**VILNIUS UNIVERSITY**

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# IRONY WITHIN THE SCOPE OF CONCEPTUAL BLENDING IN LITHUANIAN AND AMERICAN ON-LINE NEWS HEADLINES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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**VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETAS**


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**LIETUVOS IR AMERIKOS INTERNETINIŲ NAUJIENŲ ANTRAŠČIŲ IRONIJA REMIANTIS KONCEPTUALIĄJA BLENDINGO TEORIJA: LYGINAMOJI ANALIZĖ**




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## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

In communication people typically try to convey not only the facts, but also their opinions, evaluative attitudes and implications. One of the conventional means involved in reaching this aim is the use of irony. Irony, which is ubiquitous in the postmodern world, is a device for acknowledging the gap between what has been said and what is implied. As an object of study it has been in the center of attention not only as a technique commonly employed in both everyday language and the mass media, but also as one of the central objects in scholarly research. The scholarly investigation of irony has a very long history and a very broad base. Many modern researchers have been exploring the ways ironic speech conveys meaning. Over the last decades, dozens of experiments and many theoretical studies have emerged in an attempt to define the nature of the phenomenon itself, its structure, processing, social functions and many other aspects.

Most theories supplement, overlap, or contradict one another in a number of points: what is considered verbal irony, what is the correlation between the implied and the explicit level of irony, what it is made of, how it is processed and marked, and why it is used. More recently, a new approach to irony has been enabled by cognitive linguistics, one of the modern branches in philology. While cognitive linguistic approaches to language were initially based on philosophical thinking about the mind, more recent work emphasizes the importance of convergent evidence from a broad empirical and methodological base. In the first decade of the 21st century, cognitive linguistics represents one of the most exciting and innovative interdisciplinary approaches for the study of the complex relationship between language and mind. One of the newest developments in cognitive linguistics is the emergence of the theory of conceptual blending, which suggests that a new perspective can be taken on irony. The theory of conceptual blending was developed by Turner and Fauconnier in 2002. In this dissertation, conceptual blending, which claims to be capable of encompassing under its name

everything from talking donkeys to mathematical formulas, is applied to the analysis of the mechanism of irony.

**The aim of the dissertation**

To determine cross-cultural similarities and differences in the structure, processing and functioning of irony in American and Lithuanian news headlines by exploring the integration mechanisms and their constituent parts within the framework of conceptual blending. On the basis of data collected from Lithuanian and American news websites, the thesis explores the types of integration models, frames, vital relations, functions and conventionalization that create irony.

**The tasks of the thesis**

In accordance with the main aim, the objectives of the thesis are as follows:

- to identify changes in the perception of the phenomenon of irony throughout history and to consolidate the ideas related to the definition of irony by providing a working definition of irony;

- to explore the social/pragmatic functions of irony;

- to compose a list of possible indicators of irony;

- to review the means of expression of irony with reference to proper names;

- to give an overview of theories approaching the mechanism of irony;

- to introduce the mechanism of conceptual blending as a cognitive tool for irony analysis, capable of unifying the linguistic approaches to irony;

- to examine empirically the practical viability of the application of the conceptual blending framework to the analysis of irony; and while performing a contrastive analysis, to make an attempt at characterizing common and specific features of Lithuanian and American irony in news headlines.

**Data sources**

The materials of the study consist of the headlines of political news articles retrieved from the online archives of the two following websites: (1) www.delfi.lt and (2) www.alternet.com. The selective criterion of the headlines was the feature of irony directed at the country as a whole (i.e. Lithuania and the United States).

The headlines cover the time span from 2002 to 2009. A total of 60 ironic headlines was chosen for analysis.

**Methods of analysis**

Multiple methods of analysis have been applied to the collected material: qualitative, quantitative, general descriptive and analytical. The validity of the collected material (ironic headlines) as ironic was tested by a pilot research project carried out at Vilnius University Kaunas Faculty for Humanities. The pilot survey was undertaken using a specially designed questionnaire which asked the respondents (10 students and 10 lecturers at VUKHF) to identify the ironic headlines, give reasons for the decision and identify the referent of some ironies.

The quantitative analysis included counting the results of the questionnaire and identifying the frequency of certain ironies, implied mental spaces, specific frames, and functions.

A combination of descriptive, analytical and contrastive analysis was used for the representation of the theoretical background and for the explication of empirical data.

**Theoretical background**

The theoretical approach to the object of the dissertation is based on the works on irony and blending by many contemporary linguists. For irony : Booth, Muecke, Hutcheon, Knox, Sperber and Wilson, Barbe, Kreuz, Dews and Winner, Grice, Clark and Gerrig, Gibbs, Stewart, Kotthoff, Colebrook,

Attardo, Giora, Colebrook, Utsumi, and many more. For blending and cognitive linguistics in general: Turner, Fauconnier, Coulson, Colston, Lassan, and Cibulskienė.

### Scientific novelty and value of the research

The novelty and value of the dissertation lies in the choice of the theoretical approach and the material for the research. The research carried out contributes to cross-cultural studies in cognitive linguistics, discourse analysis and social sciences.

The conceptual blending approach to irony developed in this dissertation is unique and has rarely been previously applied to irony in linguistic studies[1]. In this thesis, the theoretical assumptions proposed by the cognitive model of conceptual blending have been applied to the practical study of irony in Lithuanian and American news website headlines, proving that the theory of blending is able to account for the mechanism of irony processing, and does not conflict with the majority of the other theories of irony processing. For cognitive linguistics, this study enlarges the empirical data for the mechanisms and structures of irony. The research provides new insights into the compressions, functions, and topology of irony in Lithuanian and American discourse. The findings might lead to further investigation of irony in the framework of conceptual blending, or might be applied in teaching cognitive linguistics to university students.

In Lithuania, contrastive linguistic studies of irony have not been carried out either. Therefore, the empirical findings are of practical value for cultural studies. They could be applied in teaching university students about the peculiarities of public discourse in the means of electronic mass communication in the USA and Lithuania. The collected data can also be used as subsidiary material in teaching irony patterns and indices recurring in American and Lithuanian news headlines or political discourse in general. The

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[1] Turner and Fauconnier (2000) only mention that the mechanism of conceptual blending is applicable to irony. Coulson (2000) modifies blending theory to apply it to jokes, but does not approach irony specifically.

present work is the first attempt to perform a concise contrastive analysis of irony in Lithuanian and American news headlines from the perspective of cognitive linguistics, or more specifically by applying the theory of conceptual blending.

This dissertation can be regarded as a step forward in formulating more detailed theories of irony as a linguistic, cognitive and social phenomenon.

**The hypotheses of the thesis**

1. The integration mechanism  of conceptual blending is able to encompass the analysis of irony without contradicting other theories of irony processing

2. Since humans conceptualize events and situations in a similar manner, the integration mechanisms of Lithuanian and American ironies should have similarities; on the other hand, as Lithuania and the USA are communities of different social and cultural experiences, their ironies should have some differentiating features.

3. The integration mechanism of irony should correlate with the means of expression at the explicit level of the utterance.

4. The integration network always integrates the implicit background knowledge, the author's position, the context and the element of pretense.

5. The compressions of vital relations in ironic integration networks are related to the functions performed by irony.

6. Some ironies in news headlines are more conventionalized than others.

**The structure of the dissertation**

The present dissertation consists of introductory remarks, a theoretical framework (Parts 1-8), empirical research (Parts 9-10), conclusions and references. The theoretical framework is divided into eight main parts: Part 1, *The Peculiarities of Irony in Headlines of the Mass Media*, gives a general

overview of irony in printed media in the era of the postmodern, drawing parallels between conventional newspapers and the modern daily news websites on the basis of their specific features. Part 2, *An Overview of the Development of the Concept of Irony*, gives a survey of the development of different approaches to irony from ancient times to the 20th century, with reference to ancient philosophers (Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian), the irony of the Middle Ages (Chaucer), Classicism, and Romanticism, including the ideas of Schlegel, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. Part 3, *The Definition of Irony*, focuses on the problems and conflicting views encountered in modern linguistics when trying to define the phenomenon of irony (which is still addressed as a "surfacing problem" in most recent works on irony). The reasons for the confusion are analyzed and the definitions of both dictionaries and linguists are contrasted. In the end, a working definition of irony (based on the theoretical approaches by Utsumi, Giora, and Hutcheon) that is relied on in this thesis is provided. Part 4, *The Functions of Irony in Headlines*, comprises a list of the social functions irony performs when employed in news headlines. The functions under investigation include politeness and assailing, the aggregative function of discourse communities, evaluation and negative criticism, humorous, protective, informative and other purposes. Part 5, *The indices of irony*, focuses on the role of context/ background knowledge and the lexical/grammatical marking of irony, which have been addressed only haphazardly by a few ironologists. Thus, an attempt has been made to comprise a full list of irony markers peculiar to news headlines. Part 6, *Figures of Speech in Irony Expression*, takes a look at tropes, their use in headlines in the mode of irony, and at the morphological and syntactic means of irony expression. Irony as a figure of thought is also given special attention, as the hypothesis is raised that the mechanism of irony might be influenced by irony being either a trope or a figure of speech. Part 7, *The Mechanisms of the Processing of Irony*, presents the most outstanding approaches of irony processing and their criticism. This part examines such theories as the Four-step theory by Booth, the Standard Pragmatic model by Grice, Pretense theory

by Clark and Gerrig, Pretense (or Relevance) theory by Sperber and Wilson, Semantic–Script Theory by Raskin, the General Theory of Verbal Humor by Attardo, the Graded Salience Theory by Giora, and Implicit Display theory by Utsumi. Part 8, *The Theory of Conceptual Blending: Application to Irony*, suggests that the mechanism of conceptual blending is the most efficient tool for the analysis of irony construction. The main theoretic underpinnings, concepts, basic models of integration, inner and outer vital relations and compressions are examined, and the concept of the ironic shift of meaning is applied to the theory of blending.

Parts 9 and 10, *Ironic Headlines Referring to Lithuania* and *Ironic headlines Referring to America*, are devoted to the empirical research and examine the integration mechanisms, topology of frames, vital relations, compressions, means of expression, functions and conventionality of ironies in news headlines directed at Lithuania and America.

Finally, the conclusions of the research are drawn and the list of references is presented.

# 1. THE PECULIARITIES OF IRONY IN NEWSPAPER HEADLINES

The mass media performs the role of mediator between reality and the audience. Our lives are affected by newspapers, magazines and television. They construct our attitudes, form our beliefs, broaden our outlook and give us information about the surrounding world. The ability of the mass media to influence the audience allows us to name the means of mass communication as a communicative phenomenon designed to shape public opinion. The mass media model citizens' attitudes and reasoning in respect to a number of significant issues of public life and provide not only different but sometimes controversial interpretations of social events. The object of the mass media is the constantly evolving reality of the present day, the outcome of human activity, significant events of public life, processes, developments, and problems to tackle. Relying on Urbonas (2003), the concept of the modern mass media encompasses the conventional instruments of mass communication (the press, the radio, television, cinema) and the innovative means of information transmission that have been enabled by modern technologies.

The origin of the systematic and concise analysis of the mass media is associated with the name of an outstanding American communications theorist, Lasswell, who was ranked among the most creative innovators in the social sciences in the 20th century. His analysis of three essential and universal social functions of the mass media is considered to be his most significant contribution to the field of mass media research. According to Lasswell (1948), the following functions may be clearly distinguished: (i) the surveillance of the environment; (2) the correlation of the parts of society in responding to the environment; (3) the transmission of the social heritage from one generation to the next. The first function—which may also be referred to as informative—provides a survey of the surrounding world and by Lasswell is seen as broadening  the horizon of cognition of an individual (ibid). Second, the correlative function encompasses and correlates the response of the whole state to the environment, the internal social structure and responsibility, the impact

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and cognizance enabled by "reciprocity between communicators and audience" (Lasswell, 1948, p.220) This function accounts for the interpretation and explication of information, and for supporting the governing bodies and established norms. The third function, the transmission of cultural inheritance, which might be referred to as the cognitive-cultural function focuses on the response of the old to the young, and aims at transmitting certain patterns. The significance of the above mentioned three functions was outlined by Lasswell in 1948. Subsequently, since the 1960's, the analysis of the social functions of mass communication was supplemented by Wright (entertaining), McQuail (mobilization), Kloss (rational: informative, educational; irrational: manipulative, enforcing, promotional, propaganda, and relaxing), etc. (according to McQuail, 1983, p.98-108)[2].

Until the last decade, the genres of mass communication had not been given special attention or systematic analysis by Lithuanian scholars. This notwithstanding, an analysis of the genres of the mass media has been available in the Encyclopedia of Journalism, and in *The Theory of Journalism* (2002) by Urbonas. In recent years a pioneering Lithuanian study in this field was provided by Marcinkevičienė (2008); however, the focus is on printed media exceptionally, and the Internet publications are left aside. A separate study devoted to the publicistic style was carried out by Bitinienė (2007), and the rhetoric of publicistics was analyzed by Koženiauskienė (2001). The input of the scholars of other countries into the research on mass communication is of greater volume and diversity. The outstanding authorities of the field are Fairclough (1995), Bell (1991), Chang (1998), Van Dijk (1988), Reah (2002), Bakhtin (1986), Li (2009), Lukanina (2006), Kushneruk (2007) and others.

In her book *The Language of Newspapers* (2002), Reah proposes the classification of printed newspapers into three groups: broadsheet newspapers (e.g. *The Guardian, The Times*), the middle –range tabloids (e.g. *The Daily*

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[2] McQuail warns against the possible negative influence of the mass media, which he refers to using the term "dysfunction." The media performs a positive role by giving a critical look at authority; however, on the other hand, it damages the status of the government and weakens the unity of the nation (1983, p.100).

*Mail*), and the tabloids (e.g. *The Mirror, The Star*). Relying on a *London News* (2006-09-19) article reprinted on the website of Bernardinai (www.bernardinai.lt), more and more broadsheet newspapers such as *The Guardian*, *The Times* and *The Independent* are striving for the newspaper to be not only interesting, but also comfortable to read. Therefore, more and more broadsheet newspapers are "phasing out their broadsheet editions" and retreating to smaller formats. Lavishly illustrated smaller format newspapers such as the scandalous *The Sun* are called tabloids. "Middle range tabloids" or "middle market tabloids" are the names given to the newspapers that are neither as official/serious as broadsheet papers nor real tabloids. Middle range tabloids include *The Evening Standard*, *The Daily Mail*, etc.

Given the rapid development of modern technologies, Internet publicistics has become an integral part of the mass media. The internet mass media has its own typology. The outstanding Russian journalist Kobjakov (2010) groups internet websites into mass media websites (internet newspaper, magazine, news websites, digests[3], internet editions of printed media, and the websites of TV or radio companies), informative-educational portals and the websites of companies and organizations.

For the empirical research, the internet news websites or, more specifically, the headlines of the internet news websites have been chosen. The choice of the internet publicistics is based on several reasons, such as accessibility, impact, and topicality. The internet is the most contemporary means of the mass media. With the expansion of the World Wide Web, news websites have become accessible to an increasingly wide audience, while the volumes of newspapers do not show tendencies to grow. In the editions of electronic means of mass communication, "the text acquires new features, which are conditioned by its existence in electronic form, its non-linear structure of information presentation, interactivity and the freedom of

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[3] In the Russian version, the concept retains its phonological resemblance to the English "digest," which stands for a review of other periodicals.

interpretation"[4]( Кушнерук, 2007). The electronic news portals of delfi.lt (Lithuanian) and alternet.org (American) have been chosen for analysis. As there was a difficulty encountered in identifying Lithuanian and American newspaper editions of similar status, a decision was taken to opt for news websites that do not have corresponding printed editions.

Publicistics is influenced by the social and cultural environment it exists in. Organizing the genres of the mass media along the axis of information-publicistics, Marcinkevičienė (2008) claims that the genre of publicistics, along with its informative function, operates as the means "to explain, give assessment, interpret, and present the described events in a creative, subjective, witty, and evaluative aspect" (2008, p.93). The functions of the internet news websites could be described analogically. The specifics of publicistic text are determined by its aim to impact the reader.

A wide range of linguistic means, starting with the specifics of lexical expression (the nucleus of the words employed, conceptual lexis, evaluative lexis, bookish lexis, neologisms, colloquialisms, idioms, combination of distinct layers of lexis, metaphors, metonymies) to morphological means (the predominance of the noun, the verb, the pronoun) and syntactic features (the prevalence of simple, middle-length sentences, usage of semantic blocks[5] and expressive syntax[6]) is used to enhance the impact. In other words, websites, like printed newspapers, seek to effectively manipulate the opinions of the readers. The present analysis focuses exclusively on headlines as the material for research. The choice of headlines is supported by theoretical as well as empirical evidence. The significance of headlines has been emphasized by a number of researchers. As Ramos, Martins, Pereira, and Oliveira (2009) put it, headlines can be viewed as "brief narratives, thus evoking the argumentative dimension which is associated to them, or the rhetoric they use to impose upon

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[4] In the article cited, interactivity and interpretation refer to the interactive links, and the possibility to read and write comments, to debate in forums.
[5] The chains of words made up from nouns in the possessive case; they are referred to as "collocates" in Marcinkevičienė (2001).
[6] To the field of expressive syntax, Bitinienė (2006, p.56-57) assigns parcelation, segmentation, lexical repetition, interrogation, and syntactic expression of dialogic genres.

others their way of constructing the world" (2009, p.2). Bell (1991) claims that headlines are equal to the texts themselves and Develotte and Rechniewski (2001) go even further by stressing that the headlines are likely to have a greater impact than the articles themselves, due to their formal and linguistic features. Marcinkevičienė (2008) calls headlines the highest level of hyper-text, while Koženiauskienė (2009) argues that headlines function as a separate piece of rhetoric. Bitinienė (2006) writes that headlines encode the deepest meaning of the text. Russian scholars acknowledge the weightiness of headlines as well. Relying on Kozhina (1986), the position of the headline is undoubtedly powerful, or even critical (1986, p.3). However, it should be admitted that headlines do not only advocate the article but sometimes shade it (Fatejeva, 2006), as "the headlines are likely to have a greater impact than the articles themselves, due to their formal and linguistic features" (Develotte and Rechniewski, 2001).

According to Michailin (2006), the chief editor of internet newspaper Газета.Ру, news websites aim at "expedious, operative delivery of information to the user that opens the webpage" (http://www.svobodanews.ru/content/transcript/269360.html#ixzz0yShPfENm) . Meanwhile, Lukanina (2006) draws attention to the aspect of impact and manipulation in headlines, which according to the author is primarily related with the limited screen size of the computer. As the space is limited and the number of competing headlines is large, the text itself is presented in the form of a headline (or abstract). Relying on the findings of Dor's research, *On newspaper headlines as relevance optimize* (2003), skilled newspaper readers spend most of their reading time on scanning headlines instead of reading full articles. Develotte and Rechniewski (2001) emphasize the headlines' feature of diffusion and claim that headlines reach a far greater audience than full articles. Their approach is supported by Marcinkevičienė (2008), who claims that a significant number of readers limit themselves exclusively to headlines (2008, p.175), regardless of the fact that for the sake of attracting the audience "the principle of journalism that sets the requirement for the headline to reflect

the content of the article, is frequently violated. The headlines of the modern electronic mass media only partially reflect the content and keep some information suppressed to create an intrigue for the reader" (Lukanina, 2006, p.205). Even if the internet means of mass communication do not thoroughly perform the informative function, it is the evaluative edge that is always overt, especially when certain aspects of politics are in focus. As Ramos et al. (2009) put it, "because of their cataphoric nature, headlines are powerful devices that guide the reader's interpretation and assessment of the 'facts' they refer to" (2009, p.4). Hence, the apparently expressed evaluative position forms the public opinion. Consequently, alongside the aim to inform and to attract attention, the functions of headlines encompass persuasion and the imposition of a certain evaluative edge regarding a political event. Even if the news is no longer in the forefront of attention, the reader is encouraged to take sides. The politicized texts of the electronic mass media are distinguished by their subjectivity. The same applies to headlines. Pragmatic and regulatory functions of news headlines are materialized through numerous linguistic means, starting with explicit persuasion and implicit assessment of facts, which affects the beliefs of the audience. The evaluative aspect (which is subjective) is transmitted via a variety of expressive means: the abovementioned lexical, syntactic and morphological language tools. Because of the limited scope of the current research, the focus here will be concentrated on a single expressive means, i.e. irony.

In the period of political tension or scandals (e.g. during the impeachment of the president) even broadsheet papers and corresponding websites use irony more extensively[7]. With the rise of a common feeling of disappointment, disagreement, or anger, irony tends to acquire more acute forms. Respectively, when the political arena is free of full-scale conflict, there is a significant reduction in the number of ironic headlines. Due to this reason a

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[7] Analyzing the use of metaphors, Bitinienė (2006) notices that the frequency of metaphors used in politicized texts depends on political and economic crisis in a country. As the scholar puts it: "Political can be described and assessed differently as much depends on the situation in the country and the position of the author" (2006, p. 37). Analogical reasoning could be applied to the usage of irony.

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period of a rather intense political life, that is the period of 2000-2009 has been chosen for analysis. This period encompasses the elections, the scandalous presidencies of Rolandas Paksas and George W. Bush, and the global economic crisis. In order to outline universal and national characteristics in the use of irony, a comparative analysis of Lithuanian and American ironic headlines of the above mentioned websites will be carried out.

The ironic headlines under investigation could be called auto-ironic. Under the concept of auto-irony the aspect of national representation is taken into consideration. The issue of national representation in French and Australian news headlines was addressed by Develotte and Rechniewski (2001).[8] The scholars used the term of "national representation" for the system of knowledge that includes knowledge of nation and nationality: "the concept can be used to address other nations, but may be used for the representation of one's own nation, people and country" (2001, p.7). It is noted in their work that "the representation of other nations can be used to define one's own nationality and identity" (2001, p.7). In this dissertation, the attention is focused on a single aspect of national representation—that is, on irony. Correlating national representation with irony, the scope of analysis is specified and thus all the headlines that express ironic evaluative attitude directed at one's country/nation (the identification of: "we" is "our country/nation") are treated as auto-irony or irony directed at national representation. The comparative analysis of American and Lithuanian headlines that is carried out serves as the means to reveal the universals and the specifics of ironic national representation.

In the majority of scientific work the mode of irony is associated with the epoch of postmodernism[9]. In his speculations about postmodernism,

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[8] Here, the social representations of Moscovici (1973) are taken as a methodological basis.
[9] The period and the concept of "postmodernism" has caused debates among scholars. A number of scientists believe that the epoch of postmodernism has already expired; however, the majority of sources define postmodernism as a period that started in the 20th century (World War I) and has lasted up to the present day. A detailed study on postmodernism is provided by Malp in "The Postmodern" (2005); however, despite a thorough analysis of the phenomenon, the period of postmodernism is not defined. Russian scholars refer to postmodernism as a product of western culture; they acknowledge its central position in philosophy but raise the question of whether a postmodern publicistic writing

Hassan (1987) names irony as one of its essential features and argues that it is used for the sake of the expression of diversity, contingency and playfulness. American theorist Jameson (1996) focuses on the specific irony and intertextuality of this epoch and characterizes postmodernism by applying to it the concept of pastiche[10]. Irony as a phenomenon playing an important role in the mass media of postmodernism was addressed in the works of Hutcheon (2003). While discussing irony in the mass media, Lutzker (1999) also relates it to postmodernism and proposes the idea of violence in the mass media. As a characteristic feature of the postmodernist mass media (and herewith headlines), irony was analyzed by Lassan (1995).

Speaking about postmodernism it is worth noticing the reference to "the tiredness of postmodernism" in the works of some scholars (e.g., Iljin). However, even if postmodernism is getting exhausted, in the current epoch ironic headlines comprise a significant part of internet headlines and present an effort-worthy object of scientific analysis. The ubiquitous interest in irony may be illustrated by the fact that certain websites focus on filing ironic headlines of the mass media, e.g. http://www.allvoices.com/contributed-news/1455724-ironic-times or http://englishfailblog.com/2008/10/02/ironic-fail[11].

However, one of the problems continually dwelled upon by irony theorists is the identification of an ironic text. The comprehension of a headline as ironic is determined by a number of factors. The problem of irony detection has been addressed by Rubinstein in the work *Using LSA[12] to detect Irony*

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exists (В.В. Хорольский). Postmodernism has been excessively discussed by Baudrillard (1998), Bertens (1995), Connor (1997), Harvey (1990), Heartney (2001),  Lyon (1999), Stuart (2002), and other scholars.

[10] Pastiche takes stylistic means and ideas from other works but does not parody these works. Relying on Jameson, pastiche is a vital aspect of postmodernism; he defines it as "a neutral practice of mimicry, without parody's ulterior motive, without the satirical impulse, without laughter, without that still latent feeling that there exists something normal compared with which what is being imitated is rather comic" (1983, p.5). Another excessive analysis of the concept and phenomenon of postmodernism has been provided by Iljin in his book: "Poststructuralism. Deconstructivism. Postmodernism"(1996, p. 222-224).

[11] Here the ironicality of the listed headlines is often arguable, as the headlines contain spelling mistakes (which are more likely to be a case of situational, not verbal, irony), e.g.: "Missippi's literacy program shows improvement" (though the headline claims that the literacy program has been useful, the name of the state is misspelled).

[12] Latent Semantic Analysis

(2003), where the model of automated irony detection in headlines has been presented. The LSA irony detection model is based on a calculation of distance on a scale between the literal message and the implied message. However, the author herself outlines the shortcomings of the LSA model: "In order to fully appreciate these ironic headlines one must be knowledgeable about current political and social issues…; the human participants are clearly knowledgeable in this respect, but the corpus LSA was trained on is not" (2003, p.9). Thus, as Muecke (1996) puts it, the final decision on whether an ironic speech act has been performed always depends on the recipient. A number of linguists (Booth, Hutcheon, Muecke, Kothoff, Searle, Colebrook, etc.) outline different factors that are treated as essential in irony detection. Relying on all the abovementioned scientific investigation, a list of fundamental factors in the transmission of ironic implication might be drawn.

A significant role in irony comprehension is played by common/background knowledge. The concept of common/background knowledge in this work encompasses culture, history, past and current political affairs, and social problems. These factors of irony comprehension are emphasized in the study by Develotte and Rechniewski (2001). The ironist relies on common/background knowledge and expects the reader to share the same set of knowledge and beliefs regarding the object of the discussion and, consequently, to second the author's standpoint. For example, the headline "Du Trečdaliai Seimo Narių Nusipelnę gyventi geriau" (delfi.lt)[13] ("Two Thirds of MPs Deserve to live better") re-echoes the once popular slogan "We deserve to live better" in the election campaign of Artūras Paulauskas. Though the objective of the campaigners was to create an image of a party fighting for the welfare of all people (because they deserve to live better), later the slogan became an object of ridicule as the social order had been established in a way where not the ordinary people but only Paulauskas' party, their followers and the parliament members "deserved" a better life. The headline plays on the words and implications and is undoubtedly ironic in claiming that the political

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[13] A list of full references of the headlines is provided in the appendix.

party was faithful to its promises. The reader comprehends the irony that is beyond the written text. However a reader outside the Lithuanian culture, who is not aware of the precedent phenomenon and does not share the background knowledge with the ironist, can hardly be expected to detect irony in the headline. This aspect of irony identification is strongly emphasized in Booth's *A Rhetoric of Irony* (1974), where the claim is made that irony operates most effectively among the members of a community who share the same background knowledge.

Context is another factor of importance in irony comprehension. According to Colebrook, "one way of determining the meaning of a text, phrase, or sentence is by appeal to context, conventions and expectations that surround language" (2006, p.179). Relying on the author, the philosophers of the twentieth century, especially the followers of Wittgenstein, argued that "the meaning of a word is just how a word works or is exchanged in a context" (2006, p.179). Similarly, Kreuz (1996) emphasizes the importance of context for the comprehension of verbal irony. He notices that "contextual factors that accompany an ironic statement play the main role in the way the statement will be interpreted" (1996, p. 23). In the analysis by Kreuz (ibid) the scope of contextual information is rather wide, as the concept of verbal irony itself encompasses both spoken (oral) and printed (written) irony. The object of research in this dissertation is limited to printed (written) irony; consequently, the factors that Kreuz applies to the context analysis of spoken (oral) irony (such as the situation of the linguistic interaction, intonation, and facial expression) do not come under the scope of the current analysis.

In many aspects, contextual information may overlap with the above mentioned background knowledge. Context might be understood as a broad and multidimensional concept that encompasses cognitive, linguistic, social, physical and other non-linguistic contexts (Milosky, 1992; Prutting, 1982). In the current analysis the notion of context is narrowed to the level of text and is used to refer to the text that follows the headline; any other information is understood as background knowledge. When background knowledge is

insufficient, it might be necessary for the reader to read the whole text before making a decision whether the headline is ironic or not. Let us refer to the abovementioned headline "Nusipelnę gyventi geriau" (delfi.lt) ("Deserving to live better"). The contextual information here works along with the background knowledge to reveal the irony of the statement. The article portrays parliament members; however, none of their achievements is mentioned. The focus is on corruption and illegal construction sites on the banks of lakes and the sea. In this case, if the recipient does not share the background knowledge, the ironic message of the headline can be detected by referring to the context.

According to Colebrook (2006), shared human assumptions stand for one more factor that contributes to irony recognition. As Colebrook puts it, in the twentieth century the majority of the material on irony in philosophy and literary theory argued that "irony reveals and reinforces shared human assumptions; we recognize irony... because we have fixed conventions" (2006, p.41). In this way, when language is used against our norms, i.e. when what is being said is in an obvious opposition to our norms, we recognize irony. According to the scholar, the very fact that "you can know that I mean something other than what I am saying shows that we have fixed conventions and that we seek reasons, such as irony, when those conventions are flouted" (2006, p.17).

Incongruity or conflict between certain parts of a headline, which is usually the result of the juxtaposition of the words that carry conflicting information or contradictory emotional load, contribute to irony detection as well. The above discussed model of automated irony detection in headlines (LSA) was based on this particular aspect. The incongruity on the lexical level serves as a hint to the underlying, implied ironic meaning. However, as noticed by Loukusa and Leinonen (2008), the level of incongruity might be absolutely different, which also affects the detection of irony.

Consider the headline "Ketvirtoji valdžia" – ar prisvils "tefloninis ministras" (delfi.lt) ("The fourth reign-will the Teflon minister burn"). The

implication of the ironic meaning is evoked by the incongruity between "Teflon" and "minister": *Teflon,* as the word that stands for the "non-stick" chemical material used on cookware, comes from the lexical field of domestic appliances, while *minister* belongs to the field of politics and country governance. The juxtaposition of these incongruous fields on the basis of shared characteristics (cookware tends to burn but Teflon protects its surface; similarly, the minister who despite the allegations manages to keep high ratings (does not get burnt) must also have a "protective coating") signals the author's irony.[14]

Despite the fact that most scholars point out a few factors determining irony recognition, the phenomenon of irony still presents a broad field for research. A more detailed analysis of the influence of context, background knowledge and other indices of irony will be provided in Part 5.

Irony generates unceasing debates about its definition, means of expression, and a variety of mechanisms for its processing; all these questions will be addressed in the following sections of the dissertation relying on the theoretical material of the most outstanding authorities of the field.

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[14] It is interesting to note that successful irony has the potential to become established and further used: in headlines the qualities of Teflon are attributed to V.Putin (Teflon candidate, Teflon president („Коммерсантъ" (Москва). 07.07.2000)), V.Uspaskich (Teflon minister- delfi.lt), D.Medvedev (Teflon politician), A. Brazauskas, A.Paulauskas and A.Zuokas (Teflon politicians – delfi.lt, alfa.lt), the prime minister of Italy Silvio Berlusconi (Teflon Silvio), B.Obama (Teflon), Bush, Clinton, and Huckabee (Teflon politicians – nytimes.com, guardian.uk, alternet.org).

## 2. AN OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF IRONY

In the diversity of phenomena existing in the cultural environment there are some that despite their common use remain obscure. One of these is irony. Nowadays it has become an inseparable part of our culture: "To be able to be ironical is perhaps part of the definition of our civilization" (Muecke, 1970, p.1). The twentieth century, as agreed by most language researchers, acquired the name of the Age of Irony: "We live in a world of quotation, pastiche, simulation and cynicism: a general and all-encompassing irony" (Colebrook, 2006, p.1). Due to its omnipresent nature, irony, by the very simplicity of its definition, becomes "curiously indefinable" (ibid). The problem of irony definition is also addressed by Booth (1974), one of the most outstanding authorities in ironology. According to him, nowadays the term of irony is used "to cover just about everything there is" (1974, p. ix), such that we face a real threat to lose the very idea of its essence.

To get a closer look at the phenomenon of irony and its modern research it is compulsory to discuss the stages of irony's evolution since its origin, as well as some relevant theoretical material. A short overview of the development of understanding of irony will enable us to determine the essential characteristics of the linguistic phenomenon and to touch upon other relevant problems in linguistics of the present day.

Irony as a special means of communication has been known since ancient times. The word "irony" takes it origin from the Greek word *eironeia*, which means dissimulation or feigned ignorance[15]. The term irony has its roots in the Greek comic character Eiron and is associated with the works of Aristophanes and Plato, the character of Socrates[16], the theoretic underpinnings of Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian. Most frequently when the reference to the origin of irony is given, the name of Socrates (Plato's "Dialogues") and his

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[15] The etymology of the word is provided in both linguistic and etymological dictionaries; a detailed analysis of the term has also been carried out by Anolli, Infantino and Ciceri (2001).

[16] The name of Socrates is related to one of the types of irony, Socratic irony, which, according to Winokur (2007), functions through the destruction of dogmas.

method (to destroy the arguments of the opponents by leading them into absurd reasoning) are in focus. Relying on Colebrook (2006), some scholars claim that Socratic irony or "his art to reject everyday values and concepts and to live in a constant interrogative state –meant the birth of philosophy, ethics and self-consciousness" (2006, p.7). Using irony as his tool, Socrates managed to distance himself from the very situation which, according to Colebrook (2006), despite certain differences is typical of postmodern irony as well.

The authoritative Russian philosopher Losev, in *The History of Antique Aesthetics* (1965), provides a thorough analysis of Antique irony and proves that its content, techniques and functions coincide in their essential aspects with the present-day understanding of irony as a double layered phenomenon. He enumerates the four main aspects of irony while arguing that: irony is a form of expression contradictory to the implied idea; notwithstanding the noble aims of irony it employs negative means; irony brings satisfaction to the ironist; a person skilled at irony is ascribed such features of character as the agility of mind, acuteness, and, following the idea of Aristotle, even greatness of spirit.

From the times of Aristotle to the 19th century, irony in poetics was treated as a figure of rhetoric that uses words in their opposite meanings. Quintilian defined irony as "the opposition of two meanings" and made a distinction between verbal irony, as a figure of speech, and irony as an extended figure of thought (which led to the analysis of irony in the tradition of rhetoric)[17] (Tretjakova, 2001).

Green (1979) argues that cases of simple and complex irony can be traced in the early Middle Ages as well. In the analysis of the works of Chaucer, he describes a certain ironic mode of speaking, which is signaled by excessive praise.

Relying on Knox (1989, p.29), in the early medieval ages such writers as Bede and Erasmus referred to *ironia* in the Bible. Their cited

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[17] Meanwhile Socratic irony encompasses not only the linguistic expression, but the personality as well.

examples were those of explicit mockery, such as "the taunt made by the chief priests and elders to Christ: 'Prophesy to us, O Christ, who he is that smote you" (Matthew, xxvi 68). Today the analysis of irony in the Bible goes far beyond isolated phrases and encompasses the text as a whole (Duke 1985, Plank 1987, etc.).

In the aesthetics of Classicism, irony was perceived as an attribute of the comic. According to Tretjakova (2006), the ascription of irony to the lower style was strictly fixed. However, alongside comic irony there was "irony of fate"[18] which belonged to the tragic irony.

At the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries the understanding of the concept of irony and its position was re-assessed by Romanticists. If up to this time irony used to be regarded as a trope, as a rhetorical method, now it turned into "an attitude to existence" (Colebrook, 2006, p.7). In the aesthetics of the Romantics, irony's status was elevated to the level of philosophy and irony became a common method of reflection. The Romantics emphasized not the comic but the tragic nature of irony. Relying on Tretjakova (2006), "the freedom from the imperfection of reality" was the highest virtue for the Romantics. This principle required "the universal ironizing" – an artist raised questions and doubts not only about real things and phenomena, but about his own contemplations regarding them. The aim of the Romantics to step over established rules and conventions without being limited by some final truth was established through the category concept of "game".[19]

Speaking about the philosophical approach to irony (as the means to express ideas) it is necessary to mention the observations of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, the most outstanding existential philosophers of the 19th century. Kierkegaard and Nietzsche analyzed the problems of the meaninglessness of life and the escape of boredom. In Kierkegaard's *On the Concept of Irony with Continual Reference to Socrates"(1841)* the focus of attention is on irony,

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[18] The irony of Fate is expressed by a confrontation between the presuppositions and beliefs of a person (a character of a play) and what the Gods have in store for him.
[19] The concept of "game" has developed into an independent philosophical category which joins logical-heuristic, theatrical, and emotional moments of ironic communication.

which serves as an ontological opposition to the world. This, according to the philosopher, is an inescapable necessity and a man is not free to choose whether to be ironic or not (as he cannot choose: to be or not to be).

"The essence of irony resides in the fact that while saying "yes" I do not hide my "no" – on the contrary – I show and express it. My "no" becomes an independent fact, though at the same time is dependent on the expressed "yes" – it needs it as it is only through "yes" that "no" can be established; without "yes" it does not have any meaning" (Лосев, Шестаков, 1965, pp. 11,50).

Kierkegaard (1841) is confident that irony as a method of thinking is absolutely "legal"; even more, he is confident that there exist certain periods of history when this method of thinking becomes predominant. Such historic periods, which, according to Kierkegaard, could be called "ironic formations" are inevitable stages of the process of the development of the world, because "it is irony itself that makes this process proceed" (1841, p.16). Irony owes Kierkegaard for all the attention it saw from scholars after the publication of "The Concept of irony" (1841), which is assumed to be the first serious investigation of irony, at that time.

Positive assessment was given to irony by Nietzsche, who claimed that "objection, evasion, joyous distrust, and love of irony are signs of health" (1885, p.36). Nietzsche himself was fond of fragmentary ironic speech. However, in the Romantic assessment of irony, Hutcheon sees exaggeration "in terms of freedom, pleasure, psychic health, intellectual simulation, and so on" (1996, p.3).

At the same time Nietzsche warns against the infinite threats of irony: "habituation to irony spoils the character in the end one comes to resemble a snapping dog who, besides biting, has also learned to laugh" (1996, p.191).

In general irony can also be viewed in the light of Wittgenstein's (1953) search for the new style in philosophy. As Wittgenstein (ibid) puts it, irony might be seen as a universal means in fighting both philosophical and

ideological dogmatism. And this fight, according to Wittgenstein, stands for the major aim of philosophy.

Most of the ideas of the above mentioned philosophers have remained topical to the present day. Kierkegaard's idea that the ironic "yes" residing in "no" is never concealed has been re-echoed in a number of modern theories by such ironologists as Booth (1974) or Knox (1961); and the philosopher's idea that "irony tends towards the multiplication of viewpoints and incoherence" (Colebrook, 2006, p.44) could be traced in the works of Lang (1988) and Hutcheon (1996). Kierkegaard's nihilistic irony as an expression of despair and self-pity is echoed in Whitehead's (1944) approach: "irony, I would say, signifies the state of mind of people or of an age which has lost faith. They (people) conceal their loss, or even flaunt it by laughter" (Price, 2001, p. 260).

Nietzsche's (19885) belief that irony both shows common sense and is simultaneously dangerous could be traced in Rorty's (1989) idea that irony might lead to cynicism and even fatalism (1989, p.87).

Wittgenstein's (1953) argument that irony is a form of resistance against dogmatism is relevant in modern research on irony and even in academic speeches.

Kierkegaard's (1941) idea that entire epochs evolve in the mode of irony as an inevitable stage of the development of the world is reflected in the era of the postmodern, which is referred to as the age of irony by a number of scientists. Irony, well established through the concept of pastiche, has become an integral part of postmodern aesthetics.

In the course of the last century, irony has prevailed not only in aesthetics and philosophy – it has come into the focus of attention in many scientific fields. During the last decades it has become the object of studies of psychology, linguistics, logic, semiotics, and the theory of communication. The diverse scientific methodology has enabled scientists to reveal a number of irony's secrets. For example, psychologists have attempted to assess the levels of consciousness and sub-consciousness in specific reactions (laughter) to an

ironic utterance[20]. Logicians have detected the relationship between irony and wit, and revealed that the meaning of an ironic utterance might simultaneously rely on two controversial categories, such as logicality (rationality) and illogicality.

However, as a means of linguistic expression, irony did not receive adequate attention until the second part of the 20th century. Only then did irony, as an intriguing means of communication and as a pragmatic challenge, become an object of contemporary scientific investigation. In the comprehension of the dialectics of subjectivity/objectivity, an important input was made by the works of Bakhtin (1930)[21]. In semiotics, according to Tretjakova (2001), a thorough analysis of the encoding and decoding of irony in texts has been carried out. Within the framework of this scientific problem, a significant contribution was made by Lotman and his school: following the ideas of Bakhtin, research was devoted to oppositions in the background of "cultural change and cultural dynamics"[22] (Markova, 2003, p.127). According to Torop (1999), Lotman argued that „the multiplicity of codes in a culture creates oppositions and hybrids or "creolization" (Torop, 1999, p.17). The theory of communication has identified dialogism in the very nature of irony and has analyzed the complementary relationship among the author, the addressee and the victim of an ironic utterance. In the field of ironology there has been a lot of substantial investigation carried out; however the challenge faced by all the researchers has been the definition of the concept of irony.

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[20] McDonald (2000), in a neuropsychological study, analyses the impact of brain damage on the perception of irony/sarcasm; Wegner (1994) carries out experiments to detect the impact of mental control on the perception of irony; Bargh (1984) examines the role of consciousness in irony comprehension; Gibbs (2000) in the article *Irony among friends* examines the reactions to irony.

[21] Bakhtin (1930s, 1981) refers to laughter/comism in general and claims it to be the way to "a free, educated, and artfully realistic creativity in the European civilization" (p. 23). After his study *Rabelais and his World* (1965), attention was drawn to the concept of carnivalisation (which is related to irony).

[22] The Semiotics of Russian Culture, Lotman and Uspenskij, Tartu Semiotics Library: Theses on the Semiotic Study of Cultures (1998) Ivanov, Lotman, Pjatigorski, Toporov, Uspenskij, etc.

# 3.  THE DEFINITION OF IRONY: PROBLEMATIC ASPECTS

The definition of irony has posed difficulties for theorists. Modern linguistics approaches the complex phenomenon of irony from several theoretic perspectives.

The classical definition of irony, that claims that irony is the opposition between the literal and the implied meaning (i.e. when we say the opposite of what we have in mind), is nowadays regarded as inadequate by the majority of scientists, and the phenomenon faces continuous attempts at being defined anew.  However, despite the resulting diversity of definitions, none seems to be universally acceptable to all ironologists or capable of encompassing all the diverse aspects of irony. The reasons for such a situation are manifold.

First, irony has never been a stable linguistic figure, possessing a clearly-defined form of expression that would allow a precise, universally applicable definition to be established. The understanding of irony, both as a phenomenon and as a concept, has been continuously changing its form and facets.

Second, the problem of definition grows due to irony being a very dynamic phenomenon. Relying on Muecke, who analyses irony in his book *Irony and the Ironic* (1982), the word "irony" does not now mean what it meant in earlier centuries, it does not mean in one country all it may mean in another, nor in the street what it may mean in the study, nor to one scholar what it may mean to another" (1982, p.7) An analogical idea is presented by Barbe (1995, p. 144) who argues that "understanding and uses of irony differ from one culture to another" or by Hutcheon, who explains the diversity in the comprehension of irony by providing  Jastrow's illustration used in psychological experiments  (1996, p.59); the illustration depicts a double image which might be seen either as a duck or as a rabbit depending on the perception of the viewer. On the other hand, though the theorist of art Gombrich (1999) claims that the human eye is incapable of perceiving the

duck and the rabbit simultaneously, Hutcheon speculates that "the ducks" and "the rabbits" of an ironic utterance are able to be comprehended concurrently by the human mind (1996, p.60). However, despite such a possibility, the comprehension in each individual case depends on the features of the ironist, the addressee, and the object of irony.

Third, diverse approaches to irony (and consequently, variant definitions) are the result of the different approaches the scientists take to irony. Arrays of theorists have attempted to find their own approaches to irony. Irony has been analyzed from the perspective of motivation (García & Ortega, Booth, Muecke), functions( Hutcheon), the constituent parts of an ironic act (Kotthoff), salience of the ironic meaning (Giora), grades and modes (Muecke), within the framework of speech act theory (Booth, Grice, Utsumi), etc. A more specific analysis of the abovementioned approaches will be provided further in the work, when discussing the functions and the operating mechanisms of irony.

Fourth, the problem of a laconic definition of irony is aggravated by the diversity of irony's types and forms, which cannot be encompassed by a single definition. Socratic, situational, cosmic and verbal ironies coexist as separate branches of the same phenomenon. However, as ironic as it may sound, even the classification of irony under the names of different branches does not take care of the problem of its definition. As the current research focuses on verbal irony exceptionally, none of the other aforementioned types will be discussed in more detail.

Two essential aspects that determine the choice of the definition of verbal irony in this work are further discussed.

The first aspect is a fact that comes from ancient times, from the works of Quintilian. It says that irony may be regarded as a trope and as a figure of thought (this fact will be discussed in more detail in Part 7). Relying on this idea, here an assumption is made that irony comprehension (and consequently irony's definition) is dependent on which category an ironic utterance is assigned to. Burke in his book *A Grammar of Motives* (1969) analyses irony,

together with metaphor, metonymy and synecdoche, and defines them as „the master tropes" (1969, pp.503-17). Analogically, "four master tropes" are analyzed in D'Angelo's article *Tropics of Arrangement: A Theory of Disposition* (1990); here the scientist claims that one trope might be expressed by means of another trope: "the discourse which is organized in the mode of irony might encompass such figures as zeugma, litotes, hyperbole, metaphor, metonymy, oxymoron, and antiphrasis" (1990, p.2). D'Angelo's idea of "intertwining combinations of tropes" is supported by Lithuanian scholars as well (Koženiauskienė, 2001). Speaking about "the fusion of different tropes" in ironic headlines, Koženiauskienė (2001) names periphrasis as the most conventional means of irony expression. For example, "Viešieji ryšiai Marijos žemėjė" (delfi.lt) ("Public Relations in Mary's Land"), or "The proud nation of firsts" (alternet.org).

