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## **BEARISH AND BULLISH MARKETS: A CORPUS-BASED ANALYSIS OF METAPHORICAL COLLOCATIONS AND THEIR METAPHORICAL NETWORKS**

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*This paper deals with metaphorical collocations of the noun market extracted from an English web corpus. It also categorizes them according to the list of conceptual metaphors proposed by Lakoff et al. (1991). It suggests that in order to arrive at the proper classification of images that operate in the background of collocations, we need to take into account the etymology of the collocate, the historical context of its occurrence, as well as the specialized knowledge created by the combination of the base and the collocate. The results of the paper suggest that combining the cognitive and the corpus linguistics approach to the study of metaphorical collocations helps us detect the conceptual image in a significant number of these phraseological units, which in turn elucidates the role of metaphor in the emergence of collocations.*

**Keywords:** *conceptual metaphor; English; etymology; dynamic; metaphorical collocations; web corpus*

## 1. Introduction

Long before the emergence of the Conceptual Theory of Metaphor (CMT), economists were using metaphors in their professional communication and were highly aware of that (Herrera-Soler and White 2012: 1). It is thus not surprising that of all specialized discourses metaphors were most substantially investigated in the economic one. However, unlike some cognitive linguists, who tend to view metaphorical correspondence patterns as “static” and “conventional” (Lakoff 1993: 210), linguists focusing on metaphors in the field of economics see them “as flexible and dynamic processes, rather than as fixed and static systems” (Mouton 2012: 71), thus providing yet another critique of Lakoff’s Invariance Principle. According to Lakoff, metaphorical mappings must always retain the image-schema of the source domain, suggesting that, “for container schemas, interiors will be mapped onto interiors, exteriors onto exteriors, and boundaries onto boundaries; for path-schemas, sources will be mapped onto sources, goals onto goals, trajectories onto trajectories; and so on” (Lakoff 1993: 215). From the perspective of the diachronic approach, however, it is immediately clear that the principle cannot be applied properly, since, by “addressing the question of when a specific mapping was made, we begin to attend to the peculiarities of what people knew – or did not know – about the relevant domains at that time” (Mouton 2012: 71). By way of illustration, although the mapping between liquid and money (Lakoff et al. 1991) is nowadays regarded as a rather conventional one, the medieval perception of that mapping was the one between money and blood. This can be attributed to the fact that back then the prevailing source domain of economy as a whole was that of a social organism, and all mappings were supposed to portray how specific economic organs fit into that organism (Mouton 2012: 59). In the eighteenth century, however, with the deepening of knowledge about species, the absence of circulation of blood in lower animals was linked to the absence of circulation of money in undeveloped societies, thus giving rise for a more detailed mapping ABSENCE OF MONEY IS ABSENCE OF BLOOD. Since such and similar conceptualizations inspired different scholars at different times, it is not surprising to find overlaps in the metaphorical structuring (Resche 2012: 89). A case in point may be illustrated with the above mentioned mapping MONEY IS A LIQUID, which nowadays includes the more specific historical metaphor MONEY IS BLOOD. In cognitive linguistics such dynamic processes can be better accounted for by the Extended Invariance Principle, which suggests that “all contextual effects motivated by a meta-

