance" (21), hypocrisy (12), violence/aggressiveness (10), laziness (8), self-pity (7), indifference/insensibility (7), last minutism (6), indecency (4), other (33);

• positive traits: 61 occurrences (8.20%); of them: humor (41), hospitality (6), amicability (4), other (10).

e) "Specificity" described generically (traditionalism, ruralism, archaicity, etc.): 29 occurrences (3,97%).

f) Other: 14 occurrences (1.88%).

g) Metalinguistic uses of the phrase: 39 occurrences (5.24%), of which 34 reflexive ("serious") and 5 parodic.

From the abovementioned data, correlated with similar data from the previously studied timeframe (between 1 January 2007 and 31 December 2011)[19], six important findings emerge:

1. Although spanning a larger time interval (7 years as opposed to 5 years), which had indisputably seen a significant rise in the number of Romanians enjoying access to the Internet, the period 2012–2018 saw a significant decrease—of approximately 36.5%—in the frequency of conceptual metaphors of Romanian identity as compared to the period 2007–2011 (from 1170 to 743 occurrences). This decrease must be linked to the relatively high frequency of metalinguistic uses of the CMIs in the Romanian public discourse (5.24%), which is indicative of an intensification of the speakers' skepticism with respect to the properties to which a *typical(ly) Romanian* character is assigned or perhaps even with respect to the possibility of describing a people via stereotypes. Given the importance of the metalinguistic uses of the CMIs, which I did not identify in the previous investigation, I include below a list of contexts that are most characteristic for such an attitude:

• rational pleas against ethnic reductionism; for example, in an article bearing the title "Why People Do Not Save Other People or the Bucharest Subway Case," psychologist Bianca Prangate offers the following answer: "The reasons why this happens are confusion and passing the buck. This is not typically Romanian, as you may be tempted to believe, but typically human." (https://playtech.ro/2017/apatie-sociala-romania-metrou-crima/);

• denouncing the passive attitude manifested through classifying negative phenomena as *typically Romanian*: "Why do we like to say that something is typically Romanian? Things are the same all over the world… What is typically Romanian is to be a by-stander, to complain about your country and choose not to do anything about it." (user ELENA, at https://www.totb.ro/paradox-romanesc-oameni-care-mor-de-foame-si-tomberoane-pline-cu-mancare/);

• the circularly-ironical lyrics of the Romanian rapper Kazi Ploae: "He knew it was typically Romanian to say 'It's typically Romanian'" (https://www.versuri.ro/versuri/kazi-ploae-trol-_8hc7.html).

2. Between 2012 and 2018, Romanians' self-image appears to have become more complex (and thus more balanced) than in the previous period. Thus, while in the 2007–2011 timeframe, the category *a) Community anomalies* included almost half (44.44%) of the sum total of occurrences supporting Romanian CMIs, between 2012 and 2018,

the identity-related traits are distributed relatively equally across the categories *a) Community anomalies*, *b) Products and/or technologies*, and *d) Moral traits*, each including between one quarter and one third of the sum total of identity-related occurrences.

3. Although corruption was one of the most frequently debated topics in the Romanian public discourse of the 2012–2018 period, it does not appear to have been interiorized by the Romanian speakers as an identity-related trait. Romanians appear to be more concerned with the poor condition of their infrastructure (4.84% of the total identity-related occurrences) than they are with the level of corruption in their country (3.23%).

4. Although *typical Romanian* food and drinks continue to occupy a privileged position in the hierarchy of identity-related traits (11.30%), Romanians appear to rely more on social characteristics (8.07%) and sophisticated cultural traits (9.82%) in their attempt to define themselves then they did in the previously studied timeframes.

5. A tendency toward balance is also seen in relation to how Romanians portray their moral defining traits. Although, in the case of the two series of psychological characteristics (negative: 22.88%; positive: 8.20%), the former still ranks indisputably higher than the latter, the level of disproportion in their ratio is significantly lower than it was between 2007 and 2011, when the negative traits covered 29.74% of the sum total of identity-related occurrences, while positive traits reached a mere 1.36%.

6. The popularity of Romanian "specificity"—as a generic and idealized representation of a premodern civilization—continues its downward trend among Romanian ethnics: from 10.66% between 2002 and 2006 to 6.58% between 2007 and 2011, reaching now a new minimum of 3.97%.