The second, yet no less important aspect to be considered when talking about verbal irony refers to the academic discussions as to what should be assigned to the field of irony. This question encompasses the relationship among such concepts as humor, satire, parody, sarcasm, etc. The relationship among such concepts is debatable and generates doubts among linguists up to the present day. A significant part of the discussions concerns the link between irony and sarcasm. For some linguists and literary critics those concepts are synonymous, while others claim to see essential differences; some scholars refer to sarcasm as a separate linguistic phenomenon, while others name it as the most acute form of irony. For example, Muecke (1969) draws a clear dividing line between the two concepts and presents sarcasm as a means of offence, and irony as an expression of wit. Partridge (1997) outlines the difference between irony and sarcasm, relying on the assumption that sarcasm "means precisely what it says" and does so "in a sharp, bitter, cutting, caustic, or acerbic manner", it is "an instrument of indignation, a weapon of offence"; while irony is defined as "one of the vehicles of wit" (1995, p.158). The same author quotes Locke to illustrate the relationship of sarcasm and irony: "if ideas were innate, it would save much trouble to many worthy persons",

suggesting that the word "worthy" might be treated as ironic while the whole utterance might be regarded as sarcastic. At the same time the author admits that both irony and sarcasm can be used as "the means of vituperation" (ibid)[23]. Lassan depicts the difference between irony and sarcasm through the emotional state of the ironist, and claims that if the speaker believes that the situation can be corrected then the utterance is ironic, whereas if the speaker feels helpless and takes a bitter smile as the only way to respond to the situation then the utterance is sarcastic. *Fowler's Dictionary of Modern English* states that sarcasm does not necessarily involve irony, and irony does not always need to be related to sarcasm. This point of view facilitates the idea that the two concepts should be treated separately; however, another dictionary—*The Oxford English Dictionary*—defines irony as "a figure of speech... that is often expressed in the form of sarcasm", while *The Encyclopedia Britannica* claims that "Non-literary use of irony is usually considered sarcasm" (http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/294609/irony). The *Webster's Dictionary* defines sarcasm as an utterance that is "often ironic" ( http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sarcasm).

A large number of other online dictionaries, such as *Reference Dictionary* (dictionary.reference.com), *Babylon English-English Dictionary* (www.babylon.com/dictionary), *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary* (1961), *English Advanced Version* (www.lingoz.com/en/glossary/henglish%20-%20advanced%), *Brainy Dictionary* (www.brainydictionary.com), etc., refer to sarcasm when defining irony. *Reference Dictionary* states that irony is "witty language used to convey insults or scorn" and the definition is supported with such quotations of Swift as: "irony is wasted on the stupid", "he used sarcasm to upset his opponent", and "sarcasm is a sort of glass, wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own". Such support given to the definition of irony indicates that the dictionary does not draw a distinction between irony and

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[23] Vituperation should not be considered the only or most important function of irony. The main functions of irony will be discussed in Part 4.

sarcasm.[24] Irony is also identified with sarcasm when claiming that "irony is a sarcastic use of words to imply the opposite of what they normally mean" (www.babylon.com/dictionary). Two more dictionaries identify irony as a mild form of sarcasm: "a form of humor, ridicule or light sarcasm which adopts a mode of speech the meaning of which is contrary to the literal sense of the words" (Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary) and "a certain form of humor or ridicule, light sarcasm" (Brainy Dictionary, www.brainydictionary.com).

Jorgensen (1996)[25] in his work focuses on sarcastic irony and uses the concepts interchangeably.

The same controversial issue is discussed in numerous works of psycholinguistics. The experts in psychology Lee and Katz (1998) have come to the conclusion that ridicule is an obligatory element of sarcasm, while it is not mandatory for verbal irony in general. The scholars treat sarcasm as a particular form of criticism incorporated into verbal irony. The case of an utterance that might be treated both ways (as both sarcasm and irony) is illustrated with the example of a terminally ill woman: she reports to her friend that rather than going to a medical doctor to treat her cancer, she has decided to see a spiritual healer; her friend reacts by saying: "Oh, brilliant, what an ingenious idea, that's really going to cure you" (1998, p.11). Bryant (2002), Gibbs (2000) and other researchers support their claim and agree that a number of cases of verbal irony could be defined as sarcasm, and therefore, according to Gibbs (2000), sarcasm should be perceived as a form of verbal irony.

This particular point of view will be followed in the current analysis and sarcasm will be treated as an acute form of verbal irony.

However, the establishment of the relationship between irony and sarcasm alone does not encompass all the difficulties of irony's definition. Relying on such authoritative sources as *Webster's Thesaurus*, the concept of irony is synonymous to 76 other entries, including: black humor, cynicism,

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[24] In addition, limiting irony to the expression of contempt significantly narrows down its scope.
[25] Journal of Pragmatics, November 1996, pp. 613-634. The article discusses the face-saving function of irony/sarcasm.

humor, parody, sarcasm, satire, farce and many more. The relation of irony to other verbal forms of expression does not come under the scope of the current investigation; therefore this field will not undergo any further analysis here. Instead, to get a better insight into the modern ways of delineating irony, a set of definitions will be reviewed in two aspects: first, how irony is defined in dictionaries and second, how the concept of irony is characterized by ironologists.

The definitions of irony provided by dictionaries are both laconic and rather loose. The overview of the entries leads to the conclusion that non-linguistic on-line dictionaries favor the classical approach to irony, which emphasizes the opposition between the literal and the implied meanings.

*Random House Dictionary* (www.randomhouse.com) states that irony is "the use of words to convey a meaning that is the opposite of its literal meaning". *Webster's Dictionary* (1998) defines irony in a very similar manner: "when you use words that are opposite to what you mean" (1998, p.860). Nearly the same definition is suggested by *Oxford Dictionary*: "the expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite, but using the tone of voice that explicitly shows the intended meaning" (2000, p.769). This definition might be linked to Weinreich's signals of irony discussed in his work *Linguistik der Lüge* (Linguistics of Lies, 1970). The same idea in different words is echoed in the on-line *Glossary of Linguistic Terms* (http://www.sil.org.linguistics) and on-line *Brainy Dictionary* (www.brainydictionary.com).

All the above mentioned dictionaries place an emphasis on the opposition of meanings. This leads to the conclusion that all these dictionaries approach irony as a trope and ignore it as a figure of thought.

For example, *Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics* (2007), claims that irony is a "rhetorical trope: the replacement of an expression that is meant by its opposite", and grounds its claim by a straightforward explanation that ironical speech comprises ambiguous structures or structures that contain "contradictory expressions, which

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implicitly point out to the opposite by polysemy, homonymy, or antonymy" (2007, p.596). Here it is argued that in order to make irony recognizable, "the contrast between the spoken and the intended meaning should be as large as possible" (ibid).

On the other hand, there are a large number of definitions available where it is not the opposition but the difference/incongruity between the two meanings that is emphasized.

The only on-line dictionary that approaches irony from this perspective is the *Glossary of English Language Terminology- Glossarist*: "When the speaker or writer says one thing but wants you to understand something different" (www.glossarist.com). The same idea is supported by *New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* (2005) and *Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms* (2008): "incompatibility or incongruity between the surface/expectations and reality", which can also exist between what is said and what is meant, what is expected and what actually happens, what looks like truth and what is actually true. Here irony is called the most subtle form of comism and separated from sarcasm and satire.

One of the most insightful approaches to the concept of irony is adopted by *The Encyclopedia of Linguistics* (2005), where the traditional definition of irony ( saying the opposite of the intended meaning) is referred to by calling it "obviously wrong", as the speaker is said to be capable of being ironic without having in mind the opposite meaning. Therefore the *Encyclopedia of Linguistics* (2005) favors and recommends Grice's theory, which claims irony to be a linguistic structure with an implied meaning that the reader has to decode.

*The Encyclopedia of Linguistics* (2005) is not the only source that explains the concept of irony through the incompatibility of explicit and implied meanings. The same perspective is adopted by *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms* (1996) or *Dictionary of Stylistics* (2001), which claim that irony is a "subtly humorous perception of inconsistency, in which an apparently straightforward statement... is undermined by its context so as to

give it a very different significance" (1996, p.174) or that irony is "a figure of speech or a trope where words contradict the meaning which is supported by the context and which is likely to have been intended by the speaker" (2001, p. 88). Here the belief is held that irony communicates not a straightforwardly opposite idea (i.e. not the opposition between the actual words and the implied idea), but a difference, an incongruity between what is said directly and what is implied. A great variety of books on irony (e.g. Booth, Muecke, etc.) exploit the classical example of irony when, on a rainy day, a speaker having had a look through the window comments: "What wonderful weather for a picnic". In this case we are able to see a direct opposition between the explicit assertion of "wonderful" and the implied meaning of "awful". However, such direct oppositions are not typical of irony in general. If a different example were considered—"The perspectives of the Republic of Chebureks" (www.delfi.lt), for example—the literal meaning of the headline cannot be treated as being in direct opposition to the implied idea, as "Lithuania" (which is being referred to in the headline) cannot be treated as an opposition to "the Republic of Chebureks". Here, alongside the incompatibility of the meanings, a broader context is required, as a reference is made to a critical assessment, the establishment of hierarchy[26], and an implicit comparison between Lithuania and other countries.

This leads to the generalization that irony is a means of communicating a meaning that is different from and incompatible with the straightforwardly expressed idea.

If irony is perceived as a trope expressed by a certain word that bears an implied meaning (i.e. if irony is used exclusively as a trope), then the definition escalating the opposition of meanings could be treated as at least partially adequate; meanwhile, if irony is perceived as a general manner of speech (i.e. as a figure of thought), a definition that takes a broader approach is mandatory for this linguistic phenomenon.

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[26] This explanation assumes that the ironist is unethical when criticizing Lithuania by comparing it to countries where Chebureks are a national dish.

A similar divergence of opinions regarding the opposition of meanings is traced among the linguists (or as Muecke puts it, ironologists[27]). To some extent it might be said that the positions of the ironologists fall into two major groups.

The approach to irony as an opposition between the literal and implied meanings is supported by such scholars as Booth (1969), Willson (1994), Kreutel (2003), etc. Their position could be explained by the fact that their works focus on irony more as a trope than as a figure of thought.

On the other hand, there are such scholars as Hutcheon (1996), Muecke (1969), Giora (2002), Kotthoff (2000), Stewart (1989) and many other authorities of modern linguistics whose analysis of irony is of a broader scope; they insist that irony be perceived as a communicative act and draw attention to the fact that the two meanings of irony are incompatible but not necessarily in opposition. As Hutcheon (1996) puts it: "the one thing irony would not seem to be is what it is usually claimed to be: a simple antiphrastic substitution of the unsaid (called the "ironic" meaning) for its opposite, the said (called the "literal" meaning)—which is then either set aside or sometimes only partially effaced" (1996, p.12). This, according to the scholar, would be too straightforward.

Ironologists take a very serious approach to the concept of irony. Compared to the dictionary explanations, their definitions provide much more insight into the nature of the phenomenon. Scholars bring out different features and aspects of irony and look into it from different perspectives. A short overview of the ideas of the most outstanding figures in the field of ironology is obligatory to comprise a full picture of how irony is understood and defined.

1.    Knox (1974) argues that "irony may be defined as the conflict of two meanings which has a dramatic[28] structure peculiar to itself: initially, one meaning, the *appearance,* presents itself as the obvious truth, but when the

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[27] In the book *The Compass of Irony* (1970), Muecke sees ironology as a separate branch of linguistics, and all the researchers of irony are referred to as ironologists.
[28] Dramatism in this case relates to the conflict of meanings.

context of this meaning unfolds, in depth or in time, it surprisingly discloses a conflicting meaning, the *reality,* measured against which the first meaning now seems false or limited and, in its self-assurance, blind to its own situation" (1974, p. 626). According to Knox, irony is a paradigmatic instance of indirect speech as, in a standard ironic utterance, the ironist transmits and the listener interprets the communicative meaning which is in contradiction with what is said explicitly. "Irony "lies", but it does so only as a dramatic means of bringing two meanings into open conflict[29]" (ibid, p.626).

2.  Booth (1974), when talking about irony, first of all admits to being caught in "the ironic trap of defining a term that will not stay defined" (1974, p.2). Booth divides irony into two classes, stable and unstable irony,[30] and limits his analysis to extracts of literary works. He refers to "stable irony" as "a direct and classic device—not only oratory but of every kind of communication where it appears", and says that this is the irony that is "intended but covert, stable and localized" (ibid, p.7). The four adjectives that he uses to describe stable irony Booth names "the four marks of stable irony", where "intended" means that irony is deliberately created to be heard/read and understood; and "covert" means that irony has to be reconstructed employing the hidden meanings that are not explicit on the surface; "stable" means that after the reconstruction of the meaning the reader should not undertake any further demolitions or reconstructions of the meaning; and "localized" means that irony is finite and has limits that it does not cross. Stable localized irony can be illustrated by a headline of delfi.lt, "Geroji Seimo Fėja" (delfi.lt) ("The Good Fairy of Parliament"), depicting Member of Parliament Visockytė who regularly used to email various internet pictures to other members of parliament. After the reconstruction of the ironic meaning of the headline, it becomes the finite meaning of the headline. Unstable irony in Booth's analysis is not attached to any specific ironic words of the utterance; it takes a more

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[29] Here irony should not be understood as a lie, as the intentions and aims of the speaker in an ironic speech act are different from the aims of lying. In an ironic speech act the speaker aims to disclose the inadequacy between the expectations (prototype) and the reality, and employs irony for a corrective purpose; on the contrary, when lying, the speaker's aim is to mislead others.
[30] In Muecke (1974), analogical types of irony are grouped into "specific irony" and "general irony."

general nature where "the truth asserted or implied" can undergo "no stable reconstruction" (ibid, p.240).

3.	Muecke (1969), as well as Booth, underlines the difficulty in defining irony, arguing that "the concept of irony is still in the process of being developed" (1969, p.4), and that the narrowness of the current definitions is likely to dismay experts of philology. In the book *The Compass of Irony* he defines irony in the following words "...irony, like beauty, is in the eye of beholder, and not a quality inherent in any remark, event or situation" (ibid, p.14). Therefore the scholar aims at explaining the phenomenon through the three essential elements that are inherent to irony. First, it is a "double-layered" or "two-story" phenomenon (the surface and the implied levels). Second, there is always an opposition of a certain type between those two layers which might take the form of contradiction (e.g. Fielding describes Mrs. Slipslop as ugly and then calls her a "fair creature"), incongruity (e.g. a logical incongruity when the rival kings in Voltaire's "Candide" both celebrate victory in their camps), or incompatibility (e.g. Muecke provides an example from Heine in which the meaning of the word "name" in two parts of the same utterance is different: "Gottingen, famous for its sausages and university.... I do not at this moment recall the names of all students; while among the professors, many as yet have no name"). Third, in irony there is always an element of "innocence"; it is that either the victim of the irony is confidently unaware of an "upper level or point of view that invalidates his own" (ibid, p.20) or it is the ironist himself who pretends not to be aware of such a level.

Finally, in providing a laconic definition, Muecke claims that "the art of irony is the art of saying something without really saying it; it is the art that gets its effects from below the surface, and this gives it a quality that resembles the depth and resonance of great art triumphantly saying much more than it seems to be saying" (ibid, p.6).

4.     Stewart (1989) takes a philosophical approach to irony and interprets it in the general framework of "nonsense"[31] language. Stewart distinguishes four aesthetic domains (realism, myth, metafiction and irony), where irony is the result of two domains of reality in conflict. The scholar claims that irony centers round intertextuality, culture, and play[32] rather than social factors: "irony emphasizes the textual, the interpreted, and the cultural, rather than the natural status of social interaction" (1989, p.37). According to Stewart, the intertextual level in irony has the characteristic of a shift from an interpretation based on common-sense interpretive procedures to an interpretation based on alternative interpretive rules. Stewart refers to ironic texts as "ludic" due to the paradoxical messages co-existing in them: like play, they rely on metaphorical and humorous thought and "reveal contradictions in the very process of interpretation by which they are accomplished" (ibid, p.38).[33]

Irony, according to Stewart (ibid), stands out with a multiplicity of meanings that are actualized by presenting "paradoxes of framing" or by "juxtaposing two or more universes of discourse and thereby erasing a common-sense context" (ibid, p. 38).

5.     Hutcheon, in her book *Irony's Edge* (1996), claims that irony might be treated not only as a trope or a figure of thought but as a "discursive strategy" operating on the level of language. The author says that "from the point of view of the interpreter, irony is an interpretive and intentional move: it is the making or inferring of meaning in addition to and different from what is stated, together with an attitude towards both the said and the unsaid...; from the point of view of... the ironist irony is the intentional transmission of both information and evaluative attitude other than what is explicitly presented"

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[31]   The concept of nonsense was used by Wittgenstein (1921) and referred to a lack of sense "in the context of sense and reference." Later the term was employed in the aesthetics of literary language, including metaphors, irony, puns, neologisms, etc. For further reference see: Tigges, *An Anatomy of Literary Nonsense* (1988).

[32] Here play is seen as a shift to another domain of reality (Stewart, 1989, p. 29).

[33] Such cases of language are referred to as "antilanguages" in Halliday. Antilanguages "create a reality which is inherently an alternative reality, one that is constructed precisely in order to function in alternation" (1975, pp. 570-584).

(1996, p.11). As Hutcheon says, it is the evaluative attitude peculiar to irony that makes it different from structurally similar forms (such as metaphor, allegory, and others)[34]. In her later research, Hutcheon gives a laconic definition of irony even in the headline of her article, *Irony: Saying What You Don't Mean & Meaning What You Didn't Say!* (1998).

6.      Kotthoff (1997) aims at defining irony within the context of linguistic interaction. She claims that the opposition of meanings alone cannot account for the cases of irony. Here irony is addressed as a two-voiced[35] or "doubly perspectivized" speech. Even though, according to the scholar, a great variety of linguistic forms (e.g. parody) can be addressed in a similar manner, it is irony exceptionally that is considered to be "a type of doubly voiced speech that transmits a cleft of evaluative perspectives as its main message" (1997, p.3). Moreover, irony is argued to embrace multiple intertwined social perspectives and "to reflect to other people not only what we think, but also what we think they might think—and also our distance from that thinking" (ibid, p.6).

7.      According to Colebrook (2006), we live in a world of all-encompassing irony, where irony itself is impossible to define. Despite a very thorough overview of different types of irony provided in her book, she takes a rather reserved position regarding her own interpretation of the phenomenon. According to Colebrook, to understand irony one has to step aside from the traditional "non-contradictory thinking" (2006, p.178) as it can be comprehended only when we see "the tensions and relations between what is said and not-said" (ibid, p.177). For Colebrook, irony is a category of "disjunction between what one is and what one means, both for oneself and for others" (ibid, p.178).

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[34] Having in mind that irony tends to intertwine with other tropes, the assertion that other tropes do not provide evaluation is arguable. For instance, when linguistic metaphors (based on the model of conceptual metaphors) are employed in politicized discourse, the evaluative aspect is explicit, e.g. politics is seen as a war. For further reference see Cibulskienė (2006). Presumably, what Hutcheon had in mind was that the evaluative attitude in irony is more acute and explicit.
[35] The speech that is direct and the speech that is implied.

8.    Attardo (2000) "borrows" the definition of the concept from *Webster's Dictionary*, where irony is defined as the use of words "that express something other than and especially the opposite of the literal meaning" and simultaneously argues that it is taken only as a temporal "pre-theoretical" definition, which is further reviewed in relationship with other tropes. When discussing the duality of irony, Attardo notices that it is both "appropriate and inappropriate to its context" (2000, p.793).

9.    Giora (2001) draws attention to irony's "deceitful" and "beguiling" nature as one of its notorious characteristics. Through irony, the speaker is able to "assume a different voice, pretense or some guise that may mislead the (...) addressee[36]" (2001, p.165). According to Giora, the deceitful nature of irony serves as a means of manipulation and can be used for various purposes. In her definition of irony the scholar mainly focuses on the lexical salience of meanings and describes the phenomenon as a compound made up of two levels: the dictum (the literal level of the utterance) and the implicitum (the implied level of the utterance).

10.    Utsumi (2000) refers to irony as an "intelligent, witty figure of speech" (2000, p. 1777) and defines it as a complex interaction between the utterance and its context which performs a number of social functions, including humorous and sarcastic. The linguistic style and the context of the utterance should correlate. According to Utsumi, irony presupposes a specific "ironic environment" (ibid, p. 1778), which encompasses the expectations of the speaker, the incongruity between those expectations and reality, and the negative attitude of the speaker towards the incongruity. Furthermore, irony is an utterance that implicitly displays the ironic environment (which encompasses an allusion to the speaker's expectations, pragmatic insincerity[37],

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[36] However, there remains the risk that the missed irony will result in the misinterpretation of the utterance. The case is illustrated by Giora (2000), through the example of the Israeli poetess Yona Wallach (1997), whose poems, due to missed irony, have been interpreted as open pornography.
[37] The Gricean maxims are violated. According to Vanderveken (1997), irony is an extreme case of the exploitation of the maxim of quality. Vanderveken provides his own interpretation of the violation and distinguishes two types of irony: irony as an illocutionary force and irony as the propositional content of a direct speech act.

and indirect negative attitude expressed by ironic clues/signals[38]). Utsumi applies this model of irony comprehension to his mechanism of irony construction/processing, which is discussed in more detail in Part 8. Utsumi also draws attention to the idea that "irony is a prototype-based category"[39](2004, p. 1369).

Despite the great number of scientists focusing on the phenomenon of irony and the significance of their findings, the only aspect that all the scholars univocally agree on is that the definition of irony is no doubt one of the most problematic questions in ironology.

Though the aim and scope of the dissertation does not allow the detailed discussion of even the works of the most outstanding ironologists of the second half of the 20th century, the research of Grice, Booth, Sperber &Wilson, Giora, Kreuz, and Utsumi will be further referred to in the analysis of the mechanisms of irony.

At the present stage, a working definition of irony may be compiled, with respect to the speculations of the ironologists discussed. The working definition of irony will be relied on when analyzing the news headlines of the abovementioned news websites. Here, a definition of irony synthesized from Utsumi (2000), Giora (2001), and Hutcheon (1996) will be applied. Irony in this dissertation will be treated as a meaning built **next to** and **different from** what is explicitly said, at the same time **expressing the speaker's critical evaluative attitude** (usually negative) to **what is said** and to **what is unsaid** (Hutcheon). Attention will be drawn to **the conflict of meanings** (Giora), *lexical salience* (Giora); and **sarcasm (as a part of irony) will be included** under the scope of investigation (Utsumi).

The evolution of irony and the shifts of attention within its definition show what a volatile linguistic phenomenon it is and what a variety of

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[38] Here the reference is to such signals as intonation, pitch of one's voice, situation, etc. The signals of irony are approached from different angles in ironology, starting with explicit marking with quotation marks (Koženiauskienė, 2001), lexical markers (Renouf & Bauer, 2001), tag questions (Kreuz, 1999), intonation (Utsumi, 2004), etc.

[39] The theory of prototypes was initialized by Rosch & Lloyd (1976); its impact in cognitive linguistics was noted by Lakoff (1987) and Langaker (1987/1991). The theory is discussed in detail in Evans (2007), and Johnson (on-line: citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.123.9056).

individual approaches it allows. According to Farchitdinova (2004), it is only the functions of irony that remain stable. And that is what the following part of the dissertation focuses on.

# 4. THE FUNCTIONS OF IRONY IN HEADLINES

Verbal irony is a conventional form of speech in everyday discourse. However, the question of why we choose a much more complex way of communication instead of direct speech is difficult to answer, not only for a common user of language but even for the scholars who devote their time to irony research. According to Utsumi (2004), we prefer irony because it is capable of performing functions that are not only useful for us but also are capable of performing functions that direct language is inadequate to perform. As Giora (1994) puts it, "messages are politically advantageous if they are easy for the speaker to deny or difficult for the addressee to reject" (1994, p. 104). In the article *On the Political Message: Pretending to Communicate* (1994), Giora notices that politicians and journalists know that they are in need of strategies that would enable them to avoid commitments to their words. They should be confident that "there are circumstances under which they will be able to deny their assertions or any undesired interpretations of them" (ibid, p. 104). Such aims become viable through irony. Having chosen such a linguistic form, the speaker is able to imply ideas rather than state them explicitly. And "implicit messages are easier to deny for the simple reason that they are not stated" (ibid). For the sake of "potentially great rewards" the speakers tend "to take risks"[40] (Gibbs, Colston 2001, p.188). Irony helps to transmit messages implicitly, to achieve various communicative goals effectively, and to manage and modify social and interpersonal relationships. This dissertation focuses on publicistic irony with specific addressees and objects of irony: the addressee is always a reader and the object is a social situation/event (irony directed at one's country; here, Lithuania or the USA). Irony in publicistics points to a situation that needs to be reformed or a common behavior that should be corrected.

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[40] Risk in this case stands for the threat that irony might be misunderstood.

The question regarding the functions of irony is addressed by Hutcheon (1996), Kreuz (2009), Caucci (2009), Attardo (1996), Barbe (1995), Sperber and Wilson (1986), Dews and Winner (1995), and many other ironologists. Some of them classify the functions of irony on the basis of frequency (Kreuz), others focus on a singular, "essential" function of irony (e.g. Barbe- politeness), while still others divide the functions of irony into two major classes: positive (e.g. to be humorous) and negative (e.g. to be sarcastic; Utsumi, 2004, p.1369)[41]. Still others claim that irony simultaneously serves contradictory functions (e.g. Anolli, Cicceri, Infantino, 2002), or that every function of irony might be viewed both as positive and as negative (Hutcheon, 1996).

A separate overview of all the functions of irony listed by different scholars would provide a lot of similar speculations. Therefore, to avoid repetition, the list of functions provided below reflects the most widely discussed and most conventional functions of irony that are of importance when talking about publicistic irony.

**1. Politeness[42].** Politeness, which as a function of irony generates controversial approaches, is given a central position by Barbe (1995), who assumes it to be the essential function of irony. The scholar claims that speakers use irony to avoid the harsh situation which could be caused if the opinion were stated explicitly. According to Barbe, "when employing irony (…) speakers are not as obviously aggressive and can thwart counter-attacks. Irony, therefore, turns conflict aside. A critical statement, once clothed in an inoffensive way, helps speakers and hearers to save face" (1995, p. 90).  Politeness as a function of irony is also emphasized by Dews,

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[41] The level of negativity in irony has been examined in the works of Dews & Winner (1995) and Colston (2002). Utsumi (2004) approaches irony from a different angle and examines the ratio of positive and negative functions of an ironic utterance.

[42] The founders of politeness theory, Brown and Levinson (1978), refer to irony as an FTA (face threatening act) and as a politeness strategy. They claim that irony softens criticism, and classify irony into on-record (which works as a polite positive emphasis on the shared attitudes of a group) and off-record (which is analysed within the framework of the violations of Gricean maxims; here, along with irony, are other forms of indirect speech such as metaphors and rhetorical questions.

Kaplan, and Winner (1995)[43]. The scholars introduce the "tinge" theory of irony and claim that irony both "mitigates the degree of criticism" (1995, p. 364) and allows both participants of the communicative act to save face[44].

Politeness as a function of irony is also discussed by some other scholars. Giora (1995) names the "politeness strategy" as one of the two major functions of irony.[45] And, according to Anolli, Ciceri and Infantino (2002), though irony is aggressive in itself it is "less face threatening than open criticism" (ibid, p. 367).

Meanwhile, Attardo (2002) points out that even if politeness is considered a function of irony, it does not apply equally to all cases of irony. This can be seen in a headline that expresses an ironic attitude towards a situation in Lithuania: "Lietuva – Europos girtavimo vice čempionė" (delfi.lt) ("Lithuania is the European vice champion of drinking"). The ironic critique of Lithuanian alcoholism is aggravated, as it not only emphasizes the inappropriate behavior (drinking), but also compares it to a competition, the aim of which is to win[46].

The approach to irony as a politeness strategy is even more explicitly criticized by Heui-Joo Jeoung (2006), who claims that "exaggerated politeness is itself ironic in that what it intends to communicate is the opposite of politeness: crude derision" (2006, p. 160). Therefore, according to the researcher, politeness should not be ascribed to the functions of irony.

**2. Humor.** According to some linguists (e.g. Long and Graesser, Attardo, etc.) humor is directly connected to the role of irony. Kreuz and Long (1991) have carried out an empirical experiment proving that humor is one of the main reasons why people use irony: the participants of the experiment preferred ironic utterances over literal in discourse seven times

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[43] Despite emphasizing politeness as a function of irony, the abovementioned scholars name aggression as one of the main reasons why irony is used (1995, p. 349).

[44] The main argument of the theory claims that in irony the direct meaning gives coloring to the implied meaning and mitigates both the negative effect of ironic criticism and the positive effect of ironic praise (1995, p. 349).

[45] The other main function of irony, according to Giora (1995), is "to provide a highly informative message" (1995, p. 252).

[46] This case will be further discussed in Part 10.

more frequently, with the expectation "to sound funny and witty". In another experiment conducted by Kreuz and Roberts (1994), humor was identified as the second most frequently mentioned aim of ironic discourse.

Relying on Anolli, Ciceri, and Infantino (2002), the functions of irony and humor in many cases overlap, and humor can be seen as a function of irony. Similarly, Attardo in many of his works (e.g. 2002) relates irony to humor and enumerates their overlapping functions, mechanisms, and effect; however, the scholar draws attention to the fact that not all humor is ironic and not all irony is humorous: "there are cases of humorous irony; also there are cases of irony which are not humorous" (ibid, p.122). Attardo (2001) argues that being associated with humor "adds yet another prized connotation to irony, at least in Western society" (ibid, p. 120).

**3. Evaluation**. According to Grice, irony is "intimately connected with the expression of feeling, attitude, or evaluation" (1978, p.53). In Attardo (2002), the function of evaluation is interconnected with a negative attitude and criticism. The same approach is taken by Giora, Dews, and Kreuz. Hutcheon (1996) emphasizes the evaluative function and even in the definition of irony claims that it is a "semantically complex process of relating, differentiating, and combining said and unsaid meanings… with some evaluative edge" (1996, p. 89). Sperber and Wilson (1986, p. 239) and many other scholars argue that the evaluative edge expressed in irony is always negative. Dews et al. (1995) argue that irony mitigates the negative effect of ironic criticism; however, as mentioned above, this idea is debatable. Another authority of the field, Gibbs (2007), splits the evaluative function of irony into two: the expression of negative emotions and criticism.

**4. Expression of negative emotions.** Relying on Gibbs (2007), irony is used to verbalize the emotional states that direct language is incapable of describing. In the research by Kreuz and Roberts (1994), 94% of their respondents agreed that irony is used "to reveal negative emotions."

Jorgenson (1996) and Leggitt and Gibbs (2000) analyzed the connection between negative emotions and sarcasm; the results of their research revealed that the speakers who employed sarcasm were perceived as less angry, rude, or disdainful. Allcorn (1994) compiled an index of typical aggressive patterns of behavior in the workplace, and found that irony/sarcasm is considered to be an acceptable method for the expression of anger: "sarcasm is favored in the modern workplace because the serious risks associated with such verbal behavior appear minimal insofar as speakers' comments may be subtle, and even humorous" (Gibbs and Colston, 2001, p. 189). However, other empirical research appears to cardinally oppose these findings; it is argued that irony enhances the degree of negativity in a remark (Colston, 1997): "literally positive semantic meaning of an ironic utterance (e.g. 'how nice') enhances rather than dilutes the amount of condemnation if compared to the possible literal comment (e.g. 'how awful')" (Colston, 1997, p. 332), and therefore the use of sarcasm/irony should be treated as a means of expression of negative emotions. This aspect is interconnected with the following function of irony.

**5. Criticism**. It has been mentioned above that one of the functions of irony might be seen in the mitigation of criticism (i.e. politeness; Barbe, Dews, Winner, 1995); while another—the opposite, in fact—function of irony is argued to be the enhancement of criticism. Sperber and Wilson (1986), though admitting that irony might dilute the negative effect of criticism (as argued in the "tinge" theory), claim that the objective of irony is to communicate a negative attitude towards a person or a situation. Similarly, Jorgensen (1996) draws the conclusion that a sarcastic speaker does not intend to mute criticism, but, on the contrary, wants to be critical and to show dissatisfaction. This approach is supported by Colston (1997), Toplak & Katz (2000), Kreuz (1991, 2009), and Caucci (2009), all of whom see irony as an aggressive form of criticism.

Such controversial findings of empirical researchers are addressed in the works of Pexman and Olinek (2002). They explain the difference in

findings by relying on differences of interpretative perspective taken by scholars: if it is the aim of the speaker (e.g. to ridicule) that is assessed, then irony might be regarded as more critical than a literal remark would be; meanwhile, if it is the general irony-generated social impression (e.g. politeness) that is in focus, then the ironic utterance might be regarded as less critical.

Criticism in Hutcheon's (1996) work is addressed under the name of the **assailing function of irony.**[47] This function of irony is believed to reveal the most severe form of irony. Here, according to Hutcheon, "the negative charge… is at its maximal when corrosive invective and destructive attack become the inferred—and felt—ends for irony" (1996, p. 52) This destructive attack, according to the scholar, creates the impression that irony does not aim at correction, but only at the expression of disdain and contempt. Here irony behaves as a means to "keep people in their place" (ibid, p. 53). Sarcastic irony as "primarily verbal aggression" is addressed in the works of Toplak and Katz (2000, p. 1467); they claim that "sarcasm is used as a means of verbal aggression... taken as a more severe form of criticism than found when criticism is directly expressed" (1999, p. 1482). The assailing function of irony relates to mocking in the research by Kreuz, Long, and Church (1991), where it is considered one of the most acute forms of ironic criticism. According to Colston (1997), Clark and Gerrig (1984) and Jeoung (2006), irony attacks either a specific object or a specific point of view, which in the current research will be related to irony aimed at the country. However, it should be mentioned that there might be a positive motivation seen behind the assailing (and critical) function of irony. Irony ridicules in order to correct the situation towards a certain set of values.

**6. Status downgrading.** Putting down the status of the object of irony is addressed as one of the main functions of irony in the works of Dews, Kaplan and Winner (1995) and Hutcheon (1996). As the researchers put it, "a

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[47] Hutcheon derives the name of this function from the Latin word "assilire," which means "to leap upon."

speaker who delivers a criticism elevates his or her own status and/or puts down the status of the person being criticized". Moreover, "an ironic criticism may be even more status elevating than a literal criticism" (1995, p. 299) because the speaker implies a correct model of behavior that is contrasted to that being criticized. In this way, according to Nuolijärvi and Tiittula (2011), irony not only humiliates the opponent but is also "exploited for positive self-display" (2011, p. 572). Nord (2005) in the discussion of the functions of irony refers to the status of the ironist as enabling "cool superiority" (2005, p. 226). Hutcheon (1996) gives an overview of the approaches to the status of the ironist adopted by the philosophers of the Romantic period and generalizes that "the ironist [is] a kind of omniscient, omnipotent god-figure, smiling down—with irony—on the rest of us" (1996, p. 229). The ironist appears to ascribe for himself a higher status and becomes a part of the "elite."

**7. Correction.** The corrective function of irony "suggests a positive set of values that one [should be] correcting towards" (Hutcheon, 1996, p.52). As a classical example of corrective irony, Hutcheon mentions Swift's *Modest Proposal,* a political pamphlet whose "dispassionate, business-like, grave tone is played off against the utterly immodest proposal that the situation of famine and poverty in eighteenth-century Ireland would be solved if people bred and marketed babies for food" (ibid, p. 34). According to Hutcheon, the corrective function of irony is not difficult to detect. Muecke (1974) claims that all irony is to some extent corrective. However, relying on Wilde(1981), nowadays "the idea of correctable folly or error has given way to a skepticism about the very possibility of change" (1981, p. 28), which is supported by Hutcheon's (1996) belief that "there certainly exists a kind of bitter irony that has no desire to correct, that is merely contemptuous and scornful" (1996, p. 228).

**8. Group affiliation**. Irony's function of community creation was addressed in 1974 by Booth. As Calder puts it (2006), the work of Booth always centered round the thought of affinity of ideas and creation of communities. According to Booth (1974), any irony inevitably forms a community and serves as a means of getting closer for the ironist and the

addressee. The dominant emotion generated by irony is the feeling of group affiliation, which is described in the following way: "...the author is my kind of man, because he enjoys playing with irony, because he assumes my capacity for dealing with it, and—most important—because he grants me a kind of wisdom; he assumes that he does not have to spell out the shared and secret truths on which my reconstruction is to be built" (1974, p. 28).

Irony's function of group affiliation is addressed in the works of many other scholars as well. Roy (1981) calls irony "a social device for group cohesiveness" (1981, p. 407), Twark (2007) claims that irony creates the impression of secret societies among people who "get the joke", and Lakoff (1990) notices that "irony makes use of presumptive homogeneity" and reinforces it: the comprehension of irony communicates that "You and I understand each other" (1990, p. 173). In other words, a common act of irony enhances the feeling of being a part of a group.

Hutcheon (1996) refers to this function as Aggregative. According to the scholar, it is a general social function of irony. Hutcheon claims that irony creates communities and is itself created by existing "discursive communities[48]" (1996, p. 18) which provide context for the irony. We are surrounded by those who understand irony and those who do not. The ironist and the interpreter who share a mutual understanding of irony become members of "small, select, secret societies" (ibid, p. 54). Those who do not understand irony are not allowed into this group. Analogical ideas are developed by Attardo (2002), who claims that irony serves two opposing functions: inclusive and exclusive. "On the one hand, irony builds in-group solidarity through shared play; on the other hand, it can be used to express a negative judgment about someone" (2002, p.174).

**9. Sophistication and playfulness.** Attardo (2002) claims that one of the reasons why irony is used is the fact that irony is a sophisticated language carrying an implied meaning, the decoding of which requires

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[48] The features of irony in discursive communities are analysed in Hutcheon's *Irony's Edge* (1996), p.18 and pp. 89-115.

mental dexterity. The ironist wants "to show off his ability to play with language" (2002, p. 175). This function of irony is given the name ludic[49] in Hutcheon's (1996) classification. Such a function, according to the scholar, can assume two facets: "when viewed favorably, this is seen as the affectionate irony of benevolent teasing", which is associated with playfulness, humor and wit. Such irony might be expressed by means of metaphors or puns. However, when seen as negative, it is referred to as "supple and subtle but superficial" (1996, p. 49). Citing Dyson (1965), the researcher claims that "in an age of few or shifting values irony becomes, very often, a tone of urbane amusement, assuming the right to be amused, but offering no very precise positives behind the right. It can degenerate into mere gesture of superiority, superficially polished and civilized, but too morally irresponsible to be really so" (ibid, p.49). Referring to the negative aspect of the ludic function of irony, Hutcheon notes that even without the moral frame, irony can be perceived as trivializing one of the essential characteristics of art, seriousness: at least in the 19th century and even nowadays, a generally assumed position is that "the "significant" in art (and criticism) is often seen as highly serious" (ibid).

**10. Reinforcement**. The reinforcing function of irony is associated with power. As Hutcheon (1996) says, it has always been known "that irony can be used as a weapon" (1996, p. 9). This is supplemented by Enright's idea that "the weapons of irony face all directions" (1986, p. 110), and anyone can be caught in the crossfire of irony. Carston (1981) treats this function of irony as rhetorical, and claims irony to be a powerful rhetorical tool that "presupposes the truth of the presupposed proposition to be self-evident" (1981, p. 30). The rhetorical power of irony is understood as a way of "bringing together different rhetorical tools to reinforce one's opinion or point of view" (Moser, 1984, p. 414) and to ensure that the opinion

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[49] Ludic comes from the Latin word *ludus*, "play," and means "playful." The term is used in philosophy. For further details see: Echeruo, *Redefining the Ludic: Mimesis, Expression, and the Festival Mode*", in: *The Play of the Self* (SUNY Press, 1994), p. 137.

expressed is ultimately persuasive[50] (Kreuz, Caucci, 2009). Hutcheon (1996) classifies this function as reinforcing, and argues that it is the "most straightforward and basic function of irony" (1996, p. 50), which serves to underline a certain point of view in a communicative exchange.

11. **Protection/Distancing.** Berrendonner (1981) claims that the duality of irony allows the speaker to avoid the kinds of sanctions that could follow direct criticism. In other words, irony enables the speaker to take a non-committal attitude towards his words. Berrendonner refers to this position as "retractability" (1981, p. 238). Hutcheon here distinguishes two aspects – the distancing and protective functions of irony. The protective function is also addressed in the works of Knox (1973), who notices that irony can be seen both "as a kind of defense mechanism" (Knox 1973, p. 634) and as an "aggressive cautiousness". Relying on Hutcheon (1996), the emotional charge associated with irony increases when it functions as a distancing mechanism. Distancing means "the non-committal, the inferred refusal of engagement and involvement" (1996, p.49). Relying on Kaufer (1981), the distancing function of a new perspective enables the ironist to step over the conventional means of explicit expression of one's opinion, especially when open and direct judgments are not appropriate or desirable. This is directly connected to the protective function of irony. Irony "means never having to say you are sorry: you can always protect yourself and argue that you were just being ironic" or even "turn an error into a joke" (Mizzau, 1984, p. 82) to get out of embarrassing situations. According to Berrendonner (1981), in this respect the function of irony is similar to the function of humor (1981, p. 238).

12. **Efficiency.** Ironic speech "enables the transmission of complex propositional and interpersonal meanings" (Gibbs, Colston, 2007) in a compressed form. Direct language cannot accomplish this. Direct language

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[50] Other forms of indirect language (e.g. metaphor and analogy) have been analysed (Kreuz and Ashley, 2006) and found to be effective and more persuasive than direct language. Gibbs and Izett (2005) claim that irony is equally effective.

requires greater expenditure of time and effort than ironic. For example, the ironic utterance "You are a genius!" communicates much more than the straightforward critical remark, "Your behavior is stupid!" In order to communicate a similar amount of information, the speaker of the direct utterance would need to add something like, "I do not think you behaved cleverly, I believe such reasoning would be absurd, etc." This efficiency of ironic communication is an important reason for its frequent use. Similar aspects are referred to as the "informative function" of irony in Giora's (1995) analysis, where she claims that one of the two main functions[51] of irony is to provide a highly informative utterance (1995). Though Giora does not provide a thorough analysis of this function, it is made clear that what she means is a compilation of all the abovementioned aspects, including: giving one's opinion, implied evaluation, and emotional charge. Compared with the direct statement, in this respect ironic communication is much more informative.

In addition to all the enumerated functions of irony, a few more could be mentioned: persuasiveness and coherence (Kreuz, Caucci), correction and complication (Hutcheon), characteristics of the speaker (Dews, Kaplan, Winner), manipulation (Giora), offence and many more. As the empirical material of the research focuses on irony directed at countries (Lithuania and the USA), it is worth mentioning the idea of Twark (2007) that irony is "used to assert self-identity" (2007, p.9) and to take a reflective and critical look at oneself – an ability that shows self-consciousness. Furthermore, "self-irony prevents the situation from appearing truly tragic" (ibid), takes away the tension and allows the speaker to look at the situation with humor.

As the current research concerns publicistic irony, the focus of the analysis will be on social irony, which negatively evaluates certain social events/situations (the functions of criticism and negative evaluation), identifies situations to be corrected (the corrective function), leaps upon social maladies (the aggregative function), and aims at creating feelings of

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[51] The other main function of irony (according to Giora), politeness, has been discussed above.

solidarity, i.e. a common mental space, with its addressees (the function of group affiliation). Moreover, as language play, irony should be decoded and the decoding should give satisfaction to the addressees (the sophisticating, rhetorical and humorous functions of irony). For the sake of defense and avoiding negative consequences, the ironist does not speak directly (the protective, distancing functions), but the implicit message communicates much more than direct language (the efficiency/informative function). Irony downgrades the status of the victim (the function of status downgrading), as the ironist always elevates his own intellectual position.

Ironic newspaper headlines, in addition to all the abovementioned aspects, also serve to catch the attention of the reader, to make the headline memorable and to generate feelings of satisfaction and play, or as Booth (1974) puts it, to check whether the reader belongs to the "secret amiable community." To make sure that the reader (who belongs to this "secret community") correctly accesses the intended irony, a number of irony markers are used. They are discussed in more detail in the following part of the dissertation.

# 5. THE INDICATORS OF IRONY: CONTEXT AND LEXICAL/GRAMMATICAL MARKING

Irony is a complicated phenomenon always at risk of being misinterpreted. According to Booth (1974), it is a "pluralistic" way of speaking, "an evasion of committed speech" (1974, p. 48) that is ambiguous. Irony that gives trouble can range "from the simplest everyday kidding to the most complex literary and philosophical disguises" (ibid, p. 47). As Booth (1974) puts it, modern critics have tended to stress the value of diversity of interpretation, and they have had no difficulty in finding innumerable examples of conflicting interpretations. The controversies in the interpretation of irony are related to the problem of its ambiguity.

Though Attardo (2001) argues that no detailed and systematic analysis of irony markers is available, a number of ironologists approach the question of irony recognition and irony marking from diverse perspectives and have come up with their own lists of irony markers, which appear under the names of frame-ups (Hutcheon), indices (Attardo), clues (Booth), anchors (Renouf), or, more commonly, markers or hints.

Carvalho et al. (2009) notice that in video/spoken discourse, especially in a conversational context, we are usually able to detect a variety of external clues that enable the perception of irony. The most explicit markers of irony belong to the category of kinetic markers, which, though commonly considered to be universal, according to Hutcheon (1996) might vary in different cultures.

Kinesic clues, which are also referred to as paralinguistic (Mizzau, 1984, p. 22), paraverbal or gestural (Hutcheon, 1996, p. 155), include a smirk, a wink, a raised eyebrow, the tongue in cheek, nudge, etc. Such clues are considered the most straightforward means of irony indication.[52] The research of patterns of emotional facial expression conducted by Fernandez-Dols,

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[52] On the other hand, Attardo (2001) mentions a so-called "blank-face," that does not carry any expression and yet can also be an irony indicator.

Carrera, and Casado (2001) also addresses the issue of miscommunication and meaning recognition.

Kinesic clues that signal *the addressee's* perception of irony have also been detected. .Attardo (2001) enumerates such indices of irony recognition as "rolling the eyes, shaking the head in disbelief, squinting, blushing, giving a dirty look, etc." ( 2001, p. 178). As Hancock (2007) puts it, speakers also rely on cues provided by addressees regarding the comprehension of irony. When such cues are unavailable, speakers, according to the scholar, may be less willing to use irony because of the risk of miscommunication.

Another group of clues widely discussed in works on irony focus on phonological clues for irony detection, which come under the heading of phonic markers in Hutcheon's classification (1996, p. 155). The most common indicator of ironical intention, according to Attardo (2001), is intonation. He distinguishes several intonation patterns that might be considered "ironical intonation" (2001, p. 119). These encompass a flat contour (neither rising nor falling intonation), question intonation, lowering of pitch on the normally stressed syllable, exaggerated intonation patterns (e.g. singsong melody, falsetto), nasalization, and stress patterns broader than usual (ibid).