phoric mapping will preserve the **generic**<sup>1</sup>-level structure of the source domain and of any other input space involved, in a way consistent with the inherent structure of the target domain” (Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez 1998: 265). It thus seems more reasonable to view metaphors from the perspective of the integrated cognitive model (Stanojević 2009), according to which conceptual metaphors are restricted only by central knowledge (Kövecses 2003: 82). Following this principle, we can assume that in the case of the source domain of blood the central knowledge that was adopted for the mapping MONEY IS A LIQUID is the moving movement of blood, that is, its mobility. This also seems to be in line with the neo-classical economic perception of money, according to which resources must be flexible and mobile (Henderson 2000: 172), and are thus better portrayed through the metaphors of liquid in general than with the more restricted image of blood. The integrated model allows us thus to explain the replacement of the image MONEY IS BLOOD or HAVING MONEY IS HAVING BLOOD through more general images MONEY IS A LIQUID and PLENTY OF MONEY IS PLENTY OF LIQUID. Another argument that goes in favour of this model is the frequency of linguistic expressions represented by a certain conceptual metaphor, since, after all, metaphorical expressions owe their existence to conceptual metaphor (Ostroški Anić 2019: 41). As most studies nowadays, this paper also relies on linguistic data to offer conclusions on the conceptual nature of metaphors (ibid.: 42). The method used in this paper is thus not an introspective one, but it is based on corpus data, which allow us to access a significant number of linguistic expressions belonging to the same conceptual image. The paper focuses on metaphorical collocations, the type of linguistic expressions that have been largely ignored thus far in the investigation of metaphorical expressions (Patekar 2022; Stojić and Košuta 2022), even though some authors acknowledge their existence (Reder, 2006; Volungevičienė, 2008; Konecny, 2010, 2012). What is more, previous research has shown, that the entering into combination of the base and the collocate is far from accidental and that the majority of such combinations owe their existence to the cognitive processes of metaphorization and metonymization (Stojić 2024: 11).

Although corpus-based studies of metaphorical expressions in economic discourse have received significant attention (Charteris-Black and Ennis 2001; Chung 2008; Charteris-Black and Musolff 2003; Semino 2002;

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<sup>1</sup> My emphasis.

O'Connor 1998), they were mostly concerned with identifying common and specialized usage of metaphors. Studies concerned with the actual features of metaphors (Herrera 2008; White and Herrera Soler 2009; Chung 2012) do not focus on one specific lexical phenomenon, or, when they do, they focus on units other than collocations (Juretić 2006; Rajh 2012; Parizoska and Rajh 2017). This paper is an attempt to fill this gap, since it focuses on collocations and attempts to elucidate the role of conceptual metaphor in their formation. Given the fact that the paper focuses on the term *market*, it is also expected that some collocations might indeed represent multi-word terms, since in specialized phraseology the boundary between a term and a phraseme is often blurred (Biel 2011: 227). Although Biel's claim applies to legal language, it can be extended to the economic discourse as well, given that we can easily find corresponding cases for the term *company limited by shares*, which in legal discourse, might be classified either as a more specific term of the term *company* or a "term-embedding collocation" (Biel 2014). A case in point may be illustrated with the combination *circulation of money*, since both *circulation* and *money* are terms in economic discourse, the combination of which results in a multi-word term. Nevertheless, by including the word *circulation*, which is a noun derived from a verb, we make the noun *money* the subject of that action of circulation (e.g. *money circulates*), which, according to Ureña (2011), enables us not only to activate the specialized meaning of the term, but also to gain insight into the metaphorical dimension brought about by the verb. We will thus classify these units as collocations, at the same time admitting their terminological status and allowing it to be classified either as metaphorical collocations, or "terminological metaphors" (Ureña 2011, Rossi 2017). Although fully aware of the fact that it is often "difficult to differentiate between terminological phrases and freely constructed phrases" (Cabré 1999: 86), especially when single units are extended by additional elements, it is not the purpose of this paper to discuss these terminological denominations. For this reason, we will refer to all units as collocations. A special subtype of collocations will also include mappings within one domain, hence, the ones based on metonymy, or "a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same idealized cognitive model" (Radden and Kövecses 1999: 21). Furthermore, it is possible that a metaphorical collocation underwent the process of both metaphorization and metonymy and thus represents a "metaphonymy" (Goosens 1990), name-

ly, one of its four subtypes: metaphors based on metonymy, metonymy within the metaphor, demetonymization within the metaphor and metaphor within metonymy.