II. Conceptual Metaphors of European Identity

As for the CMIs describing the **images of the Other** (Romanians about Europeans), between 1 and 10 January 2019, Google returned for the period spanning 1 January 2012–31 December 2018 **588 relevant occurrences** of the phrase *typical(ly) European* (with all its four inflectional forms for gender and number). These occurrences cover the following conceptual spheres:

a) Physiognomic, genetic and climate-related data: 77 occurrences (13.09%); of these:
- relief and climate elements (landscape, forest, vegetation, etc.): 28 occurrences;
- genetic elements (haplogroups): 28 occurrences;
- features (eyes, non-specified physical beauty, etc.): 13 occurrences;
- other: 8 occurrences.

b) Products and/or technologies: 100 occurrences (17.01%), of which:
- architecture and town planning: 53 occurrences;
- motor vehicles (including their parts): 12 occurrences;
- clothing style: 10 occurrences;
- notation systems and music instruments: 5 occurrences;
- weapons: 5 occurrences;
- other: 15 occurrences.

c) Cultural and ideological models/phenomena/processes: 203 occurrences (34.52%); of these:
- rights, principles, and values (civil rights, legitimism, democracy, humanism, human dignity, etc.): 39 occurrences;

• national and international institutions and ideologies (national state independence, supranational state forms, national anthems, populism, monarchy, etc.): 34 occurrences;

• science and knowledge (universities, modern sciences, critical spirit, etc.): 32 occurrences;

• tourism (holidays, stores, shopping districts, etc.): 29 occurrences;

• arts (film, novel/narrative, artistic motifs, etc.): 27 occurrences;

• economy (budget, taxes, etc.): 11 occurrences;

• "modern family": 8 occurrences;

• other: 23 occurrences.

d) Moral traits: 142 occurrences (24.15%), of which:

• negative traits: 83 occurrences (14.11%); of them: superiority complexes (31 occurrences), monotony/boredom/depression (15), immodesty (7), hypocrisy (6), naivety (5), impoliteness (4), other (15).

• positive traits: 59 occurrences (10.03%); of them: tolerance (13 occurrences), refinement/elegance (12), openness to dialogue (8), politeness (6), other (20).

e) European civilization/modernity (generically): 44 occurrences (7.48%).

f) Other: 22 occurrences (3.74%).

g) Metalinguistic uses: 0 occurrences (0%).

From the abovementioned data, corroborated with similar data from the previous period (1 January 2007–31 December 2011),[20] the following findings ensue:

1. In the 2012–2018 timeframe, the incidence of European CMIs in the Romanian public discourse is lower than that of Romanian CMIs (the former amount to only 79.13% of the latter). Nonetheless, the number of European CMIs occurrences appears to have experienced a notable increase, namely of 103.46%, in relation to their value in the previous period. Undoubtedly, this increase is explained by the fact that Romania's integration in the EU structures and mechanisms has become a current reality, also perceived as such by the Romanian speakers.

2. Between 2012 and 2018, the image of European identity in the Romanian public discourse appears to have leveled off. This stabilization impacted both in the (macro)categories ratio—labeled (a) to (e), which do not witness major variations as compared to the 2007–2011 timeframe—, and the subcategories of the former—for example, in the category *b) Products/technologies*, architecture and motor vehicles rank first as they also did in the previously studied period.

3. Another trend of the European CMIs, recorded since 2012, is that of an increase in the gap between negative moral (14.11%) and positive traits (10.03%) in favor of the former. Although this discrepancy is not yet as large as it is in the case of the Romanian CMIs, there is a visible rise in instances of Romanian critiques of European institutions and values.

4. Nevertheless, Romanians continue to believe in the civilizing power of Europe. The ratio of this generic category is again on an upward curve between 2012 and 2018 (from 5.53% to 7.48%), following a period of five years, spanning 2007 and 2011, when it experienced a steep downward trend as compared to the 2002–2006 timeframe (from 10.67% to 5.53%).

5. There are no metalinguistic uses of European CMIs. This shows that Romanian speakers are much less interested in the legitimacy and accuracy of *typically European* traits than they are in those that are *typically Romanian*.

Conclusion: "We" = Romanians and/or Europeans?

THE ASSUMPTION that, for the Romanian speakers, the Romanians are "we" and Europeans are the "Others" pervades this article. But does this opposition still hold true today, when more than twelve years have passed since Romania was declared an official member of the European Union? Is it possible that, in the meantime, the European identity has become, for the Romanians, another "we" or, at the very least, a secondary dimension of "we"?

In my 2012 article, the answer that emerged from an analysis of the co-occurrences of the terms *(typically) Romanian* and *(typically) European* in the contemporary Romanian public discourse was a negative one. However, in the meanwhile, I have come to the conclusion that, perhaps, the question requires a different approach, since the juxtaposition of several identities or dimensions of the same identity in a discourse automatically implies their bringing into opposition (or, at any rate, a non-coincidental relationship). A more solid and handy approach in this case would therefore involve a series of comparisons between the Romanians' and Europeans' identity "maps", which I have drawn in the previous sections of this article.