Other phonological markers of irony outlined by Attardo are a slower rate of speaking, syllable lengthening, pauses, and laughter. Hutcheon (1996) also includes throat clearing, change of voice register, alterations of speed, and Carvalho et al. (2009) add pause duration to the list.

Rockwell (2007) contributed to the research with an analysis of vocal patterns that distinguish sarcasm from literal language. The perceptual coding method employed by Rockwell revealed that pitch range, length of utterance, and total amount of sound significantly discriminated sarcastic from non-sarcastic utterances (2007, p.361). Cheang and Pell (2008) in *The Sound of Sarcasm* also presented a study that was conducted to identify possible acoustic cues of sarcasm.

However, while being essential in face-to-face communication, these markers are not applicable for written irony. As this research focuses on the analysis of news headlines on internet web pages, a different set of irony markers should be taken into consideration. The marking of irony in written texts can be organized along two axes: context and lexical/grammatical marking.

Context and its importance in irony recognition has been the focus of a number of irony comprehension studies. Though researchers fail to agree on the temporal stage at which context affects irony comprehension, "irony comprehension is believed to rely heavily on context" (Katz & Lee, 1993).

In Booth's (1974) work, context is approached from the perspective of the intentionality of the writer. Irony in terms of intention is also defined by Muecke (1969). As Hutcheon (1996) puts it, "all irony is intentional" (1996, p. 118), and the intentionality can be traced in some specific ways. Booth refers to the clues of irony as "the form of an inference about an implied author's intentions" (1974, p. 52), where "every clue depends for its validity on norms which the reader embraces and which he infers, rightly or wrongly, that his author intends" (ibid, p.53). It makes no difference whether we think of these norms as being intrinsic (inferences on the basis of the text itself) or extrinsic (inferences based on external clues about the author's probable intentions). Booth enumerates the following marking strategies: a. Known error proclaimed (e.g.: "only thirty-four stories," a deliberate error in using "only" when referring to a big number (ibid, p. 84)). B. Conflict of facts (e.g. "The penguins had the most powerful army in the world. So had the porpoises" (ibid, p.62)) c. Clashes of style (if a speaker's style departs notably from whatever the reader considers the normal way of saying a thing, or the way normal for this speaker, the reader may suspect irony (ibid, p.67)) d. Conflicts of belief (We are alerted whenever we notice an unmistakable conflict between beliefs expressed and the beliefs we hold and suspect the author of holding. (ibid, p.73) and e. Illogicality (ibid, p.75)

Hutcheon (1996) emphasizes the "circumstantial context" (which is also referred to as "communicative context" in Adams 1985, p. 40) that refers to the circumstances/situation of uttering/interpreting, and that makes statements deployed within it possible and meaningful as irony (1996, p.143). In addition to the circumstantial context, she distinguishes "textual context" (ibid, p.144), which refers to the text or the utterance as a whole and provides a frame for attributing irony; the third sort of context suggested by Hutcheon (1996) is an intertextual one, "made up of all the other relevant utterances brought to bear on the interpretation of the utterance in question" (ibid, p.144).

The main focus of Attardo (2001) with regard to the irony-signaling context is on the co-occurrence of incompatible elements in the same sentence, paragraph, or larger textual unit, or co-occurrence of incompatible elements in the context of the utterance.[53] Pexman, Whalen, and Green (2010) also approach context in terms of incongruity (strong vs. weak), and relate it to the speaker-target relationship (close vs. distant)[54].

Utsumi (2004) divides the indices of irony into the markers of linguistic style and context (2004, p. 1367) and sees context as the "likelihood that an ironic remark will be made". Within his notion of context Utsumi encompasses the ironic environment, which consists of (a) the speaker's expectation, (b) the incongruity between the expectation and reality, and (c) the speaker's negative attitude toward the incongruity.

The significance of context in irony comprehension/processing was addressed in the works of such ironologists as Grice, Searle, Gibbs, Sperber and Wilson, Katz, Kreuz, Giora, Fein, and many more. However, the majority of the research addresses context not as an irony facilitating anchor, but as a factor conditioning the priority of accessibility of the literal or ironic meaning, the dominance of the ironic meaning over the literal, and the speed of irony

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[53] In his analysis, Attardo (2001) marks the ironic utterance as "u" and defines it as being in relation to the context of "u" (2001, p. 117).

[54] Pexman, Whalen, and Green carried out a series of experiments to check how the perception of irony depends on the extent to which an ironic statement is suitably face-threatening in its particular context. The findings can be found at: http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/ftinterface~content= a921279683~fulltext=713240930~frm=content

comprehension[55]; therefore, the account of context that the abovementioned scientists provide might seem to present a cardinally different view of context and its importance. Nevertheless, none of the scholars denies the significance of context in irony processing or comprehension; it is only the approach they take that is different. They might for example argue regarding differences in the timing of context activation or the principles of functioning. Indeed, the direct access view of Gibbs (1986) claims that the ironic meaning of an utterance is accessed directly in a supportive context, while the pragmatic theory (Grice, 1975; Searle, 1979) insists that notwithstanding the context, it is the literal but not ironic meaning that is accessed first. The graded salience theory (Giora, 1999) addresses the problem by insisting that it is not the context that determines the priority of meaning accessibility, but the salience of the meaning (though context joins the meaning construction quite early in the comprehension processes).

Taking into consideration all the abovementioned approaches to context as the index of ironic meaning, a three-level context scheme has been developed to be applied to the current analysis of news headlines on internet websites:

a. Immediate context, which resembles Attardo's idea of the co-occurrence of incompatible elements in the same sentence.

b. Neighboring context, which refers to the information provided in the article under the headline.

c. General context, which encompasses the ideas of scientists mentioned above and that could be described as consisting of:

• General knowledge of cultural, social, political background, referred to as "common ground" by Kreuz, Kassler, Coppenrath, and Mclain Allen (1999). This could be illustrated by the headline "Litbelo teisėsauga" (delfi.lt) ("The Jurisdiction of Litbel") the analysis of which requires historical knowledge (what the name stands for, under what circumstances it was

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[55] The findings of the research are presented in detail in the works by Gibbs (1986), Sperber and Wilson (1985, 1995), and Giora (2004).

formed, etc.); "Prezidentui reikia padėti" (delfi.lt) ("President Needs Help") which needs political background knowledge (who the president is, why he needs help, what his presidency was like, etc.) to be processed adequately; or on the intertextuality based headline "Pakalniškiai skundžiasi plukdomi *durnių laivu*" (delfi.lt) ("Citizens of Pakalniskis complain about being carried on "the Ship of Fools" (which cannot be processed correctly unless the reader knows what *"the Ship of Fools"* stands for).

- Universal background knowledge/common sense. Some ironic headlines rely on common sense. In "The USA takes gold in Arms Olympics" (alternet.org) the author relies on the truth known universally that no Arms Olympics are actually held.

- Presuppositions regarding the knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs of the author. This aspect is based on inferences the reader is able to make regarding the knowledge of the author, and might be illustrated with the headline above, emphasizing the presupposition that the writer must also know that no such Olympics are held.

- Logicality and compatibility of the content, relying on the knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs of the author. For example, considering the headline "Ar prisvils Tefloninis ministras?" (delfi.lt) ("Will the "Teflon Minister" burn?") the reader relies on the writer's knowledge that the minister cannot be made of Teflon, and therefore the utterance cannot be taken literally. Similarly, it is simply logical that dogs do not eat electronic documents, even if the headline states "White House Claims the Dog Ate Its Emails" (alternet.org).

- Shared knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs. Some ironies are accessible only due to the "common ground" (Kreuz, 1999). Consider "Forrest Gump's Evil Twin" (alternet.org). If the addressee does not share the position of the author as one who has seen the film *Forrest Gump*, then President Bush as the target of irony will not be identified.

- Knowledge of the situation (in this case, the source, i.e. the news and politics section of the selected websites).

- Inferences regarding the expectations of the author and the contrast between those expectations and the existing situation. "Sodoma ir Gomora Marijos Žemėje" (delfi.lt) ("Sodom and Gomorrah in Mary's Land") could serve as an illustration for the contrast of expectations (the country that has positive evaluation) and the reality (that has negative evaluation). Consequently, as Muecke puts it, to comprehend an utterance as ironic, the addressee needs "to know more of the speaker or his views" (1969, p.57).

Context is called the "key element" in Booth (1974), who argues that the decision "whether a given word or passage is ironic depends on the intentions that constitute the creative act. And whether it is seen as ironic depends on the reader's catching the proper clues to those intentions" (1974, p.310). According to Booth, the reader "discovers those clues in context" (ibid, p.91). The notion of context here encompasses "a proper use of knowledge or inference about the author and his surroundings" (ibid, p.120), their common experience of the vocabulary and grammar of English (e.g. the dictionary meanings of breast and chest) along with "the understanding of rules which allow for and control verbal inventions" (ibid, p.100); and, in addition, "their common cultural experience and their agreement about its meaning and value (e.g. nudity shouldn't matter much to anyone)" (ibid, p.102).

Intentionalist theories insist that it is the responsibility of the ironist to leave guiding clues for the interpreter (Amante, 1981, p. 77)[56]. The more clues are available, the easier it is for the addressee to decode the ironic meaning. Thus, the other means of irony marking that is focused on in this study is lexical/grammatical factors[57].

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[56] Amante (1981) writes: "it is mandatory that some clue to irony be provided by the ironist" (1981, p. 83); however, as Attardo (2001) notes, Amante does not provide any arguments for his position.

[57] Attardo further makes a distinction between the markers and the factors of irony. The distinction is based on the fact that "a marker may be removed without affecting the presence of the irony... while a factor may not be removed without destroying the irony" (2001, p. 118). However, as the differences among markers are not within the scope of this dissertation, all the means used to mark ironic meaning here will be referred to by the commonly accepted concepts of marker, clue or indicator.

Lexical factors have been thought to play a role in the identification of written irony by several ironologists (Kreuz, Roberts, Utsumi, Attardo, Carvalho, Silva, Sarmento, Oliveira, Livnat, Rubinstein, etc.). According to Roberts and Kreuz (1994), the two major goals of irony are to show negative emotions and to clarify, and these goals are easier to reach when lexical cues are provided.

Numerous analyses and experiments have made the compilation of a list of the lexical cues of irony feasible. In this study the following lexical indices of irony are taken into consideration:

- Adjectives. According to Kreuz et al., speakers often use exaggeration when they speak ironically. The authors provide the example of saying, "What a perfectly wonderful day we are having!" on a rainy day (1999, p.1686). The importance of exaggeration in signaling ironic intent is verified by the experiments of Kreuz and Roberts (1995).[58]

- Adverbs. Utsumi (2000) suggested that adverbs act as cues that can help an addressee recognize irony by implicitly displaying a negative attitude. The findings of Utsumi are supported by Kreuz and Caucci (2009), while Rubinstein notes that "intensifying adverbs" are crucial clues in detecting irony. In the headline "Bush Conveniently Forgets his Own Role in the Baseball Steroids Era" (alternet.org), the adverb *conveniently* serves as an intensifier of the ironic meaning by hinting that it was convenient for Bush to forget his role, thus implying that Bush did not actually forget what had happened.

- Interjections. Interjections abound in subjective texts, particularly in those carrying valuable information concerning the authors' emotions, feelings and attitudes. Kreuz and Caucci (2007), in an analysis of sarcasm in published works, found that interjections often signal ironic intent. Carvalho et al. (2009) believe that some interjections can be used as potential clues for

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[58] The findings and full analysis and can be found in Kreuz and Roberts (1995), *Two cues for verbal irony: hyperbole and the ironic tone of voice.* Metaphor and Symbol Activity, 10: 21-31.

irony detection, when they appear in specific contexts. "Oh! It's so easy" is the example provided by Carvalho et al.

- Demonstrative pronouns. Demonstrative pronouns were given much attention in the study by Carvalho, Silva, Sarmento, and Oliveira (2009). In Portuguese, the occurrence of any demonstrative form – namely, "este" (this), "esse" and "aquele" (that) – before a noun usually indicates that the entity is being negatively or pejoratively mentioned. In some cases, according to the scholars, demonstratives are the unique explicit clue that signals the presence of irony. The case could be illustrated by the headline "That other America," which refers to, in the eyes of politicians, the non-existing America of the middle class as not belonging to the usual, idealized, unique America.

- Forms of familiarity. When a high-ranking politician is referred to by the use of his/her first name only, such familiarity is likely to be seen as ironic. For example: "Ar perlips rūpintojėlis Gediminas "Dujotekanos" vamzdį?"(delfi.lt) ("Will Worrying Gediminas step over the tube of "Dujotekana"") vs. "Ar pavyks G.Kirkilui susitarti su Gazpromu?"(delfi.lt) ("Will G.Kirkilas Manage to Come to Terms with Gazprom?"). Certain forms of dialogism might also be regarded as an expression of familiarity and therefore a potential marker of irony, e.g. "The Turks are coming—so what?"(alternet.org).

- Diminutive Forms. Diminutives, according to Carvalho et al. (2009), are commonly used in Portuguese, often with the purpose of expressing positive sentiments like tenderness and intimacy. However, they can also be sarcastically and ironically used to insult or depreciate the entity they represent. This is especially so when diminutives are used in reference to well-known personalities, such as political entities (e.g. "Socratezinho" for the current Portuguese prime-minister, José Socrates).

- Neologisms. Occasional neologisms that are context-dependent and do not belong to the lexicon are likely to indicate irony. In the headline "Lietuvos "stribuomenė" pagal V.Landsbergį" (delfi.lt) ("Lithuania's "stribuomene" according to Landsbergis") the word "stribuomenė" is

deliberately formed [59] to express a negative ironic attitude to certain Lithuanian political figures.

Along with lexical markers goes a group of indices of irony that encompasses morphology and syntax. The morphological indices of irony coincide with neological markers, i.e. occasionalisms[60] (which deal with suffixation (Zuokulas[61]) or compounding (**agurk**as (cucumber)+Uspas**kich** = Agurkichas[62])) or word category changes (Zuokas – zuoktelėti[63]).

The syntactic structure and syntactic marking of an utterance are also potential irony markers. Livnat (2003) analyses the syntactic structure of ironies in the light of echo-mention theory and argues that the interpretation of the speaker's meaning in some cases of irony must rely on an understanding of the implicated meaning of the identity relations underlying the syntactic structure. According to the scientist, "the syntactic structure seems to serve as a major clue to the speaker's meaning as it helps the reader to pick out an originator of the echoed utterance as a possible victim of the irony" (2003, p. 78). The following is a list of such syntactic markers of irony:

• Syntactic structure. Following Livnat (2003), the syntactic structure of the headline "Putinas nekaltas, aplinka kalta" (15min.lt) echo-mentions the syntactic structure of the catch-phrase of President Paksas, "Aš nekaltas, aplinka kalta", and therefore might be considered to be marked for irony. Similarly, "How Bush stole the elections" (alternet.org) echo-mentions the syntactic structure of the Dr. Seuss story, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*.

• Rhetorical question. Rhetorical questions as one of the possible indices of irony are analyzed in the works of Koženiauskienė (2001, 2004).

• Tag questions. Tag questions, according to Kreuz et al. (1999), "appear to be frequently appended to ironic statements" and are used as

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[59] Stribai (collaborators of the Soviet occupants, destroyers) + aukštuomenė (the higher society).
[60] Such formations are discussed under the term of *hapax legomenon* in Renouf and Bauer (2001).
[61] The mayor of Vilnius **Zuok**as + Dra**cula.**
[62] Member of Parliament Uspaskich, also known as a major producer of pickled cucumbers.
[63] The mayor of Vilnius **Zuok**as + k**uoktelėti** (to go off the hooks).

"another potential cue of ironic intent" as the tag might function "to make the statement seem even more ironic" (ibid, p.1698).[64]

- Exclamation. Kreuz and Caucci (2009) found that the presence of exclamation points to irony. According to Attardo (2001), the exclamation mark is used for emphasis: "in the right context, it can underscore other means to highlight irony" (2001, p.119).

- Inverted commas/Quotation marks. As Renouf puts it (1987), quotation marks are ambiguous. They can indicate novelty, but they can also flag the metalinguistic status of a word, new or otherwise, or the fact that the writer has a particular reaction to a word, e.g. that the writer is being ironic. As Attardo puts it, "'Scare quotes' are used to convey a certain detachment from a written utterance and hence irony" (2001, p.119). Carvalho et al. note that "quotation marks are also frequently used to express and emphasize an ironic content, especially if the content has a prior positive polarity (e.g. positive adjective qualifying an entity)" (2009, p. 55).

Relying on Muecke (1978, p.57), in order to perceive an utterance as ironic it is obligatory "to know more of the speaker or his views" and his intentions, as irony markers alone "cannot be defined as infallible pointers to irony" (1978, p.118). On the other hand, the wide scope of the research that has been carried out in the field of irony markers testifies to the importance of irony markers, especially when taken along with the context in which they appear. The presence of the indices of irony and their supportive context prove to be efficient and play an important role in irony comprehension.

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[64] The use of tag questions has been widely studied in sociolinguistics. Lakoff identified tag questions as being used primarily by women (1975), while Brown and Levinson (1978) related tag questions to the politeness theory.

## 6. FIGURES OF SPEECH IN THE EXPRESSION OF IRONY

In the Renaissance period, which saw a passion for classification, the figures of speech were arranged into a variety of classes and sub-classes. For example, Henry Peach in his "Garden of Eloquence" (1577) lists 184 different figures of speech. As the current analysis does not aim at providing a thorough analysis of all the figures of speech, only those that are related to the expression of irony will be further discussed.

According to the established Western tradition[65] (for further reference see Koženiauskienė's "Rhetoric"), the figures of speech are grouped into two major categories: tropes and figures of rhetoric (which encompass figures of thought and syntactic figures). The concept of tropes is associated with an alteration in the meaning of a word, while figures of rhetoric (including figures of thought) embrace the whole utterance. Irony has most commonly been assigned to the tropes. Consider the lines by Shakespeare, "For Brutus is an honorable man; / So are they all, all honorable men" (1599, *Julius Caesar*, Act 3, Scene II), where the word *honorable* is used in its opposite meaning. Limiting the concept of irony to its comprehension as "the opposite meaning" would confine its expression to antiphrasis; meanwhile, in the further sections of this analysis it becomes evident that the number of tropes associated with irony is much greater.

Moreover, irony can be also treated as a figure of thought. To illustrate this case, consider the newspaper headline "Seimas – geriausias vaistas nuo noro dirbti" (delfi.lt) ("Parliament –the Best Treatment against Willingness to Work"). None of the words comprising the headline could be said to express the opposite of their actual literal meanings. Here irony arises due to the implied message that the members of the parliament do not perform the role they are supposed to perform. In this dissertation, the assumption is made that the mechanism of blending employed by irony directly depends on whether the

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[65] It should be mentioned that the East have their own school and traditions in rhetoric, the analysis of which can be found in Massimilian Tomasi's book (2004) *Rhetoric in Modern Japan: Western Influences on the Development of Narrative and Oratorical Style.*

irony of a news headline is an instance of a trope or a case of a figure of thought. The hypothesis has been made that this distinction impacts the structure of the mechanism of blending. To check the validity of the assumptions, an overview of the types of figures of speech with a special reference to tropes[66] is necessary.

Relying on prior research (Vengalienė, 2006), ironic headlines can be grouped into a few large categories on the basis of their formal building mechanism: 1. The use of tropes; 2. Word building; 3. The use of figures of rhetoric (figures of thought and syntactic figures).

When talking about the use of tropes it is necessary to look back into the works of the most outstanding authorities of the field in the 20th century[67]. In his book *A Grammar of Motives* (1969), Kenneth Burke analyzes four tropes: metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and irony, and calls them "master tropes" (1969, p. 503), having in mind that they are the basic tropes used in a language[68]. However, Burke looks into these tropes not as "figurative usage" of words but as the means of "the discovery and description of the truth" (ibid, p.503).

D'Angelo in his work *Tropics of Arrangement: A Theory of Disposition* (1990) applies Burke's theory and describes the text as organized in the mode of metaphor-metonymy, metaphor-synecdoche, metaphor-irony, etc. Each trope is thus defined through the means of another trope. Furthermore, the scholar claims that "discourse[69] which is organized in the mode of irony can encompass such figures as zeugma, litotes, hyperbole,

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[66] Irony as a figure of thought will not be given a separate entry in this dissertation, as in this case the difference lies not in different tools of rhetoric, but in the extent of irony—as will be shown by applying the mechanism of blending in the empirical analysis of headlines.
[67] Tropes have been analysed since ancient times; much attention to tropes was paid by scholars in the Middle Ages; this dissertation is based on the research of modern times.
[68] The notion of "basic tropes" might differ in the works of different researchers, e.g. Koženiauskienė distinguishes two main tropes—metaphor and metonymy (Koženiauskienė, 2001, p. 205).
[69] The question about the relationship between a discourse and a text generates heated discussions in linguistics. Some scholars (Stubbs, 1995) do not distinguish between the two concepts, while others define them as absolutely different (Widdowson, 1995). One of the distinctive features is being dynamic (for a discourse) and being static (for a text). Relying on this feature, a newspaper headline could be seen both as a discourse (a conversation of a journalist and a reader) and as a text (a static piece in a newspaper).

metaphor, periphrasis, paronomasia, antanaclasis, antithesis, paradox, metonymy, oxymoron, and antiphrasis" (1990, p. 2).

Different combinations and compositions of tropes are also addressed in Koženiauskienė's *Rhetoric* (2001, p. 205); here irony is referred to as "a trope within a trope" (ibid, p.245), i.e. a trope that is combined with a number of other tropes. An interesting insight into the relationship of irony and metaphor comes from Shilikhina (2009), who claims that "metaphor is a linguistic tool, while irony is a certain type of a verbal action" (ibid, p.42).

According to D'Angelo (1990), all the above mentioned tropes can be exploited by irony. However, a pilot examination of ironic headlines revealed that not all of them are equally conventional as the means of expression of an ironic attitude. The tropes that are most frequently encountered in an ironic mode in news headlines fall into the following categories:

1.      Metaphor. Metaphor, relying on *The Oxford Companion to the English Language* (1992), is an analogy between two objects or ideas, conveyed by the use of one word (the characteristics of which are to be transmitted) instead of another. According to the classical theories of language, metaphor is defined as "a novel or poetic linguistic expression where one or more words for a concept are used outside of its normal conventional meaning" (Lakoff, 1993). Meanwhile, in modern cognitive linguistics, Lakoff explains metaphors as "cross-domain mappings in the conceptual system" (1993, p. 202), where "metaphoric expression refers to a linguistic expression (a word, phrase or sentence), that is the surface realization of such domain-mapping" (1993, p.203). Metaphor as a linguistic expression has been in focus since ancient times; in modern linguistics it has been the most widely analyzed trope (see Enholm, Lausberg, Johnson, Crowley, Lanham, etc.), which, relying on Lausberg's *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric* (1998), might be used in its reversed form to create an ironic effect. The use of metaphor in the ironic mode is also addressed in the research of D'Angelo (1990). The expression of irony through metaphor could be illustrated with the headline "Seimas: zuikis tas pats, tik varnos nebe tos" (delfi.lt) ("Parliament: the same rabbit, but

different crows"), where the members of parliament are metaphorically referred to as crows (fighting for the catch[70]), while some acquiring financial benefit for themselves when in parliament are metaphorically referred to as a rabbit (seeking for benefit is seen as the pursuit of a rabbit[71]).

2.     Periphrasis. Periphrasis in Trask's *A Student's Dictionary of Language and Linguistics* (1997) is defined as a roundabout or indirect way of giving reference by using more words than are necessary. This way of speaking is also referred to as circumlocution[72]. Periphrasis is frequently found in the ironic headlines of both Lithuanian and American news websites. Some cases of periphrasis have already been conventionalized and the periphrastic meaning of some phrases has acquired the status of the most salient meaning. (e.g. Lithuania was recognized as the referent of *Marijos žemė* "Mary's land" by 100% of the respondents). This case could be illustrated by such headlines as "Sodoma ir Gomora Marijos žemėje" (delfi.lt) ("Sodom and Gomorrah in Mary's Land") "Pedofilų šalis – Marijos žemė" (diena.lt) ("The Country of Pedophiles –Mary's Land") etc.[73] Other instances of periphrasis delivering the ironic attitude of the journalist are not so conventional, though might also be considered to facilitating correct interpretation in certain contexts. For example, by referring to Lithuania as the republic of Chebureks in the headline "Čeburėkų Respublikos perspektyvos" (delfi.lt) "The perspectives of the republic of Chebureks", the author relies on the reader's knowledge of Lithuanians' craving for this Asian national dish. This case of periphrasis echoes the structure of another conventionalized phrase, i.e. „Banana republic", which is found not only in Lithuanian headlines (a more detailed analysis of these headlines will be provided in Part 9).

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[70] Cf. the Lithuanian saying *supulti kaip varnoms* "attack like crows."

[71] Cf. the Lithuanian saying "to catch two rabbits at a time."

[72] Periphrasis is seen both as a trope (Korolko, Metthew, Purcel, Župerka, Koženiauskienė) and as a figure of rhetoric (Silver, Lassan, Poesy, Geoffrey, etc). A strict classification does not exist and Lanham (1991), in his *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, does not draw a distinguishing line between tropes and figures.

[73] "Mary's land" is one of the most frequent periphrasis used to refer to Lithuania. The conventionality of the phrase will be discussed in Part 9.

3.    Paronomasia. Paronomasia, according to the Glossary of Linguistic Terms (2004), is based on the use of words alike in sound but different in meaning; it brings out the ironic attitude as the semantic qualities of the two words mingle between themselves.  Thus in the headlines: "From Backslapper to Back Stabber"[74] (nytimes.com), "Finality and Fallibility" (nytimes.com), "How odd of Rod" (alternet.org), the backslapper becomes a back stabber, finality comes to be associated with fallibility, and Rod gets the quality of being odd. The similar sounds seem to refer ironically to some similarities in meanings. The effects created by paronomasic puns are given much attention in Hempelmann (2003).

4.    Antanaclasis or the repetition of a word in two different senses (the Glossary of Linguistic Terms (2004)). Koženiauskienė (2001) defines antanaclasis as a kind of diaphora that creates a play on words: "it is a figure whose graphical syntactic structure resembles the reflection of the same word, a twin-word, when homophonic words are used in supposedly identical meaning" (2001, p.263). Antanaclasis is also a frequent means of the expression of an ironic attitude.  The relationship between antanaclasis and irony has not been given much attention in modern linguistics; though in the abovementioned study of D'Angelo (2001), a reference is made to antanaclasis in the mode of irony. This case could be illustrated by an example taken from the *Glossary of Linguistic Terms* (2004): "If you are not fired with enthusiasm, you are fired, with enthusiasm". However, it should be admitted that ironic headlines employing antanaclasis are rather scarce on news websites.

5.    Metonymy[75]. Metonymy has proven to be one of the most widely employed means used to construct an ironic meaning. Headlines such as "Čiukčianovas ir Neftianovas atvyksta į Lietuvą" (delfi.lt) (Chukchanov and

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[74] "Back Stabber" is at the same time the name of a popular song, which is most probably known to the reader but not activated in the discussed headline; this can be explained by selective projection, described in Parts 9&10.

[75] The definition of metonymy generates a number of disputes in linguistics (Panther and Radden 1999; Barcelona 2000; Dirven and Porings 2002, Radden and Kovecses 1999); however, as it is not within the scope of this dissertation, the definition provided in linguistic dictionaries—a figure of speech consisting of the use of the name of one thing for that of another of which it is an attribute or with which it is associated (*Glossary of Linguistic Terms* (2004))—will be relied on.

Neftanov come to Lithuania) or "Kodėl Ivano ir Frico vamzdis kelia baimę?" (delfi.lt) ("Why the Barrel of Ivan and Fritz Causes Fear?") do not require much background knowledge to be understood as ironic. The names and coined surnames metonymically refer to Russia and Germany and, at the same time, carry negative associations: Ivan is associated with rude, unintelligent Russians, while Fritz associates with Nazis. Meanwhile, in other headlines irony is more implicit, and broader background knowledge is necessary to decode the ironic meaning. The headline "Bitter Orange" (alternet.org) employs a complex trope, as one word encompasses two meanings: 'orange' as a fruit and 'orange' as a color. Here the ironic attitude is directed towards the Orange revolution of the Ukraine and a parallel is drawn to a bitter orange. For the reader lacking knowledge about the orange revolution, the second variant of interpretation might be inaccessible until he reads the whole article and traces the connection between the word 'orange' and its referent. Meanwhile, the reader having more knowledge at his disposition will see the irony as metonymically expressing a negative attitude towards the political situation in the Ukraine in quite a harsh way on the level of the headline.

6.    Litotes. Litotes in the *Glossary of Linguistic Terms* (2004) is defined as a trope that uses "a negated antonym to make an understatement or to emphatically affirm the positive" (ibid). This trope has also been employed to construct ironic meaning in headlines. Litotes is frequently expressed as the negative of a certain structure. By employing litotes the oppositional aspect of irony becomes relatively obvious. In the headline "For Putin and the Kremlin, a Not So Happy New Year" (nytimes.com) the phrase 'not so happy new Year' actually stands for the meaning of 'not a happy new year at all'. This position is supported when the headline phrase "not so happy" is juxtaposed with the assessment of the situation as 'bad' that is revealed in the article (the context). The evaluative attitude of the writer is reinforced by the fact that on New Year's Eve everyone is traditionally wished a "Happy New Year", while in the headline, published on the 3rd of January, the conventional greetings are transformed into the mocking "Not So Happy New Year".

7.    Antiphrasis. Antiphrasis is the form irony acquires when the intention of the writer is to express a straightforward opposition between the dictum (literal) and implicitum (implied) levels of the headline. What a headline declaring "You are a Genius!" (alternet.org) in fact claims is: „you are a fool! ". Irony in the form of antiphrasis corresponds to the still popular definition of irony as the opposition between what is said and what is meant[76].

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[76] The shortcomings of such definitions have already been discussed in Part 3.

# 7. THE MECHANISMS OF THE PROCESSING OF IRONY

The phenomenon of irony is considered problematic not only in terms of its definition, means of expression, controversial functions or contextual and linguistic marking. One more problematic aspect in ironology is the mechanism of its operation and comprehension. This aspect became a focal point in modern linguistics during the 1980s. The analysis of the mechanisms of both humor and irony in linguistics is associated with studies of figurative language.

The comprehension of verbal irony of any kind involves a certain type of dynamic reconstruction, where the focus of the attention transcends the content of the "mental spaces" (Fauconnier 1985, 1997) and assumes a higher position from which the primary point of view is reassessed.

In recent years, psychologists, linguists and philosophers have put forward a wide range of diverse theories aiming at the mechanisms of irony comprehension. Those theories encompass cognitive, linguistic, and social aspects of ironic speech, and each theory claims to be capable of providing "a single umbrella for capturing the essence of irony" (Gibbs, Colston, 2001, p.192).

Research in the field of verbal irony mainly encompasses discussions of the semantic mechanisms of irony (e.g. Raskin 1985, Sperber and Wilson 1981, etc.), and simultaneously pragmatic (e.g. Gibbs), psycholinguistic (e.g. Vaid et al. 2005) and neurolinguistic (Uekermann and Daum, 2007) investigations and experiments.

Researchers of verbal irony apply different methodological perspectives, carry out empirical analysis within the scope of mass media discourse, "live" speech and literary texts, and propose their own hypotheses. The methodology applied in ironology is especially diverse; however, the number of dominant and universally approved theories comes to approximately ten. According to Dynel (2008), ironology is currently dominated by Attardo and Raskin's *General Theory of Verbal Humor* (Attardo and Raskin 1991;

Raskin and Attardo 1994; Attardo 1994, 2001; Attardo et al. 2002), which can be regarded as an extension of Raskin's prior *Semantic Script Theory of Humor* (1985). Though the theory deals with humor in general, the relationship of irony and humor is considered and the theory is argued to be applicable to irony. On the other hand, it should be admitted that the theory is not universally accepted[77]. A number of other theories have also been claimed to be adequate and are supported by different theorists. The development of the research into the mechanisms of irony is best reflected in the theories that are outlined below.

**a. The Four Steps of reconstruction (1974).** As discussed above, one of the biggest authorities of ironology in 20th century linguistics is Booth (1974). He announced the first model of irony comprehension, published in his study "Rhetoric of irony" (1974). Despite the fact that Booth considers irony to be a phenomenon dependent on a subjective individual point of view[78] and concludes that "reconstructions of irony are seldom if ever reducible either to grammar or semantics or linguistics" (1974, p.43), in general, the scholar aims to establish a stable model of the detection of ironic meaning. The model proposed by Booth is based on the reconstruction of ironic meaning in four steps. In the first stage the reader/listener is required to reject the literal meaning of the utterance. This is not because the reader/listener does not agree with the expressed idea, but because he notices the inadequacy between the words and what he knows to be true: "in every case, even the most seemingly simple, the route to new meanings passes through an unspoken conviction that cannot be reconciled with the literal meaning" (1974, p.10). At the second stage the reader/listener tries out alternative explanations or interpretations, which are "incongruous with what the literal statement seems to say" (1974, p.11). The third step involves making decisions regarding the beliefs and

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[77] Krikmann (2009) notes that "in the last few years, the traditional script-based linguistic theories of humour (SSTH and GTVH) have undergone increasingly stronger attacks from both the 'non-script-spirited' traditionalists and the younger generation of cognitive linguists. At least two recent issues of the journal *HUMOR*, 17-4 (2004) and 19-3 (2006), have been almost entirely dedicated to that criticism" (2009, p. 26).

[78] Booth argues that "almost every statement that I (Booth) label non-ironic, Kenneth Burke could prove to be ironic in a dozen different senses" (1974, p. 12).

knowledge of the author/speaker: "it is this decision about the author's own beliefs that entwines the interpretation of irony... so inescapably in intentions [of the author]" (1974, p.11). In the fourth stage, having already made a decision regarding the beliefs of the author, the reader/listener finally chooses a new meaning or "a cluster of meanings" (1974, p.12). Relying on Booth, the reconstructed meaning, "unlike the original proposition (...) will necessarily be in harmony with the unspoken beliefs" that the reader has decided to attribute to the author. According to the scholar, all these four steps are "virtually simultaneous" (ibid).

The ideas of Booth made a big contribution to the field of ironology. As one of his followers, Sara Humphrey, says: "Booth's hermeneutic research in irony opens up a world of interpretative possibilities revealing the functioning of ironic meanings. It is only when we see the schematics of irony that we can comprehend it with more responsibility" (http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/~raha/Booth-site/).[79]

**b. Standard Pragmatic Model (1975)**. Grice's (1975, 1978) linguistic research does not focus exclusively on irony; however, irony is addressed within the framework of the Conversational Maxims[80]. Grice's theory has served as a starting point for a number of modern linguists, who apply the Gricean models of conversational maxims and irony comprehension to modern studies[81]. Irony in the works of Grice (1975, 1978) is understood as a breach of the conversational maxim of quality. In this approach, the treatment of irony coincides with its treatment in classical rhetoric, where irony is defined as an opposition between what is said and what is meant. Wilson and Sperber (Sperber & Wilson 1981, 1998; Wilson & Sperber 1992) criticize this approach, claiming that such a treatment is "inadequate as ironic understatement, citation, and allusion do not communicate any meanings that

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[79] A broader analysis of Booth's works could be found in the internet article by Jakobsen *A Critique of Wayne C. Booth's A Rhetoric of Irony* (2007), in Griffin's book *Satire– a Critical Reintroduction* (1994), Enos's *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition* (2010), and many others.
[80] Grice is best known as a philosopher who proposed the conversational maxims. Grice introduced the four maxims in *Logic and Conversation* (1975).
[81] Gricean conversational maxims are relied on in the research of Utsumi (2000); the theory of irony as pretense was later developed by Clark and Gerrig (discussed below).

are in opposition to direct words" (Sperber & Wilson 1981, 1998; Wilson & Sperber 1992).

Grice and Searle (1975, 1978) apply the mechanism of the Standard Pragmatic Model to irony comprehension. Relying on this model, the direct meaning is always accessed first, despite the context[82]. If the direct meaning is compatible with the situation and context, it is accepted as the intended meaning and any further operations are ceased. If the direct meaning is incompatible with the situation or context, it is rejected and replaced by a compatible indirect meaning. According to Giora (1998), in this framework "literal meaning enjoys a privileged status—it is always activated and always first" (1998, p.7). Following this model, the comprehension of irony should take longer than the comprehension of literal meanings due to the established sequence that starts with the literal (direct) meaning. According to Kotthoff, the process includes three stages: "understanding the literal meaning, recognizing its inappropriateness in the current context, and finally generating a suitable meaning" (2003, p.1393). This model shares a lot with the Modular view (Fodor, 1983)[83], as both models argue that ironic utterances are always first understood as literal and only then as ironic.

This approach to irony is criticized by Sperber and Wilson (1981, 1992), Giora (198), Fein (1998), Gibbs (1986), Gibbs and O'Brian (1991), Utsumi (2000) and other scholars, who base their criticism on their empirical research[84]. Despite all the criticism, this theory was an important contribution that led to further investigations of the mechanisms of irony. This theory and its critique have been of importance to the research of Sperber and Wilson (1981, 1992), Amante (1981), Kumon-Nakamura, Glucksberg, & Brown

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[82] The obligatory processing of the literal level in ironic utterances has been emphasized by Schwoebel, Dews, Winner, Shrinivas (2000).

[83] The modular view holds the belief that lexical processes are autonomous and the context does not influence the access of the primary meaning of a word.

[84] The experiments carried out by Gibbs (1986), Gibbs and O'Brian (1991), Giora (2002), Fein (1999) and other scientists will be discussed below. Utsumi's (2000) criticism focuses on the argument that the assignment of an utterance to irony relying on the violation of the conversational maxims is inadequate, as "the violation based view cannot discriminate irony from other nonliteral utterances" (2000, p. 1779).

(1980), Haverkate (1990), Gluckberg (1995), and other scholars working in the field of irony.

      **c. Pretense Theory of Irony (1984)**. Grice is known as the founder of the pretense theory, but more commonly, the theory is associated with the names of Clark and Gerrig (1984) who developed and publicized it further. In the article "Logic and Conversation", Grice (1989) relates irony to the definition assigned to Aristotle (the opposition of meanings) and, in the framework of pretense, relates it to the flouting of the Maxim of Quality (which demands, "speak the truth"[85]). These ideas are further developed in his article "Further Notes on Logic and Conversation" (1980). The Gricean approach to irony has been adopted by Clark and Gerrig (1984). In 1985 they presented the Pretense theory of irony, claiming that it was superior to Sperber and Wilson's Mention theory (1981), where irony is analyzed as the recognition of pretense. In the model of irony presented by Clark and Gerrig, it is assumed that the speaker "pretends" to be a naive and injudicious person who is talking to an uninitiated audience; at the same time, "the speaker intends the addressees of the irony to discover the pretense and thereby see his or her attitude toward the speaker, the audience, and the utterance" (Clark & Gerrig, 1984, p. 121). An ironist saying "What a nice day for a picnic!" on a rainy day assumes the identity of another speaker who is talking to an uninitiated audience, while the actual audience is expected to feel a great satisfaction in recognizing both the element of pretense and the ironic attitude of the speaker.

      Relying on Clark (1996), joint pretense[86] is seen as a staged communicative act where the actual speaker is, at the same time, an implied speaker performing a sincere communicative act targeted at an implied addressee who is, at the same time, the actual addressee. Both participants of the communicative act are expected to "mutually appreciate the salient

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[85]On the other hand, relying on Utsumi's theory (1996, 2003), which claims that the principle of cooperation should be applied to the implied (actual) level of irony, it is possible to argue that the maxim of quality is not violated.

[86] The theory of Clark and Gerrig was associated with the element of pretense; later the theory was developed by Clark, who introduced the term "joint pretense" (1996).

contrasts between the demonstrated and actual situations, (...) and if asked the actual speaker would deny meaning for the actual addressee what the implied speaker means for the implied addressee" (Giora, 1998, p.432).

According to this approach, irony is seen as a double-layered phenomenon where the literal meaning is activated and retained alongside the parallel implied meaning. This idea, which reflects the nature of irony in general, might be seen as the basis of the Pretense theory.

Clark and Gerrig faced excessive criticism regarding the element of pretense. Utsumi (2000) claims that pretense is neither a sufficient nor an obligatory condition for irony. Kreuz and Gluckberg (1989) argue that the element of pretense is necessary not only for irony but for all figurative language. Meanwhile, even more questions are generated by joint pretense. If it were an obligatory element of irony, this would mean that "the addressee of irony must share the ironic intention with the speaker beforehand in order to pretend jointly" (Utsumi, 2000, p.1782), which, according to Utsumi, is "an inappropriate assumption" (ibid).

d. **Relevance theory (1981)**.[87] The research of Wilson and Sperber in ironology (Sperber & Wilson 1985, 1995, 1998, 2002, Wilson & Sperber 2002, On Verbal Irony, 1992, Verbal Irony: Pretense or echoic mention, 1984, Relevance: communication and cognition, 1985/1995, etc.) presents an alternative model of irony comprehension. As already mentioned, these scholars partially rely on the ideas of Grice (1975, 1978). On the one hand, as Wilson and Sperber put it: "Relevance theory may be seen as an attempt to work out in detail one of Grice's central claims: that the essential feature of most human communication, both verbal and non-verbal, is the expression and recognition of intentions" (2004, p. 607). On the other hand, Wilson and Sperber criticize the Gricean account of irony, claiming that such an approach is: "theoretically inadequate because saying the opposite of what one

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[87] The term "echoic mention" was used by Sperber & Wilson in 1981, yet in their further research (in their book *Relevance*, 1986) it was replaced with "echoic interpretation," which refers to "the use of a propositional form to represent not itself but some other propositional form it more or less closely resembles" (See Sperber & Wilson 1986, notes to first edition, footnote 25, pp. 289-290).

means is patently irrational" and that this approach hardly explains "why verbal irony is universal and appears to arise spontaneously, without being taught or learned" (ibid). As a solution, Sperber and Wilson present Relevance theory (1981). This theory is based on the assumption that human comprehension is controlled by context and that therefore irony should be recognized as a case of mention: "recognition of an ironic utterance as a case of mention is crucial to its interpretation" (1981, p.309).

Sperber & Wilson claim that ironic "echoic mentions are of different degrees and types. Some are immediate echoes, and others delayed: some have their source in actual utterances, others in thoughts and opinions; some have a real source, others an imagined one; some are traceable back to a particular individual, whereas others have a vaguer origin" (ibid, pp. 309-310). Thus, according to this account, the hearer/ reader chooses the source that is most relevant to the context; when a relevant source is detected, the irony processing ceases. Sperber & Wilson claim that the hearer recalls (is given an echo-mention of) a familiar proposition and the position of the speaker regarding the said. The scholars believe that the reader/hearer processes only what the ironist implies but not what is said literally[88]. They see irony as a prototype of a language which does not employ the literal level for the transmission of the idea; the literal level only gives a hint of (echo-mentions) the idea and shows the speaker's attitude towards it. Therefore, irony becomes a prototype of the utterances that only give a mention and are coded through an indirect citation. These utterances are simultaneously the words of the speaker and of somebody else[89]. The theory requires rejecting the literal level in favor of the implicit meaning.

Though the Pretense Theory claimed to be different from the Echo-mention theory[90], in fact, according to Barbe (1995), both theories could be considered theories of substitution. In the Mention/ Relevance theory, the

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[88] This argument of Sperber and Wilson is known as direct access.
[89] The idea reflects the concept of carnivalisation (Bakhtin) which is also associated with the element of pretense.
[90] See footnote 87.

interpreter substitutes the idea that is mentioned with the idea that he thinks the speaker believes in. In the Pretense theory, the interpreter substitutes the speaker's idea with the idea of another person.

**e. Semantic-Script Theory of Humor (1985)**[91]**.** In the eighties, Raskin proposed the Semantic-Script Theory of Humor. He claimed that all kinds of humor involve a semantic-pragmatic process. The theory encompasses the semantic opposition between frames (which is activated through a fragment of a text) and flouting of the Maxim of Cooperation (Grice, 1989). The Semantic-Script Theory of Humor was based on the corresponding competences (in the field of humor) of the speakers. Natalie Guinsler refers to Raskin's theory as Incongruity theory (2008). [92]According to the scholar, Raskin's "script-based semantic theory of humor applies the idea of incongruity as the source of enjoyment in humor" (2008, p. 8) This statement is based on Raskin's claim that "the punch line triggers the switch from one script to the other by making the hearer backtrack and realize that a different interpretation was possible from the very beginning" (Attardo & Raskin, 1991, p. 308). According to Guinsler, "this recognition of an alternative meaning is the impetus of the positive affect derived from humorous stimuli" (2008, p. 9).

The Semantic-Script Theory of Humor is addressed as the Theory of Relevant Inappropriateness by one of the leading researchers in the field of humor, Attardo (2007). He claims that "an ironical utterance is both inappropriate and relevant to its context" (Attardo, 2007, p. 135). Attardo has systemized The Isotopy–Disjunction Model[93], and applied it to humorous texts (including irony). The Isotopy–Disjunction Model presented by the scholar is a

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[91] Semantic Script Humor Theory addresses humor in general. Yet one of the biggest authorities in the field of humor and irony, Attardo, applies this theory to irony and in his research holds the belief that humor and irony—though being two separate phenomena—often overlap (the approach is supported by Dynel (2008), Giora (2001), Jorgensen (1996), Kotthoff (2003), Partington (2007) and other scholars). Meanwhile, some other academics, for example the Russian scientist Козинцев (2004), believe in cardinal differences between irony and humor.

[92] Guinsler (2008) approaches Raskin's theory as one of the theories of incongruity. According to the scholar, a number of different theories might do under the term of incongruity (as well as surprise, contrast, configuration). These might include Kant's approach, Bergson's (1899) research or the theory of Bisociation by Koestler (1964).

[93]The concept of isotopy and the Isotopy Theory were defined by the scholar of semiotics, Greimas (1966). Greimas does not address the field of irony/humor in his book, but his ideas are exploited in Attardo's model of Isotopy-Disjunction (2002).

model of text interpretation based on the idea that in a humorous text, the otherwise "normal" linear processing of the text is disrupted by an "anomalous" element (ibid).

The idea underlying the model of the linear organization of jokes is that while processing the text in a linear way, the reader/listener connects the meanings of the words in the text to get a general meaning which Attardo marks as S1. An anomalous element in the text creates a passage from S1to a different meaning, which Attardo calls S2 (ibid). The passage from S1to S2 is sudden and unexpected. In The Isotopy–Disjunction Model, the element which causes the passage from S1 to S2 is called a "disjunctor"[94]. Attardo further makes a distinction between referential jokes/irony, which are dependent on the meaning of the text, and verbal jokes/irony, which not only rely on the meaning of the text element [95], but also involve "phonetic ambiguity (loosely known as puns), syntactic ambiguity, or alliteration" (ibid, p. 2). Relying on this distinction, Attardo (ibid) classifies jokes into referential, lexical verbal, syntactic verbal, and alliterative verbal.