## 2. Corpus and methodology

In order to investigate metaphorical collocations, we resort to the English monolingual web corpus of the TenTen Corpus family (enTenTen20), which consists of more than 10 billion words<sup>2</sup>. The analysis focuses on collocations of the noun *market*, which were investigated by means of the Wordsketch function, i.e. through grammatical relations “modifiers of x”, “adjective predicates of x”, “verbs with x as object”, and “verbs with x as subject”. These grammatical relations were studied in order to detect whether a combination listed by Sketch Engine (Kilgariff et al. 2014) as a potential collocation, can indeed be classified as one, and, if yes, a metaphorical (or metonymical) one. The identification of metaphorical collocations was based on the MIP method (Pragglejaz Group 2007), a metaphor identification procedure focusing on the comparison between the basic and the contextual meaning of lexical units. According to MIP, if the contextual meaning significantly differs from the basic meaning listed in the dictionary, the lexical unit is considered metaphorical. For the purpose of this paper, the contextual meaning detected in concordances from enTenTen20 was compared with the basic meaning of both the base and the collocate listed in the Merriam Webster Dictionary<sup>3</sup>. Very often, however, we also resorted to the Online Etymological Dictionary<sup>4</sup> in order to confirm our supposition of the basic meaning. Since the noun *market* is polysemous, the meaning that was taken as basic from the Merriam Webster Dictionary was “a meeting together of people for the purpose of trade by pri-

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<sup>2</sup> This study was conducted within the project “Metaphorical collocations – Syntagmatic word combinations between semantics and pragmatics” (IP-2020-02-6319), financed by the Croatian Science Foundation. The project is based on extracting, analysing and classifying metaphorical collocations in four different languages: English (enTenTen20), German (deTenTen20), Italian (itTenTen20) and Croatian (hrwac 2.2.) and its aim is to reveal and establish similarities and differences in metaphorical mappings not only the ones typical of one language and culture, but also the ones that are shared between cultures. For the purpose of this paper, the analysis only focuses on one term in one language and includes a domain-specific approach.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.etymonline.com/>. Accessed 1 April 2024.

vate purchase and sale and usually not by auction”<sup>5</sup>, suggesting that in most contexts the meaning of the base was already metaphorical. Coupled with the metaphorical meaning of the collocate, collocations produce an image that seems to account for the co-occurrence of the two words within a collocation. Along these lines, the study investigates the behaviour of the collocates when they co-occur with bases that have already undergone the process of metaphorization (Stojić and Matešić 2024), an innovation that has recently been highlighted as a useful strand of research in the examinations of metaphorical collocations. Apart from establishing metaphorical collocations, the paper also establishes its types according to the Master Metaphor List (Lakoff et al. 1991), where it is attempted to group metaphors according to a uniform format consisting of four very general categories, namely, event structure, mental events, emotion and other. In addition, however, there is a need to couple such categorization with the investigation of specialized domain knowledge (e.g. *bear and bull market*), which suggests that such and similar studies must always adopt an interdisciplinary perspective, and include the knowledge of corpus linguistics, phraseology and terminology, cognitive linguistics and sociocultural knowledge.

### 3. Results and discussion

Sketch Engine listed 99 potential collocations candidates for each of the investigated grammatical relations. Most metaphorical collocations belong to the EVENT STRUCTURE group and its different cases and subcases. The most productive image here is that of amount being linked to verticality as a specification of the metaphor AMOUNT IS A PHYSICAL PROPERTY, hence, PROPERTIES ARE PHYSICAL PROPERTIES:

Modifiers of X: bear / bull / bearish / bullish market

Adjective predicates of X: the market is flat / stable /dynamic / quiet / unstable /stagnant / high / low / hot / booming

Verbs with X as subject: the market increases / declines / drops / rebounds / plunges / falls / rises /rallies / soars /shrinks / tightens

Verbs with X as object; boost the market

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/market>. Accessed 1 April 2024.

A peculiar case here are collocations involving what it seems to be an animal battle location (e.g. *bear / bull market*), but an investigation into their etymology makes it clear that the collocates do not invoke the characteristics of animals as such, but rather tend to imply the direction of their attack. A bull attacks using an upward movement, symbolising the rising of the prices, whereas a bear swipes its paws downward, thus exemplifying the decline of the prices.<sup>6</sup> Since the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary and the Merriam Webster Dictionary do not agree on the origin of these metaphors, the collocates could also easily be grouped into the metaphor COMPETITION IS WAR, given the fact that in the stock market the bulls and the bears fight for profit.<sup>7</sup> In this sense, the animals actually represent investors and give rise to metonymy as well. Further collocations of the war image include *beat / conquer / capture / target / hit the market*, all of which, unlike the animal collocates, which portray market as a place of battle, dethrone it to the position of the victim.