The findings that follow from this new approach is that the Romanian and European identities—as perceived by the Romanian-speaking community in the second decade of the twenty-first century—are not only different, but, in most regards, they are also heavily contrasting. This is confirmed both at the level of (macro)categories and of most subcategories. For example, Romanians continue to perceive their ethnic "specificity" as rural/traditional, equating the European identity with modernization—see criterion (e). Then, with respect to products and technologies—criterion (b)—, Romanians tend to associate their identity with products intended to meet their primary needs (food and drink), while Europeans are equated with cultural products and sophisticated technologies. Even the negative moral traits are fundamentally different (except for hypocrisy and indecency): if Europeans are deplored for their display of ungrounded superiority complexes, the Romanians' "typical" traits – passivity, "contrivance," envy, self-pity, laziness, etc.—suggest they rank lower in relation to the Other.

Therefore, twelve years after their country was granted membership in the European Union, Romanians appear to have not adopted the European dimension as an essential part of their ethnic identity. But this phenomenon is also widely witnessed in Western countries, which points to the fact that this is not in any way an indication that Romanians are Eurosceptics. It means only that the construction of a genuine European identity, if it is indeed something that can be acquired, does not occur in a small number of years, being rather the outcome of a process spanning a number of generations.

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Notes

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2. See George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago–London: University of Chicago Press, 1980); George Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* (Chicago–London: University of Chicago Press, 1987); George Lakoff and Mark Turner, *More Than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor* (Chicago–London: University of Chicago Press, 1989); George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999).

3. See Raymond W. Gibbs, Jr., *The Poetics of Mind: Figurative Thought, Language and Understanding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Cornelia Müller, *Metaphors Dead and Alive, Sleeping and Waking: A Dynamic View* (Chicago–London: The University of Chicago Press, 2008); Gerard J. Steen, Aletta G. Dorst, J. Berenike Herrmann, Anna A. Kaal, Tina Krennmayr, and Trijntje Pasma, *A Method for Linguistic Metaphor Identification: From MIP to MIPVU* (Amsterdam–Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2010).

4. Gibbs, 436.

5. Lakoff and Johnson, 3.

6. For a more detailed discussion of the way in which cognitive linguistics approaches idioms and metaphors, see Simina-Maria Terian, *Textemele româneşti: O abordare din perspectiva lingvisticii integrale* (Iaşi: Institutul European, 2015), 54–67.

7. Lakoff and Johnson, 31.

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12. Jerzy Bartmiński, "Changes in the Polish Stereotype of 'a German'," in *Aspects of Cognitive Ethnolinguistics*, ed. Jörg Zinken, transl. Adam Glaz (London: Equinox, 2009), 178–198.

13. Elena Faur, "Semantica cognitivă şi 'teoria metaforei conceptuale': O abordare din perspectivă integrală," *Limba română* 63, 3 (2014): 340–356; ead., "The Invariance Principle: A Principle of Semantic Creativity?" in *The Proceedings of the International Conference Globalization, Intercultural Dialogue and National Identity. Section: Language and Discourse*, 1, ed. Iulian Boldea (Târgu-Mureş: Arhipelag XXI Press, 2014), 778–790.

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18. Radu Drăgulescu, "Representations of the Fire in Romanian Phytonymy," in *Multicultural Representations: Literature and Discourse as Forms of Dialogue. Section Language and Discourse*, eds. Iulian Boldea and Cornel Sigmirean (Târgu-Mureş, Arhipelag XXI Press, 2016), 8–19; id., "Deutsches Wortgut in rumänischen Pflanzennamen: Ein Bericht aus der rumänischen Wörterbuchpraxis," *Lexikos* 27, 1 (2017): 214–236.

19. Terian, 960–961.

20. Ibid., 961.

Abstract

Conceptual Metaphors of Identity in Contemporary Romanian Public Discourse: A Cognitive and Quantitative Approach

By using the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), Comparative Imagology (CI) and a corpus-based approach, this article studies the frequency and the content of conceptual metaphors of Romanian and European identity in the Romanian public discourse of 2012–2018. Our working practice focuses on the systematization of the characteristic occurrences of the Romanian auto- and hetero-images, the comparison of the two series of data, as well as the analysis of the dominant trend therein, in relation to the previous time interval (2007–2011). The conclusions of the article concern the increase or decrease in the Romanian speakers' interest in identity-related problems, the structure of each identity ethno-profile, with a special attention paid to the relationship between the negative and the positive traits assigned to the two communities, as well as the analysis of the extent to which the Romanians have assumed a European identity, at the level of their public discourse.

Keywords