In parallel to the Isotopy–Disjunction Model, Attardo has developed the General Theory of Verbal Humor (2002). This theory has been acknowledged as the currently dominant theory in the modern research of humor in general, and also in ironology. A full account of the theory can be found in Attardo & Raskin (1991) and Attardo (1994, 2001). The General Theory of Verbal Humor is presented as an extension to Raskin's Semantic-Script Theory of Humor (1985). Relying on the General Theory of Verbal Humor, the reconstruction of the implicit ironic meaning (which is referred to as the "value" by Attardo) is "absolutely inferential as in the text itself, apart from an assumption regarding relevance, no other aspect of meaning is given"

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[94] "Disjunctor" in Attardo is an equivalent to Raskin's (1985) "Script Switch Trigger".

[95] The distinction is based on the "disjunctor" and the moment of connection (when the direct/literal meaning of the utterance is transformed into a humorous or ironic meaning). "Referential jokes are based on the meaning of the text and do not make any reference to the phonological realization of the lexical items" and therefore can be translated easily into other languages (e.g. "A taxi accident in Glasgow. 15 get injured"). Meanwhile the "verbal jokes" are based on phonological realization and the translation is either impossible or "must rely on unsystematic correspondences between the codes" (e.g. "Do you believe in clubs for young people? – Only when kindness fails") (Attardo, Linguistic theories of Humor, 1994, pp. 95-97).

(Attardo, 2000). In his research Attardo also holds to the opinion that the comprehension of irony is a two-level process, the sequence of which is determined by salience[96] (Attardo, 2000).

**f. The Graded Salience Hypothesis** belongs to the outstanding scholar Giora. The theory was presented in 1997[97] and has been further developed both individually and together with other researchers: Fein (1998, 1999, 2005, 2004), Ariel (1998, 2000), Balaban (2005), and Alkabets (2005). The theoretical background provided by Giora has been applied in the studies of Kotthoff (1998, 2003), Attardo (2001), etc.

The theory presented by Giora takes an approach to irony which is different from the accounts favored by both the supporters of the Standard pragmatic model (Grice) and the followers of the Direct Access model (Sperber and Wilson). Contrary to the Standard Pragmatic Model of irony processing, the experiments conducted by Giora(1999, 1998, 2003, etc.) reveal that in some cases, figurative speech (e.g. conventional metaphors, conventional ironies, or well-known proverbs) is accessed in its indirect meaning first, if supported by a context facilitating the interpretation of the indirect meaning as argued by a number of other researchers (e.g., Gibbs, 1980; Turner and Katz, 1997; Giora and Fein, 1999a; Katz and Ferretti, 2001). Consequently, contrary to the claims of the Direct Access model, the investigation of Giora suggests that even certain cases of direct speech can be first accessed in their figurative meaning in contexts supporting direct interpretation (Gibbs, 1980; Giora and Fein, 1999).

To solve such controversies, Giora presents the idea of graded salience [98](1997), which is capable of accounting for the problematic cases.

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[96] Here Attardo supports Giora's theory (1997), discussed below.

[97] Graded Salience theory supports the Indirect Negation View (Giora, 1995). Relying on this model, the aim of the ironist is to draw the reader's attention to "failed expectations," i.e. to an obvious incongruity between what is said (an allusion to the expectations) and what the real situation is. According to Giora, explicit negation mitigates the negativity (Giora, 1995; Giora, Balaban, Fein, & Alkabets, 2005), while in irony (which is a form of indirect negation), the negation emphasises the difference between what is said and the actual situation that is being criticised (ibid).

[98] Relying on Giora (1999, 2005), "the meaning of a word, phrase or sentence (e.g. a conventionalised idiom or proverb) is considered salient if it is encoded in the mental lexicon" and is salient due to

First of all, Giora claims that the rejection of the dictum level of an ironic utterance is an incorrect step. According to the scholar, it is precisely the gap between the dictum (literal, direct) and implicitum (indirect, figurative) levels that generates irony. This gap delivers the most important information. According to Kotthoff (1998), the ironist communicates his evaluation; he communicates the difference between what was the desired result and what is the actual result[99]. As the scholar puts it, "irony always marks a deviation from the normal standard, which, at the same time, it implicitly creates. Hence, the evaluation gap which is always constructed in irony, integrates the gap separating the normal from the not-normal" (1998, p.1403). For the communication of the evaluative attitude, neither the dictum nor the implicitum levels can be rejected or underestimated. Both levels should be given equal attention, as both levels contribute to the communication of the evaluative attitude. Therefore the theory of Graded Salience suggests the same model of processing for both literal and ironic utterances. Giora claims that the main factor that makes an impact on speech processing is lexical salience. If the meaning of a word is encoded in our lexicon, it means that meaning is salient. As Giora puts it: "salient meanings of words and collocations are always accessed initially... irrespective of contextual information or bias" (1999, p.243). Though Peleg, Fein, and Giora (2008) admit that context can influence comprehension, they claim that „it cannot block salient but incompatible meanings" (2008, p.15) as "context does not interact with lexical processes" (ibid). Thus, in Giora's model of irony processing, the distinction is made not between the literal and implicit meanings but between lexically salient and non-salient meanings. Relying on this theory, when lexically salient meanings are incompatible with the context, additional processes are necessary to access

"conventionality, frequency, familiarity, or prototypicality" (1999, p. 921). Consequently, the meanings that are not coded in the mental lexicon are referred to as non-salient.

[99] The idea of Kotthoff reflects the main features of social irony and supports the arguments of Utsumi's theory. The idea can also be related to the irony of Fate, which is generated by a sharp contrast between reality and human ideals, or between the intentions and results: the results are usually contrary to the expectations (according to Booth's *A Rhetoric of Irony*, 1975).

less salient meanings. The model of irony processing presented by Giora is considered to be one of the essential contributions into ironology. However her account has not been universally supported either. For instance, in her article *Irony: Negation, Echo, and Metarepresentation* (2007), Carmen Curcó makes a comparison of Sperber & Wilson's Echoic-Mention (Relevance) theory of irony and Giora's Graded Salience Hypothesis on the basis of the cognitive capacities that are required for irony comprehension, and comes to the conclusion that Sperber & Wilson's theory provides a better account of irony.

**g. Implicit Display Theory (2000).** In 2000, Utsumi presented the Implicit Display Theory as a method for the analysis of irony. The theory was later referred to as a cognitive theory of verbal irony (2004). According to Utsumi (2004), the large number controversial approaches to irony came about due to the diverse features of irony which have been taken as the basis (e.g. pretense, echoing, incompatibility, indirect negation, etc.) when defining irony and when distinguishing ironic utterances from direct ones. Relying on Utsumi (2004), all "these theories suffer from the same problem that they have attempted to provide necessary and/or sufficient properties for distinguishing irony from non-irony; there appear to be no such properties shared by all ironic utterances" (2004, p.1369). The way to tackle the problem is offered by Utsumi's Implicit Display theory, which takes an approach to irony as a "prototype based category" (ibid)[100] within the framework of cognitive linguistics. The theory stands out due to its attention to the utterance's style and context: the "style of an ironic sentence, which corresponds to properties of implicit display, governs how similar it is to the irony prototype, i.e., the degree of irony. On the other hand, context determines how likely one is to make an ironic remark, i.e. likelihood of irony" (Utsumi, 2004, p.1370). Referring to irony as a prototype category, Utsumi distinguishes three essential

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[100] Irony as a prototype based theory was addressed by Sperber and Wilson (1981). In their work (Sperber & Wilson 1981, Sperber 1984 and Wilson & Sperber 1992 ), irony is defined "as a prototype of such language where the literal meaning is used not to transmit the idea but to echo it and , simultaneously, to express one's attitude to the echoed idea" (cited from Kotthoff, 1998); in this way irony becomes the prototype of the utterances that are double-coded through echoing. Kotthoff criticizes this position and argues that double-coding through echoing is not specific to irony, but can be detected in a variety of forms of humorous communication (Kotthoff, 1998).

prototypical features as three conditions that make up the basis of the Implicit Display Theory. First, irony presupposes an ironic environment, which is "a proper situational setting in the discourse context" (ibid). According to Utsumi (ibid), an ironic environment is made up from (a) the speaker's expectations, (b) an incompatibility between the expectations and the reality, and (c) the speaker's negative attitude towards this incompatibility. For an utterance to be comprehended as ironic, the discourse situation should be interpreted as an ironic environment (with all the aspects present or implicit). Second, relying on Utsumi, "irony is an utterance that *implicitly displays* ironic environment. Implicit display of ironic environment is achieved by an utterance which (d) alludes to the speaker's expectation, (e) includes pragmatic insincerity by violating one of pragmatic principles, and (f) expresses indirectly the speaker's negative attitude by being accompanied by ironic cues" (ibid) . Third, Utsumi argues that verbal irony is distinguished from non-ironic utterances by relying on how much it corresponds to the conditions of the ironic environment and implicit display: for a sentence to be interpreted ironically it should be recognized as "having achieved implicit display", and the "situation should be identified as ironic environment" (2007, p. 524). Utsumi illustrates the case with an example of an ironic utterance: "You're really a good dancer" (in a situation when your expectations that your partner will dance well are not fulfilled, and you get disappointed).  The ironic utterance then satisfies all the three conditions of implicit display[101]. As Utsumi puts it in his article *Stylistic and Contextual Effects in Irony Processing (2004)*, irony is a prototype -based category "characterized by the notion of implicit display. The prototype of irony is an abstract exemplar which completely meets all the three conditions for implicit display" (2004, p. 1370). Utsumi also argues that "the degree of

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[101] First, an allusion is made to the previous expectations that the partner is a good dancer. Second, this is a case of an utterance whose literal meaning violates the conversational maxim of quality. Third, the hyperbolizing word "really" is used to reinforce the ironic attitude.

ironicalness is quantitatively defined as a measure of similarity between the prototype of irony and an utterance" (2007, p.524)[102].

Utsumi believes that the Implicit Display Theory, contrary to other theories of irony, is able to provide a concise account of irony comprehension[103]. He gives reference to the shortcomings of a few theories that have been discussed above and claims that "allusion-based theories such as Sperber and Wilson's (1995) echoic interpretation theory cannot explain why over polite utterances were rated as more ironic than appropriately polite utterances. On the other hand, insincerity-oriented theories such as Attardo's (2000) relevant inappropriateness view cannot account for the finding that the speaker's expectation affects the degree of irony" (2000, p.1804). Utsumi also claims that the interpretative Echo-mention theory is incapable of accounting for the fact that ,the degree of "ironicalness" is influenced by contextual information only in cases when the expectations towards the beliefs of the addressee serve as the cause for irony (Utsumi grounds this conclusion on experiments he conducted in 2000). The cause of such difficulties, according to Utsumi, lies in the position of some scholars who believe that irony "interpretively echoes not only the speaker's expectation but also other sources such as someone's utterances, opinions or even general norms, whereas the implicit display theory assumes that only the speaker's expectation is alluded to by irony" (2000, p.1805).

In general, Utsumi's theory (2000) is in accord with the theoretical postulates of Giora's Graded Salience theory (1997), and is in many aspects compatible with Attardo's General Theory of Verbal Humor (2002).

The current research focuses on the incompatibility between social expectations and actual results (as a stimulus for irony), which is one of the most characteristic features of social irony. Irony is recognized when the addressee realizes that the expectations of the speaker are in conflict with the

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[102] Irony as a prototype based category is also examined by Kalbermatten (2007); yet he enumerates different prototypical features of irony (the opposition between the literal and implied meanings, concealed criticism, aims, shared experience and common background knowledge).
[103] The functions of irony, relying on Utsumi (2007), are the weakness of the theory.

results of some social activities or statements that come from the source the speaker relies on. Irony is determined by our common/background knowledge and therefore when irony centers round *our* reality (Lithuania) it is easier to recognize; meanwhile, when irony is aimed at a reality which is strange to us (America), the recognition of the ironic environment might present some difficulties; yet, in this case, linguistic means (lexical and grammatical) and background knowledge enable us to detect an ironic utterance. In the current analysis, when selecting ironic headlines for examination, I will hold to the theoretical framework of three scholars: Utsumi, Giora, and Attardo. They will be relied on when detecting the lexical salience of the utterance and its correspondence to the prototype. However, to account for the mechanism of irony processing, the newest theory of cognitive linguistics—i.e. the theory of conceptual blending—will be applied. An overview of this theory is provided in the following part of the dissertation.

## 8. CONCEPTUAL BLENDING AND ITS APPLICATION TO IRONY

### 8.1. The scope and impact of the theory

The limitations of the irony processing mechanisms discussed in the previous parts of the dissertation can be solved within the framework of cognitive linguistics and its methods of analysis. One of the essential achievements in human information processing has been the emergence of Gilles Fauconnier & Mark Turner's theory of conceptual integration, or, as it is more commonly referred to, conceptual blending[104]. According to Evans (2006), the theory of blending developed out of two traditions of cognitive linguistics: the theory of conceptual metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) and the theory of mental spaces (Fauconnier, 1985). Blending has been presented as a scientific model which encompasses and explains a variety of divergent phenomena, "from talking donkeys to complex numbers" (Evans, 2006, p.401). One of the great achievements of the theory is its contribution to the field of creativity, where it shows how new meanings can emerge from old information. Evans notes that the theory is "still in process, and a great deal of research work is currently taking place to elaborate and extend blending's original formulation. In addition, much interesting work is taking place in applying blending principles[105] to art in general and literary forms in particular"[106](ibid). According to Coulson and Oakley(2000), "conceptual blending theory offers a general model of meaning construction in which a small set of partially compositional processes operate in analogy, metaphor, counterfactuals, and many other semantic and pragmatic phenomena" (2000, 2005). The main claims of the two leading cognitive scientists, Turner and Fauconnier, are presented in their book *The Way We Think* (2002), which according to Evans is a „landmark... of the imaginative nature of the human

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[104] This theory, relying on Coulson and Oakley (2000), is also known as "the theory of online meaning construction, the many space model, and the network theory" (2000, pp. 175-196)

[105] The main statements and mechanisms of the theory are discussed below.

[106] The list of scholars that work within the framework of blending theory includes Turner, Fauconnier, Coulson, Oakley, Veale, Gibbs, Bache, Evans, Dancygier, Lehrer, Feyaerts, Brone, Moschovakis and many more.

mind" (2006, p. 400). Fauconnier and Turner show that conceptual blending is "at the root of the cognitively modern human mind" (ibid), and therefore it should not be narrowed down to the concept of "word manufacturing" suggested by Lehrer (2007, p.116).

The achievements of Turner and Fauconnier have generated further interest and research. In addition to the research by Coulson & Oakley, a few more scientists should be mentioned. Evans & Green provide an insightful overview of conceptual blending in their book *Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction* (2006). Evans, in his book *How Words Mean: Lexical concepts, cognitive models and meaning construction*, focuses on the interaction between blending and metaphor theory in the processing of figurative meanings. Kovecses (2000) shows how the concept of blending is applied to metaphors. The relationship between blending and metaphors is also addressed in the works of Oakley and Coulson (1999); Dancygier analyses the relationship between blending and pronouns (2008) and offers a new approach to the interpretation of proper names relying on blending (2008). Lehrer (2007) focuses on lexical creativity, applying blending to the study of "nonce-words" (ibid); the analysis and concepts of this study are equally applicable to the analysis of neologisms that imply irony. The formation of nonce-words and their "specific meta-communicative functions" (2007, p.15) are also studied by Hohenhaus (2007), and though irony is not given special attention, the scholar notes that in figurative and humorous texts a significant role is played by lexical creativity, which is related to "hypostatization", a concept introduced by Lipka (1975, p. 200)[107]. Meanwhile, a substantial amount of scientific work relates blending to other spheres of investigation. Pereira (2007) applies blending theory to the studies of artificial intelligence; Ramey (2009) analyses the motif of sleep and death within the framework of blending. And Lakoff & Nunez (2000) apply blending to "mathematical infinities" (ibid). In Lithuania,

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[107] The term has been used to refer to "the power of words in concept formation , where the mere existence of a name implies to a speaker that a corresponding entity must exist in extralinguistic reality" (Hohenhaus, 2007, p. 22).

the phenomenon of crosslinguistic blending has been addressed by Braun (2010).

The research mentioned above comprises only a small part of all the scientific work that is being carried out in the field of blending. In the current study, the theory of conceptual blending will be applied to the analysis of irony, relying on the major statements, mechanisms, typology, and compressions of blending. To reveal how the mechanism of blending can be employed to account for irony processing, a more detailed overview of the theory of conceptual blending is required.

## 8.2. The structure and compound elements of blending

The research of Turner & Fauconnier starts as far back as the Upper Paleolithic, when "human beings developed an unprecedented ability to innovate and acquired a modern human imagination, which gave them the ability to invent new concepts and to assemble new and dynamic mental patterns through the evolution of the mental capacity for conceptual blending" (Turner & Fauconnier, 2002, p. 187). As Sinha puts it, "the focus in blending theory on the dynamics of meaning construction makes it a productive tool" for analysis (2005, p. 1537). It is the dynamics of conceptual blending that plays an essential role in how we think and live; "however, to a great extent it operates beyond the limits of our consciousness: almost invisibly to consciousness, it choreographs vast networks of conceptual meaning, yielding cognitive products, which, at the conscious level, appear simple"[108] (Turner & Fauconnier, 2002, p. v). As mentioned above, the major claims of Turner & Fauconnier's theory are related to the theory of mental spaces[109], and the concept of blending is defined as a process of conceptual mapping and integration unique to the human mind. Relying on the theory, a conceptual

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[108] In their book, Turner and Fauconnier describe the complex cognitive processes that should be activated to perceive a blue cup as a blue cup, though in everyday life this seems to be a simple action.
[109] Mental spaces are like small conceptual packets interconnected by specific long-term knowledge (e.g. memories that might be activated in certain situations) and formed due to certain thoughts and actions. The network of mental spaces joins together a number of mental spaces. The mental structure of blending is an integration structure which receives input projections (the mental spaces of other networks) and develops a new emergent structure which is not directly inherited from the inputs.

integration network is built where mental spaces are marked as circles, elements as dots, and relations among different mental spaces are represented by lines. Turner & Fauconnier provide the following generalized scheme of the mechanism of blending:
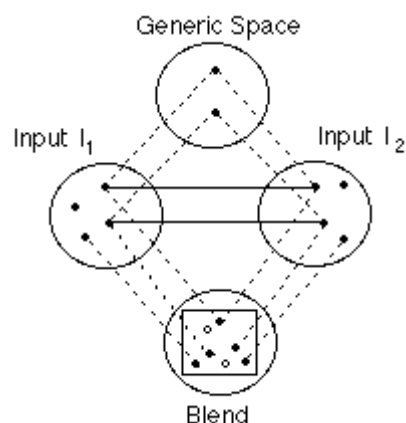


Two input spaces containing common elements[110] are connected through a generic space, and having undergone selective projection,[111] elements are transferred to the blended space[112], which can also be referred to as a "hybrid frame" (Coulson, 2001, p. 115). Coulson, Urback, and Kutas (2006) notice that in the analysis of the blended space, both social context and the cognitive situation of the speaker, should be taken into consideration. On the basis of the generalized scheme of Turner & Fauconnier, further developments are being made: the scheme has undergone modifications, and new elements have entered the model. Talking about the integration network, Coulson emphasizes "frame shifting" (2002), Bache incorporates the notion of "conceptual disintegration[113] as an indispensable counterpart to blending" (2005, p. 1615), and Veale, Feyaerts and Brone (2006) place emphasis on the dynamics of the blended structures. Yet the starting point for all researchers of blending is the theory of Turner & Fauconnier. On the basis of their

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[110] Coulson refers to such input spaces as "established domains" (2001, p. 115).

[111] Selective projection is discussed in detail in Turner and Fauconnier's *The Way We Think* (2002, pp. 71-73).

[112] Turner's website, devoted to the theory of conceptual blending, provides a generalised scheme constructed from three mental spaces (without a generic mental space). See: http://markturner.org/cdss/cdss1.html

[113] The concept of disintegration is used as a "technical cover term for a number of specific related phenomena complementing 'integration,' such as fragmentation and differentiation" (see: Bache's *Constraining conceptual integration theory: Levels of blending and disintegration*).

generalized schemes, cross-space relations are detected and more complex schemes are built.[114] In the picture provided below, the classical example of "This surgeon is a butcher"[115] illustrates the general scheme: an abattoir maps onto an operating room, the aim of serving meat maps onto the aim of healing, the tools of butchery map onto the tools of surgery, etc. (Kovecses, Koller, *Language, mind, and culture*, 2006, p. 276).
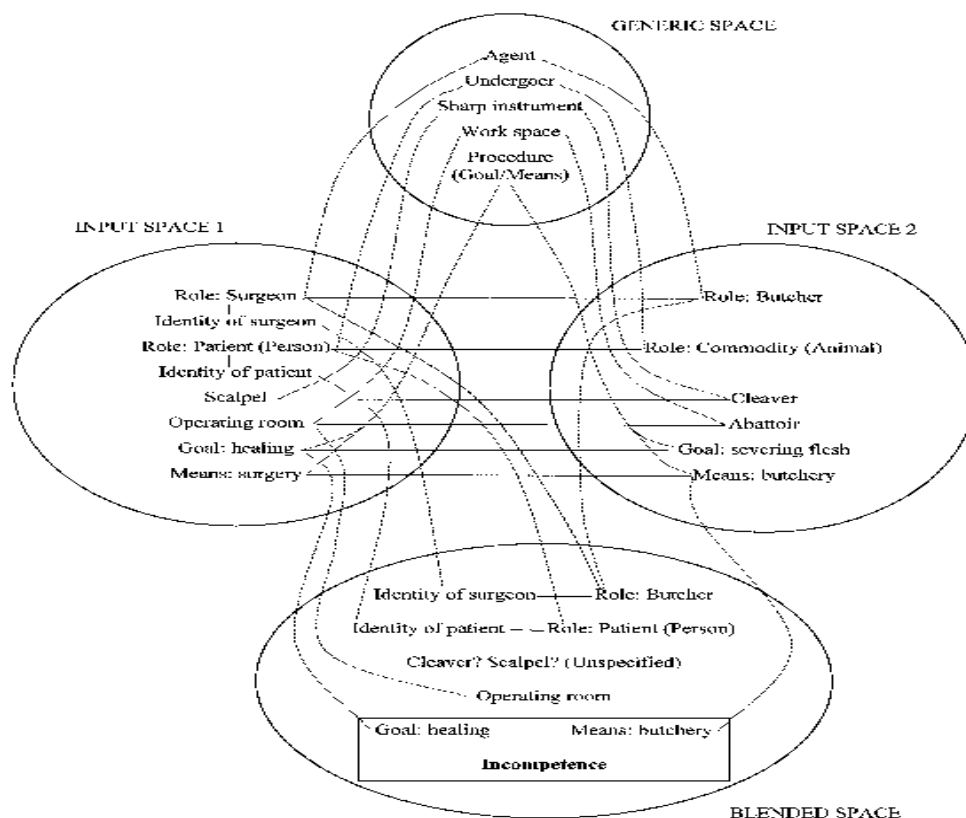


Figure 1. Conceptual integration network: Surgeon as butcher

As mentioned above, lines indicate relations among the different elements within the mental spaces. However, finding counterpart elements is neither obvious nor easy. The mapping is done by relying on the intended blend, and not on an obvious analogy between x and y (in this case, between a surgeon and a butcher). Even when the counterpart elements are detected, they do not reveal the main idea of the utterance, i.e. that the surgeon is incompetent (as incompetence is not inherent in any of the input spaces). The theory

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[114] An example is provided on the following page. A broader variety of integration networks will be provided in Parts 10 and 11.

[115] The example is taken from Turner and Fauconnier's *The Way We Think* (2002) and is widely exploited by other scholars examining the processes of blending (Evans, Coulson, etc.).

accounts for the inference of incompetence in the following way. Only a partial projection from each of the input spaces is performed. From the target input space, "structured by the domain of SURGERY, it inherits such elements as the identity of a particular person being operated on (i.e. the speaker), the identity of another individual who is performing the operation, and perhaps details of the operating room setting. From the source input space, which draws on the domain of BUTCHERY, it inherits the role 'butcher' and associated activities" (Grady, Oakley & Coulson, 1999, p.104). Selective projection is an indispensible part of the mechanism of blending in which the elements to be projected into the blended space are selected. Sometimes two counterpart elements from input spaces are projected, sometimes one, and in other cases none; an element that has no counterparts in other mental input spaces can also be projected into the blended space. However, it is not only selective projection but also the juxtaposition of elements from the inputs that leads to the "emergent structure" (Turner & Fauconnier, 2002), i.e. the idea of incompetence. The emergent structure, which is typical of conceptual blends, is not copied from either of the inputs: "it is generated in three ways: through composition of projections from the inputs, through completion based on independently recruited frames and scenarios, and through elaboration, or running the blend"[116] (Turner & Fauconnier, 2002, p.48).

According to Turner and Fauconnier (2002), the relations among inputs are constantly maintained when we "run the blend", so that "all these 'sameness' connections across spaces seem to pop out automatically, yielding a flash of comprehension. But for this flash to occur, counterpart links must be unconsciously maintained even as they change dynamically across [all of the] mental spaces" (ibid, p.44). Everything that is projected into the blended space is automatically projected back to all the input spaces. Blends create a space where different structures are manipulated simultaneously; the other mental

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[116] Turner and Fauconnier emphasize that blending composes elements from different input spaces to "build the connections that do not exist in separate inputs" (2002, p. 48); the emergent structure in blending can also be developed through completion (which is usually related to background knowledge).The elaboration of the blend opens up the creative possibilities of blending.

spaces that are included in the network do not disappear; on the contrary, the value of the blended space is in its capacity to conceptually integrate all the inputs. Thus, building the integration network, according to Turner & Fauconnier, involves establishing mental spaces, cross-space matching, selective projection, identifying shared structures, projections back to the inputs, and running the blend. All of these operations are performed simultaneously. Generic and blended spaces are also connected, as the blend inherits its structure from the generic space, which becomes more specific as some elements that do not come directly from the input spaces are possible in the blend[117].

## 8.3. Types of integration networks

Turner and Fauconnier (2002) distinguish four typical integration networks: simplex, mirror, single-scope, and double scope. The mechanism of blending is accounted for relying on these structures. As the analytical part of this dissertation is based on different models of integration, an overview of their characteristic features, based on the work of Turner and Fauconnier (2002), is provided below.

a. Simplex Networks. Simplex networks stand for the least complicated structures. Here one input space serves as a frame and the other input space provides elements to fill that frame. The first input space is a readily accessible frame, for example one of family, which encompasses such roles as father, mother, child, etc. The other input space can contain specific elements, such as Paul and Sally. When we conceive of Paul as the father of Sally, we create a blend wherein the elements of Paul and Sally are integrated into the frame of family: the role of father is mapped onto Paul, and the role of daughter is mapped onto Sally. The frame of the first input space is compatible

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[117] The case could be illustrated with a riddle provided by Turner and Fauconnier (2002). A monk climbs up a mountain and descends in a few days; a question is asked whether there is some place that the monk reaches at the same time on his two separate journeys. There is a monk going up the mountain in one input space, and the same monk going down the mountain in the second input space. The blended space contains the meeting of the "two" monks, which does not come from either of the input spaces (*The Way We Think*, 2002, pp. 39-57).

and does not conflict with the elements of the other input space. As a result, a simplex network blend intuitively does not feel like a blend. According to the scholars (ibid), the cross-space mapping in simplex networks corresponds to the logical forms of Frege (1892)[118].

b. Mirror networks. A mirror network is "an integration network in which all spaces—inputs, generic, and blend—share an organizing frame. An organizing frame for a mental space is a frame that specifies the nature of the relevant activity, events, and participants" (ibid, p. 122). As an illustration of a mirror network, Turner and Fauconnier (2002) provide a story in which the modern catamaran *Great American II*, sailing from San Francisco to Boston in 1993, was compared to the clipper *Northern Light*, which took the same route in 1853. The observers noted that „*Great American II* is 4.5 days ahead of *Northern Light*." Here the organizing frame of the blend is a boat race in the ocean along a single route: different ships that took the same route at different time are seen as racing each other along the route at the same time. The organizing frame "provides a topology for the space it organizes; that is, it provides a set of organizing relations among the elements in the space. When two spaces share the same organizing frame, they share the corresponding topology and so can be easily put into correspondence. Establishing a cross-space mapping between inputs becomes straightforward" (ibid, p.122).

Though the mental spaces of a mirror network might have the same topology at the level of organizing frame, they might differ at a more specific level (e.g. in this case there is a clash due to differences in the types of boats and in the time of year). The conflict might be resolved in two ways: either only one of the conflicting elements is projected into the blend or both conflicting elements are projected into the blend as separate entities (thus, in this case, the common element "boat" is projected into the blend, while "the more specific clashing elements clipper ship and catamaran are both brought into the blend, to yield two boats of different types" (ibid, p.125). The resulting race is of an odd kind, as clippers usually do not race catamarans. However,

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[118] For more details see: Frege, *Sense and reference* (1892).

the oddity of the race network has no impact on its purpose, which is merely to determine the relative speeds and positions of the boats.

c. Single-Scope networks. Single-scope networks have two input spaces with different organizing frames, only one of which is projected into the blend. "Its defining property is that the organizing frame of the blend is an extension of the organizing frame of one of the inputs but not the other" (ibid, p.126). Turner and Fauconnier (2002) provide an example in which the scenario of two boxing men can provide a frame that can be applied "in compressing our understanding of two CEOs in business competition" (ibid, p. 128). Single-scope networks are the prototype of conventional (source-target) metaphors. The input space that provides the organizing frame for the blend can, employing the terminology of Lakoff (1980)[119], be called the "source", and the input space that is in the focus can be referred to as the "target".

Single-scope networks provide "a highly visible type of conceptual clash, since the inputs have different frames" (ibid, p.129). The clash is dealt with by giving the overall organizational power to only one of the input spaces, which is then called the framing input. Usually the framing space has prebuilt compressions that are exploited to induce a compression for the focus input: "single-scope networks give us the feeling that "one thing" is giving us insight into "another thing", with a strong asymmetry between them" (ibid, p.129). Such blends provide not only compressions but also strong emotions, which, according to Turner and Fauconnier "induce the feeling of global insight" (ibid, p.128).

d. Double-Scope networks. Double-scope networks have two input spaces with incompatible or conflicting frames. There is "an organizing frame for the blend that includes parts of each of those frames and has emergent structure of its own. In such networks, both organizing frames make central contributions to the blend, and their sharp differences offer a possibility of rich clashes" (ibid, p.131). A thorough analysis of such structures is provided by Coulson (2001), with reference to the conventional metaphor "to dig one's own

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[119] For more details see Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 1980.

grave". In the case depicted by Coulson, a person with knowledge of finance disapproves of his parents' decision to keep their money under a mattress. He says: "You are digging your own grave". "Digging one's own grave" inherits the structure of digging and burial, from the "digging a grave" input. But it also acquires "causal, intentional, and internal event structure from the "unwitting failure" input" (1997, p. 169). The two inputs are not simply juxtaposed (juxtaposition is impossible due to the incompatibility in the causal structure: silly behavior leads to failure, but digging a grave does not lead to dying). Rather, according to Turner & Fauconnier, emergent structure specific to the blend is created. Instead of preventing the building of the integration network, such clashes challenge the imagination and the resulting blends, as the scholars put it, are highly creative.

*e. Multiple blends.* In addition to the four essential types of integration networks discussed above, Turner & Fauconnier describe complex blends that do not possess a generic space, but instead have more than two input spaces. Multiple blends are constructed when several input spaces are projected in parallel or in succession (the intermediate blends then serve as inputs for further blends). Describing multiple blends, Turner (2002) distinguishes the megablend[120], whose input spaces are separate blends on their own. To illustrate the case of a megablend, a joke provided by Turner & Fauconnier could be taken: "The stork dropped George Bush on third base with a silver spoon in his mouth" (2002, p. 285). Here, the complete structure encompasses input spaces that are already separate multiple blends: Birth as arrival by a stork, Life as a game of baseball, a silver spoon as a high status in a society. A network structure that contains several smaller network structures enables relations among separate blends and takes the existing compressions into a new blend.[121]. Thus, when a blend is built from other ready-made blends as input spaces, the result is a megablend. Relying on Turner & Fauconnier, such blends have "spectacular emergent emotions and dramatic psychological

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[120] In his later article "Compression and representation" (2006), Turner refers to megablends with the term "hyper blends."

[121] Compressions are further discussed below.

effect" (ibid, p.145). Words on their own, according to the scholars, are very uninformative compared to the meanings they encourage us to construct by relying on the compressions within the blends. Veale (2002), considering the ideas presented above, draws attention to aspects of social cognition and culture, and claims that cultural forces "shape the process of conceptual integration" (2002, p. 1). According to Veale, most of the research that is being carried out within the framework of conceptual blending does not take into consideration that "cultural blends are the result of a community process in which many voices interact over time, and... this interaction imposes a variety of unique pragmatic forces on the development of a blend" (ibid, p. 2). Therefore, when discussing blending within a certain cultural environment, the specific cultural/social processes peculiar to that environment are to be seen as integral parts of the blends. This insight of Veale is relevant to the current analysis, as irony in news headlines cannot be examined separately from the cultural and social environment[122] in which they appear.

### 8.4. Compressions and vital relations

Mental spaces, the connections between them, and blended spaces are established for a reason. As Turner & Fauconnier claim, blending "gives us global insight, human-scale understanding, and new meaning", and "one of the most important aspects of our efficiency, insight, and creativity is the compression achieved through blending" (2002, p. 92). As one of the assumptions of the current analysis is that irony exploits compressions enabled by the mechanisms of blending, an overview of the theoretical underpinnings regarding vital relations and compressions is provided below. All of the vital relations that function inside the blend and connect the various mental spaces provide certain compressions. Turner & Fauconnier provide an explicit illustration of how this works by referring to a picture that shows a dinosaur turning into a bird:

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[122] The arguments of Veale can be related to Moschovakis's (2006) research on topical identifications in blends. The scholar draws attention to the metaphorical nature of topical identifications and other aspects.
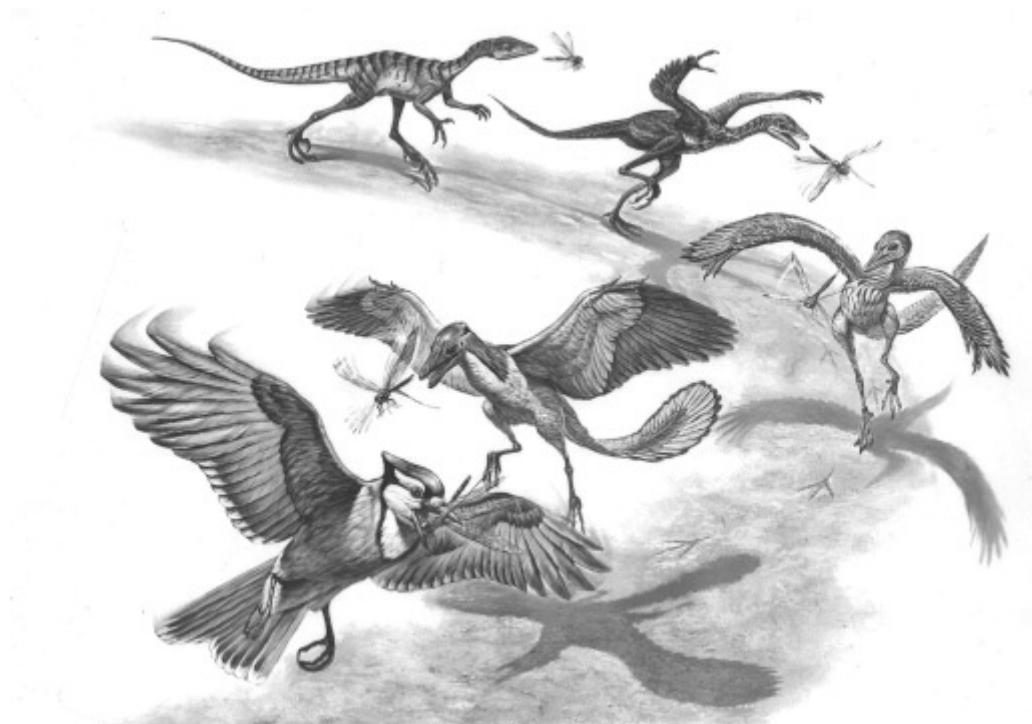
The picture reflects how the vital relations (here: Time, Space, and Identity) and compressions work in a blend. In the picture, the dinosaur and the bird are the same creature, though in reality they were separated by millions of years and different locations. In the blend, the millions of years are compressed into five steps along a single path, and the evolution itself is presented at the "scale of human understanding" (ibid, p. 92). Compressions enable complex processes to be communicated in a simple and comprehensible way.

Turner & Fauconnier (ibid) noticed that certain conceptual relations between elements show up repeatedly in many blends. They classified "outer space vital relations"[123] (which include Cause-Effect, Identity, Space, Time, Change, Part-Whole, Representation, Role, Analogy, Disanalogy, and Intentionality[124]) and "inner space vital relations"[125] (such as: Similarity, Uniqueness, Property, and Category). All these relations enable compressions that allow complex phenomena to be presented at the scale of human understanding. Further in the analysis, the vital relations peculiar to irony will be examined, as it is assumed that the use of irony is related to the

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[123] These are the relations that connect separate input spaces in the conceptual integration network.
[124] The analysis of each is provided below.
[125] These are the relations that have been compressed inside the blended space.

compressions enabled by blending. Therefore, following the ideas of Turner & Fauconnier (ibid), a short overview of the vital relations and their compressions is provided below.

Compressions of Time. Time is a "vital relation related to memory, change, continuity, simultaneity, and non-simultaneity, as well as to our understanding of causation" (ibid, p. 96). In networks that have compressions of Time, the input spaces usually differ in time, yet the mechanism of blending enables those spaces to be joined into a whole. In the picture above, one flight of one dinosaur encompasses millions years of the evolution of countless numbers of creatures.

Ironic news headlines frequently implicitly mention certain cultural aspects, historic events, fictitious stories or imaginary scenarios that are separated in time from our nowadays reality. It is the mechanism of blending that enables irony to connect these into a whole. Political jokes (e.g. the American ex-Presidents Clinton, Reagan and Nixon are together on the "Titanic") or headlines (e.g. "Bliūkšta Kėdainių caro mitas" (delfi.lt) ("The myth of Kedainiai Tsar fades"), where a modern politician is related to a tsar)[126] frequently make use of compressions of Time.

Compressions of Space. Turner & Fauconnier describe compressions of Space as being very similar to compressions of Time, the difference lying only in that compressions of Time enable two events/situations that are separated in time to be joined, while compressions of Space join events/situations that are separated in space. When describing compressions, Turner & Fauconnier provide only the main guidelines and claim that this field is open for further investigation. Speaking about irony, the compressions of Space, relying on the pilot research project carried out for this dissertation, might be of several kinds, e.g. joining two actual locations that belong to different input spaces (e.g. Golgotha and the Houses of Parliament), or joining real locations with imaginary places (e.g. Lithuania and a land of miracles).

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[126]Special attention to compressions in ironic headlines has been given in Vengalienė, D.(2009) *Blending in ironic references to Lithuania in news headlines*

Compressions of Change. Change is a very "general vital relation, connecting one element to another and suites of elements to other suites" (ibid, p. 92) The outer space vital relation of Change often goes together with the outer space vital relation of Identity. As a result, these outer space vital relations are usually compressed into the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness (e.g. in the dinosaur-bird example, we are given a compression within the blended space due to the outer space vital relation of Change: the whole process of evolution is seen as a change experienced by one creature within its own lifespan, i.e. the dinosaur and the bird are comprehended as one single unique being, manifesting the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness). Thus, the mechanism of Blending provides us "an efficient compression of Change into Uniqueness at human scale" (ibid, p. 94).

Compressions of Role-Value. Role-Value is one of the most common vital relations. All Roles have their Values. Within or across mental spaces, an element can be linked as a Role to another element as a Value. For example, George Bush or Rolandas Paksas are two of many possible values for the role of "President".

Analogy is dependent on Role-Value compressions. Turner & Fauconnier draw attention to the case of the Pope: "Suppose we have one network with *Pope* in one input and *Giovanni Montini* in the other, and *Pope Paul VI* in the blend, and we have another network with the same role, *Pope*, in one of its inputs and *Albino Luciani* in the other and *Pope John Paul* in the blend" (ibid, pp. 98-99). In this case, according to Turner & Fauconnier, the elements Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul are analogous, as the Role-Value compressions of both blends have the same role input. According to Veale (2006), analogy is "just one manifestation of creative cognition, but one that clearly illustrates this ability of creative thinkers to transcend conceptual boundaries and perform a semantic leap from one category structure to another" (2006, p. 223). The vital relation of Analogy is connected to the vital relation of Disanalogy. (For example, both Kant and a modern philosopher in separate input spaces can be connected by Analogy, yet at the same time there

are differences between them that are accounted for by the vital relation of Disanalogy).

Part-Whole Compressions. These compressions are typical in cases where one input space provides the whole and the other input space contains a part of that whole. Metonymy is based on such compressions; for instance when a person's face in a picture is referred to as a person.

Representation Compressions . Representation is very similar to the Part-Whole relation. Compressions of Representation are found when one input space corresponds to the thing represented in the other input space. In *The Way We Think* (2002), the case is illustrated by a situation where a person looking at a painting says, "Here is Queen Elizabeth. She is dressed as the Empress of India"; here, relying on Turner & Fauconnier, the vital relation of Representation is the relation between the Queen and the paint in the picture. Turner has devoted a separate study, *Compression and representation* (2006), to an analysis of the vital relation of representation. There he has concluded that: "powerful, nuanced, and mentally inexpensive, the compression of representation is a forge of creativity" (2006, p. 26), that makes human beings different from other species. Though important, representation is but one of many essential vital relations in the complex structure of language.

Cause-Effect Compressions. The elements of Cause and Effect located in separate input spaces are connected by the vital relation of Cause-Effect that usually goes together with compressions of Time, Space, and Change.

Property Compressions. The vital relation of Property, according to Turner & Fauconnier, is obvious: "a blue cup has the property blue" or "a murderer has the property guilty" (2002, p. 99). This relationship, in the classification of the scholars, is assigned to the inner space vital relations. The relation of Property can emerge as a result of cause-effect compressions: "a warm coat is something that causes you to be warm; it is not something that is warm in itself, but in the blend, it has the Property warm" (ibid).

Category.   This is one more relation that is ascribed to the inner space vital relations by Turner & Fauconnier.   In the example of a boat race

mentioned above, *Northern Light*, through the relation of Category, is connected to the element "clipper". In this case, the outer space vital relation of Analogy is compressed into the inner space vital relation of Category in the blend.

Intentionality. Intentionality also belongs to the relations functioning inside the blend, and encompasses such aspects as "hope, desire, want, fear, belief, memory, and other mental attitudes and dispositions" (ibid, p.100). The inner space vital relation of Intentionality is usually emphasized in the blend. In the dinosaur example discussed above, "the dinosaurs in the input spaces are not trying to evolve into birds in order to eat a dragonfly, but in the blend the unique dinosaur is" (ibid, p.101).

Uniqueness. Uniqueness is the fourth and the final inner space vital relation distinguished by Turner & Fauconnier. It "obtains automatically for elements in the blend, and we take it for granted" (ibid, p.101). The majority of the outer space vital relations are compressed into the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness.

All the vital relations operating in the structures of blending are dynamic and constantly undergo various compressions and de-compressions while developing the meaning that is transmitted to and from the blended mental space.


### 8.5 Irony and the mechanism of blending

In the current dissertation, it is assumed that the mechanism of conceptual blending can be applied to the analysis of irony[127], and that irony is capable of exploiting the benefits offered by this mechanism (compressions are considered to be the main benefit). The application of the mechanism of blending to the analysis of the phenomenon of irony enables the network structures that are peculiar to irony to be defined, as well as the compressions

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[127] The possible application of the mechanism of conceptual blending to verbal irony has been mentioned by Palink (2006), but the idea has not been further developed.

ironic communication undergoes. A list of inner and outer space vital relations that are characteristic of irony can also be compiled.

The capacity of irony to exploit the mechanism of blending and its compressions could at least partially give an answer to the still-unanswered question in ironology, why do we use irony or what factors stimulate the use of irony. As noted by Grady, Oakley and Coulson (1999), through the emergent structures, the theory of blending is able to explain negative assessments related to utterances. The structure is called emergent, as, "after connecting two input structures, the structure that is unique for the blend is produced" (Evans, 2006, p.429), and incongruity results in inferences. In irony this is related to "evaluative attitude, criticism, superiority" (ibid). Relying on Evans, the insightful inference emerges due to the incongruity between the reality and the desired situation. However, irony has not been separately analyzed by Turner & Fauconnier, Evans, or any other scholars. The outstanding American scientist Coulson, in her book *Semantic Leaps: Frame Shifting and Conceptual Blending in Meaning Construction* (2001), relies on the mechanism of blending when discussing humorous discourse and anecdotes, yet irony is not addressed. In her analysis of humorous texts, Coulson uses the concepts of "frame shifting" and "shift of meaning"[128], which will be applied in the current analysis of irony.  The findings of Coulson (2001) will be taken into consideration when defining the types of blending mechanisms exploited by irony, and the concept of „shift of meaning" will be used when referring to the elements in the blended space that obviously contradict our beliefs and common knowledge about reality, or elements that are incomparable in some other ways.

Due to the incompatibility between the constituent elements of the blended space, an ironic shift of meaning is caused which will be represented by a curved arrow in the schemes. As Turner & Fauconnier (2002) claim, all the processes of blending happen simultaneously and are processed

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[128] Coulson introduces the concepts to refer to a dynamic model of meaning construction that is based on reanalysis and results in a shift of implications (see Coulson, 2001, pp. 33-115).

at the same time[129]—therefore the ironic shift of meaning should also be treated, not as taking place after the construction of the blend, but simultaneously to its construction. Moreover, an assumption has been made that due to the ironic shift, irony is projected backwards from the blended space to the inputs. These assumptions are based on the conviction of Turner & Fauconnier, who argue that: "everything that is fused into the blend is projected back into the counterpart input spaces" (ibid, p. 327).

Irony, like all humor in general, or any other form of indirect language, can be exploited for complex communicative, social, and cognitive aims (which occupy a central position in language theories oriented at research of communication). Therefore, this examination of its mechanisms, structure, relations, and compressions is important for modern cognitive linguistics. To contribute to this field of academic research, irony will be analyzed within the framework of conceptual blending, the only drawback of which, according to Gibbs (2000), is that it is "too powerful"[130].