Another subtype of the PROPERTIES ARE PHYSICAL PROPERTIES group includes the image AMOUNT IS SIZE, and relates the number (amount) of companies or products of a specific company on the market to its size. It expressed through the following collocations:

Modifiers of X: big / large / major / huge / broad market;

Adjective predicates of X: the market is small / robust / enormous / vast

One might argue that some collocations revealing the “amount” image display similar meanings as the collocates from the verticality group. Nevertheless, the collocates which denote the vertical rising or falling of the prices, or leave such possibility open, as witnessed by the occurrence of antonymous pairs of collocates (e.g. *stable – unstable; high – low*) differ from the collocates in the size group, which merely refer to the number of entities on the market, whose increase or decrease does not occur vertically. This comes even more to the foreground in collocates setting the borders of the market, which might also be subsumed under the image MARKET IS A LOCATION (e.g. *local / regional / global / domestic market*), another specification of

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/bull-bear-market-names/>. Accessed 20 December 2023.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

the EVENT STRUCTURE general metaphor. Bearing in mind that all these collocates, apart from denoting location, also somewhat limit its reaches, we might consider them as part of the MARKET IS A CONTAINER image, despite the fact that the collocates *local* and *regional* indicate somewhat fuzzy borders. They are, nevertheless, sub-segments of a domestic or single market, which in turn represent locations within the borders of a country<sup>8</sup>. Concordances from the corpus also support this claim:

*He aimed his books at a fairly local market only, for English was not a language known and used outside this country. (bl.uk)*

*Given the relatively small size of the Indian SME sector, which is largely confined to local and regional markets, India is unlikely to be able to challenge the Chinese export engine. (epw.in)*

*The company has established an outstanding reputation in providing superior customer service within its regional market. (pr.com)*

The container image can, however, be further subdivided into the image, where the market represents a substance, or, is itself a container object. The collocations denoting location would logically be grouped into the container object image:

Modifiers of x: local / regional / domestic / market

Verbs with x as subject: market opens / closes

Verbs with x as object: enter / penetrate / saturate / access / exit / close / re-enter the market

The other sub-category of the container image is the one, where collocates imply that market is a substance we can cut:

Modifiers of x: niche / retail / mass / fragmented / private / global / worldwide market

Adjective predicates of X: market is sub-segmented

Verbs with X as object: segment / divide / shape / transform the market

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<sup>8</sup> <https://marketbusinessnews.com/financial-glossary/domestic-market/>. Accessed 20 December 2023



The image of cutting seems to be “dead” (Resche 2012) in some collocations (e.g. *retail market*), but a closer look at the etymology of the collocate makes it clear that the same conceptual image was at play (Anglo-French *retailer* – cut out<sup>9</sup>). The meaning is still partly visible today, given that the collocate refers to the selling of goods “in small quantities directly to the ultimate consumer”<sup>10</sup>. Similarly, while most of these collocates are transparent in terms of denoting a portion of something, the collocate *private* stands out. The etymology indicates that *private* is something which is not open to the public or is set apart from it<sup>11</sup>, thus making our decision to categorize the collocation *private market* as the container substance justified. By the same token, the image MARKET IS A SHAPE also invokes the container metaphor, making it superfluous to introduce a new metaphor image for collocations *global market* or *shape / transform the market*, since, after all the shape metaphor is used transitively with the metaphor SHAPES ARE CONTAINERS (Lakoff and Johnson 1991: 10).