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[129] The blend is treated as a dynamic structure which can be destroyed, reformed or connected to other structures. The dynamics of the blending structure are illustrated by Veale, Feyaerts and Brone (2006); they refer to unfriendly humour and deformations of blending structures in "trumping" games. The term of a "trumping game" is introduced to refer to a situation where due to some linguistic means an unfavorable situation is turned into a victory against the opponent. Such transformation is a characteristic feature of humor and has been studied as a figure-ground-reversal in Attardo's General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH, Attardo 1994, 2001), and as a mechanism of conceptual profiling in cognitive linguistics (Langacker 1987). In this dissertation, an assumption is made that similar deformations are peculiar to irony (e.g. the words of the opponents are repeated in a different context).

[130] The remark of Gibbs (2000) on blending being too powerful is discussed by Bache (2005). A question is raised whether the theory is capable of giving an in-depth insight into such a great variety of different fields. Yet the vast application of the theory has proved it to be an indispensable tool in a number of narrow fields.

# 9. IRONIC HEADLINES REFERRING TO LITHUANIA

The research of Lithuanian headlines has been conducted within the scope of delfi.lt website and the results of the research are based on the analysis of this particular on-line website only. Delfi.lt provides a wide range of ironic headlines, a number of which address ironically Lithuania itself. The selection of ironic headlines is based on the pilot research (Appendix 1), which has been carried out to test the ironicality of the collected headlines.

## 9.1. "Lithuania – Mary's Land"

The phrase "Mary's land" as a reference to Lithuania is one of the most widely conventionalized ironies when talking about the country[131], one which is easily accessed/comprehended by Lithuanian audiences both in and out of context[132]. This ironic reference is frequent in the headlines of the Lithuanian mass media, articles, and comments. As the results of the pilot study[133] and the current analysis reveal, the ironic meaning of the phrase is both salient and conventionalized. On the other hand, the same phrase might be used in its non-ironic (metaphoric) meaning. The non-ironic use of the utterance is related to traditional Lithuanian Catholicism, to the manifestation of St. Mary and the belief in her protection.[134] The phrase is used metaphorically, without irony, in the Catholic publications of the Lithuanian press, and in religious programs on Lithuanian television. If there is no religious context, the ironic meaning of the

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[131] The Lithuanian headlines under discussion were found on the delfi.lt website, and the results of the research are based on the analysis of this particular website.

[132] A pilot study was carried out to examine the ability of the reader to detect irony in news headlines. The results of the research were presented in international conferences at VDU and VUKHF, in 2010.

[133] The results of the pilot study will be continuously referred to in the analysis of headlines.

[134] The apparition of St.Mary (acknowledged by the Vatican) in Europe took place in 1608 in Šiluva. "Therefore the cult of St.Mary in Lithuania is so conventional" and "therefore Lithuanians are proud to call their country Mary's land." A traditional Mary's feast is held annually in Šiluva for a vast community of believers (XXI Amžius, 62, 2003. http://www.xxiamzius.lt/ archyvas/xxiamzius/20030816/mums_01.html )

utterance is more salient[135], as the focus is usually not on the holy land but on the maladies of the country.

A non-ironic utterance uses a complex structure of blending that encompasses a number of mental spaces. Relying on Giora (1999), the non-ironic (and here, the metaphorical) meaning of an ironic utterance is not rejected; it remains active. The mental space encompassing the non-ironic meaning is integrated into the common blending structure. According to the theoretic underpinnings of Turner and Fauconnier (2002), the utterance operates on the basis of the below given mechanism of blending:
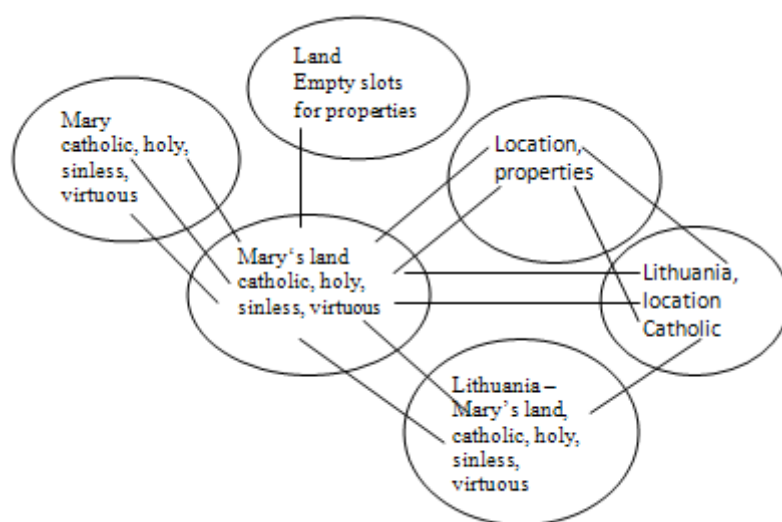


Figure 1

The structure "Lithuania - Mary's land" is a megablend made of two mental input spaces: Mary's land and Lithuania. The first mental input space, Mary's land, is a megablend on its own (it contains two separate inputs, Mary and Land, which are not connected through a generic mental space). The second input space, the mental space of "Lithuania," can be referred to as another megablend containing such mental input spaces as location, administrative unit, people, government, culture, etc. The mental input space/blend "Mary's land" is made up from two mental input spaces: Mary

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[135] The pilot study revealed that all the references to Mary's land on www.delfi.lt had an ironic meaning. The reference has been used ironically in headlines, in articles, and in comments.

(framed by Christianity) and land[136], as an abstract location. The structure of the "Land of Mary" blend corresponds to the Single Scope structure discussed by Turner and Fauconnier (2002, p.127); Here, similarly to the Metaphor Theory (Lakoff, 1980), one input space (in this case the input space of Mary) serves as a source, and the other input space (respectively, the input space of Land) as a target. In this way, the qualities associated with the name of Mary are mapped onto the location, which is not identified as a specific place in the megablend. In the blend of "Mary's Land", "land" serves as a container for the qualities that come from the mental input space of "Mary". Such features as catholic, holy, sinless, virtuous, etc. are projected into the mental space of "Land" and consequently into the blended space. As the integration does not go through a generic space, the mechanism is considered a megablend. The main inner space vital relation is that of Property, which in the blended space of "Mary's land" is compressed into the outer space vital relation of Uniqueness. The blended space provides a catholic, sinless, virtuous, pious country. None of the mental input spaces in this network contains irony. The name of Mary in the Christian tradition does not have any relation to irony either[137]. With reference to locations, the name of Mary is found in a variety of place-names[138], none of which could be considered ironical.

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[136] Land as a country also is regarded as a case of metonymy. Presumably in a non-ironic reference the focus is on the precise place where St.Mary appeared, on Lithuania as a certain territory, but not as a country. It is only later that the reference shifts to the country. Presumably the meaning of an ironic reference resulted from the incompatibility between Lithuania as a land and Lithuania as a country, and consequently evolved into the conflict between what "Mary's land" should look like and what it actually looks like.

[137] Relying on F.W. Dankers, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, (3rd edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), entry for ἅγιος esp. definition 2.d.β.) Wikipedia states that Mary of Nazareth is one of the most highly venerated saints in both the Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox Churches. The Roman Catholic Church, Eastern Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches venerate her as the Ever-Virgin Mother of God (Theotokos), who was specially favoured by God's grace (Catholics hold that she was conceived without original sin) and who, when her earthly life had been completed, was assumed bodily into Heaven. Some Protestants, including certain Anglicans, Methodists and Lutherans, embrace veneration of Mary and also hold some of these doctrines. Others, especially in the Reformed tradition, question or even condemn the devotional and doctrinal position of Mary in the above traditions. Mary also holds a revered position in Islam.

[138] In the USA (St. Mary's, Alaska ,St.Marys, Georgia, St. Maries, Idaho, St.Marys, Iowa, St.Marys, Kansas ,St. Mary's City, Maryland, Saint Mary's County, Maryland, St.Marys, Ohio ,St.Marys, Pennsylvania, St.Marys, West Virginia ), in Canada (St.Marys, Ontario, St. Mary's, Newfoundland and Labrador, in Avalon (electoral district), St. Mary's, Nova Scotia), in the UK (St. Mary's, Isles of Scilly,

In the headline under discussion, the blend of "Mary's land" serves as an input space for a hyper blend[139] of "Lithuania is Mary's land". In this case, the integration network follows the mirror structure of the mechanism of blending, where both generic and blended spaces share the same organizing frame, i.e. the frame of a country. The elements of the "Mary's land" input space are mapped onto their counterparts in the "Lithuania" input space. These are the abovementioned elements that stand for such properties as: catholic, religious, honest, protected by St. Mary, etc. The same elements are projected both to the generic and to the blended spaces. The outer space vital relations of Property and Analogy undergo compressions and turn into the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness.

This structure reflects a model of the non-ironic, metaphoric meaning of "Lithuania is Mary's land". Meanwhile, in the headlines collected for the analysis, the utterance communicates an incongruity between the author's expectations and reality. This incongruity is made explicit by employing irony to communicate a critical evaluative attitude and emotions (in this case, disappointment). Also, relying on the theory of Utsumi (2002), the headline is considered ironic if there is an incongruity between the reality and the prototype (i.e., the real Lithuania does not correspond to a prototypical land of St Mary). The headline is also considered ironic relying on the lexical salience (Giora's theory, 1997), which is based on the results of the pilot study (see Appendix 1). When the utterance is used ironically, the structure and both inner and outer vital relations undergo changes. Contrary to the previous script, a new scenario is constructed where the idealized vision and the critical evaluation of the country are interconnected, relying on the mental input space of "context/author's position/background knowledge"[140], which encompasses

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one of the Isles of Scilly, St Mary's, Hampshire, a district in the city of Southampton ), in France (Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, a town in the Camargue) etc.

[139] The term employed by Turner (2004) to refer to a subsequent bigger blend. As already mentioned, a more general term to refer to a blend that encompasses other blends in its structure is *megablend*.

[140] This mental input space is considered a megablend, as it blends the elements that come from different frames. In the dissertation a more detailed analysis of the structure of this mental input space will not be provided due to the limitations of the work. In schemes the mental input space of

elements that are dictated by the specific context of the utterance, common sense, background knowledge, shared beliefs, and opinions. If the compound elements in the mental space "Lithuania is Mary's land" were religious, pious, honest, etc., then, after the integration of the mental space of "context/author's position/background knowledge" into the network, such elements as corrupt, dishonest, cunning, etc. appear. This is because the article tells about the involvement of the parliament members in illegal construction projects. There emerges a conflict between the mental spaces of "Lithuania is Mary's land" and "context/author's position/background knowledge": the actual Lithuania and Lithuania as Mary's land, when brought together into a single blend, look incompatible. However, as Turner & Fauconnier put it: "far from being impeded by this pervasive feature of incompatibility in conceptualization, blending draws some of its power from being able to operate over incompatible spaces" (2002, p. 87). When the mental input space of "context/author's position/background knowledge" enters the blend, the final blend ***Lithuania is Mary's Land***"[141] exploits a double-scope integration network which simultaneously brings together two contrasting scenarios: the explicit and the implicit. The vital relations of the blend undergo cardinal changes. The main outer space vital relation of the blend is Disanalogy, which in the blended space is compressed into Uniqueness. The incompatibility of the input elements results in a clash which is projected into the blended space and here gives rise to the ironic shift of meaning, simultaneously expressing the author's negative evaluative attitude directed at the situation in Lithuania. The ironic meaning of the utterance is what Turner & Fauconnier define as emergent structure. It has been facilitated by the compressions (that irony achieved through the mechanism of blending) at the scale of "human understanding" (ibid, p. 90): everything that is entailed within the separate mental spaces is brought together though the vital relations of Property and Disanalogy, and compressed into the vital relation of Uniqueness.

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"context/author's position/background knowledge" will be depicted as comprising certain constituent elements but its integration system will not be developed.

[141] The marking of bold+italics+underline in schemes and structure descriptions will indicate irony.
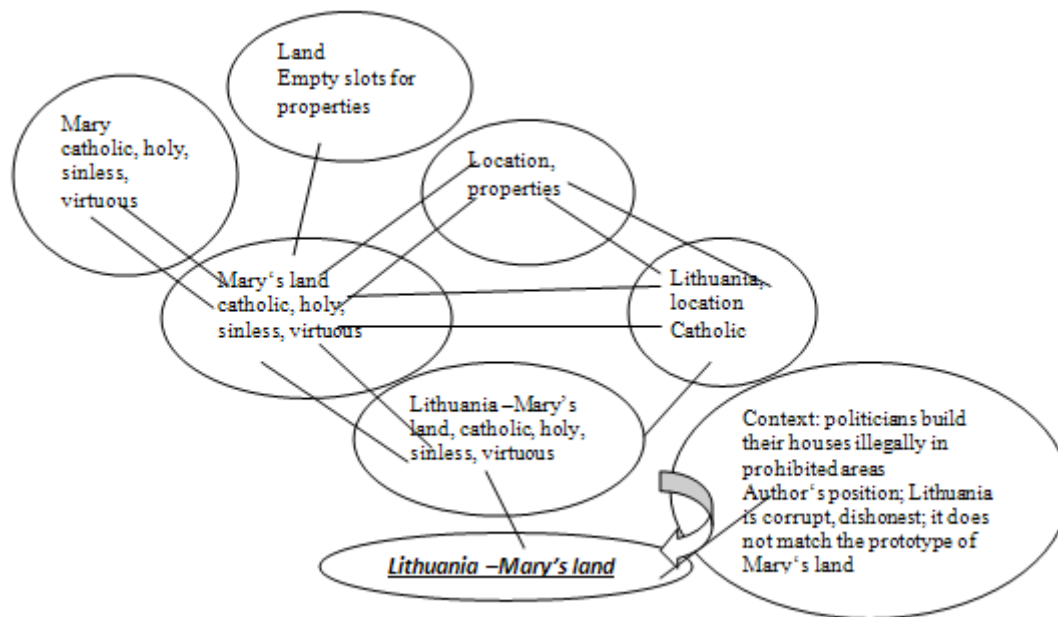
Figure 2

In the headline, the ironic overstatement (praise) based on Disanalogy performs a reinforcing function functions to reinforce the negative evaluation, as the situation is not merely presented as negative, it is presented as an inadequacy between the expectations and reality. According to Colston, "by stating the more desirable state of affairs that did not occur, the speaker creates a contrast with the current situation, making the current situation look worse by comparison" (1997, p.320). This strategy is referred to by Colston as 'salting the wound' (ibid). The ironic utterance accommodates everything that is contained within the blending network, making it both informative and efficient; compressions accommodate the transmission of both large amounts of information and the evaluative attitude.

The utterance that is being discussed can be further elaborated as a separate mental input space for more complex blending networks. Such elaboration has been encountered in several headlines on the news website delfi: "Public relations in Mary's Land", "Sodom and Gomorrah in Mary's Land", "Mary's land is a Land of Pedophiles", etc. While irony and the negative evaluative attitude are more implicit in the first headline, in the

following ones these become overt as the incongruity between the negative and the positive poles is explicit and the juxtaposition looks shocking.

All three ironic headlines inherit the compound elements, i.e. they inherit one of the input spaces from the "Lithuania is Mary's Land" blend. In all three cases, the irony exploits a complex megablend structure, where the constituent input spaces are megablends on their own. The name of Lithuania is not stated in the headlines, which proves the conventionality of the utterance; the author feels confident that the listener/reader is capable of decoding the referent of "Mary's Land." In the blending structure this could be addressed as an implied mental space which is characteristic of all the three headlines.[142] Moreover, through the "Mary's Land" input space all these headlines inherit a negative ironic evaluative attitude (which in the "Mary's Land (Lithuania)" blend is expressed through the conflict of the positive metaphoric and implied negative ironic evaluations). The negative assessment is reinforced by the juxtaposition of contrasting evaluative potentials: Mary's Land on the one side, and Sodom and Gomorrah or the Land of Pedophiles on the other. This does not only reinforce the imagery but also creates a very sharp contrast. The first ironic headline, "Public relations in Mary's Land," employs the mechanism of a megablend where the mental input spaces do not share a generic space and the constituent elements (after mapping) are projected directly into the blended space. In addition to the explicit mental spaces, the blending network also encompasses the implicit mental space of Lithuania. This space correlates with "Mary's Land," giving the blend an ironic evaluative attitude (which is accessible to the reader because a phrase from one discourse (religious) is juxtaposed with a phrase from a different, non-religious discourse; and the non-ironic meaning of the phrase is typical only in the religious context, while in the non-religious context the ironic meaning is more salient and transmitted to all the other mental spaces (including 'public relations') of the blend). Therefore the headline implies not

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[142] Ironic reference to "Mary's land" as a counterpart for Lithuania without mentioning the country explicitly is common both in the Mass Media and in everyday language to communicate a negative ironic (sarcastic) evaluative attitude.

only a negative ironic assessment of the country in general, but criticism directed at the strategies of public relations as well.

The other two headlines exploit the mirror structure of the conceptual integration network. However, each of the input spaces is simultaneously a separate blend on its own. Both input spaces in the integration network share the same organizing frame – a location possessing certain qualities. The same organizing frame is projected into the blended space, yet its structure here is enriched by the ironic evaluative attitude resulting from the clash of the positive and negative poles of "Sodom and Gomorrah" and "Mary's Land" at the dictum level. The mechanism employed by the headline could be illustrated by the following scheme:
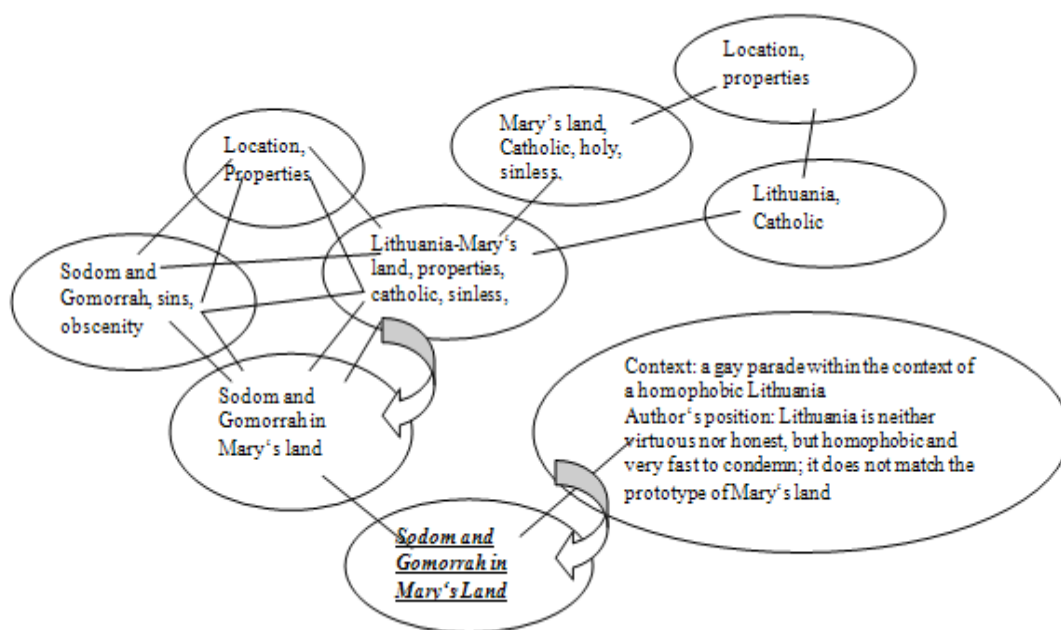


Figure 3

In the conceptual integration network of "Sodom and Gomorrah in Mary's Land", the mental space "Mary's land" is the separate megablend analyzed earlier, so its internal structure has been left out of this scheme. The scheme contains an implied mental space of Lithuania which, due to the conventionality of "Mary's Land," has not been explicated in the headline. "Lithuania" is not introduced as a separate input in the "Mary's land is the

Land of Pedophiles" headline either. Here an integration structure analogous to the above given mirror network can be traced, where the input spaces referring to Lithuania ("the Land of Pedophiles" refers to Lithuania, and "Mary's Land" is also a periphrasis of Lithuania) are separate megablends with implied mental spaces.

In both headlines, the outer space vital relations of Place, Time, Analogy/Disanalogy and Property undergo compressions and are transformed into the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness.

Irony in the analyzed headlines performs several essential functions. First, it expresses criticism directed at the author's country. In explicating the contrast between the expectations and reality, or according to Utsumi (2002), between the prototype situation and reality, the headline expresses a negative evaluation through one of the most conventional strategies of irony: "praising in order to blame" (Muecke, 1969, p. 67)[143]. Lithuania, when referred to as "Mary's land," is awarded praise which is incompatible with the real situation and in fact performs the role of accusation. The author expresses disappointment and criticism, and verbalizes an emotional state which, according to Gibbs (2007), would be difficult to describe literally. Criticism here, according to Hutcheon (1996), equals the assailing function of irony.

Second, the expression of criticism is related to the corrective function of irony. By decoding the disapproval, the community of readers is implicitly encouraged to correct the negatively evaluated situation in the desired direction. Criticism expressed through irony, according to Izett & Gibbs (2005), is much more effective than literal criticism.

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[143] Knox, in *The Word Irony and its Context, 1500-1755* (1961), devotes a whole section (*The Methods of Blame-By-Praise Associated with Irony*) to an analysis of ironic praise, and distinguishes eight different methods: Socratic self-depreciation, Direct praise, Simple concession, Ironic advice, Ironic defense, The fallacious argument, Burlesque, and The fictitious character. According to Freedman (1986), all eight methods are in fact versions of a single ironic praise for virtuous qualities that the target of irony does not possess, or for what are in fact blame-worthy qualities or vices. Muecke (1969) also draws attention to "praise in order to blame" as one of the main models of irony; he distinguishes three separate forms of "praising in order to blame": a praise for desirable qualities known to be lacking; a praise for having undesirable qualities or for lacking desirable qualities; and inappropriate or irrelevant praise (1969, p. 67).

Third, irony creates a community of those who understand the ironic communication and find the beliefs, assessment, and criticism of the author acceptable. In this case, the ironic attitude towards the country, like all auto-irony in general(cf. Twark, 2007), allows the participants to see the situation as not so tragic; if the author finds a community he can identify with, he does not experience social solitude (loneliness).

As mentioned above, "Mary's Land" is one of the most conventionalized, well-established references to Lithuania, both when used metaphorically with a positive connotation and when used ironically with a negative charge. The conventionality of the phrase is supported by the findings of the pilot study; the phrase was related to the name of Lithuania by 100% of the respondents, and the analyzed headlines were found ironic by 90% of the respondents. In deciding whether a headline was ironic, an important role was played by both context (e.g. the immediate context providing the contrast between positive and negative notions) and general background knowledge (e.g. knowledge of Lithuania being frequently referred to as Mary's Land and knowledge of the context wherein such reference is usually made). If a headline does not have any explicit ironic marking (e.g. "Lithuania is Mary's Land"), the identification of the ironic meaning is dependent on the content of the article, i.e. broader context.

### 9.2. "Lithuania is a Banana Republic"

Another way to express an ironic attitude towards a given situation in Lithuania has been to refer to the country as a banana republic[144]. In the pilot study, all the respondents saw banana republic as a negative reference to a country. The phrase is considered ironic because the readers/listeners understand that bananas are not among the economic resources of Lithuania (as

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[144] On delfi.lt, the phrase "Banana republic" has been used to refer not only to Lithuania but to the USA as well. The USA as a Banana Republic is referred to in the American media as well (e.g., Banana Republic, USA http://www.firstprinciplesjournal.com/articles.aspx?article=1223, America the Banana Republic  http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features, etc.)

they are in, e.g. Nicaragua or Honduras). Banana republic has its figurative meaning—it stands as a synonym for poverty and poor economic development; that is, it refers to a country which is dependent on foreign rule, where all decisions regarding domestic and foreign policy are made abroad or in the interests of foreign powers. Consequently, the citizens live in poverty. The reader who knows this meaning of banana republic is able to decode the critical negative attitude towards Lithuania in the headline "Lithuania is a banana Republic". The evaluation is expressed through the juxtaposition of Lithuania and the poor countries of Latin America. Lithuania is not a 'banana republic" in economic terms, although, according to the writer, it is a "banana republic' in terms of the quality of life. The juxtaposition of incompatible aspects triggers the irony. As the phrase "banana republic" will be treated as a separate input space in the integration network of the headline ("Lithuania is a banana republic"), the origins of the phrase are worth considering. Relying on Chapman (2008), "banana republic" is a pejorative term used for small countries (usually in Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa) that suffer from political instability, dependence on poorly developed agriculture, and corrupt government. According to Chapman, "O. Henry[145] was the first to use the term 'banana republic'… which was his imaginary version of Honduras" (2008, p. 68). Here "banana" implied dependence on the simplest form of agriculture and lack of modern industrial technologies. "Banana republic", according to Chapman, should also be associated with poor infrastructure, worthless currency, and dependence on foreign capital. All these elements are encompassed into the mental input space of "banana republic". This mental space is a megablend on its own, as it integrates two separate input spaces (which do not share a generic space), projects their elements into the blended space, and generates an emergent structure which encompasses elements that come not only from the input spaces but from background or contextual knowledge as well. Turner & Fauconnier (2002) assert that "inputs do not determine the integration network" (2002, p. 53), and place much more

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[145] A well known American humorist and writer (1862-1910).

emphasis on the emergent structure of the blended space. In the current research, an assumption is made that an implicit mental space of context/author's attitude/background knowledge (which provides elements not inherent in any of the explicit mental spaces) enters the integration network to create an ironic shift of meaning; yet, here the inferences are partially generated due to the interaction of the explicit mental spaces. When the elements "banana" and "republic" are joined in the blended space, the emergent meaning expresses a negative evaluation which is not inherent in either of the input spaces (neither bananas nor republics are inherently negative). In addition to the outside contextual implications that have already been discussed, there function a few vital relations. The input spaces of "banana" and "republic" are dominated by a Part-Whole outer space vital relation, which in the blended space is compressed into Uniqueness. In this case 'banana' as a part of the whole gives the assessment of the whole and provokes the ironic meaning. Thus, in the integration structure of the ironic headline "Lithuania is a Banana Republic", irony is partially inherited from the input space of "Banana Republic". What elements are integrated into the mental spaces and what elements are projected into the blended space depends on the background knowledge of the reader/listener. Turner & Fauconnier (2002) call this phenomenon selective projection, and admit that due to selective projection into cognitive integration structures, separate people might see the same things in different ways[146]. In the discussed headline, the structure that has been presented above is integrated into a bigger, more complex structure—into a new megablend:

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[146] It is interesting to note that the blend came to wider (common) use among ordinary people at the beginning of the nineties and coincided with the opening of the market to a greater variety of imported goods, including bananas. Therefore, for some people the term "banana republic" used to have a more direct meaning, related to the huge quantities of bananas consumed here.
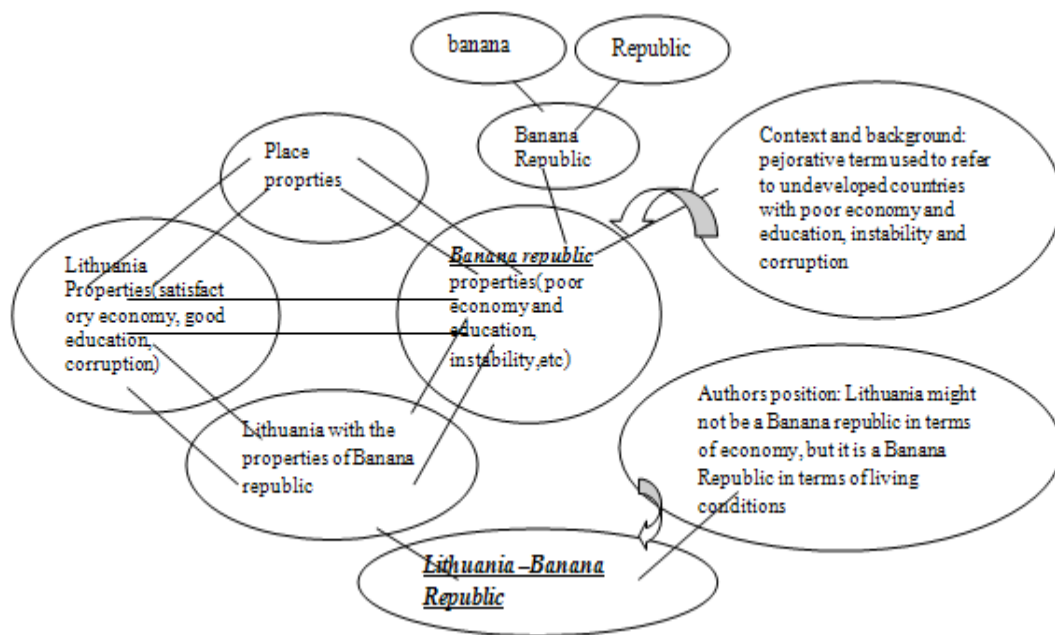
Figure 4

The new megablend is formed within the framework of a mirror integration network. The organizing frame for both input spaces is "a country and its values", and the elements from one input space are mapped onto the elements of the other input space: corrupt government—corrupt government, weak economy—weak economy, political "games"—political instability. One of the essential elements, i.e. bananas, is not explicitly active, however it contributes its negative evaluative attitude implicitly. All the matched elements are selectively projected into blended spaces. The ironic negative attitude that is inherent in "banana republic' is also projected into the blended space. In the previous headlines, irony was expressed in the form of an overstatement (or according to Hutcheon, as "praise in order to blame"); in this headline, the conflict in the blended space between "Lithuania" and "Banana republic", which reinforces the ironic meaning, takes the form of metonymical understatement.

In the final stage[147] the structure integrates the mental space of context/author's attitude/background knowledge, which functions as a means to reinforce the ironic meaning. The final blend is classified as a double-scope

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[147] Processes in blending do not happen in stages. Everything goes on simultaneously; however, for the sake of clarity, in the analysis the description is given as if in stages.

integration network, as the scenarios of both the dictum and the implicitum levels of the text are active simultaneously. Irony degrades the status of Lithuania to the level of a "banana republic", in contrast to the previous headlines where the status of Lithuania was ironically elevated to the status of Mary's land. In both cases the comparisons are inadequate; too extreme praise and too acute criticism both result in clashes that lead to ironic shifts of meaning.

The emergent structure within the blended space has not been copied from any of the inputs; it is generated by the background knowledge, context and beliefs of the participants of the communicative act. According to Turner and Fauconnier (2002), "we rarely realize the extent of background knowledge and structure that we bring into a blend unconsciously" (ibid, p.48).

The ironic headline containing the "Lithuania is a Banana republic" counterfactual[148] is completely fantastic, but within the context it does not look unusual. On the contrary, the reader achieves benefit of being given a deeper insight due to the compressions enabled in irony by the blending mechanism.

The compressions operating within the mental space of "Banana republic" have been inherited from the separate input spaces of the blend. The outer space vital relation of Part-Whole is compressed into Uniqueness. When "Banana Republic" is used as a separate input space, this compression is sustained and projected into a bigger, more complex structure. The mental spaces of "Lithuania" and "Banana Republic" are connected by the outer space vital relation of Analogy, which in the mental blended space is compressed into the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness. This compression enables us to see Lithuania-as-banana-republic as a unique whole. In this case the ironic negative evaluation performs the reinforcing, assailing, corrective, and aggregative functions.

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[148] Counterfactual is a term used to describe alternatives that are better or worse than reality. The term in cognitive linguistics was developed by Kahneman and Miller (1986) in *Norm theory: Comparing reality to its alternatives*.

The ironic utterance "Lithuania is a Banana Republic" can be further elaborated and used as an input space in more complex integration networks. The conventionality of the ironic evaluation expressed through this phrase is proved not only by its use in headlines ("Baltijos širdis ar Bananų respublika?" ("The heart of the Baltics or a Banana Republic?") ("Vakarų Žinios"), "Elektros energija bananų šalyje" ("Electricity in a Banana Country") (Novum.lt), "Nemuno šalis - Demokratinė Bananų Respublika" ("The Land of Nemunas – the Democratic Banana Republic") (Respublika"), "Kas mes – bananų respublika?" ("Who are we- a Banana Republic?") (diena.lt), "Lietuva - bananų respublika (baltoji Afrika)" ("Lithuania- a Banana Republic (white Africa)") (kantas.net)[149]), but also the fact that the mental space of Lithuania in most of these cases is not explicit; the reader is believed to be capable of decoding the referent.  This reference is much more frequent in comments than in headlines or articles; however, here neither quantitative nor functional analysis has been carried out.  In the headlines, irony first of all performs an evaluative function. The assessment of Lithuania as a banana republic promotes negativity, disappointment and disapproval, and emphasizes the downgrading of the country's status. According to Colston's (2002) research, ironic criticism reinforces the condemnation of the object of irony. However, here the corrective function of irony may also be detected: the ironist seeks to draw the attention of the addressee to the situation that is in need of correction.

The assessment of Lithuania given in the above headline might not be acceptable to all the readers, therefore those who understand the irony and approve of the author's position are said (by Booth, 1974) to form an "amiable community", thereby demonstrating the aggregative function of irony.

Here the irony does not perform its usual protective function; the writer does not leave open the possibility of distancing himself from his words, as both the explicit and the implicit levels of the utterance retain their negative evaluative attitudes.    The headline was found ironic by most of the

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[149] As the websites of the cited headlines are not within the scope of the current investigation, their further analysis has not been carried out.

respondents of the pilot study, which supports the assumption that in 'banana republic' the irony has been conventionalized[150]. It is interesting to note that the ironic structure under discussion can also serve as a template for similar ironic headlines, a few of which will be discussed below.

## 9.3. Lithuania is a Cheburek Land in: "The Perspectives of Cheburek Land"

Irony in this headline is communicated through metonymic representation. The structure of the headline exploits the template of "Banana Republic", which has been conventionalized in the mass media globally[151]. However, in this headline the mechanism of the integration network that irony uses is slightly different; the mental spaces compiling the network of "Cheburek Land" contain different elements. First, there are two main mental input spaces: "Chebureks", a traditional dish of Caucasian Tatars and the nations of the Balkans, and the abstract location of "land". As in the previous example, the mental input spaces are linked by the metonymical Part-Whole vital relation, which is compressed in the blended space into Uniqueness. The structure does not possess a generic space and is organized along the rules governing the integration structure of multiple blends: the elements from the mental input spaces are projected directly into the blended space. The "Cheburek land" blend does not have an inherent negative or ironic connotation (e.g. if the phrase were applied to Georgia there might be no negative connotation at all). However, when the referent of the phrase is Lithuania, a negative connotation tends to arise (this will be discussed below).

In addition to the two explicit mental input spaces, the evaluation and elements related to the author's background and contextual knowledge are projected into the blended space. Coulson & Oakley, in their study "Blending

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[150] "Banana Republic" is used as a reference to the USA (e.g."Our Banana Republic", "OK, we are a banana republic"), Germany (e.g. "Bananen Republik Deutschland?", "BRD - Bananen Republik Deutschland"), Russia, and other countries.
[151] See footnotes 143& 149.

basics" (2000), notice that „mapping" between elements in such mental spaces as „Cheburek land" might be supported by a variety of "different sorts of relations, including identity, similarity, analogy, and pragmatic functions based on metonymy, synecdoche, and representation" (2000, p. 177). In this headline we come across a pragmatic function based on metonymy—to avoid identifying the country directly, only a small 'representative' object is mentioned. Simultaneously, the function of status downgrading is performed as the 'small part' chosen for representation is trivial and insignificant. And no doubt the choice was deliberate. The choice of the 'small part' for metonymic representation reveals the speaker's derogatory attitude (had some significant object/feature been chosen for representation the irony would have been lost). The metonymical-ironic representation of the country is based on the name of a dish that in Lithuania has the reputation of a low quality fast food served in kiosks, and retains the pejorative function of status downgrading peculiar to the "banana Republic" blend. The fact that a country with ambitions for a higher status (i.e. to be seen as a Western European country) is referred to through a trivial attribute (Chebureks) reveals a negative assessment and irony that were not inherent in any of the inputs. The blended space generates an emergent structure where the ironic shift of meaning appears due to the incompatibility between the opinions about the country escalated by politicians (expectations) and the actual situation in the country. The network of "Cheburek land" is incorporated as an input space into the more complex integration structure of "Lithuania is Cheburek Land", where the other mental input space, "Lithuania", is implied (though the focus of the headline is on Lithuania, it is not mentioned explicitly). Here the integration follows the mirror mechanism of blending; the cross-space mapping of the elements is performed, counterpart elements are detected and projected into the generic space and selectively projected into the blended space. The inner conflict between Lithuania and Cheburek land in the blended space is solved by integrating the input space of context/author's beliefs/background knowledge. For the integration of the additional input, the mechanism of double-scope blending is exploited. The

context/author's beliefs/background knowledge input provides additional insight and stimulates the ironic shift of meaning, which is considered to be the emergent structure of the blend.
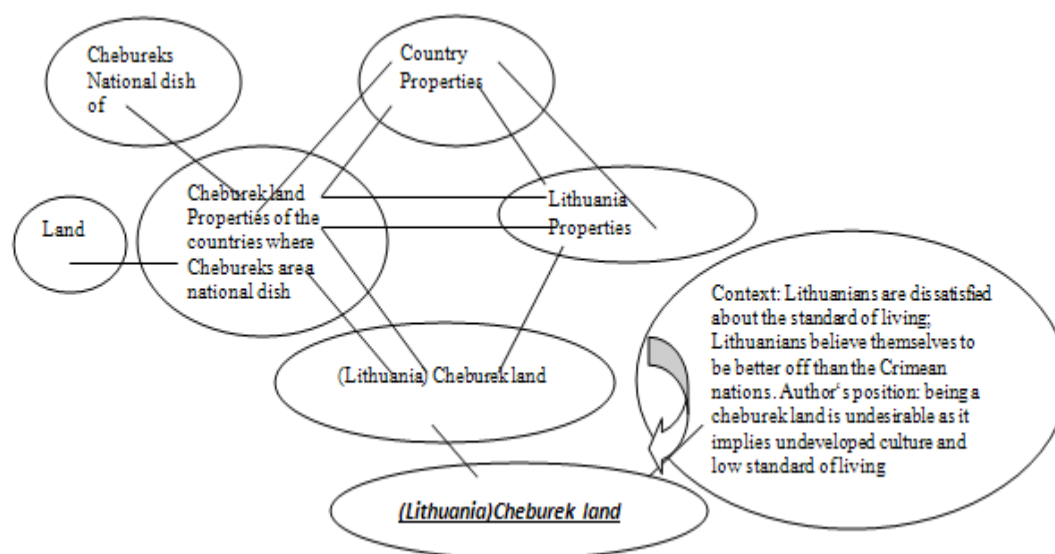


Figure 5

The blended space undergoes further elaboration and is incorporated into a megablend of the ironic headline "The perspectives of Cheburek Land".

As cheburek kiosks have become a common realia of Lithuanian life, such a reference is not chosen at random. The habits and preferences of the nation are taken into consideration. While the next headline (see below) mentions kebabs, which stand for a newer fast food tendency in Lithuania, chebureks could be treated as a relic of the Soviet period. In the mental blended space, such an implication is at conflict with the implications coming from the mental space of "perspectives", which denote a direction, a movement forwards as defined in the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*: "a view, especially one in which you can see a long way into the distance" and is here related to the future of the country. Meanwhile, "chebureks" remind the reader of the Soviet past. The conflict of two contrasting perspectives reinforces the position of the ironist.

The whole integration network of the headline is dominated by the Part-Whole and Analogy/Disanalogy vital relations, which in the blended space are compressed into Uniqueness. Irony exploits the tools of conceptual blending to

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be efficient at communicating complex mental structures in a brief and informative way, or, as Turner and Fauconnier put it, to provide "global insight and human-scale understanding" (2002, p. 92).

In the headline the parallel between Lithuania and Cheburek Land downgrades the status of Lithuania. Though no research has been carried out on how Lithuanians rate different countries, relying on the logic of the headline an assumption can be made that if Lithuania is ironically given a negative assessment through comparison with the Crimea or the Balkans, this implies that Lithuania actually has a superior status.

Irony in the headline has been primarily aimed at criticizing and expressing negative evaluation, but simultaneously it performs a corrective function.

Though the reference to Lithuania as Cheburek Land shows an insightful and creative approach, it is unconventional and only appears in a single case in the examined news website.

### 9.4. "Lithuania is Kebab Land"

In the news website Delfi.lt, the reference to Lithuania as Kebab Land[152] is also considered unconventional, as it was only encountered a single time[153]. Yet it may also be argued that the headline follows the template of "Banana republic". The structure of the headline partially resembles the structure of "Lithuania is a Banana republic" and also "The Perspectives of the Cheburek Land". The analogy between Lithuania and Kebab Land is founded on metonymic representation: the metonymic reminder of a type of Asian national cuisine serves to imply a relationship between Lithuania and those Asian countries where kebabs are produced, and thus to communicate the implicit negative evaluative attitude that has also been characteristic of the previous

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[152] Kebab is one of the national foods of Asian countries.
[153] Although no other cases of "Kebab land" were found on delfi.lt, similar references have been detected in comments that follow news articles and on other Lithuanian websites, e.g. alfa.lt has a headline "Kodėl lietuviai neišvyniojo kebabų ideologijos?" ("Why haven't Lithuanians developed a Kebab ideology?")

headlines. For Lithuania, the benchmark of development is Central Europe; however, in headlines communicating ironic attitudes, the features ascribed to Lithuania come to be associated with countries that are located far from here, in Asia, Latin America, or Africa. The model of the irony in such headlines could be seen as resembling a variant of Muecke's (1969) "praising in order to blame" model, where the target of the irony is being praised for an irrelevant quality. Being Kebab land is a feature irrelevant to Lithuania, and though such a characteristic could be considered a kind of praise, here it is irrelevant and therefore triggers irony.

The irony here exploits the blending mechanism that is typical of megablends and is able to incorporate all multiple, mirror, and double-scope networks. The mental input space "Kebab land" is a complex multiple blend on its own. The blend encompasses the inputs of "kebabs" and the abstract location "land", which are interrelated through the Part-Whole outer space vital relation. As in the cases discussed above, this is compressed into the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness. "Kebab land" and "Lithuania" are integrated into a mirror network and, together with the implied input space of "context/author's position/background knowledge", become separate input spaces integrated into a double-scope network. The incompatibility of the constituent elements (e.g. Lithuania and kebabs imply different cultures) initiates the ironic shift of meaning. As the integration network of the headline resembles the structure of the previous headlines, the graphic presentation of the scheme is unnecessary.

Irony in the headline (as well as in the previous headlines) is first of all directed at Lithuania as a country which, in Utsumi's words "does not meet the expectations", and simultaneously at Lithuanians as people, because the irony here ridicules a new tendency in fast food consumption. The ironic mode of the utterance, according to Twark (2007), allows the reader to look at the situation with humor while preventing others from laughing at us. As in the headline above, it can be assumed that the country's status is being defined through the comparison with other countries. Depending on the beliefs of

the reader (his approval or disapproval of the author's position and means of expression) irony creates a community, i.e. it brings together those who approve of irony and are willing to accept the position of the author. Relying on the ideas of Turner and Fauconnier (2002), while interpreting such ironic headlines we rely on the mechanism of blending to construct a counterfactual in which Lithuania is simultaneously a Banana Republic, a Cheburek or Kebab land.  As Turner and Fauconnier (2002) claim, "conceptualization always has counterfactuality available and typically uses it as a basic resource" (ibid, p. 87).

In the pilot study, the headline was recognized as ironic by 50% of the respondents, who commented on the necessity of context to make a decision about irony. The irony of the headline is not conventionalized and the reference to Lithuania as a Kebab land appeared only once on the Delfi website. On the other hand, it is clear that the template of "banana republic" has to some extent been conventionalized.

### 9.5. "Lithuania of Cepelinai"[154]

A trace of the "Banana republic" template can be detected in this headline as well. Though the structure of the blending mechanism employed here is different, we can see the same implicit negative ironic evaluation typical of the metonymical representation of a country by reference to a national dish. As in the previous headlines, the metonymical representation is deliberately expressed through a relatively insignificant phenomenon. It could be said that even if the headline makes use of the "banana republic" template, it is elliptic, as it does not contain explicit elements of "country", "land", or "republic".  Nevertheless, these elements are implicit and the same integration structure employed by "banana republic" is applicable to this headline as well. The mechanism of this ironic utterance within the scope of blending theory is seen as a mirror network containing two main inputs, land of Cepelinai and

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[154] A national Lithuanian dish.

Lithuania. However, the input space of "land of cepelinai" is a multiple blend on its own, containing two inputs: "cepelinai" and the implied input of "land". This input and "Lithuania" do not share a common generic space. The elements in the input spaces of "cepelinai" and "land" do not have counterparts, but are connected through the outer space vital relation of Part-Whole. This metonymical representation of Lithuania by reference to a dish once again acts as a stimulus for ironic interpretation. The ironic shift of meaning is the result of a clash between the reality (nothing much to be proud of) and the expectations (a progressive country known for advanced technologies and social development). Turner and Fauconnier define such clashes as "creative clashes" (ibid, p. 159) that lead to new effective meanings. The outer space vital relations that operate within the network are Part-Whole, Representation, and Property, which are projected into the blended space of "Lithuania of Cepelinai" and compressed into Uniqueness. The mental space of "Land of Cepelinai" is thus incorporated into a more complex blend, where it becomes an input space alongside "Lithuania" to construct the blend where Lithuania is seen as the land of Cepelinai. The mental spaces at this stage follow the mirror mechanism of blending: they have the same organizing frame and the counterpart elements can be easily mapped: location—location, properties—properties, evaluative attitude—evaluative attitude, etc. Common elements from the input spaces are projected into the generic space, and then selectively projected into the blended space. This way the location, Lithuania, is projected into the blended space along with the evaluative attitude that is related to cepelinai (which resembles the cases of assessment in the ironic metonymical headlines above). Finally, the mental space of "context/author's position/background knowledge" is integrated into the network following the double-scope mechanism.
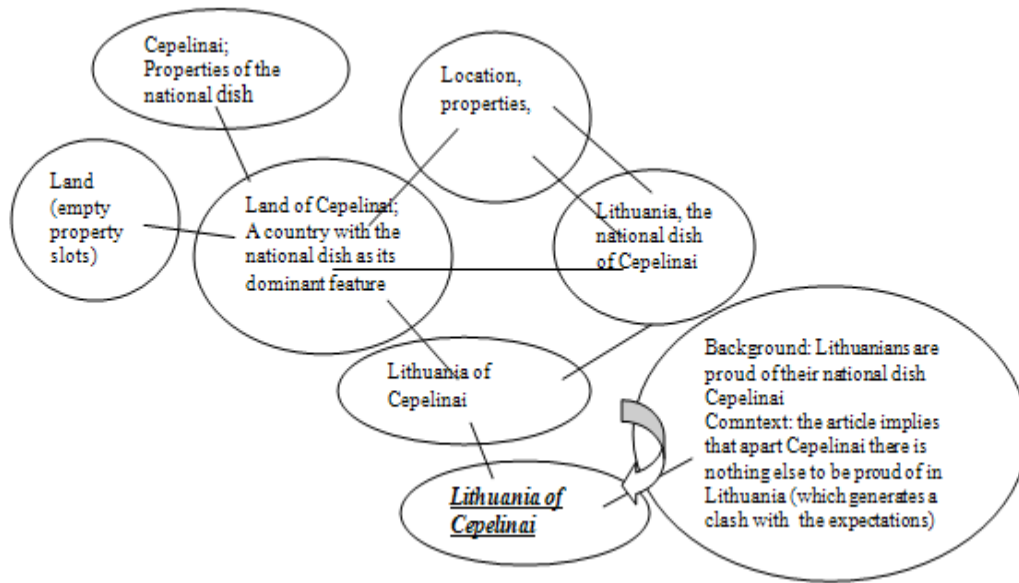
Figure 6

Despite the fact that Lithuanians are fond of cepelinai, the metonymic representation of this dish as an essential property of the country is inadequate, as it does not correspond to the expectations. The outer space vital relations (Space, Property, Part-Whole, Representation, and Similarity) functioning within the blend undergo compressions into the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness, enabling us to see Lithuania as a Land of Cepelinai. This representation expresses the critical ironic attitude of the writer; the ironic shift of meaning is caused not only by a "creative clash" of elements, but to a greater extent by a conflict between the Lithuania we want to see (the prototypical Lithuania, the vision escalated by politicians) and the Lithuania seen by the author. Irony is not explicit at the level of lexical opposition, but rather functions as a figure of thought where the direct (metonymic) meaning is at the same time the ironic meaning expressing the author's disappointment— in this particular case, criticism is directed at the stagnation in the tourism sector and vandalized architectural monuments. The incongruity between the expectations and reality (as well as the distance between the prototype and reality) is defined as one of the essential features of irony in Utsumi's theory (2002).

Irony in the headline performs multiple functions. First, the negative evaluative attitude is expressed, which is linked to the corrective function of irony—to draw attention to a situation that needs correcting, to initiate changes. Simultaneously, the aggregative function of irony is performed as the author brings together those who share his beliefs. The downgrading function of irony is linked to the downgrading of the status of Lithuania, which again could be seen in connection with the corrective function (by downgrading the status a stimulus is given to restore it). The headline could also serve as an exemplary illustration of the protective function of irony; as the opposition of meanings is not explicated, irony offers a "shelter" for the ironist, who has a possibility to argue that no irony was intended and that it is actually a positive attitude that is expressed in the headline.

Despite the fact that cepelinai are one of the most popular dishes in Lithuania and are thus easily associated with the name of Lithuania, the ironic phrase has not been conventionalized in headlines or articles. In the pilot study the headline was marked as ironic by 75% of respondents, though this may be linked to their personal attitudes (positive or negative) towards living in the land of Cepelinai. The result can also be linked to the fact that there is no incongruity at the lexical level; Lithuania is in fact the country of cepelinai. Incongruity operates only at the implied level (as discussed above) between the expectations and reality.

### 9.6. "Lithuania is the Leader of Indifference to its Citizens"

This headline is seen as ironic due to several factors. First, in the pilot study, 75% of the respondents felt that it was ironic. Second, the headline follows the requirements set by the theory of Utsumi (2002) for an ironic utterance, i.e. it presupposes an ironic environment which is made up of the expectations of the speaker (Lithuanians wish to be leaders), an incongruity between the expectations and reality (Lithuanians do not want to lead in the field of indifference), and the negative attitude of the speaker towards this

incongruity (his disappointment that Lithuania is the leader in a negative sphere). The ironic environment of the headline is implicitly revealed through the clash between indifference (a negative feature) and leadership (something to strive for).

Ironic headlines are constructed when a certain topicality is moved from one space (frame) to another. In such cases, Coulson (2001) offers the term frame shifting[155]. In this case the frame shifting is obvious, as all the elements from one mental space follow the scenario offered by another mental space. Irony here is based on a structural metaphor[156]. Cibulskienė (2006) in her dissertation[157] claims that all thinking in general is metaphoric, and that discourse is based on conceptual metaphors which are represented by linguistic metaphors at the level of language. One of the most conventional conceptual metaphors of political discourse, according to Cibulskienė (2006), is POLITICS IS SPORT. This metaphor provides the model for the headline under analysis. The mechanism of blending exploited by the headline encompasses such elements as leadership and competition. Countries are perceived as participants of sports events, the politics of the countries as a championship, indifference to their citizens as a sports event in which the aim is to win, and Lithuania as a champion of this event. Coulson, relying on the research carried out by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1962), holds to the idea that in blending, „phoros[158] is often modified in the course of analogy in order to facilitate parallels between it and the target"(2002, p. 199), i.e. we select the elements and the scenario that enable us to disclose and emphasize the desired

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[155] Frame shifting theory is compatible with blending theory, though it has a different focus. While Turner & Fauconnier (2002) emphasize the organizing frame in the mechanism of blending, Coulson (especially concerning humorous texts) places emphasis on frame shifting – when all elements of one input space (which is called a target domain in Coulson) are shifted into the frame of another input space ( which is referred to as a source domain in Coulson) and the scenario of the new frame is applied to the shifted elements.
[156] Lakoff & Johnson (1980) distinguish structural, orientational and ontological metaphors. Structural metaphors are metaphors in which one concept is structured through the expression of another concept. They belong to a type of conceptual metaphors. Conceptual metaphors as a means of thought structuring have been examined by Lakoff (1980), who claims that our behavior and language are based on conceptual metaphors.
[157] Cibulskienė "Conceptual Metaphor in Lithuanian and British Discourse of Elections", 2006.
[158] The term *phoros* was introduced by Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca (1962); later the same phenomenon become known as a "source" due to the works of Lakoff & Johnson (1980).

aspects of the target domain. Within the framework of blending this is seen as a single-scope network that has one organizing frame (in this case, the frame of sport) whose elements are mapped onto the elements of the mental input space of "Lithuania":
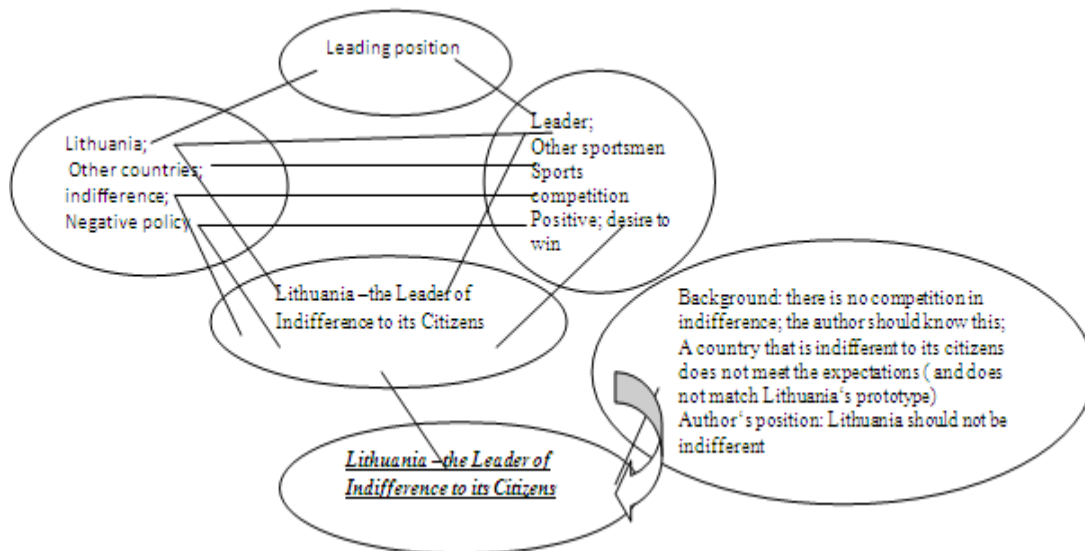


Figure 7

The single-scope network gives an obvious conceptual clash, as the input spaces have different organizing frames. As Turner and Fauconnier put it: "Single-scope networks give us the feeling that one thing is giving us insight into another thing with a strong asymmetry between them" (2002, p. 129). The clash results not only from the contrasting frames, but also from the incompatibility of the elements of the mental spaces: indifference to the citizens, which is a negative phenomenon to be avoided, is presented as a desired result in connection with the competition frame, as something to aim for. This blended space is used as a separate input in a more complex double-scope network where the other input space is "context/author's position/background knowledge". As the first input space is incongruous with common background knowledge (in politics, as in sport, the aim is always something positive, although here a negative aspect is presented as the desired goal), an ironic shift of meaning is generated which restores the logic of the utterance. The mechanism of blending deals with the clash by constructing a blended space where being a leader becomes a negative feature as the

competition is held in the wrong field. The vital relations compressions of Time, Space and simultaneously the scenario inherent in the mental space of "Sport" are all projected into the blended space and applied to the elements of the target (or "focus") input space[159], i.e. to the elements of the politics frame.

In this case the outer space vital relations of Similarity, Time, Place, and Analogy/Disanalogy are compressed into the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness. Here we can also talk about the compression of the whole scenario, as the entire political situation of the country is presented, at the human scale of understanding, as a single sports event. However, the most dominant outer space vital relation is that of Intentionality. It undergoes compression and is retained in the blended space, where it gives an insight into the nature of politics as intentionally striving for more indifference. The irony of the headline delivers a critical negative evaluation directed at the politics of the country. The compressions enabled by the mechanism of blending reveal that Lithuania's leadership in indifference is a negative but intentional activity. The dominant functions of irony in the headline are evaluative and assailing, together with the reinforcing, aggregative and humorous functions.

The assessment of state politics through the frame of sports can be considered conventional[160]. In the previous headlines, the focus was on the conventionality of the ironic utterance; here it is not a particular phrase, but the assessment of politics via the frame of sport that is conventional. The tendency can also be traced in the two headlines analyzed below.

### 9.7. "Lithuania is Europe's Vice-Champion in Drinking"

In this headline, irony promoting a negative critical attitude follows the mechanism of blending discussed in the case above. Irony comes up as a result of an incongruity between two mental input spaces: Lithuania's drinking problem has been depicted within the frame of sports. In the structure, a cross-

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[159] What Lakoff & Johnson refer to as a "target", Turner & Fauconnier call a "focus" space.
[160] In Cibulskienė's dissertation, the metaphor POLITICS IS SPORT is not ascribed to the three most frequent conceptual metaphors but mentioned (among several more) as typical.

space element mapping is performed: drinking is mapped onto a sports event, European countries onto competing sportsmen, the hardest drinking countries onto champions and vice-champions, etc. As in the headline above, the irony exploits the single-scope mechanism of integration, i.e. insight into the country's problem is given through the mental space of sports using its inherent compressions. The mechanism builds a blended space in which European countries are competing in terms of drinking. According to Turner and Fauconnier (2002), such -based blends do not strike us as unusual but, on the contrary, allow us to take a deeper look into the focus input space and into the blended space.  Moreover, the clash between the mental input spaces is obvious and leads both to the interpretation of the ironic meaning of the utterance and the perception of the criticism. Irony is stimulated not only by the clash of frames, but also at the level of the cross-space mapping of the elements: when drinking (a negative realia) is mapped onto a sports event (a positive activity), this explicit juxtaposition of the two poles (positive and negative) contradicts logic and stimulates an ironic interpretation. We activate "a salient counterfactual scenario" (Coulson, 2002, p. 132), the impossibility of which enables us to understand that the headline is meant to be read ironically. Such assumptions about intended irony are supported by the integration of the "context/author's position/background knowledge" input space into the network, which then acquires the form of a double-scope integration network. The specific features of irony become explicit: they include the "incongruity between the speaker's expectations and the real situation" (Utsumi, 2000, p. 1783), and the speaker's "negative emotional attitude (e.g., disappointment, anger, reproach)" (ibid).  Thus, the mental space of "context/author's position/background knowledge" supports the irony that is dominant in the final blended space. The scheme below depicts the mechanism of integration:
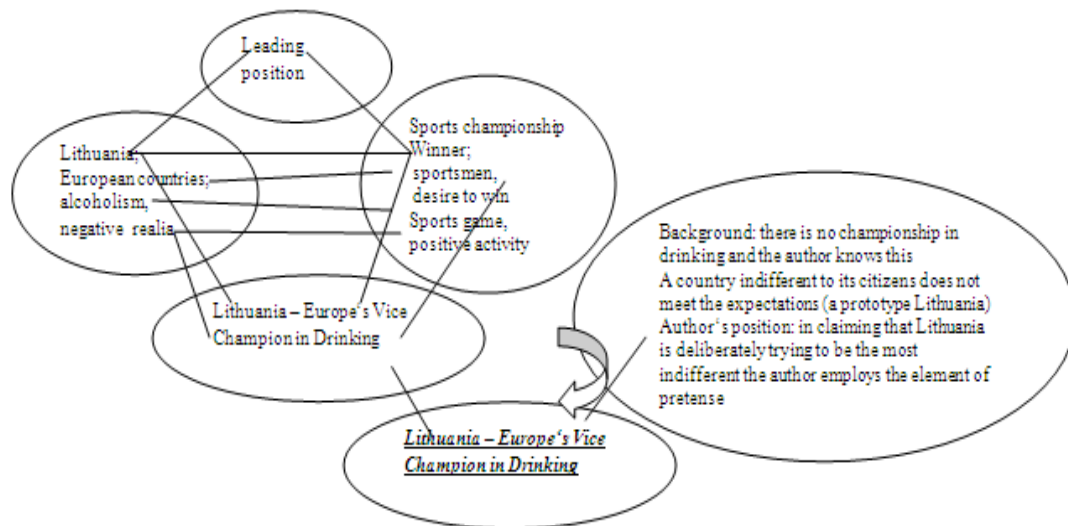
Figure 8

The outer space vital relations of Similarity, Time, and Space, alongside the whole scenario of the sports event, undergo compressions into the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness. Intentionality is also compressed and retained in the blended space. It contributes to the blend by depicting drinking as an intentional activity supported by the policies of the country, which is supposedly proud of its victory in this sports event[161].

The irony in the headline is metaphoric. According to Coulson (2002), the use of metaphor is motivated by "rhetorical goals such as the need to suggest correct inferences, elicit affective responses, or elicit a construal that is appropriately motivating" (2000, p. 200). In this case, drinking is elevated to the status of a representative feature of the country—which triggers an ironic interpretation.

As discussed above, the headline also makes use of conventional metaphorics based on the conceptual metaphor of Politics is sport. The utterance itself, if taken separately, is not considered conventional, however, as it was only encountered a single time.

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[161] The element of pretense, though not given special attention in this dissertation, is typical of every ironic utterance. In a more detailed analysis it could be incorporated into the blending structures of irony.

### 9.8. "Lithuania is the Leader of Parallel Worlds"

This headline represents the third instance of an ironic headline (found on the Delfi news website) based on the conceptual metaphor of Politics is sport.  In modern society, the concept of parallel worlds is commonly associated with the sphere of science fiction or fantasy films: a parallel world is a world that in some strange way exists alongside our world but is independent of it. The article (whose headline is being analyzed) focuses on the prime minister's promise that billions of litas will soon pour into the budget. This unrealistic situation is referred to as viable in a parallel world. Referring to Lithuania as a parallel world, the writer assumes the position of an ironist who sees the rich and prosperous Lithuania promised by politicians as a parallel world to the real Lithuania we live in. The establishment of parallel worlds (deceitful promises) is assessed as a sport event, where Lithuania or Lithuanian politicians are in the leader's position. In other words, when talking about the parallel worlds, the author is actually talking about the lies of the politicians. The headline is based on a pretended belief in the existence of parallel worlds, while actually the writer is communicating his critical ironic assessment of the actions of the politicians and his disbelief in both the current policy and in the promises of the politicians.

The irony of the headline exploits a blending mechanism containing several levels. The mirror integration network encompasses the input spaces of the real Lithuania (which contains a shadow economy, a budget deficit, lying politicians, etc.) and of the parallel worlds (where the economy is transparent, the budget contains billions of litas, politicians are honest, etc.); the constituent elements undergo a cross-space mapping and are projected into the generic space, while counterpart elements are selectively projected into the mental blended space. As a result, in the blended space we see Lithuania with the features of a parallel world: billions in the budget, a transparent economy, and honest politicians. The compound elements of the mental space are in conflict due to our contextual knowledge, which leads to the ironic shift of meaning.

The blend undergoes further elaboration and is integrated into a more complex structure: Lithuania-the-parallel-world participates at a sports event with other countries-as-parallel-worlds, and takes the leading position. The structure of the integration network consists of two mental input spaces: Lithuania-the-parallel-world, and the frame of sports with its typical elements (a sports event, competitors, a competition, leaders, etc.). The single-scope mechanism, similar to those discussed above, is used to enforce the irony. The mechanism is based on the outer space vital relations of Time, Space, and Similarity, which are compressed into Uniqueness in the blended space. The blended space also adopts the inherent compressions of the "source domain". In addition, the outer space vital relation of Intentionality is compressed and retained. The irony resulting due to the incompatibility of the elements of the input spaces is projected into the blended space, as well as to all the other spaces of the blend. The process is not gradual; according to Turner and Fauconnier (2002), the blend is dynamic and all the processes take place continuously and simultaneously; the input elements and compressions are projected into the blend and the blended space impacts the inputs. The blend creates a scenario according to which Lithuania is the best parallel world, one which is about to receive billions into its budget. However, the blended space is further incorporated into a double-scope network together with the input space of "context/author's position/background knowledge", which presupposes the actual situation in Lithuania and is in conflict with the first input space. The conflict generates irony which is transmitted both to the blended and to the input spaces.
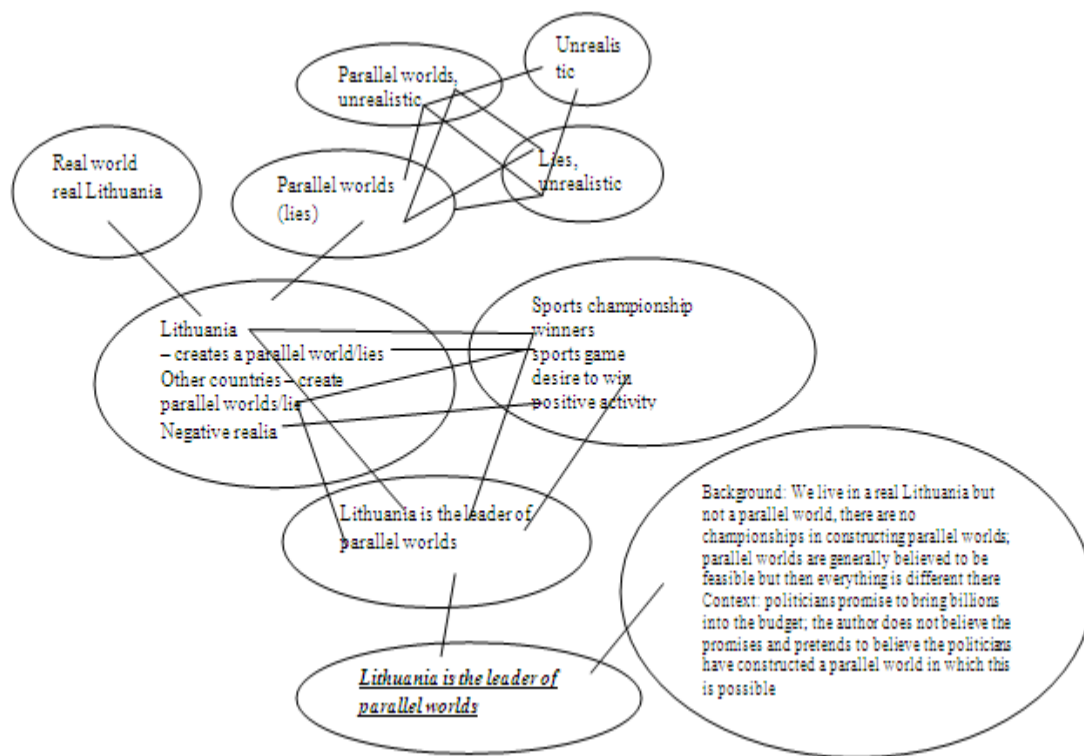
Figure 9

Irony in the headline functions through a pretended belief in parallel worlds, and is associated with the criticizing, corrective, assailing, and aggregative functions. By blending Lithuania with unreal worlds, the unreliable promises of the politicians are emphasized—the criticism is directed towards political activities based on lies. The author does not blame anyone directly, but rather assumes the position of an ironist who believes the promises on the condition that the Lithuania the politicians are talking about is a parallel world. The ability to express a negative evaluative attitude and criticism without direct accusation can be related to a form of politeness discussed by Barbe (1995) and supported by Chen (1990) and Dews, Kaplan, Winner (1995), who claim that "ironic criticisms were found to be less insulting than literal criticisms" (p. 297)[162]. They also draw attention to the fact that ironic criticisms not only (relatively) protect the reputation of the object of irony, but can be called a "face-saving" means "showing the speaker as less angry and more in control" (ibid), as a person capable not just of expressing

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[162] Irony as a means of politeness generates heated debates, and an opposite point of view is discussed in Brownell (1990), Colston (1997), etc.

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negative criticism but also of looking at the situation with humor. The humorous aspect of irony has been emphasized in a number of studies by Attardo, Kreuz (1991), Twark (2007), Dews, Kaplan and Winner (1995), Raskin (1985), etc. Kreuz (1991) notices that irony, due to its humorous aspect, is memorable and therefore offers "highly effective ways for speakers to achieve their communicative ends" (p. 161), which might be "to mock, to insult and to be funny" (ibid).

On the other hand, the same ironic utterance can be seen as performing an assailing function—the object of the irony, the politicians, are attacked by questioning the validity of their promises. As a means of attack, irony has benefits inaccessible to the direct speech, as responding to an ironic attack is always much more complicated than to a direct remark. Ironic criticism or blame is linked to the corrective function of irony—it encourages society to admit to and correct its social problems.

As in most of the analyzed headlines, as well as in irony in general, the function of community building is overt in this case. The importance of this function has been discussed in detail by Booth (1974), who noticed that "the building of amiable communities is often far more important than the exclusion of naïve victims", and claimed that "every irony inevitably builds a community of believers" (ibid, p. 28).Taking conventionality into account, it should be noted that the ironic headlines under analysis have been collected from one news website only; yet the same metaphorical pattern of irony can be found on other Lithuanian websites as well. To mention but a few: "In the championship of alcohol consumption Lithuania takes $8^{th}$ place" ("Alkoholio suvartojimo rungtynėse Lietuva- aštuntoje vietoje", zebra.lt), "The leader of inadequate taxes" ("Neteisingų mokesčių lyderė", bernardinai.lt, zebra.lt), "Lithuanians – the champions of self-treatment" ("Lietuviai-savigydos čempionai", veidas.lt), "Lithuanians among the leaders in bribery" ("Lietuviai – tarp kyšininkavimo lyderių", delfi.lt, 15min.lt ), "Lithuanians are the leaders in fake licenses" ("Lietuviai - suklastotų vairuotojų pažymėjimų lyderiai", lrytas.lt), "Death atlas:Lithuania is among the "leaders" once again"("Mirtingumo atlasas":

Lietuva – vėl tarp Europos "lyderių", delfi.lt), "Lithuania –an absolute leader in youth suicides"("Lietuva-absoliuti lyderė vaikų savižudybėse", zebra.lt). In nearly every one of these cases, the irony results from the clash of a positive sports frame and the negative frame of some social problem.

The pilot study supports the assumption that irony expressed through the Politics is sport metaphor is conventionally used when communicating an ironic attitude towards a negative situation: 90% of the respondents identified the headline as ironic (though when asked to relate the phrase "the vice-champion in drinking" to a specific country, only 40% linked it to Lithuania).

### 9.9. Lithuania is the Land of Miracles in: "The Tales of the Land of Miracles: a Dragon and a Boy"

An implicit reference to Lithuania as a land of miracles appeared in two headlines[163], both of which communicate an ironic critical attitude by employing the mental input space of miracles. Miracles, tales, and dragons are commonly associated with folk tales or children's books. Meanwhile, in the news, elements of folk tales are unacceptable, and their deliberate use not only draws the reader's attention, but also signals figurative meanings. In the case of "The Tales of The land of Miracles: A dragon and a boy" the motifs of tales are employed to ridicule the political situation in Lithuania.

The irony in the headline follows a complicated network of integration, one that incorporates multiple, single-scope, and double-scope structures, as shown in the scheme below:

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[163] Lithuanian headlines abound in everyday realia defined in terms of miracles; however, at this stage of research only the ironic headlines addressing Lithuania have been selected.
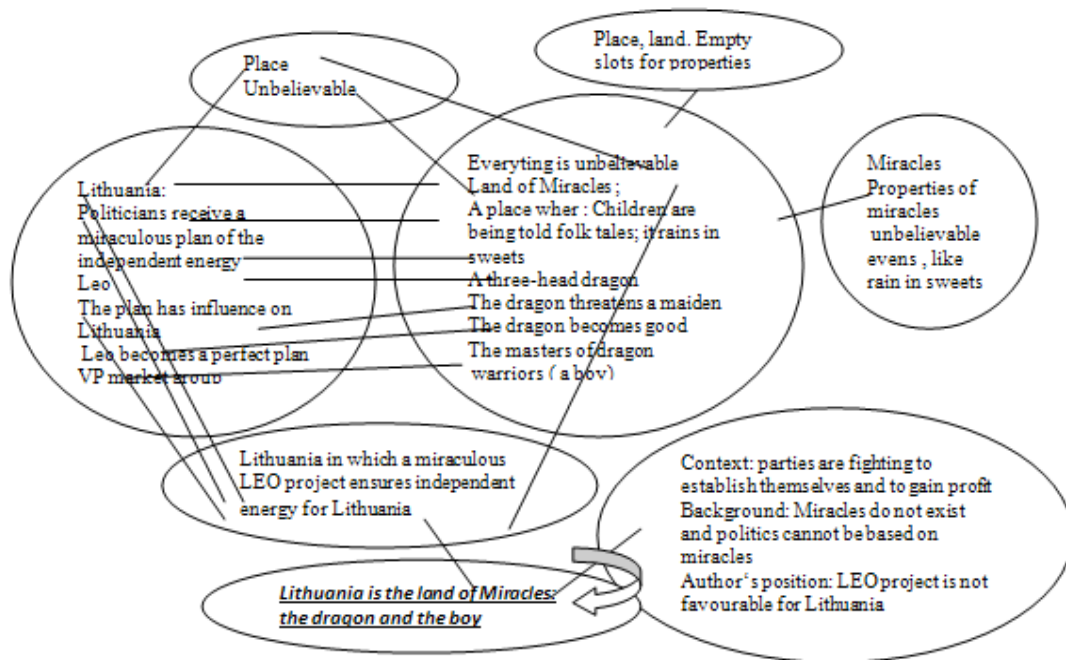
Place
Unbelievable

Place, land. Empty
slots for properties

Miracles
Properties of
miracles
unbelievable
evens , like
rain in sweets

Lithuania:
Politicians receive a
miraculous plan of the
independent energy
Leo
The plan has influence on
Lithuania
Leo becomes a perfect plan
VP market group

Everyting is unbelievable
Land of Miracles ;
A place wher : Children are
being told folk tales; it rains in
sweets
A three-head dragon
The dragon threatens a maiden
The dragon becomes good
The masters of dragon
warriors ( a boy)

Lithuania in which a miraculous
LEO project ensures independent
energy for Lithuania

Context: parties are fighting to
establish themselves and to gain profit
Background: Miracles do not exist
and politics cannot be based on
miracles
Author's position: LEO project is not
favourable for Lithuania

*Lithuania is the land of Miracles:*
*the dragon and the boy*

Figure 10

The mental input space "Land of Miracles" is a separate multiple blend on its own, which integrates two mental input spaces, land and miracles. In the mental space of miracles, all the elements necessary for the blend are activated. As discussed above, all the mental spaces integrated into the same structure by conceptual blending influence one another. Here, as the phrase "land of miracles" is metaphoric, in order to perform a cross-space mapping, certain elements that have counterparts in the mental input space of "Lithuania' are activated, e.g. a story-teller, children, sweets for children, a dragon, a boy, a fight, etc. The blended space of the "land of Miracles" undergoes further elaboration and is used as a mental input space in a more complex structure, i.e. in a single-scope network. The second input space of the structure is the implied input space of Lithuania. The author relies on the reader to identify the implied referent by relying on the shared background knowledge, context and vital relations (e.g. the vital relations of Property and Similarity). In contrast to the elements of the first input space, some of which are explicit in the headline, here the reader is responsible for finding the counterpart elements and conducting the cross-space mapping on his own. The matching counterpart

elements are projected into the generic space and selectively projected into the mental blended space. As a result, the blended space establishes a scenario in which Lithuania magically manages to achieve energy independence due to the "Leo" plan and those who designed it. The blended space is integrated into a double-scope network with the input space of 'context/author's position/background knowledge", which contains contradictory information, e.g. that the plan of Leo will not make all sources of energy in Lithuania independent of foreign interests, that VP Market (the designer of the plan) is out to make a profit, and that the members of Parliament voted for the project not because it was reasonable but because they were given "sweets" in the form of 20 million Litas. The contrasting input spaces generate a clash which leads to an ironic shift of meaning: the author looks with irony at the situation in Lithuania and at those who believe in "miracles". The pretended belief in miracles is incompatible with the actual situation and cannot be interpreted literally.

Irony in the network exploits all the compressions enabled by blending. The main outer space vital relations include Analogy/Disanalogy, Similarity and Property, which are compressed into the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness. The vital relations of Time and Space are also compressed. The compressions allow the desired implications: the speeches of the politicians are not to be trusted (just as fairy tales cannot be literally trusted), and the Leo project, though favorably described by the government, is a threat for the country. The headline implicitly refers to politicians as naïve children, to magnates of business and the government as story tellers, to the Leo project as a three-headed dragon, etc. Relying on such metaphoric references, it might be assumed that the headline is built on the basis of the Politics is a tale metaphor. Petraškaitė-Pabst (2006), in her analysis of political conceptual metaphors, ascribes such metaphors to the field of folklore and draws attention to the frequency of these metaphors in the Lithuanian mass media. Therefore it might be said that metaphorical reference to politics as a folk tale is relatively conventionalized; in addition to its appearance in

headlines, similar references can be found in articles (e.g. Petraškaitė-Pabst (2006) cites the following cases: "when we join the EU we will see rivers of milk and banks of pudding" ("kai įstosime į ES, paplūs pieno upės su kisieliaus krantais"), "a fairy-tale-like life" ( "pasakiškas gyvenimas"), or the EU as "a land of miracles" and "the good fairy"), as well as in the readers' comments on websites. In the pilot study, 80% of the respondents found the headline ironic (though when asked to name the referent of the phrase "Land of Miracles" taken out of context, only 35% related it to Lithuania[164]). Thus, the conclusion follows that the conventionalization of the irony in the phrase "Land of Miracles" is more related to the phrase itself than to its application to Lithuania.

Irony in the headline is associated with the criticizing, corrective, assailing, and aggregative functions. The criticism is directed at political activities based on lies. Such ironic criticism is linked to the corrective function of irony, which encourages the reader to admit to and try to correct the situation.

## 9.10. Lithuania is the Land of Miracles in: "The Tales of the Land of Miracles. Gediminas' Dream"

The headline "The Tales of the land of Miracles. Gediminas' Dream"[165] is analogous to the previously discussed one. It is also elaborated on the basis of a "folklore metaphor" (Pabst, 2006) to express a negative critical evaluation of the country and its politicians. As Anolli, Ciceri and Infantino note, irony is "a mask revealing, paradoxically, what it apparently hides" (2002, p. 76). To achieve this aim, the ironic headline exploits a powerful metaphoric expression. The metaphor simultaneously reveals the opposition between Lithuania and a land of miracles while pointing out the incongruity.

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[164] The relatively small rate of recognition of Lithuania as the denotant of "The land of miracles" may be related to the fact that while filling in the questionnaire the respondents focused not on the frame of the present political situation in Lithuania but on the problem of emigration, and related "the land of miracles" to the desirable locations to live and work in.
[165] Referring to the Grand Duke Gediminas who ruled in the 14th century.

To communicate the idea, the writer uses a commonly known sphere. As Lassan (2002) argues, the aim to transform an abstract concept, an idea, into an obviously sensual picture poses the necessity to find a metaphor which could equate an ambiguous aspect of an entity to a well-known realia: metaphor is built in such a way as to use a key word as a hint for communicating the subject's model of behavior in a world where opposing values exist. In this way the author communicates not only how the focus/target space should be understood, but also how the content of the mental focus space should be assessed. In this case the communicated assessment is that of ironical negative attitude.

The blending mechanism employed in this ironic headline could be illustrated by the scheme below:
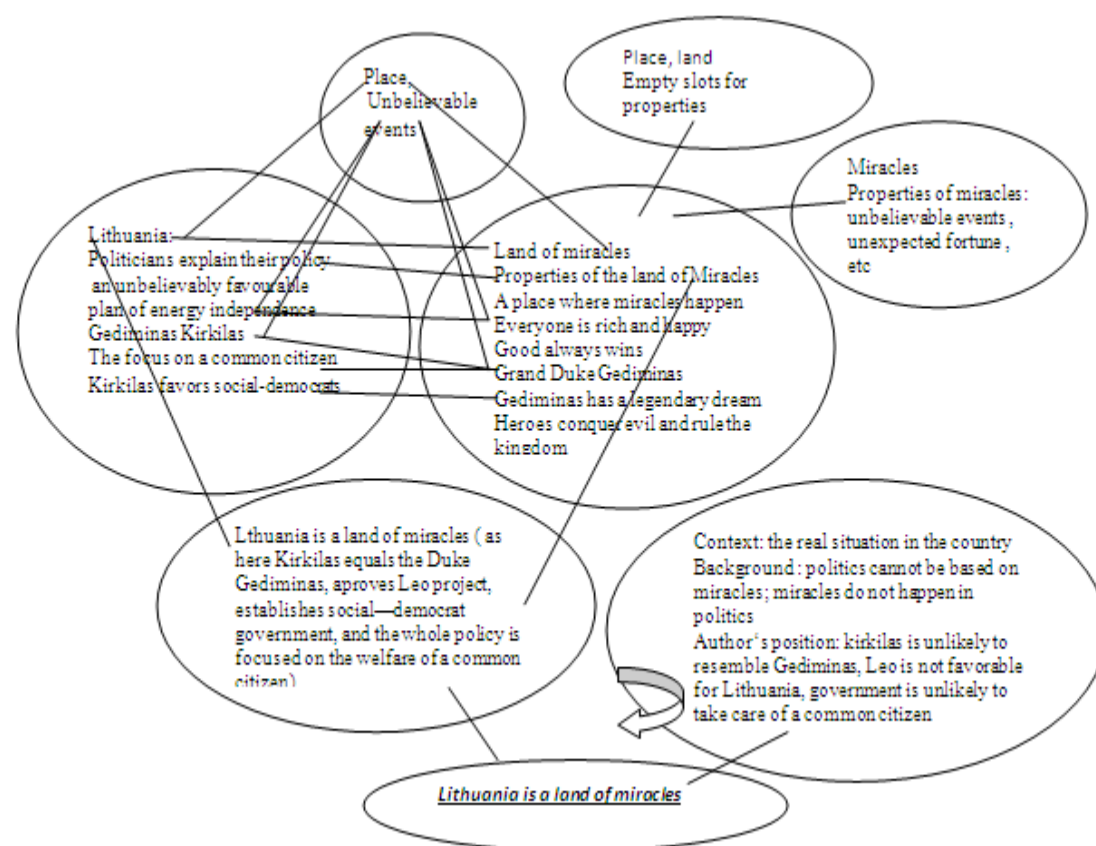


Figure 11

The biggest part of the construct is similar to the previous structure. The mental space of "the land of Miracles" is a separate multiple blend encompassing two mental input spaces that are not linked by a generic space.

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The first input is an abstract location (land), which serves as a slot to fill with the properties of the second input. The second input (miracles) is related to the national folklore, legends and historic experience; here the activated elements are: Duke Gediminas, his legendary dream, and the context of the dream. Intertextuality plays a great role in this case. A reader with no knowledge of the legend of Gediminas' dream[166] will not be able to construct a blend similar to the one in the scheme above[167]. If the reader's knowledge is sufficient, however, the elements of the dream and Gediminas will be projected into the space of "Land of Miracles", to be further mapped to the elements of the implied mental space of "Lithuania": Gediminas Kirkilas, Prime Minister at the time, will be mapped to Gediminas, and the plans of the establishment of Leo and the government of social democrats will be mapped to the Gediminas' dream of the establishment of Vilnius. The juxtaposition of the elements of the implied space "Lithuania" and the input space of "the Land of Miracles" hints at the ironic shift of meaning. The blended space is incorporated (as an input) into a more complex double-scope network, together with the input space of "context/author's position/background knowledge". The incompatibility of the elements within the two spaces generates an ironic shift of meaning: the real Lithuania is contrasted with the land of Miracles where Leo is a reasonable project and politicians actually care about the welfare of the common people, while Duke Gediminas is compared to the prime Minister Gediminas Kirkilas (although both personalities carry the same name, the ambitions of Kirkilas are equated to a dream). The double-scope integration network, according to Turner and Fauconnier, "provides human beings with the ability to do remarkable compressions" (2002, p. 353) and enables the reader to build two contradictory scenarios as an inseparable whole while, at the same time, comprehending the input spaces as separate entities. The double-scope

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[166] Beresnevičius claims that the legend was popularized by the Romantics, but notices that "the legend had been known to our ancestors and to Lithuania's neighbors. The dream of Gediminas and the story of the establishment of Vilnius are narrated in Russia's chronicles (earl Krasinski's, Archeological society's, earl Rachinski's transcripts), Lithuania's chronicles (Bychovo' chronicle), in Strijkovski, Vijūkas–Kojelavičius, and later authors" (Beresnevičius, 1991).

[167] As Turner & Fauconnier argue, the structure of blending is dependent on the participants of the communicative act. Different participants might integrate different elements into the structure.

mechanism not only achieves the goals defined by Turner and Fauconnier (i.e. to "compress what is diffuse" and to "give the global insight;" (2002, p. 346)), but also makes the ironic attitude explicit. The ironic attitude is adopted when evaluating both the country (where "miracles' take place) and the Prime Minister (whose ambitions are similar to those of the Grand Duke).

Irony in this case is a very economical means of expressing a negative ironic evaluation. The mechanism of the blend enables compressions of the outer space vital relations of Analogy/Disanalogy and Similarity, analogies such as the "miracles" in both input spaces and the two Gediminases, which appear together with explicit clashes (miracles are incompatible with the mental space of politics, and turn into negative actions there, while the situation in the land of miracles Lithuania does not correspond to the situation in the actual Lithuania). These vital relations are compressed into the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness. The blend inherits the compressions of Time and Space from the inputs: Lithuania of the 14th century and the present day Lithuania are seen as a single entity. Other outer space vital relations that function within the blend include Identity, Cause-Effect, Change and Intentionality, which operate between the inputs and undergo compressions in the blended space. The blended space contains a laconic compression of different centuries, events, intentions, consequences and personalities. However, simultaneously we see these as separate input spaces. The mechanism of blending enables us to see the different spaces as a whole and also as separate spaces, as when running the blend "the links to the inputs are constantly maintained" (Turner and Fauconnier, 2002, p. 44).

Irony in the headline performs the functions of criticism, assailing, reinforcement, protection and community building. The criticism is aimed at the unreasonable ambitions of G. Kirkilas and at the country which makes such ambitions viable. The implied criticism is related to the reinforcing function of irony, not only because irony (according to Kreuz, 1991) is a sharper form of criticism than direct statement, but also because the ironic attack is more difficult to fight—the ironist can always deny having been ironic. The function

of group affiliation is related not only to the audience supporting the position of the author but also to the limitations imposed by the intertextuality of the headline. Irony ridicules, but as Raskin (1985) puts it, political ridicule commonly makes use of "allusions to a particular event, slogan, mannerism or trait" (p. 222), and is therefore accessible only to a narrow circle of people of a particular culture or epoch. In this case, the reader is expected to trace the link between Gediminas Kirkilas and Duke Gediminas, to be familiar with the legend about the establishment of Vilnius, and to be capable of decoding the referent of the land of miracles. A typical idea of such political ridicule, according to Raskin (1985), is that politics, a political leader or the whole way of life of a certain country are not the way they should be; the real situation is different from the one portrayed, and this creates the ironic effect.

## 9.11. Lithuania is Litbel in: "The Jurisdiction of Litbel"[168]

Though not numerous, ironic Lithuanian headlines relating to history may be called a separate field, one which imposes particular preconceived requirements on the reader. In order to perceive irony, or even to understand this headline, the reader must be able to answer the question, "What is Litbel?" However, merely basic knowledge is not enough for the interpretation of the headline; to perceive it as ironic the reader must be well acquainted with the events that were relevant at the time when the article was published: The Lithuanian court was considering Minsk's appeal, and had just taken the decision to extradite the active critic of the regime, fighter and dissident Alexandr Jankovskij. In the context of those events, two perspectives are taken in the headline: the reader perceives a Lithuania that considers itself a democratic country which is in no way ready to remember being a constituent part of Litbel; and at the same time, in the field of law enforcement, another

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[168] Litbel – Soviet Socialist Republic of Lithuania and Belarus, established in February 1919 by the Bolshevik party; Litbel existed only for a few months, till August 1919.

Lithuania that retains the features of "authoritarian" Belarus and thus deserves criticism, i.e. being given the name of Litbel.

The role of contextual information in the interpretation of irony has been discussed in the works of a number of scholars (Pexman, Olineck, Renouf, Utsumi, Danks, Giora, etc.). In this particular case, knowing the facts of the context meets the conditions for being accepted in the readers' community built by irony. Such a function of irony was given a central role in Booth (1974), who claims that irony builds communities that only the "privileged" (those who manage to perceive irony and who share the author's evaluative position) can join.

This ironic headline, which seems short and uncomplicated, incorporates complex blending structures. The name Litbel is a complex blend itself, not only because it is a combination of Lithuania and Belarus, but also because of the historical as well as cultural contextual information that fills the mental spaces.
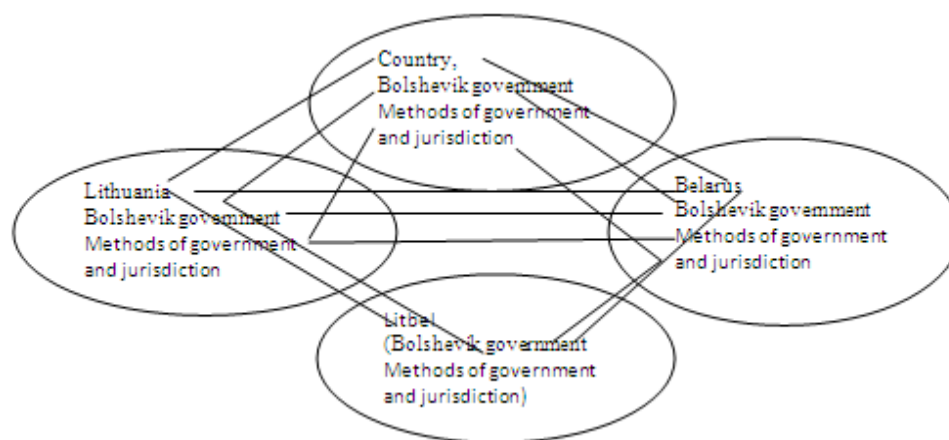


Figure 12

This blend uses mirror integration: the overall structure has the same organizing frame, i.e. the country ruled by Bolsheviks, with a tendentious law enforcement system. Since both explicated mental input spaces are of an analogical structure, the mapping of the constituent elements of the input spaces is not complicated. The counterpart elements are matched and projected to the generic and to the blended spaces. The mental space "Litbel" encompasses the element "jurisdiction," which can also be seen as a separate

input space connected through the vital relation of Part-Whole. "Jurisdiction" as one of the key elements of the blend has counterparts in all constituent mental spaces of the blend. The organizing frame itself provides an implicated negative evaluation, which is connected with the general evaluation of the discussed period in Lithuania. The mental space of "Litbel" (and, simultaneously, the "jurisdiction of Litbel") inherits all the compressions enabled by the blending mechanism, which result in the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness. Although the mental space is externally similar to the headline, it is not the blended space of the final blend. In order to reach an ironic effect, the obtained blend undergoes further elaboration and is then incorporated into a more complex structure as shown below:
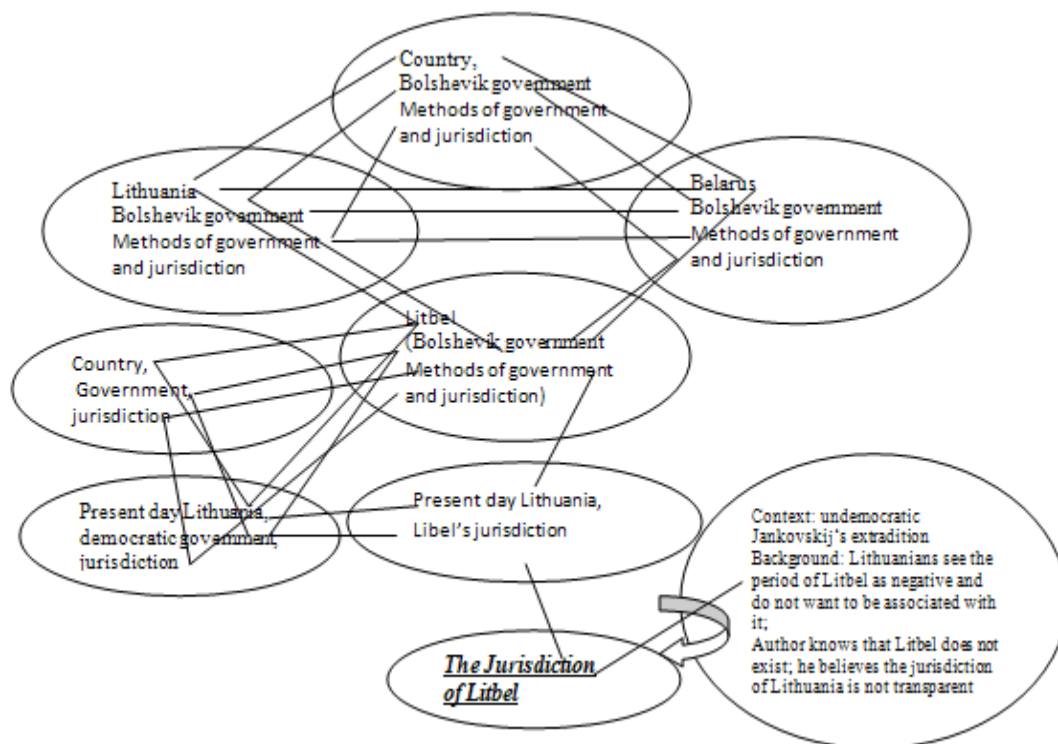


Figure 13

In the bigger structure of the megablend that encompasses the present-day Lithuania and Litbel's jurisdiction, the mental input space of "present-day Lithuania" is implicit. The author relies on the contextual knowledge: the issues of that time, i.e. the vagaries of Lithuanian and Belarusian law enforcement systems. The second mental space is the implicit space of present-day Lithuania (including the element of its present-day jurisdiction).