Another EVENT STRUCTURE metaphor includes metaphorical collocations revealing the image of motion, with the following subtypes:

#### CHANGE IS RELATIVE MOTION

Modifiers of x: volatile / bustling market

Adjective predicates of x: market is jittery

#### PROGRESS IS MOTION

Verbs with x as subject: the market evolves / heads / develops

Verbs with x as object: push / move the market

The etymology of the collocates here again plays a crucial role in the classification of metaphors, given the fact that the original meaning does imply a rolling movement (lat. *volvare*), which in turn symbolizes progress. Apart from these rather neutral or positive collocations, there are also negatively connoted instances invoking the image of the HARM PREVENTING FORWARD MOTION TOWARD A GOAL, where harm is portrayed as a general

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/retail>. Accessed 5 April 2024.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=private>. Accessed 20 December 2023.

obstacle (e.g. *the market is tough*), or a burden which slows down motion (e.g. *the market slows; disrupt / distort the market*). Other more static examples of the image of harm include the metaphor HARM IS A PHYSICAL INJURY and its subtype WELL-BEING IS HEALTH (e.g. *market is strong / weak / fragile / healthy*). These collocations might also invoke the image of AMOUNT IS VERTICALITY, since a strong market involves a vertical increase of prices.

Although the EVENT STRUCTURE group is by far the most frequent general metaphor centring around metaphorical collocations of the noun *market*, there are also some instances of MENTAL EVENTS, where market is portrayed as a love object, that is, a lover or a possible partner (e.g. *market is attractive / vulnerable*), or a being with a life cycle, in our case, a plant (e.g. *the market is ripe / cyclical; the market grows / matures*).

Further images, which Lakoff et al. (1991) refer to as OTHER include the image MARKET IS A MACHINE with the following examples:

Verbs with x as subject: the market crashes / collapses

Verbs with x as object: operate / navigate / rig / fuel / drive / propel / fix the market

These examples can all be traced back to the emergence of the image ECONOMY IS A MACHINE in the nineteenth century, when physics was the role model for the conceptualizations in economy. Market is also portrayed as a liquid, but apart from involving the image of the linear waterway (e.g. *liquid market*) and representing an ease in the execution of trade<sup>12</sup>, it also includes the images of turbulence or natural disasters (e.g. *current market; flood the market*), thus making market a protagonist in a (destructive) natural process<sup>13</sup>. Furthermore, there is the image of GOODNESS IS LIGHT / BADNESS IS DARK, which underlies the collocation *black market*, denoting the activity of illegal trading. There is also one instance of the SOCIETY IS A BODY metaphor represented by the collocation *flea market*, where fleas might stand for something parasitic, a disease with which people who buy second-hand clothes get infected. The collocation is at the same time metonymical, since it stands for a special type of market for used articles and

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/l/liquidmarket.asp>. Accessed 8 April 2024.

<sup>13</sup> [https://metaphor.icsi.berkeley.edu/pub/en/index.php/Frame:Natural\\_process](https://metaphor.icsi.berkeley.edu/pub/en/index.php/Frame:Natural_process). Accessed 8 April 2024.

antiques<sup>14</sup>. Similar examples of metonymies include *Christmas market*, *night market*, *exchange market*, *online market*, etc., where the collocate invokes a special type of market occurring in the virtual environment, during specified periods of the year (or day), or aimed at specific products. Other types of metonymies include collocations, where the base *market* stands for the investors or the customers on the market (e.g. *estimate / understand the market*; *unpredictable market*), the presence of which would without the collocate go unnoticed. There are, however, instances of metonymies within metaphors (e.g. *stable market*; *stabilize the market*), or, metaphors based on metonymies (e.g. *bears* and *bull markets*, where bulls and bears stand for investors), the reasoning of which was already discussed elsewhere in this paper. Although the principal aim of this paper was to investigate metaphorical images behind metaphorical collocations, some authors (e.g. Barcelona 2003) suggest that all metaphors are metonymically motivated based on metonymical conceptualizations of the source and target domain. We thus admit that collocations in images AMOUNT IS VERTICALITY and AMOUNT IS SIZE can also be viewed as metonymical, since, after all, “studies of metaphor and metonymy have found it notoriously difficult to separate one from the other, as they often overlap or motivate each other” (Jimenez-Munoz and Lahuerta Martínez 2017: 259). By way of example, the combinations *the market rises / drops* are metonymical in the sense that it is not the market that rises or drops, but the prices. Furthermore, as suggested by Radden (2003), some people may associate the rising of the prices with a rising line in a graph from stock reports, giving rise for the metonymy THING FOR ITS REPRESENTATION. Similarly, a small market will have less competitors than a large one, making us associate the size of the group of people on the market with their number and creating yet another experiential metonymy (Radden 2003: 96).