The network employs the mirror structure of integration: the elements are mapped, the generic space is defined, and the selected elements as well as all the implications and compressions from the previous mental spaces are projected into the blend. All the outer space vital relations are compressed into the inner space relation of Uniqueness. The blended space (serving as an input) together with the mental space of "context/background knowledge/author's position" are incorporated into one common structure via the double-scope integration mechanism. Within this structure, the constituent elements of the mental input spaces (time period, government force, law enforcement systems) are in conflict, which results in the ironic shift of meaning. Due to the double-scope integration, we have today's Lithuania and its jurisdiction as well as its negative ironic evaluation. Here irony has both assailing and corrective functions. The reinforcing function of irony manifests itself by enabling the strengthening of the evaluative approach that the author wants to convey.

Such an ironic reference to Lithuania is not conventional. During the pilot study, although Lithuania was indicated as the object of the headline by the majority of respondents, they encountered problems explaining the possible meaning of the headline as well as determining if it was ironic or not. Although intertextuality and historic references are typical of ironic headlines, the ironic use of "Litbel" was a unique case, not detected in any other headlines or articles/comments.

**9.12. Lithuania is the Little Drummer in "Lithuania-Russia: the Death of the Little Drummer"**

This headline presents one of the most interesting references to Lithuania found on delfi.lt. In the pilot study this was the headline that caused the most difficulties for the respondents. The difficulties could be related both to the metaphoric expression of irony and to the intertextuality of the headline. Relying on the article (http://blog.delfi.lt/sauliusstoma/6972/.delfi.lt), Galina

Starovoitova[169], a famous activist of the democratic movement in the Soviet Union and Russia, once called Lithuania a little drummer[170]. According to the journalist, she characterized Lithuania this way in reference to its impact on the fall of the Russian Empire, and then on Russia's democracy. These implications of the headline may not be accessible to a common reader, therefore the intended idea of the journalist can be constructed through irony by means of the mechanism of blending only after having read the article itself, in which the author explains that Lithuania used to be called a little drummer at the end of the 20th century due to the movement of Sąjūdis and the fall of the Russian Empire. Thus politics in the headline is conceptualized relying on the conceptual metaphor of war, in which Lithuania performs the role of a little drummer in the avant-garde of the army. The drummer in this case symbolizes the movement of democracy in Lithuania and its impact on the USSR. Meanwhile, the emphasis in the article is on the politicians who ascribe to themselves the mission of the "little drummer" to "spread the democracy of the West to the East"; the article not only expresses disappointment at the failure of this mission, but also questions the very spirit of democracy in Lithuania, ridiculing the "formal democracy" that was acquired after joining the EU and NATO. The author communicates a critical ironic assessment of the type of democracy in Lithuania which is based on the incongruity between the politicians' point of view and the author's position.

If the reader has sufficient contextual knowledge and is capable of tracing the intended connections, the irony of the headline could be depicted as functioning according to the blending mechanism below:

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[169] More information about G.Starovoitova:
http://www.webcitation.org/query?url=http://www.geocities.com/Athens/2533/galina.html&date=2009-10-25+05:32:48
[170] The full text can be found at: http://detkam.e-papa.ru/mp/54/462.html (Sept. 2011).

Being in avant-garde of an
army/a movement

Politics;
Lithuania
A leader of a
democratic movement
in the former Soviet
Union
Democracy

War:
A little drummer
Being in avant-garde
Battles
army

(Lithuania)-the little
drummer
Democracy

Country,
democracy,
properties, time

Present day Lithuania
Democracy

Present day Lithuania- the
little drummer
Democratic; has a mission
to lead others

Background: Storovoitova's words
Context: At present democracy in
Lithuania is in a poor condition;
contrary to the public claims of
politicians Lithuania cannot show the
way to democracy for other countries
Author's position: Lithuania cannot
be seen as a little drummer
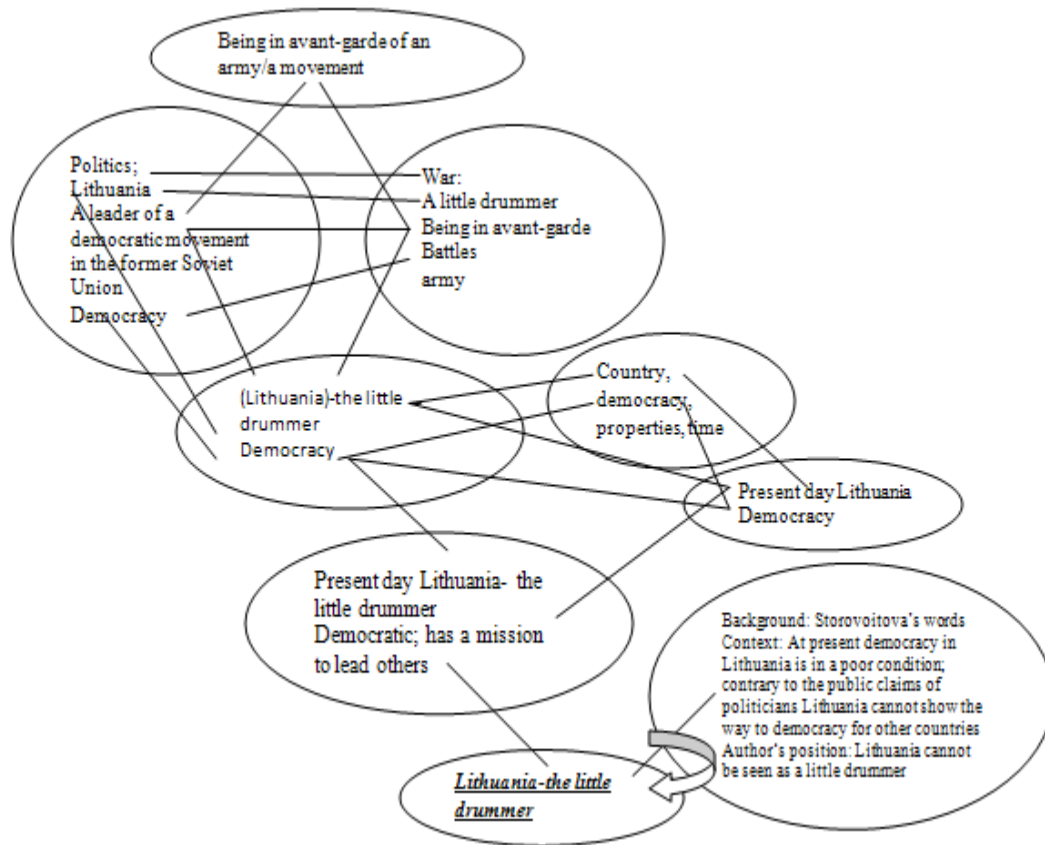
*Lithuania-the little*
*drummer*

Figure 14

The scheme shows that irony exploits a complex mechanism of blending. The mental space of "The Little Drummer" is a separate blend that integrates two mental input spaces: 1. the mental space of the little drummer (which entails being in the avant-garde, being a herald, etc.), which can be presented within the frame of war; and 2. the implicit mental input space of Lithuania at the end of the 20th century (within a broader frame of politics). The diminutive size of Lithuania's territory seems to emphasize its great input into the democratic movement. Lithuania is seen as a little drummer relying on the mental model of the conceptual metaphor POLITICS IS WAR. On the linguistic level, it is realized through a single-scope network that follows the organizing frame of war. The elements of the mental spaces undergo cross-space mapping (e.g. a herald of democracy—a drummer of an army, the movement of democracy—the battles of a war, etc.); the elements share a generic mental space and are selectively projected into the blended space. The conceptual model of POLITICS IS WAR has been discussed as one of the most

frequent conceptual models of political discourse in the works of Cibulskienė (2006), Petraškaitė (2006), and other Lithuanian scholars. Therefore it could be argued that the linguistic metaphor is conventional as well; however, in this case not the whole frame of war, but only a small element has been actualized and therefore the metaphor is closer not to the "basis" metaphor[171] (which organizes the whole text and enables further development of the implications) but to the "fragmentary" model (in which further elaboration is limited).

The mental input spaces are connected by the outer space relations of Space, Time, Part-Whole, Analogy, and Similarity, which are compressed into the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness in the blended space. The blended space undergoes further elaboration and serves as an input for a mirror integration structure, together with the input space of the present-day Lithuania: in this way, the Lithuania of the 1990s is seen as an equivalent of the present-day Lithuania (which, according to the politicians, is still in the avant-garde of the democratic movement and has the mission of teaching other countries the ways of democracy). Both input spaces of the mirror network share the same organizing frame and undergo the cross-space mapping of counterpart elements (Lithuania of the 1990s—present-day Lithuania, the democratic movement of the 1990s—the present democratic movement, the role of Lithuania in the 1990s—the role of Lithuania now, etc.) which share a generic mental space. The elements of the democratic movement of the 1990s and the present-day Lithuania are selectively projected into the blended space. The outer space vital relations of Time, Space, Intentionality, Similarity, Identity and Change are compressed into the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness in the blended space, which enables the reader to see the present-day Lithuania as a herald of democracy. However, the resulting blend reflects only the position of some politicians; according to the author, the democratic movement in Lithuania has ceased and Lithuania is no longer considered a country capable of teaching other countries the ways of democracy. Thus the mental space of "context/background knowledge/author's position" is

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[171] The concepts of base and fragmentary metaphors were introduced by Lassan (2002).

activated, and together with the blended space of "Present Lithuania, the Little Drummer (a herald of democracy)" serves as an input space for a double-scope integration network. The conflict of the contradictory information that flows from the input spaces is resolved by the ironic shift of meaning: the author communicates a negative ironic attitude targeted at the statements of the politicians regarding Lithuania's avant-garde position in the movement of democracy. The inadequacy between Lithuania as a prototypical little drummer of democracy and the reality is addressed as the condition of "failed expectations" in Utsumi's theory (2002). Irony here communicates criticism and disappointment. Simultaneously irony performs a corrective function: it draws attention to the negative tendencies and encourages the reader to acknowledge the shortcomings and initiate positive changes. The aggregative (or group affiliation) function of the headline is more explicit than in other cases: due to the complex intertextuality and metaphorical expression, irony here is accessible only to "a narrow elite community" (according to Booth, 1974) or, as Hutcheon puts it, to a separate "discursive community" (1996, p. 4). The elitism of the community is conditioned by a multi-layered intertextuality, as reference is made not only to the words of Storovoitova, but to the lyrics of a Russian folk song as well. Therefore the irony of the headline could be described as unconventional or occasional, as its processing requires accessing all the levels of the context, which is related to very specific events.

### 9.13. Results of the Analysis of Lithuanian Headlines

Irony directed at Lithuania as a country in ironic news headlines can be analyzed within the framework of the mechanism of conceptual blending. The mechanism of irony in such headlines is generally a complex structure, a multi-layered megablend.

The blended spaces of most of the analyzed headlines are composed of two mental input spaces, one of which is Lithuania or incorporates Lithuania as an element. This mental input space in the conceptual blending network is either explicated or implied (by relying on the conventionality of the ironic utterance). The second mental input space in the majority of the examined cases is a separate blend on its own with a multiple, single-scope or mirror network. The multiple integration is peculiar to cases where the mental space encompasses elements (spaces) that come from unrelated spheres. Mirror networks are common in cases where two mental input spaces share the same organizing frame. Single-scope structures are typical in cases where irony employs metaphors as a means of expression.

To communicate irony the ironist employs several distinct thematic fields.

The most conventionalized ironic reference to Lithuania is "Mary's Land". The conventionality of the utterance enables the headline to leave out any direct reference to Lithuania (in the conceptual blending network this is marked as an implied input space). This ironic reference is linked to the cultural-historic experience of Lithuania.

The second field is based on the metonymical representation of the country through certain foods. The conventional ironic phrase "Banana republic", which is used universally to refer to a variety of countries, is employed both as a reference to Lithuania and as a template for similar references (Lithuania as a land of Kebabs, Chebureks, Cepelinai).

The third field is associated with the conceptual metaphor POLITICS IS SPORT, which has facilitated a number of linguistic metaphoric means.

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Ironic headlines exploit the mental model and focus on negative realia of the country, depicting it as participating in a sports competition for questionable goals. Here the conventionality of the irony is linked not to a specific reference but to the model of the metaphor POLITICS IS SPORT in general.

The fourth field involves an imagined, unreal world, where Lithuania is named as a land of miracles. This field corresponds to the topicality of folklore metaphors analyzed by Pabst (2006), and can be regarded as a certain variant of the POLITICS IS A TALE metaphor. The ironic utterances on their own have not been conventionalized, but the elements of the headline are easily mapped from the space of the unreal into the mental space of the actual Lithuania by relying on common background cultural knowledge.

The fifth sphere is linked to the historic past of Lithuania. Such ironic utterances in headlines have not been conventionalized in headlines and present singular cases of use. Contrary to the cases mentioned above, they are not elaborated in the articles or in readers' comments. Such ironies rely on the shared beliefs and background knowledge of the readers. The headlines where irony is linked to the historic past of Lithuania might be heavily intertextual and therefore not accessible to every reader.

Ironic headlines exploit different mechanisms of conceptual blending. All the analyzed headlines are complex megablends. They are made up of double-scope, single-scope and mirror networks.

Double-scope integration is employed in all the networks as the final megablend. One of its inputs in all cases is the mental input space of context/author's position/ background knowledge. The incompatibility of the constituent mental input spaces in this double-scope integration network is the stimulus for the ironic shift of meaning.

The conceptual structures of ironic utterances commonly encompass implied elements/spaces, which in the current analysis have been referred to as implicit mental spaces/elements.

The mechanism of conceptual blending exploited by ironic headlines enables the compressions of diverse vital relations. In the headlines under

analysis the following vital relations have most commonly been compressed: Time, Space, Change, Representation, Analogy/Disanalogy, Part-Whole, Similarity, and Intentionality.

The vital relation of Time can be related to memories, historic or legendary events (the jurisdiction of Litbel, the dream of Gediminas), change (Lithuania as Mary's land, the little drummer), unreal time (the land of miracles), simultaneity (Kebab Land, Cheburek Land, Banana Republic). Mental spaces can be separated in time, but due to the mechanism of blending those input spaces are unified. In the ironic headlines the author refers to certain actual historic, cultural, fantastic, and evaluative aspects. Explicating all of these in a headline would be space-consuming, and for this reason the irony of the headlines exploits the compressions enabled by conceptual blending. The outer space vital relation of Time undergoes compressions in the blended space.

The compressions of the vital relation of Space join together two mental spaces that occupy different physical spaces. The compressions of Space in the analyzed headlines are of two categories: compressions of space between two real locations (e.g. Lithuania and a Banana Republic, or Lithuania and Litbel) and compressions of space between an actual location and a counterfactual, an imagined place (e.g. Lithuania and a land of miracles).

The compressions of the vital relation of Change link the elements of one mental space to the elements of another input space and imply a transformation: Litbel turns into Lithuania, Duke Gediminas becomes Gediminas Kirkilas, Lithuania becomes a parallel world, negative realia change into goals to strive for, etc.). The vital relation of Change can operate separately or together with the vital relation of Identity: when talking about Lithuania and the land of Mary, the location is identical, but when talking about Duke Gediminas and Gediminas Kirkilas we see them as connected by the vital relation of Change but not Identity. The blending mechanism enables the compression of the outer space vital relations of Change and Identity into

the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness at "human scale understanding", due to which the whole structure is comprehended as a single unit.

The compressions of the vital relation of Role-Value were most dominant in the integration networks of those headlines where irony employed metaphors (Lithuania, as a value, is given the role of a leader, European countries the roles of sportsmen, etc.). The elements here are neither roles nor values on their own, but only due to the interaction between them. Role-Value compressions are peculiar to mirror integration networks. Here they go together with the vital relation of Analogy. In this case both mental input spaces share the same organizing frame and both inputs have Value elements for the same Roles (e.g. Lithuania and Kebab land are both values for the role of country). The outer space vital relations of Role-Value and Analogy are compressed into Uniqueness in the blended space; yet, though we see the blend as a single unit, this does not prevent us from seeing the input spaces as separate compound elements. The peculiarity of the Role-Value relation in irony lies in the fact that certain features associated with value are projected from one (source) mental space onto the "value" elements of the other (target) input space.

The relations between mental spaces and the blended space are dynamic and continuously maintained. They enable the economy of the irony of headlines and allow them to communicate complex matters at the scale of human understanding. This is made viable due to the compressions of the vital relations.

Irony targeted at Lithuania exploits a number of means of expression: metonymy, metaphor, overstatement and understatement.

Metonymy is used for an ironic effect and has been commonly seen in the cases when the author uses a trivial, insignificant aspect of life to refer to an entire country; here irony performs the derogatory function (e.g. the whole country is implicitly referred to through kebabs or chebureks).

The use of metaphors is another peculiarity of ironic headlines. Irony, in its own way, exploits metaphors which have been conventionalized in

political discourse in general. In headlines where irony targets Lithuania, linguistic metaphors based on the following conceptual metaphors have been identified: POLITICS IS SPORT, POLITICS IS WAR, and POLITICS IS A TALE. Metaphors that are used as different input spaces (target and source) contain cardinally contrary elements, the clash of which supports the ironic shift of meaning.

Both overstatement and understatement have been used in headlines to reinforce the ironic negative assessment and to encourage an ironic interpretation of the headline.

An ironic shift of meaning is also associated with a clash between the utterance at the literal, direct level and the context/background knowledge/author's position, as well as with the element of pretense. The author's pretended belief in the message of the headline (at the dictum level) is an indispensible constituent part of the process.

Irony in the headlines directed at Lithuania performs several functions: corrective, evaluative, critical, assailing, reinforcing, humorous, and group affiliation.

The conventionality of the ironic utterances could be treated in two ways. First, there have been cases where the phrase itself has become conventionalized and the ironic meaning should be considered salient (e.g. Mary's Land). Second, there have been cases where it is only the frame that has been conventionalized and that can be filled in with different lexis (e.g. the frame of sports where Lithuania is referred to as the vice-champion in drinking). This type is linked to the use of metaphors that have been conventionalized in political discourse in general.

The conventionality of an ironic utterance can also be related to the use of the implied mental space of Lithuania in conceptual blending networks. The author relies on the conventionality of the utterance and does not refer to Lithuania explicitly.

Several headlines under analysis are based on intertextuality (e.g. the little drummer), which might turn into a barrier to receiving the communicated message. Intertextuality serves the aggregative function of irony.

The mechanism of irony is influenced by context and background knowledge. Statistically, irony within a familiar context is much more readily interpreted (as revealed by the pilot study).

Ironic headlines directed at Lithuania should be considered an informative and economic means of the communication of an evaluative attitude. The evaluative attitude in all cases was negative.

## 10. IRONIC HEADLINES REFERRING TO AMERICA (USA)

The American on-line news website alternet.org provides a wide range of ironic headlines, a number of which refer ironically to America itself. Radden and Kovecses (1999), relying on Langacker's (1993) research, address the name of America as a case of metonymy based on a "whole thing for a part of the thing" relationship, where the name of America (a continent) is used to refer to one of its parts (the USA[172]). Within the scope of blending theory, such a relationship is treated as a conceptual network integrating two mental input spaces, one of which is a continent and the other is the USA, interrelated by the outer space vital relation of Part-Whole, which is compressed into the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness in the blended space: here America stands metonymically for the USA. In the analyses of the ironic headlines below, "America" is a common compound element; however, as the blending mechanism of the given network does not undergo any changes, "America" in the further schemes will be shown as an input space in the form of a separate blend.

### 10.1. "We are Number 1"

This headline precedes an article criticizing America's military policy, its volumes of armament and large numbers of military bases. The statement "We are Number 1" implies that the USA is winning a competition that has taken place among countries. Here irony makes use of the structure supported by the model of the conceptual metaphor "Politics is Sport," which is not explicitly expressed in the form of a linguistic metaphor. As discussed above, this metaphor in English (and other) political discourse has been analyzed by Kovecses (2002), Gibbs (2004), Cibulskienė (2006), Arcimavičienė (2008) and other scientists. One of the essential findings in this field has been the fact that

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[172] Langaker refers to such cases as "active-zone/profile discrepancies" (p. 192), based on the fact that "various facets of the profiled entity participate in a relationship to different degrees" (p. 191); he argues that such cases are "the rule not the exception" (p.192).

the conceptual metaphor of Sports in political discourse highlights the superiority of physical power. In the headline under analysis, dominance and power are emphatically explicated, could even be treated as hyperbole.

To study the irony of the headline, as was the case with similar Lithuanian headlines, the mechanism of conceptual blending can be applied. According to Turner and Fauconnier (2002), all conventionalized "source-target" metaphors usually rely on the single-scope structure of integration. This case is no exception: here the irony exploits metaphoric reference and consequently a single-scope network. However, the network is not a typical case as discussed in the works of Turner and Fauconnier. The headline explicitly provides only part of the components needed for the structure; the other part (i.e. the second mental input space) is implied. The first input space (sport), which serves as a "source" domain, contains such elements as: a sports match, competition, winning, champions, participants in a sports event, etc. The second input space is referred to by the inclusive pronoun "we", which does not explicitly indicate the referent, but in this case implies America. It could be argued that, although the second mental input space is indicated by the pronoun "we", it is still an implicit mental space. It encompasses such elements as: America, America's military policy, its volumes of armament, other countries, the volumes of armament in other countries, etc. All the elements come from the frame of politics, and the conceptual metaphor that the irony is built on could be identified as POLITICS IS SPORT. The cross-space mapping between the elements of the inputs identifies the active relations: America is the winner of the first place, volumes of armaments becomes a competitive event, other countries are other participants of a sports event. Sports metaphors of this kind are related to the exhibition of power in Arcimavičienė's study. Here, the metaphor is integrated into a larger blending network and thus contributes to the communication of irony.

America's arms policy is presented at the scale of human understanding by transmitting the properties associated with the "source" domain into the "target" domain. The structure shares the same organizing

frame, i.e. the frame of sports. The mechanism of the integration, relying on the classification of Turner and Fauconnier, is single-scope and can be illustrated by the following scheme:
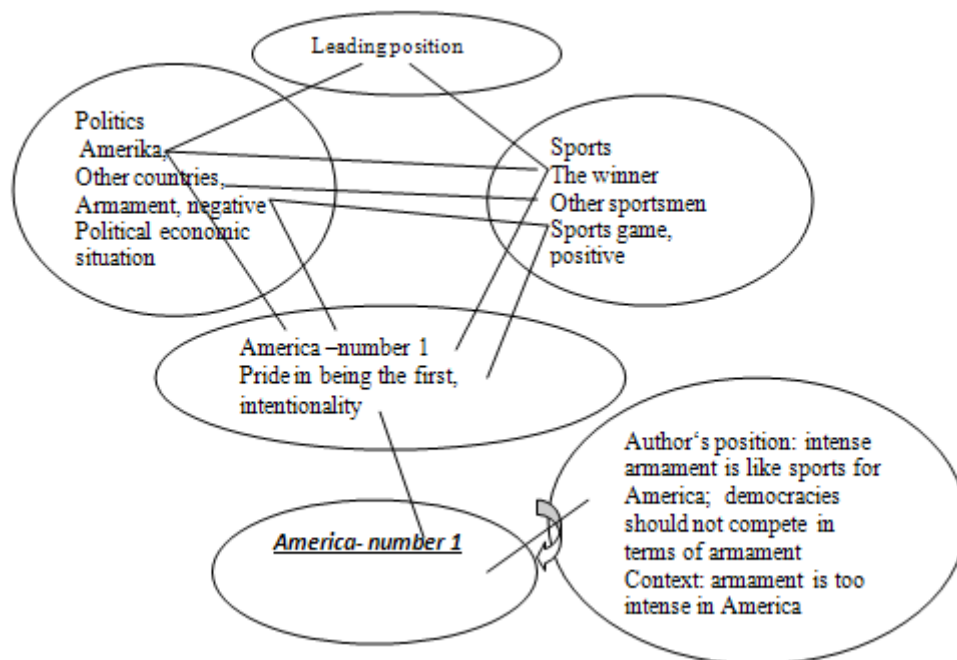


Figure 15

The elements of the structure are linked by outer space vital relations. The vital relation of Role-Value connects the role elements established by the sports frame with the values found in the politics input. Along with Role-Value, the other active relations are Time, Space, Analogy/Disanalogy, and Intentionality, which do not only link the mental input spaces but are compressed and projected into the blended space. Due to these compressions, the huge quantity of armaments in America is seen within the framework of sports—as a single sports game, where the ultimate goal is to win, to become Number 1. The blended space undergoes further elaboration and is introduced as an input space into a bigger double-scope network, together with the input space of „context/author's position/background knowledge". The latter input space is considered an essential implied element of the network, as it is this particular input space that facilitates the ironic interpretation of the utterance. The input space contains the author's belief that America has too many weapons, and that competition in the field of armament is not a policy to be

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followed, as a country should strive for advancement in different spheres. Both input spaces are linked by the outer space vital relations of Analogy/Disanalogy. Due to the clash between the input spaces, an ironic shift of meaning takes place: the ironist looks down on a country that is proud of being number 1 in terms of weapons of war. Contextual knowledge and the decoded implied position of the author (or, in other words, the shared point of view) enables the reader to see the author's pretense in supporting the pride of being Number 1. Consequently, the irony of the headline is comprehended as a double-scope network in which irony is provoked by the clash between two incompatible scenarios: in the first, politics is Sport and armament is a sports event, a competition to be won as becoming the winner enables the country to feel proud; in the second, increasing the volumes of armament is wrong in itself, and cannot be treated as an achievement to be proud of. The mechanism of conceptual blending enables us to activate both scenarios simultaneously (the outer space vital relation of Disanalogy undergoes compression into the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness), to identify the conflict of the scenarios (if the reader shares the same position with the author) and to understand the headline as ironic. The final blended space receives elements and implications from both mental input spaces. Though the mental space of sport is used as a "source" domain, not all of its implications are projected into the blended space (cf. Fauconnier & Turner): the intentionality is projected to the final blend from the input of sports, yet the evaluative attitude (negative) is projected from the input space of "context/author's position/background knowledge".

The recognition of irony is linked to the recognition of the element of pretense. The reader is expected to recognize pretended pride and to activate the implied criticism. This is, first of all, related to the aggregative (community building) function of irony: irony is directed at and understood by readers who share the same beliefs/point of view with the author. Booth (1974) describes this function as enabling the author and his audience to acquire a higher status

and to look down on others. Attardo refers to this function as the "inclusive" and "exclusive" aspects of "group affiliation" (2001, p. 120)[173].

The negative assessment communicated by irony can also be seen in connection with the corrective function: the reader is encouraged to support the author's position that the situation is in need of correction.

The expression of the negative attitude which is incorporated into the network by the mechanism of conceptual blending is considered one of the essential functions of irony, or even, relying on Sperber and Wilson (1986, p. 239), the reason why irony is used[174].

Simultaneously irony performs the reinforcing function, which is associated with a strong impact and the persuasive force of irony (the author does not impose his opinion on the reader; the reader is supposed to "find" it on his own). Carston (1981) refers to this aspect as the rhetorical function, and describes irony as "a powerful weapon of rhetoric" which "presupposes the truth of the presupposed proposition to be self-evident" (1981, p. 30).

Thus, the irony in the headline performs evaluative, corrective, protective, aggregative, and reinforcing functions.

The implicit mental space of America facilitates the assumption that not only has the metaphor of sport been conventionalized in political discourse, but the utterance itself has become conventional. This assumption is supported by the pilot study, in which 70% of the respondents named America as the referent of "country number 1". However, as irony in this headline is dependent on contextual information which is not explicit at the lexical level, only a few respondents considered the headline to be ironic prior to being given the context.

As mentioned above, the utterance itself could be considered at least partially conventionalized, as other headlines have been found following the

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[173] Referring to the opposing effects of the group affiliation function, Attardo (2001) sees irony as reinforcing the "in-group" solidarity through shared play; at the same time, however, he notices that irony is a means to criticise someone and to isolate him from the group.
[174] According to Sperber & Wilson (1986), the expression of a negative attitude is the main function of irony. However, there is an opposite point of view claiming that irony mutes (Dews, Winner, Kaplan, 1995).

same idea: "America is country number 1" and "U.S. takes gold in arms Olympics". The headline "America is country number 1" follows a nearly identical mechanism of conceptual blending (the difference lies in the input space of America being either implicit or explicit) and therefore will not be discussed in more detail. The other headline is analyzed below.

### 10.2. "U.S. Takes Gold in Arms Olympics"

The irony in this headline once again develops the topic of armament (politics) within the frame of sports. The first part of the headline corresponds to the usual sports news headline (e.g. "U.S.A Takes gold in ice fishing" (suntimes.com), "USA Takes Gold in Downhill" (cbsnews.com), USA Takes Gold at FEI World Reining Championship (horsesinthesouth.com), etc.). However, the word "arms" in the second part of the headline redirects the reader towards irony. In this case the headline could serve as an illustration of Coulson's frame shifting theory (where the reader has to move the whole utterance to a different frame) or as an instance of Veale's "trumping games"[175] theory (where the direction of interpretation of the utterance is suddenly changed due to certain elements). Both theories contribute to the study of irony by providing some insight into timing: when, at what point, an ironic hint is detected. However, in terms of the mechanism of irony, the mechanism of conceptual blending is to be relied on. This case provides a clash of two different fields whose expression relies on the conceptual metaphor "POLITICS IS SPORT". Therefore the structure of the network will be similar to the structure provided in the scheme above (which also contained the mental space of sports as one of its inputs). The final structure of the blend is a double-scope network which encompasses a single-scope blend as one of the inputs (here the other input is "context/author's position/background knowledge"). The single-scope network links two main inputs: Armament (in the frame of politics) and the Olympics (in the frame of Sports). The

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[175] The trumping game has to do with a reversal of meaning by extending a metaphor. Taking the gold in the Olympics is a positive thing, while armament is negative. This clash results in a humorous, ironic effect.

mechanism of the "Arms Olympics" blend is considered to be single-scope as it has one obviously dominating frame, i.e. the organizing frame of Sports. The connection between the two mental input spaces can be described as relying on the outer space vital relation of Role-Value, which corresponds to the case of source and target domains in metaphor theory. The cross-space element mapping links the following elements: countries involved in armament—participants in the Olympics, armament—an Olympic event, the desire to have the biggest amount of arms—the desire to win a gold medal, competition—competition, etc. The generic space contains elements that are shared between the input spaces, i.e. the desire to achieve a goal, competition, and participants of competition. As in all Single-Scope networks, one mental input space provides the frame (i.e. the organizing frame of sports) and the other input space provides the elements for this frame (in this case the elements come from the frame of politics). Though the mental input spaces have common elements of topology, the organizing frame comes from the frame of sports and is applied to the field of politics. The vital relations and compressions peculiar to the blend (see the analysis of the previous headline) are further projected into a more complex network:
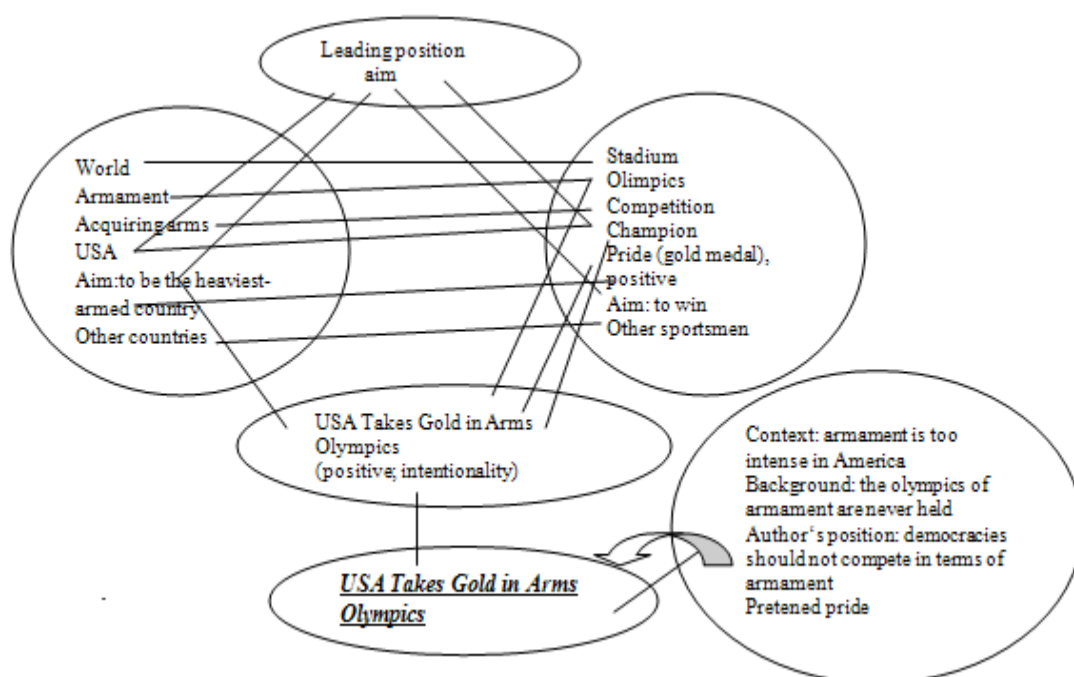


Figure 16

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The blended space, "U.S. takes gold in arms Olympics", undergoes further elaboration and is incorporated (as a mental input space) into a double-scope network together with the input space of "context/author's position/background knowledge", which encompasses such elements as the author's belief that competition in armament is unacceptable, that the growing numbers of armaments is a negative tendency, and the common knowledge that such an event as an Arms Olympics does not exist. The clash of the elements "armament" and "Olympics" within the blend ("U.S. takes gold in arms Olympics") not only provokes a conflict, but also functions as a marker of irony at the level of lexis. In the frame of sports, competition and the desire to win are regarded as positive factors, yet in terms of armament the negative assessment is supported. The double-scope mechanism activates the scenarios of both the "explicitum" and the "implicitum" (Giora, 1990) level of the headline. The ironic negative assessment, relying on the terminology of Turner and Fauconnier, belongs to the emergent structure of the blend, which does not come from either of the input spaces but is characteristic of the blend itself. As discussed above, conceptual blending does not operate in stages but is a simultaneous process. Thus the irony is shared among all the spaces integrated into the network. Double-scope structures are given special attention in the works of Turner and Fauconnier (2002), who believe that "double-scope integration, which typically exploits clashes, is the hallmark of cognitively modern human beings", and has "the capacity for the strongest form of conceptual integration" (Turner, 2004, p. 90).

The mental spaces of the network are linked by vital relations. The mental input space of Politics and the mental input space of sport are linked by the outer space vital relations of Role-Value, Time, Space and Intentionality: the USA is seen as one of the participants (the champion) of the Olympics, taking part in the competition and intentionally trying to do its best (intentionally trying to be the country investing the most into arming itself). All the outer space vital relations are compressed into the inner space vital

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relation of Uniqueness: a sports event and the armament of America are seen as a single entity.

As mentioned above, an important role in the network is played by the element of pretense (which comes from the second input of the double-scope network). Recognizing pretense also contributes to the processing of the ironic message (in case of the headline under discussion, the prevailing implication is similar to "the author pretends to believe that the arms Olympics are actually held, that America has got a gold medal, that the heaviest armament is the ultimate goal to strive for, etc.").

In the headline, irony performs a number of functions. It communicates a critical negative assessment of the situation. Relying on Utsumi (2000), the incompatibility between the actual situation and the desired situation is revealed. As the situation fails to meet the author's expectations and does not correspond to the prototype of a positive leading country, the ironist takes a position which puts him above the situation. Simultaneously the irony here performs a corrective function—by disclosing the problem, the ironist encourages the reader to tackle it. As in a number of other ironic headlines, the humorous function of irony is also of importance here. However, it is related not to jaunty laughter but to a sarcastic smile. By exploiting metaphoric reference, irony "evokes a certain degree of tension in achieving striking comparisons or implications" (Veale, 2003, p. 2). As in the previous headlines, irony also performs an aggregative function, as, according to Booth (1974), "every irony inevitably builds a community of believers" (1974, p. 28).

The ironic utterance can be regarded as conventionalized from a few perspectives: first, due to the conventionalized linguistic metaphors based on the cognitive model of "POLITICS IS SPORTS" in political discourse; second, due to the structure of the headline, which could be considered a template for ironic references, e.g.: "U.S. takes gold in Couch Potato Olympics" (mlive.com), "US takes gold at computer-gaming 'Olympics'" (newscientist.com), "USA Takes the Gold... In Whining" (blogcritics.org), etc.

However, the use of such ironies is not limited to references to American realia. In headlines, the slot of America can also be filled by the name of any other country without losing any ironic implications. Analogical headlines with reference to Lithuania have already been discussed in the previous part of the work.

### 10.3. "Goodbye Dreamland America"

Ironic references to the so-called American Dream comprise one of the most interesting groups of headlines, as this theme could be considered conventional when talking about America. Though at present the reference is found both in direct (non-ironic) and ironic meanings, originally the phrase was exploited only in positive, non-ironic, contexts. The American Dream (or the pursuit of the American Dream) is defined as the national ethos of the USA, where the dream and freedom include a promise of success and prosperity (Rhodes, 2010). The term American Dream was first used in 1931 by Adams in his book *Epic of America;* here the "American Dream" stood for a dream of a land where "life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement"[176]. The ironic meaning of the phrase could be related to overestimated expectations, the culture of consumerism, and the consequences of the economic recession. In the literary tradition the term can be traced in Ownby's *American Dreams in Mississippi: Consumers, Poverty, and Culture (1999)*[177],

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[176] Relying on Cullen (2004), the idea of the American dream was established in the Declaration of Independence, which claims that "all men are created equal" and given "certain unalienable rights" including "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness". Historically the idea of the American dream is connected to the availability of low-cost land in the New World. In 1931 the concept was popularized by the historian J.T.Adams in his *Epic of America*. Yet, Adams was not the only writer to contribute to the popularity of the term. Scholars have analysed the American Dream in Franklin's *Autobiography*, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925), Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), Miller's *Death of a Salesman* (1949), etc. The theme of American Dream is also characteristic of speeches of political leaders (e.g. A.Lincoln, H.Clinton, etc.).

[177] Here the author distinguishes four American Dreams: the Dream of Abundance (abundance of material goods), the Dream of Democracy of Goods (every man has the right to the same goods regardless of race, gender, or social class), Dream of Freedom of Choice (the ever-expanding variety of goods allows people to fashion their own style of life), and the Dream of Novelty (ever-changing fashions and new models broaden the consumers' experiences in purchasing).

where the American Dream is compared to the culture of consumerism[178], the rights to have and to have cheaply. On Alternet's website, Dreamland America and the American Dream are frequently used in headlines, yet most of the headlines do not have the ironic shade of meaning that, for example, was common for the Lithuanian "Mary's Land". Dreamland America both retains its direct meaning and develops a newer ironic meaning that bears negative implications.

In the headline under discussion, the American Dream equates to cheap oil; therefore, due to the crisis in the oil market, one has to say "goodbye" to all the aspirations. The limitations of the dream are ridiculed, as the idealized American Dream is metaphorically compared to a single product, the loss of which (for a consumer nation) means the destruction of dreams. The functioning of this irony, relying on the theoretical underpinnings of Turner and Fauconnier, can be seen as a complex megablend communicating the inner relations and compressions of the headline. The mechanism of the blend can be illustrated by the following scheme:
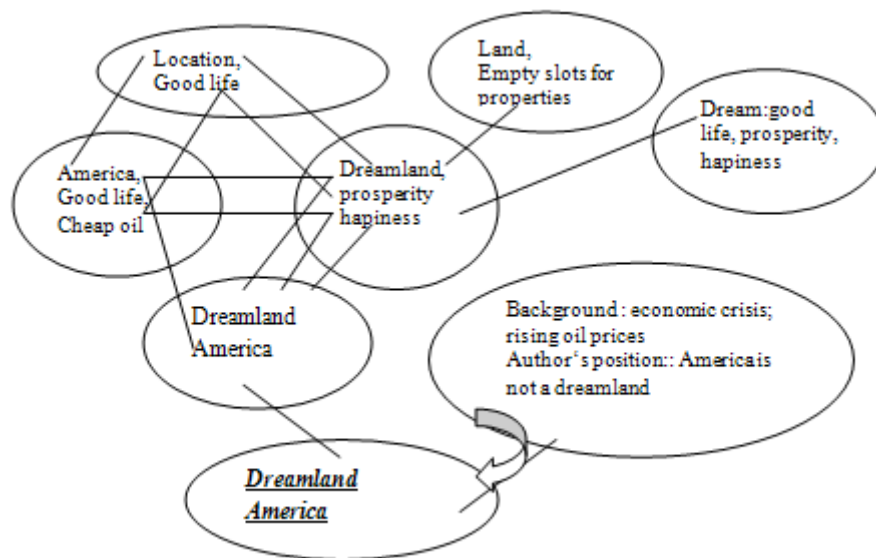


Figure 17

The American Dream megablend follows the mirror structure of integration which has two mental input spaces and a common generic space.

The first input space, America, may be treated as a separate metonymy-based blend (as in all the discussed integration systems that encompass a mental input space of America). The second input space, Dreamland, is a multiple blend on its own, having two separate mental input spaces (i.e. Land and Dream) not connected by a generic space. The treatment of the mental input space of Dream is directly dependent on the reader's beliefs and attitudes (positive or negative) and on the context (which in this case could be related not only to the knowledge of the current situation, but also to the intertextuality of the headline). If the reader shares his attitude with the ironist, the input space of Dream becomes the source of the ironic evaluative attitude, as this mental space encompasses the elements related to the culture of consumerism: the abundance of products for a consumerist society, among them—the equivalent of the "dream" in the headline—cheap oil. The mental input spaces of Dream and Land follow the multiple integration model and form the Dreamland blended space. The input spaces of Dream and Land are interrelated through the outer space relation of Property, where Land provides slots for the properties that come from the input space of Dream. The resulting blend undergoes further elaboration and serves as a mental input space for further blending processes. Together with the other input space, i.e. America, it follows the model of mirror integration. The counterpart elements of the input spaces undergo mapping: America (country)—Dreamland (country), properties of America—properties of Dreamland, Americans—citizens of Dreamland, etc. The elements common to both input spaces are projected into a mental generic space and selectively projected into the blended space. Cross-space outer  vital relations of Place, Similarity, and Property undergo compressions into an inner space vital relation of Uniqueness, and the final megablend depicts a unique Dreamland America that retains all the relations and implications of the integration structure and communicates them "at the level of human understanding" due to the compressions enabled by the blend. The blend then serves as an input space for even further elaboration. It is incorporated into a double-scope network, where the "context/background

knowledge/author's position" serves as a second input space. The conflicts between the compound elements of the input spaces provoke an ironic shift of meaning, which is projected as emergent structure into the final blended space. The integration structure in this case stands out as a complex network employing mirror, multiple, and double-scope mechanisms.

Due to the implications and the need for contextual knowledge, the integration structure of blending employed by irony may be interpreted differently by different readers. The reader who has other attitudes or beliefs may see the mental space of Dreamland as exceptionally positive[179]. In this case, the structure is deprived of two key aspects—the conflict between the reference and the contextual/background information disappears, leaving the integration without its conflict of meanings and the subsequent ironic shift. In other words, the reader will not see irony and will interpret the headline as non-ironic. As Kotthoff (1998) notices, the final decision on whether irony happens always depends on the addressee.

It is worth noticing that the reference to America as a dreamland has been conventionalized not only in the USA. In the pilot study, 90% of all the respondents unerringly identified America as the referent of Dreamland (yet only 45 % of the respondents marked it as possibly carrying an ironic charge; the findings support the idea that both the non-ironic and ironic meanings of the phrase are salient). The Alternet website provides numerous instances of both ironic and non-ironic references to the topic of the American Dream. However, the reference most commonly focuses not on America as a Dreamland but on those aspirations of society relating to the American Dream. Here, the headlines mainly follow the model of Veale's "trumping game," in which the exact place of the ironic shift (or, in Veale's term, a disjunctor) may be clearly identified by relying on the syntactic structure of the utterance, e.g.: "The American Dream Is Alive and Well ... in Finland" (alternet.org), "Living the American Dream, in one Room Apartment" (alternet.org), or "It's really a Dream Because you Have to be Asleep to Believe it" (alternet.org). It should

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[179] The inability to detect irony is referred to as an "intentional gap" by Austin-Smith (1990, p. 51).

be mentioned that the tradition of associating the American Dream with real estate can be traced in the speeches of the politicians of other countries as well, e.g. A.Braverman referred to the policy of house building in Russia in 2010 (that was inspired by the president of Russia D.Medvedev) as a "Russian Dream." This also shows the conventionality of the phrase.