#### 4. Conclusion

The aim of this paper is to investigate metaphorical mappings behind the metaphorical collocations extracted from a web corpus of English texts. The study reveals that most images operating in the background of the co-occurrence of the term *market* with its collocates belong to the general metaphors of events. Economy in general and market in particular, are,

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/flea%20market>. Accessed 20 December 2023.

after all, arenas of all sorts of financial interactions and transactions. The historical mappings of economy and machines (e.g. *the market crashes*) as well as of economy and living organisms (e.g. *the market grows*) are still present, but are less frequent than some “newer” images portraying the vertical rise of the prices. The investigation into the historical context, the specialized knowledge and the etymology of collocates suggest that meaning is a dynamic process, urging us to admit that a metaphorical collocation, especially if there is no consensus on the origin of its occurrence, might belong to more than one metaphorical image. A corpus approach, however, suggests that one image might be more prevalent than the other (e.g. AMOUNT IS VERTICALITY as opposed to COMPETITION IS WAR in collocations *bear* and *bull markets*). The paper is thus an attempt to suggest that arriving at a network of metaphorical images (starting from specific to more general) allows us to comprehend more specific images as belonging to the general ones (e.g. MARKET IS A CONTAINER and MARKET IS A LOCATION) and thus achieve more systematicity in the approach to the classification of metaphors. Such systematicity might also provide aid for classifying metaphorical collocations of other nouns of the same or similar category (e.g. *law* or *state*), which, like market, function as some sorts of social institutions imposing and regulating both social and financial transactions. Since one of the aims of our project is also to investigate metaphorical collocations contrastively, it remains to be seen whether other languages display the same degree of metaphoricity, especially in expressing the vertical rise or fall of the prices on the market. Finally, although this paper investigates collocations of the term *market* in a general corpus, future research might profit from examining such combinations in a specialized corpus of market economy, which would both support the findings of this study and supplement it with other instances.

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## SAŽETAK

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### MEDVJEĀA I BIKOVSKA TRŽIŠTA: KORPUSNO UTEMELJENA ANALIZA METAFORIČKIH KOLOKACIJA I NJIHOVIH METAFORIČKIH MREŽA

U ovom se radu istražuju metaforičke kolokacije engleske imenice *market* u mrežnom korpusu te se kategoriziraju prema popisu konceptualnih metafora Lakoffa i drugih (1991). Metaforičke se kolokacije iz korpusa izvlače s pomoću funkcije Wordsketch alata Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff et al. 2014), ali se rad usredotočuje na analizu četiriju gramatičkih relacija. Da bi se metaforičke kolokacije ispravno razvrstale prema slikama konceptualnih metafora, nužno je analizirati etimologiju kolokata, njegov povijesni kontekst, ali i specijalizirano znanje koje nastaje spajanjem baze i kolokata. Takav pristup ukazuje na činjenicu da su metafore ekonomije prilično dinamične, nerijetko podvrgnute različitim procesima transformacije slike, što otežava njihovo svrstavanje u jednu konceptualnu metaforu. Budući da se kombinacijom korpusnog i kognitivnolingvističkog pristupa nastoji rasvijetliti uloga metafore u procesu stvaranja metaforičkih kolokacija, rezultati ovog rada mogu se primijeniti na istraživanja metaforičkih kolokacija drugih srodnih imenica (npr. *law* ili *state*), koja bi mogla rezultirati istim ili sličnim metaforičkim konceptualizacijama.

**Ključne riječi:** *konceptualna metafora; etimologija; dinamičnost; metaforičke kolokacije; mrežni korpus*