**10.4 America as Empire in "The Empire of Illusion", "In the Empire of the Obscene", and "Bye Bye Ms. American Empire"**

The American Empire is one more reference to America that is used both ironically and non-ironically in news headlines.  Firstly, the Empire is a metaphoric term used to describe the political, economic, military and cultural influence of America on the rest of the world. The usage of the term (with reference to America) can be traced back to 1898; at this time, the left wing politicians, as well as some of the conservatives, took a negative approach to Imperialism and assessed it as immoral and well rooted in America. Therefore, the reference to America as Empire often communicates a negative evaluative attitude which is straightforwardly reflected in news headlines that place it in opposition to some positive aspect, e.g.:  "Which Will It Be America, Empire or Democracy?" (alternet.org)

In the headline "The Empire of Illusion," irony exploits a complex integration mechanism of mega blending that entails an implied mental input space of America. The blended mental space The Empire of Illusion has two mental input spaces: America and The Empire of Illusion, both of which can be treated as separate blends. The mental space The Empire of Illusion is a blend of two separate mental input spaces, Empire and Illusion, which are not connected by a generic space and present a case of a multiple integration network.  These two mental input spaces are connected through the vital relation of Property, as the properties of the mental space of Illusion are connected to the elements that belong to mental space of Empire (and to the implicit negative assessment that is inherent in the Empire space within the

framework of political discourse). The input space of Illusion contains such elements as unreasonable expectations, beliefs, uncertainty, and instability. The mental space of Empire is associated with such properties as size, mightiness, power, and, as already discussed, may be associated with a negative assessment. All these properties (or elements) of both input spaces are mapped and projected into the blended space. The outer space vital relation of Property is compressed into an inner space relation of Uniqueness. The mental space of "The Empire of Illusion" could be seen as a metonymic blend (based on the vital relation of Part-Whole), as the assessment of the whole Empire is based on one aspect—illusions. Such an assessment of the whole based on an inessential feature has been considered one of the features of irony by Beals (1995). The mental blended space "The Empire of Illusion" undergoes further elaboration and serves as an input in a more complex network. Together with the implied input space of "America" it forms a mirror network. Here the cross-space mapping is conducted and common elements (location, size, dominant features (illusions), etc.) are projected into the generic space. The elements that are necessary for the goals of irony (as Turner and Fauconnier (2002) argue, the elements are intentionally selected to achieve the goals of the final blend) are projected into the blended space. The mental spaces are connected through the outer space vital relations of Place, Similarity, Property and Part-Whole, which undergo compressions and turn into the inner vital relation of Uniqueness in the blended space.
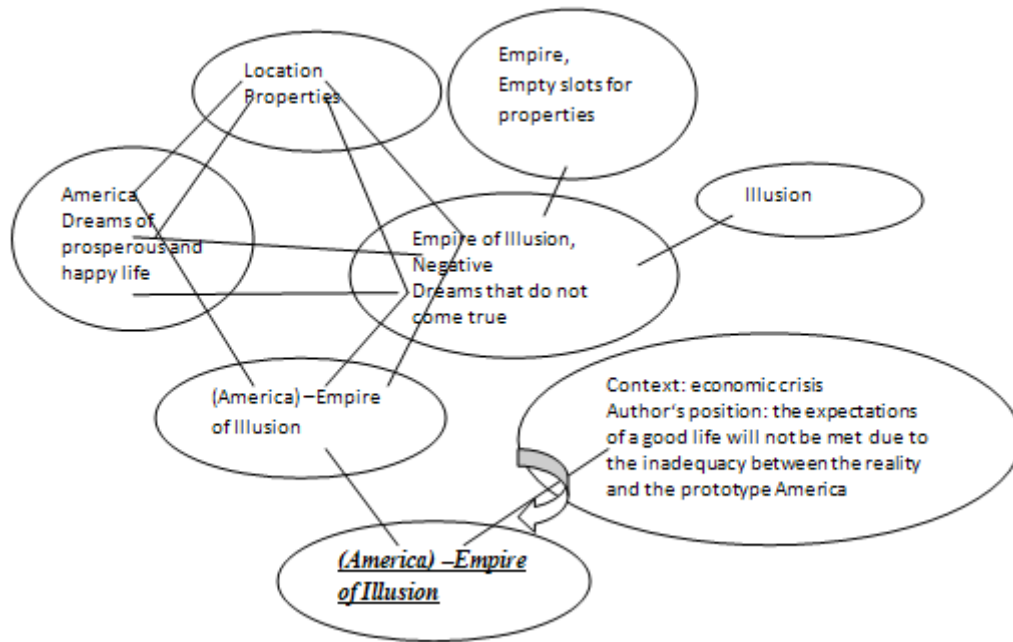
Figure 18

As seen in the scheme above, the mental space of "(America) the Empire of Illusion" is incorporated into a double-scope integration network together with the mental space of "context/background knowledge/author's position". The conflicts among the elements of the mental spaces and the implications provided by "context/background knowledge/author's position" provoke the ironic shift of meaning, which is projected into the final blended space as an emergent structure. It is worth mentioning that in the case of this headline, the conflict between the final two inputs is of a different nature. In the previous headlines, the mental input space of "context/background knowledge/author's position" provided a negative opposition to the positive assessment presented in the headline; here, however, the headline presents a case of "literal irony" (Barbe, 1995) or, in other words, a "truth-telling irony" (Jeoung, Martin, 1992): the ironist sees America as an illusion-based country and at the same time communicates its nonconformity to the prototype, i.e. to the expectations[180].

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[180] To the category of "literalness" Barbe (1995) ascribes the type of irony in which the direct meaning of the utterance is simultaneously its ironic meaning. Next to literal irony, the scholar distinguishes the categories of opposition/difference and sarcasm, which may coincide with the first two.

Irony in the headline performs several functions. It shows the critical negative evaluative attitude of the author and performs the aggregative function, as the author creates discursive communities of those who share his position and whose aim is, as Redfern puts it, "to preserve but share secrecy" (1984, p. 177). At the same time, similarly to other ironic headlines discussed above, the ironist communicates his disappointment in the situation. Irony here acquires the features of sarcasm and is hardly corrective. Relying on Hutcheon (1996), "there is certainly a lot around today for irony to correct", yet postmodernism, according to Wilde (1981), is more concerned not with correcting the world but being skeptical about the very possibility of change. As Wilde puts it, "postmodern ironists… are agreed at least in acknowledging the inevitability of their situation in the world they describe. Whether or not they are involved with that world, they are *of* it, their perspective conditioned by a view from within reality itself" (1981, p. 121).

"Empire" as a reference to America in the headlines of alternet.org is common and conventionalized. The name of America is not explicated, thus the reader is expected to be capable of correctly interpreting the reference in both its non-ironic and ironic meanings (e.g. "How to Manage an Empire in Decline?" (alternet.org).

### In The Empire of the Obscene

The ironic headline "The Empire of the Obscene" is directed at several social problems of American society, as the article says: "pot, porn and migrant labor". The ironic interpretation of the headline is directed through the conflict of two mental input spaces, Empire and Obscene: the blend of "Empire of the Obscene" hints at irony, as the mental space of Empire contains many more typical positive/negative implications (e.g. size, mightiness, pride, importance) than the ones that come from the mental space of Obscene. Yet, it is the negatively-charged elements from the mental space Obscene that are projected into the blend. The headline is based on intertextuality: the weekly newspaper "New Yorker" published a series of articles under the title of "An Empire of

the Obscene" focusing on the history of pornography in America[181], which allows a presumption that the reference was easy to decode for a wide circle of readers.   Here the blending structure employed by irony corresponds to the structure of the headline "The Empire of Illusion" discussed above.

The megablend "The Empire of the Obscene" is constructed of two mental input spaces: the implied mental space America and the explicit mental space Empire of the Obscene, which is a separate blend on its own. "The Empire of the Obscene" is a blend which is organized along the multiple integration structure and contains the mental input spaces of Empire and Obscene. Those two mental input spaces are interrelated through the outer space vital relations of Property and Part-Whole, which undergo compressions and are seen as an inner space relation of Uniqueness in the blended space. The elements from the mental space of Obscene (pot, porn and migrant labor) and the negative evaluative attitude are projected into the blended space.   The "Empire" here serves as a container for the elements (properties) that come from the mental space of Obscene. The blend follows further elaboration and, as a separate input, is integrated into a mirror network with the implied America mental space.   The counterpart elements are defined between the input spaces, and mapping takes place (Americans—the citizens of the Empire of the Obscene, the activities of Americans—the business of pot, porn and migrant labor, etc.). The elements are projected into a generic space and selectively projected into the blended space. Cross-space connections of Time, Space, Analogy, and Intentionality undergo compression into the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness in the blended space. The blended space inherits the counterfactual location of the Empire of the Obscene with all its characteristic features, which is at the same time America. The blended space is further exploited as an input in a double-scope integration structure with the other input space of "context/background knowledge/author's position". The mental space of "context/background knowledge/author's position" entails not

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[181] "An Empire of the Obscene" details the history of pornography in American culture, starting with the eventual business magnate Reuben Sturman. For more information see http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2003/03/10/030310fa_fact_schlosser.

only background knowledge about drugs or migrant labor, but also the position of the author: while equating America to an Empire of the Obscene, the author hyperbolizes the extent of the problem to reveal his disappointment regarding the incongruity between the expectations (a positive prototype of America) and reality. The incongruity provokes the ironic shift of meaning which is projected into the final blend as emergent structure.

Irony in the headline could be related to some social functions of irony. The author gives a negative assessment and draws attention to some aspects of life in America. The critical evaluative attitude, as in the headline discussed above, could be related to the aggregative function of irony.

The conventionality of the headline is based on the conventionalized usage of "Empire" in reference to America.

Relying on the findings of the pilot study, the headline was seen as ironic and as expressing a negative assessment by 60% of respondents.


**America as Ms. American Empire in "Bye Bye Ms. American Empire"**

The intertextuality of this headline is instantly perceivable due to its parallel syntactic structure with a well-known song. "American Pie" is considered "a folk rock song", the author of which is the American singer and songwriter Don McLean[182]. The American pop star Madonna performed the same song in March of 2000 to promote the soundtrack of her film *The Next Best Thing* (2000). The song immediately became a worldwide hit[183]. Therefore the headline instantly looks familiar to the reader. According to Koženiauskienė (2001), transformations of well-known phrases (e.g. idioms, proverbs) signal the potential for irony to the reader. In this case the song's words "American Pie" are transformed into "American Empire," but the

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[182] Recorded and released on the *American Pie* album in 1971, the single was a number one U.S. hit for four weeks in 1972. For further reference see: Dearborn, Bob (2002-08-10). "Bob Dearborn's Original Analysis of Don McLean's 1971 Classic 'American Pie'".

[183] The song was a big worldwide hit, reaching number one in many countries, including the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Italy, Germany, etc.

mental input space of "American Pie" remains active and is incorporated into a common integration structure exploited by irony:
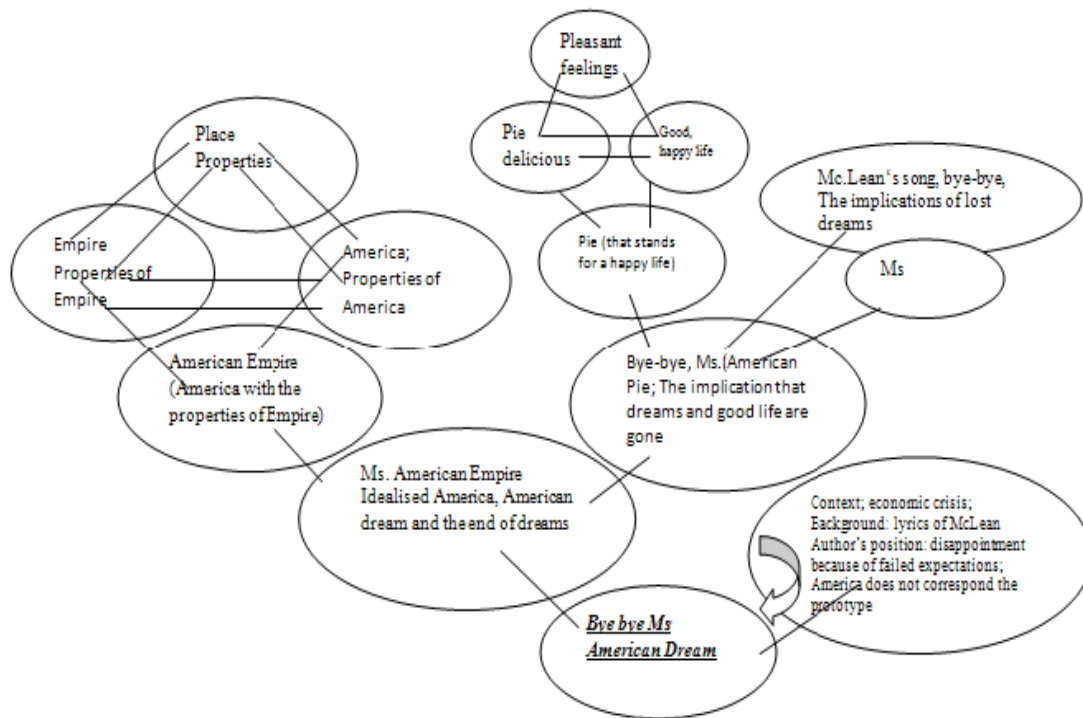


Figure 19

Due to its intertextuality and the numerous metaphors integrated into the network, the mechanism of blending that irony employs in this headline is rather complex. The mental blended space "Ms. American Empire" is a megablend that incorporates two mental input spaces: American Empire and Ms. American Pie. Both mental input spaces are separate blends on their own. The structure of the "American Empire" blend corresponds to the structure of the previously discussed "Empire" blends: it has two mental input spaces (America and Empire) that are blended following mirror integration, as they both share the same structure. The counterpart elements are detected and cross-space mapping is performed; the common elements are projected into a generic space and selectively projected into the blended space. The slot of location is filled with America and the properties of the location are inherited from the mental space of Empire (size, welfare, power, etc.). The mental spaces are interconnected through the outer space vital relations of Place, Property, and Similarity, which undergo compressions and become the inner space vital

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relation of Uniqueness in the blend. The second input space of the "Ms. American Empire" blend, "Ms. American Pie" is partially implicit, as in the headline only one element of this mental space is explicit. "Ms. American Pie" is a separate multiple blend incorporating the mental input space of "American pie" (which may be treated as a metaphoric blend on its own, in which the "pie" adopts the meaning of welfare or the American Dream) and the title used to address a woman, "Ms.", both of which share the frame of McLean's lyrics. As already mentioned above, the mental space of "American pie" is a blend on its own that functions according to the single-scope blending mechanism, which, according to Turner and Fauconnier (2002), is peculiar for metaphors. Relying on the outer space vital relation of Similarity, the positive pleasant associations related to a pie (the source domain) are mapped to the space of American life (the target domain); in this way, the "pie" in the blended space stands for the good life, and is further projected into the blended space of "Ms. American Pie". The element "Ms." that comes from McLean's lyrics performs a reinforcing function: it reinforces the contextual signals and ensures the dominance of the frame of McLean's lyrics (the other element that is also related to the same frame, "bye bye", is straightforwardly projected into the megablend's blended space, "Bye Bye Ms. American Empire"). The mental space "Ms. American Pie" metaphorically reflects an idealized America and inherits all the implications and compressions of its input spaces. Further, "Ms. American Pie" serves as an input space and is integrated into a multiple network together with the input space of "American Empire". The input spaces do not share a generic space but are connected through the outer space vital relations of Property and Similarity: "American Empire" takes the idealized properties from the Ms. American Pie input space. The outer space vital relations are compressed into the inner space relation of Uniqueness. The resulting blend joins the final, double-scope structure with the input space of "context/background knowledge/author's position". The mental input spaces are in conflict: a perfect idealized America is incompatible with the implications of the context and the author's position. The incongruity results in

an ironic shift of meaning (which is supported by the "bye bye" element).  The compressions of the vital outer space relations (here: Time, Property, Similarity, Change) into the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness enable the reader  to see "Ms. American Empire" as a single entity with an inherent ironic aspect.

Similar structures may be analyzed by applying the frame-shifting model of Coulson (2001), which offers at a certain moment in an utterance to shift all the information to a new frame. In the analyzed headline, this would mean shifting from the "Ms. American Pie" frame into the frame of "American Empire" with a change of meaning as the vital relations of Time and Property and the evaluative aspect undergo alterations. The headline could also serve as an exemplary case to illustrate Sperber and Wilson's Echo-mention Theory (1981), as the explicit intertextuality of the headline allows the reader to trace the initial utterance that is being ironically re-echoed. At the same time the headline enables us to talk about Veale's (2002) trumping games in irony. Yet it is exceptionally the blending theory that allows insights into the in-depth mechanism of irony.

The conventionality of the headline could be discussed from a few perspectives. First, the popularity of McLean's single (the conventionality of the phrase "American Pie")—though the phrase "American Pie" is not a common reference in news headlines, it is not accidental either. For instance, when talking about the economic crisis, the blend undergoes further elaboration in such headlines as: "Bye Bye American Pie: 10 Reasons Why America's Economic Pie Is Rapidly Shrinking" (therealnewsradio.com)*,* "Un-American Pie" (alternet.org), "Tea  Party As American As Apple Pie" (alternet.org), "Saving Room for the Rotten Pie" (alternet.org), etc.  Second, as already mentioned, the reference to America as Empire has been conventionalized in headlines both ironically and non-ironically. To illustrate the case a few headlines may be listed: "The Empire at Oil's End" (alternet.org), "America's Empire of Bases" (www.thenation.com), "Which Will It Be America, Empire or Democracy?"(alternet.org), "The Theology of

American Empire" (alternet.org), "How to Manage an Empire in Decline" (alternet.org), and many more.

In the pilot study the headline was identified as ironic by most (90%) of the respondents.

### 10.5. America as (a Social Drawback) Nation

A group of headlines has been collected that is based on the pattern "America as (a Social Drawback) Nation"; the group includes the following headlines: "Fast Food Nation", "Our Junk Food Nation", "Fast Food Nation: the Dangers of Unexamined Appetite", "Debtor Nation at Red Alert", "A Nation of Wanna-Be Authors", "Incarceration Nation", "Body Count Nation", "Downsize Nation: Welcome to the New, Smaller American Dream", "How America Turned into a Nation of Speedfreaks", etc.

All the headlines in this group contain the word "Nation" as a reference to America and are directed at certain social problems. In each case irony, exploits a similar mechanism of blending and follows a similar integration structure. Therefore a single general structural analysis will be provided for the listed headlines, which can be referred to as "A social drawback+Nation" reference to America. The headlines employ a complex megablend structure that incorporates multiple, mirror and double-scope integration networks. As an example, consider the following scheme:
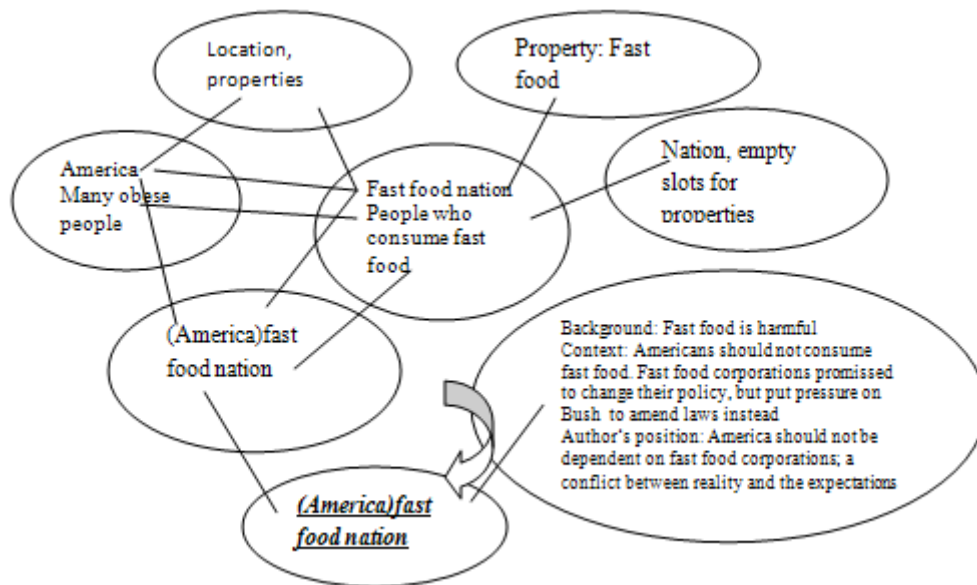
Figure 20

The integration structure comprises several levels. By employing multiple integration, the "Fast food nation" blend is constructed[184], which encompasses two mental input spaces ("Fast food" and "Nation") which do not share a generic mental space. The "Fast Food" (or other social drawback) input space is connected to the input space of "Nation" through the outer space vital relations of Part-whole, Representation and Property: a drawback is seen as an indispensible part of a certain country, as its typical feature (representation/property). In the blended space these relations undergo compression into the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness, while the blended space inherits a negative evaluative aspect from the "drawback" input space. The representation of the whole nation/country based on one negative aspect is a signal which is referred to by many ironologists as one of the essential signals of ironic interpretation. The "social drawback nation" blended space is further elaborated and incorporated into a bigger structure as an input space together with the implied input space of "America". A mirror network is constructed and a new blend is built. The input spaces ("A social drawback nation" and "America") share the same structure and undergo cross-space

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[184] In this particular headline the blend is "fast food"; in the other headlines of the group, the "fast food" slot can be filled with reference to different social problems: incarceration, speed freaks, etc., which here are generally referred to as the category "social drawback".

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element mapping: Americans—people who have a social drawback, features of America—features of a drawback nation, etc. The counterpart elements are projected into the generic space and selectively projected into the blended space. The input spaces are connected by the outer space vital relations of: Analogy, Space, Part-whole, Representation, and Property which are compressed into the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness in the blended space. The resulting blend inherits the features of all the preceding inputs and is further elaborated. The blended space ("America as (a social drawback) Nation") is integrated as an input space into a double-scope network together with the mental input space of "context/background knowledge/author's position". Contextual and background knowledge and the author's position determine the ironic shift of meaning. The ironic shift of meaning in this case is based not on the opposition between what is said and what is implied, but on the acknowledgement of a negative fact and on the inadequacy between the prototype[185] and the reality. Thus the double-scope integration network, through the incorporation of "context/background knowledge/author's position", allows two simultaneous scenarios: America dominated by a social problem, and a positive prototype America without a dominant social drawback; the structure that enables a double meaning at the same time enables the expression of a negative and ironic attitude. Irony is reinforced through the metonymic reference which is at the same time an exaggeration.

References to America through the frame of food ("Fast Food Nation", "Our Junk Food Nation", "Fast Food Nation: the Dangers of Unexamined Appetite") were found to be among the most common in the headlines of alternet.org. The social phenomenon in focus is incorrect nutrition habits, which are exploited to give an ironical assessment of the whole country. In the headline "The Debtor Nation", irony follows the same principles and the same mechanism of integration (just with a different background/contextual knowledge). Here irony is related to the bubble in the real estate market, and again can be seen as an exaggeration. Such headlines

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[185] Further reference in Utsumi (2000).

also stand for the cases of "literal irony" (Barbe, 1995) where the explicitum level of the utterance is at the same time the implicitum—the ironic—level. "A Nation of Wanna-be Authors" ridicules the vast number of Americans having the ambition of becoming writers. Here the social drawback can hardly be referred to as a drawback, and therefore the irony of the headline can be ascribed to the category of friendly irony, which is not typical of headlines. "Incarceration Nation" draws attention to the large number of institutions of incarceration, and retains the same characteristics of ironic headlines, i.e. an excessive emphasis on a single feature and the conflict between the expectations (a prototypical positive America) and the reality. In the case of "Body Count Nation", the irony is more acute as the attention is drawn to a painful topic—a war. An assumption can be made that the strength of irony in this group of headlines depends on the nature of the depicted problem: the irony is softer when talking about "The Nation of Wanna-be Authors", but becomes sharp when a painful social aspect is referred to, as in "Body Count Nation" (here irony is biting not only in the headline but also in the article itself: *They tried. They really tried. But they couldn't help it. They just had to count"* – the quotation follows the "trumping" technique of Veale (2002)), or in such headlines as "America Loves Peace? Odd, Since We're Always at War" (alternet.org), where irony is signaled by the syntactic structure of an utterance (the interrogative form is considered one of the irony markers in Koženiauskienė (2001)) and by Veale's formula of trumping games. In the headline "Downsize Nation: Welcome to the New, Smaller American Dream", America is not explicitly referred to as a "Downsize Nation"; however, the explanation that follows the column leaves no doubts about the referent. The first part of the headline exploits a three-level integration structure similar to those discussed above. Downsizing usually means moving to a lower, poorer level—thus to a smaller American Dream. The irony here can be traced from three perspectives: first, it results due to the conflict of inputs in the double-scope integration network (when the mental space of "context/background knowledge/author's position" is integrated); second, as in the previous

headlines, irony arises due to exaggeration (when the whole country is assessed on the basis of one feature); and third, irony appears due to the syntactic structure of the headline, which again can be related to Veale's idea of trumping games: the beginning of the utterance, that has a positive connotation ("Welcome to the new..."), is suddenly interrupted by a negative turning point to a negative, "smaller" American Dream. The irony is also reinforced due to the parallels between downsizing and the American Dream.

"Has America Become a Taser Nation?" is one more case of a similar mechanism of blending exploited by irony. Despite the fact that the usage of the electro-shock equipment has not evolved into a nation-wide matter, the problem is presented as a representative feature of the country. The same topic is developed in some other headlines of the website, e.g. "The Taserification of America", where irony is expressed by means of a neologism constructed on the conventional principles of word formation but created especially for a single use and not established in the lexicon.

"The Dealer Nation" is one more case where irony follows the same pattern of conceptual blending. Criticism here, as well as in the previous headlines, is directed towards an undesirable social activity of the society/country. The headlines targeting fast food and dealers can be related to criticism of the culture of consumerism, a criticism which has proven to be frequent on alternet.org. The criticism of the consumerism culture has been related even to the Christian topics; as one headline asks: "The Commercialization of Christmas: What Would Jesus Buy?"

One of the functions of irony in the above headlines can be explicated by referring to Twark (2007), who claims that "auto-irony prevents the situation from appearing truly tragic"; in addition, by ridiculing our own social inadequacies we prevent others from laughing at us.

This group of headlines presents the most overt cases of social irony, the corrective and critical functions of which are exposed by the expression of a negative evaluative attitude. Criticism and a negative assessment is characteristic of all irony that targets social/ public problems. According to

Hutcheon (1996), "irony's appraising edge is never absent and, indeed, is what makes irony work differently from other forms which it might structurally seem to resemble (metaphor, allegory, puns)" (p. 12). Relying on this idea of the scholar, it can be said that irony not only functions differently, but is able to use other forms of language for its own purposes.

Social irony creates communities, i.e. performs the aggregative function due to which, according to Littman and Mey (1991), the author and the reader "can establish either a concurrence or a clash between the value systems" (p. 149). Irony here stands not only for a witty play on words, but for a game of intellect that is accessible only to those who share the same beliefs/attitudes as the ironist.

The conventionality of this group of headlines can be judged from two perspectives: the assessment of the country through the reference to fast food is characteristic of the headlines of alternet.org; and the pattern of reference, "a social drawback + Nation", is conventional and carries a negative evaluative attitude.

The headlines were identified as ironic by 75% of the respondents in the pilot study, most of whom identified America as the probable referent of the headlines (as the social problems revealed by the headlines are common for many countries, the respondents also mentioned Russia, Germany, Lithuania and other countries as possible referents).

### 10.6. "America – the Culture of Greed"

Ironic references to America's greed are one more theme developed in headlines (e.g. "U.S. culture of greed is threat to world" (naturalnews.com), "US cult of greed is now a global environmental threat" (guardian.co), "How We Can Stop Our Culture of Greed" (dig.com), "'Culture Of Greed' Has Taken Over Corporate America" (alternet.org), etc.), and can also be related to the criticism of consumerism, as the article claims that "the world is doomed to environmental catastrophe unless the threat posed by U.S. consumption culture

is directly addressed". The headline, "America—the Culture of Greed" represents America through the prism of greed and criticizes aspects of the materialistic culture (aspects which are related to the activities of huge corporations) of the country in general.

The blending structure employed by irony incorporates only explicit mental spaces, and functions at three levels. First, it is a double-scope blend integrating two input spaces: "America—the culture of greed" and "context/background knowledge/author's position". "America—the culture of greed" is a mirror blend that encompasses two mental input spaces ("America" and "The culture of greed") which share a generic space and are separate blends on their own. In this way, "The culture of greed" follows the integration pattern of a metonymy-based multiple blend of two input spaces, "Culture" and "Greed". The integration can be seen as a case of what Turner and Fauconnier describe as a Y-type open-ended integration structure (2002, pp. 148-154), which does not have a generic space but functions relying on the compressions of the outer space vital relations. The inputs are connected by the outer space vital relations of Part-Whole, Representation, and Property, which undergo compression into an inner space vital relation of Uniqueness. The blended space facilitates the ironic shift of meaning which results due to the conflict between the positive connotation of culture[186] and the negative connotation of greed[187]. Irony exploits the mechanism of conceptual blending that corresponds to the schemes of some of the headlines discussed above:

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[186] Williams (1983), p. 90. Cited in Shuker, Roy (1994), *Understanding Popular Music*, p.5. He argues that contemporary definitions of culture fall into three possibilities, or a mixture of the following three: a general process of intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic development; a particular way of life, whether of a people, period, or group; and the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity.

[187] An excessive desire to acquire or possess more than what one needs or deserves, especially with respect to material wealth. The Bible provides us with a rich definition of greed. From a Christian perspective, the core definition of greed is that it is the obsession with accumulating material goods.
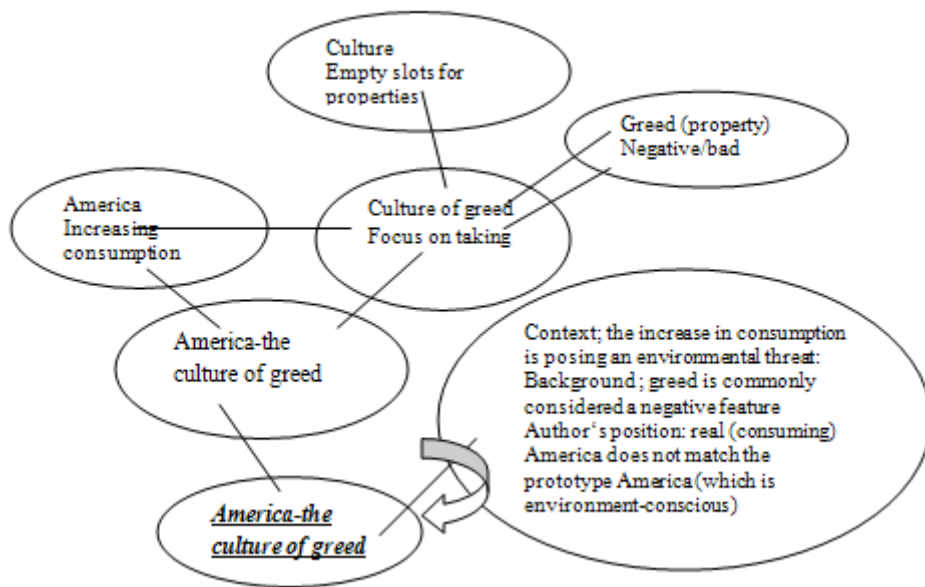
Figure 21

As discussed above, Turner and Fauconnier (2002) draw attention to a special case of "noun-phrase of" (p. 148) integration structures, which form a separate group sharing the characteristics of an "open ended connector" (p. 149). In this case, the open-ended connector space would be "the culture (of)"; however, contrary to the examples provided by Turner and Fauconnier, in which the integration is based on the outer space vital relation of Role-Value[188], here the emphasis is placed on the outer space vital relation of Property. Therefore the integration follows the mechanism of multiple blending, which enables the properties of one mental space to be blended with the slots provided by the other, i.e. the properties of the mental space of greed are mapped to the slots available in the mental space of culture. The outer space vital relation of Property is compressed into the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness in the blended space.

The incompatibility of the elements leads to the ironic shift of meaning, and the resulting irony is transferred to the whole structure. As mentioned above, all the processes inside a blend proceed simultaneously in all directions; mental input spaces dictate the structure of the final blend, and the

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[188] Turner & Fauconnier provide the following example: "Paul is the father of Sally", where father and daughter are roles, and Paul and Saly are values(p.149).

final blend dictates the selection of the mental input spaces (and their elements). Therefore irony can be seen as maintained throughout the whole structure, not only in one certain part.

In constructing the final blend, the mental space of "America—the culture of greed" serves as an input space that is blended together with the mental input space of "context/background knowledge/author's position" in a double-scope network. The ironic meaning generated in the double-scope network allows the actual America and the America dominated by greed to be perceived as a single entity. The critical evaluation communicated by irony is, on the one hand, too intense (greed cannot be seen as a sole dominant feature), but on the other hand just and deserved (as, according to the article, heavy consumption in the U.S. leads to environmental catastrophe). Similar ironies have already been mentioned above, referring to them as "literal ironies" (Barbe, 1995).

It is interesting to note that the employment of the mental space of "greed" is more than sporadic in ironic headlines. The mental space of "greed" was detected in several ironic headlines criticizing the realia of American life, e.g. a dialogic headline that imitates a witty exchange ("How Americans Like Their Greed: Supersized" (alternet.org)), or a headline based on a complex blending structure ("The Bankruptcy Bill: A Tutorial in Greed" (alternet.org)).

### 10.7. "This is America, Even Cancer Should Make a Profit"

This headline ridicules the tradition of a materialistic culture and way of thinking. Such irony is also ascribed to the category of literalness[189] by Barbe (1995), as the irony of the headline coincides with the explicit non-ironic metonymical level of the utterance. The headline is treated as explicitly marked for irony (by the reinforcing words "even" and the modal "should"). Though, according to Muecke (1978), "the markers of irony cannot be defined as infallible pointers to irony" (p. 365) and irony should be defined relying on

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[189] See footnote 179.

"intention and communication" (ibid.), the explicit use of markers facilitates the decisions of the reader. The frames of the headline are structured along the pattern of the conceptual metaphor ILLNESS IS A BUSINESS; within its mental spaces, orientational metaphors[190] such as ILLNESS IS DOWN (BAD) and PROFIT IS UP (GOOD) can be detected. Thus irony exploits the mental model of conceptual metaphors and the expressive means of linguistic metaphors. The structure of the integration is provided below:



money

Illness:
Trouble
Sadness
Big expenses
Bad (down)

Business:
Profitable area
Positive
Money
Good (up)
Business should
bring money

Context: in America health
insurance industry is corrupt
Background: illnesses should not
generate profit for anybody
Author's position: pretended belief
that earning money from cancer is
a norm in America; inadequacy
between the reality and the
expectations

(In America) Illness
should bring money

This is America, Even
Cancer Should Make a

Figure 22

The blending mechanism employed by irony in this case is a megablend that encompasses a few integration networks. "Cancer Should Make a Profit" follows a single-scope structure. The blend is based on metaphoric reference to an illness as a business, and integrates two mental input spaces: "Illness" and "Business" which undergo cross-space mapping to detect counterpart elements: illnesses—a profitable business, sadness—happiness, expenses—profit, bad—good, etc. One element of both mental input spaces—money—is projected into the generic space. Selective projection

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[190] Relying on Cibulskienė (2006), orientational metaphors are "metaphors in which one concept generates the whole system of concepts. Orientational metaphors organize concepts by giving them a special orientation; up-down, in-out, forwards-backwards, center-periphery". This relationship is normally based on our experience s of the physical environment we are in (p. 2).

allows the elements—illness, profit, obligation, business—to be moved to the blended space. The integration follows a single-scope model, as the structure shares one organizing frame (the frame of business) which is carried to the blended space. As already mentioned, this integration structure is common to metaphoric irony, and here the mental input spaces correspond to the functions of "source" and "target" in metaphor theory. Within the structure there function the outer space vital relations of Similarity, Property and Disanalogy, which undergo compressions and become the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness in the blend. The blended space, relying on the headline, is understood as a constituent part of the "America" frame. The blended space is further integrated into a double-scope network, together with the input space of "context/background knowledge/author's position". The inputs in the structure do not share a generic space and communicate conflicting information. Yet, as Turner and Fauconnier (2002) put it, "double-scope networks can operate on strong clashes between the inputs" (p. 131). Instead of blocking the comprehension of the headline, the conflict of meanings gives a deeper insight into the meaning of the utterance and does not sound strange or inappropriate in the context. The double-scope network enables the reader to see two scenarios simultaneously (a negative America where even cancer should bring profit, and a positive prototypical America where profiting from a tragedy is inappropriate) as a single entity and at the same time to accept the ironic evaluative attitude communicated by the ironist. The headline incorporates the single-scope network based on the model of conceptual metaphors, which is considered to be a conventional pattern in political discourse: political events and politicians are often given an assessment that is structured along the models of conceptual metaphors. Here the evaluative attitude is based on the model of ILLNESS IS A BUSINESS, which, though infrequent, can also be traced in a few other headlines, e.g.: "Should Nursing Homes Be for Profit?" (alternet.org) and "How Breast Cancer Became Big Business" (alternet.org). Much more frequently, however, the headlines are organized along the model of the conceptual metaphor POLITICS IS BUSINESS, which is typical of the

political discourse of the USA, Lithuania (Makarova, 2008), and the UK (Arcimavičienė, 2010).

100% of the respondents of the pilot study identified the headline as ironic. When given only the second part of the headline, the idea of profitability was not related to any specific country, which leads to the conclusion that irony was detected due to the frame conflict and not because of any conventionalized reference to America.

## 10.8. America as a Lover, in "America's Love Affair with Really Soft Toilet Paper is Causing an Environmental Catastrophe"

America seen as a lover presents an interesting and frequent reference to the USA in the headlines of alternet.org. The metaphor of love is more conventional in political discourse when the reference is given not to the country, but to the communication of politicians. Yet the headline "America's Love Affair with really soft Toilet Paper is Causing an Environmental Catastrophe" employs the metaphor of love to give an ironic negative assessment to the whole country: a love affair results in an environmental catastrophe. The article discusses America's general policy of deforestation, the cause of which is ironically argued to be America's love of soft toilet paper. The irony is based on the confrontation of two connotations: love is an elevated, high emotion, while toilet paper evokes low connotations, images that are related to the physiological needs of human beings and that are usually considered a "taboo" topic. In addition, the headline personifies both America and the toilet paper, which are transformed into two people, two lovers. This creates a humorous perspective which makes the irony (and at the same time this particular headline) memorable.

The integration structure, though related to the frame of politics (the government issues permits to cut forests), is organized following the mental model of the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS CONSUMPTION:
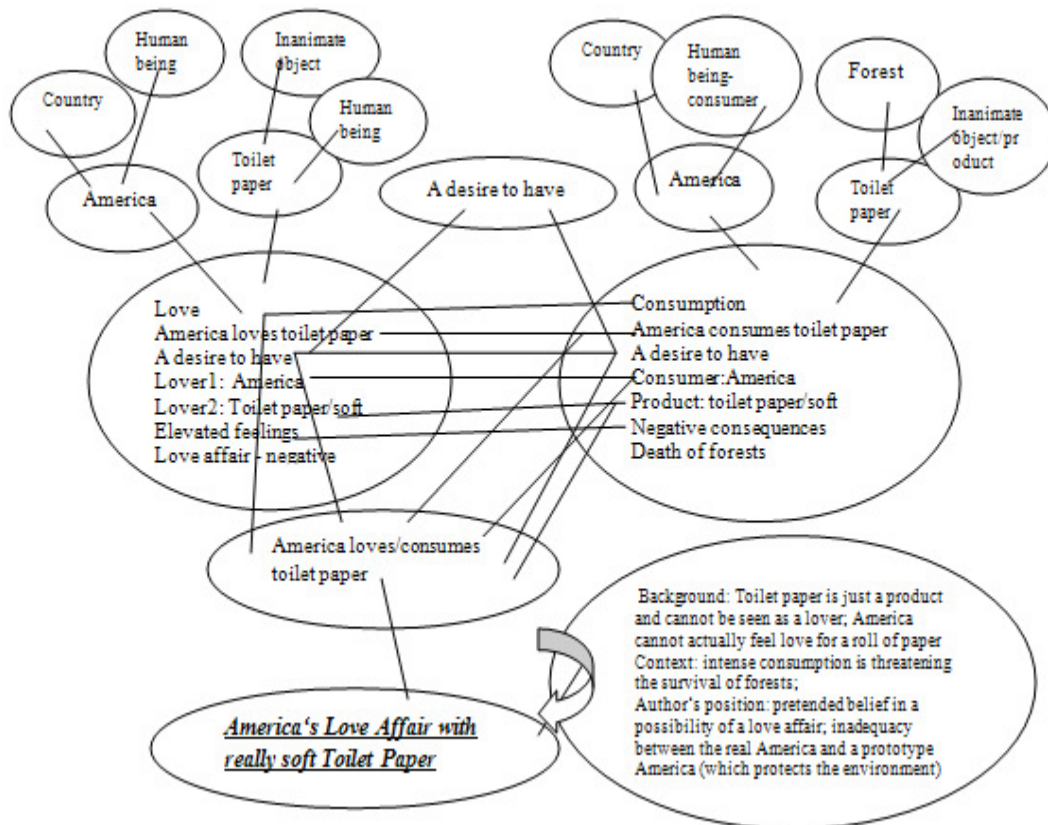
Figure 23

The integration structure of the blend is complex and multi-layered and incorporates a number of integration mechanisms. The blended space of love, "America loves toilet paper", is based on personification and organized following the principles of multiple and single-scope integration: first, the single-scope structure is used to see the country (America) as a person who is in love—the properties of a person are mapped onto the country; second, another single-scope structure is employed to map the features of a person who is loved (an object of affection) onto the mental space of toilet paper. The resulting blends and their inherited qualities are incorporated into a bigger multiple structure, "America loves toilet paper", which is further elaborated; together with another, parallel space ("America consumes toilet paper"), it enters a third single-scope network, the organizing frame of which remains that of love. As already discussed, the input spaces of such structures resemble the "source" and "target" domains of metaphor theory, where the "source" serves to give insight into the "target". Therefore, in the blended space the

consumption of the toilet paper is seen as a love affair. The blend is supported by a number of vital relations operating between the input spaces. Those include the outer space vital relations of Change, Causality, Similarity, Analogy, Property, and Identity, all of which in the blended space are compressed into the inner space relation of Uniqueness. Some of the vital relations in the blend are of a specific character. Due to the vital relation of Change, the forest element changes into both toilet paper and a lover; due to the vital relation of Property, the frame of love inherits the connotations low, bad, and inappropriate; due to the vital relation of Causality, the usual scheme of admiring the object of love turns into using it (in the case of toilet paper) or destroying it (in the case of forests), thus supporting the implication that America's love is destructive. This conflict of meanings is seen both on the level of the elements (lover—paper—forest) and on the level of frames (love—consumption). The blended space undergoes further elaboration and is incorporated into a double-scope network together with the input of "context/background knowledge/author's position". Background knowledge dictates that toilet paper is merely an inanimate object and cannot be anyone's lover, that America is a country and cannot cherish love for a roll of soft paper, etc. However, the counterfactuality of the blend does not mislead the reader. Pexman, Ferretti and Katz (2000) characterize a counterfactual context which is inconsistent with our background knowledge as an "irony-inviting counterfactual context"[191]. Consequently it can be argued that the counterfactuality of the headline triggers irony. The structure of the double-scope integration joins the conflicting mental spaces into one entity and facilitates the ironic shift of meaning. The network's structure as a megablend shows that the conflict of meanings comes from the clash of both the constituent elements and the frames. The simultaneous perception of different scenarios, according to Booth (1974), gives the reader the "chief pleasure" when appreciating the irony in the headline.

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[191] Pexman, Ferretti and Katz in their discourse analysis focus on factors that influence the interpretation of metaphors and irony. According to their findings, "counterfactuality of the discourse context in which the statement is placed has effects that occur early in processing" (2000, p. 249).

The vital relations and implications of the structure undergo compressions and, together with the critical evaluative attitude, are projected into the final blended space. The blend enables us to perceive neither scenario separately, but to concentrate on the conflict, on the double nature of the utterance and, relying on Booth (1974), to see separate details as peripheral.

The irony in the headline performs several functions: it communicates an implicit negative assessment of the situation and also criticizes it. According to Utsumi (2000), the incongruity between the desired and the actual situations is highlighted and therefore intensifies the level of criticism. The ability of irony to communicate an evaluative edge is considered one of its essential features by a number of ironologists. The critical edge of irony is related to its corrective function—by uncovering a social drawback, the ironist encourages changes. The impact of irony is reinforced by the expressive means it employs. Here, it exploits metaphors that facilitate effective implications. Irony not only communicates complex phenomena at the level of human understanding, but also conveys an evaluative aspect that is much more effective in an ironic utterance than in a literal one. This feature is related to the reinforcing function of irony, which is considered the essential function by some ironologists (e.g. Gibbs, Colston, 2001). The headline also performs the ludic function (Hutcheon, 1996) which is related to playfulness, and the aggregative function of community building that has already been discussed in the analysis of many headlines above.

The ironic utterance can be seen as partially conventionalized. Headlines built on the model of the metaphor of love can be found regularly on different websites, e.g.: "America's new Love Affair with Self-Storage" (alternet.org), "Forests Pay the Price for America's Love Affair" (alternet.org), "The long War: America's love Affair with a Boogeyman" (alternet.org), "Is America's Love Affair with Stupidity finally over" (alternet.org), "America Loves Peace? Odd, since we're always at war" (alternet.org), etc. It is worth noticing that in all these headlines the object of love is associated with negative

connotations (and the only positive one, "peace", is instantly followed by "odd").

100% of the respondents in the pilot study identified the headline as ironic. However, the identification is believed to be related not to the conventionality, but to the explicit conflicts and counterfactual scenarios.

## 10.9. Results of the Analysis of American Headlines

Ironic headlines directed towards America as a whole can be approached from a variety of different perspectives (frame shifting, echoic-mention, trumping games, etc.), but only the theory of conceptual blending is unarguably applicable in all cases. Moreover, it is uniquely capable of explicitly demonstrating which mental operations take place in the human mind while processing irony, as well as shedding light on how the compressions of meanings are enabled. For example, Coulson's (2001) theory of frame-shifting associates humor (and irony) with a shift of elements from one frame to another; however, in this dissertation the analysis based on conceptual blending shows that it is not the shift of elements, but the conflict of frames or the incompatibility of compound elements that causes the ironic shift of meaning and generates irony.

The mechanism of irony in most cases is a complex structure, a megablend, which encompasses other conceptual blends as separate mental input spaces. Within their mega-structure, ironic headlines follow double-scope, single-scope and mirror integration patterns.

The final stage of the integration that provokes the ironic shift of meaning is always a double-scope integration system. Double-scope integration is always used to incorporate the mental input space of "context/background knowledge/author's position".

Single-scope mechanisms are typical of the structures of the headlines in which irony exploits linguistic metaphors (based on the models of conceptual metaphors) as its means of expression. Single-scope networks (in

the analyzed headlines) integrate mental spaces which, in many cases, are separate blends on their own.

The mirror integration structure is peculiar to ironic headlines in which America is referred to as a nation that has a social drawback.

Some headlines follow a multiple model of integration in which the mental input spaces are not connected by a generic space (e.g. a generic space does not connect the mental input spaces of fast food and nation, as the inputs share neither the same organizing frame nor any counterpart elements); the multiple integration network is characteristic of highly intertextual ironic utterances.

Implicit mental spaces or implicit elements within the mental spaces are typical in the integration networks of ironic headlines.

In the majority of single-scope or mirror integration structures exploited by irony, the blended space is constructed from two mental input spaces, one of which is "America" (or incorporates "America" as a separate element). In the mechanism of blending, this mental input space is either explicit or implicit (relying on the conventionality of the reference). The second mental input space of such a blend in a single-scope model usually resembles the "source domain", and in a mirror model is frequently a separate blend of a multiple structure.

In the headlines directed towards America, irony frequently exploits metaphor and metonymy as a means of expression (i.e. irony is often in a metaphorical or metonymic mode).

To achieve its goals through the mechanism of blending, irony exploits a few topical fields as constituent input spaces.

Highly conventional ironic references to America come from the field of sports (the metaphors of sports) and the American Dream. The conventionality of the reference is usually demonstrated by the fact that America is not explicitly mentioned in the headlines (in the schemes America is marked as an implicit mental input space). The conventionality of the

reference based on a sports metaphor is related to both the image of America as a leading country and the traditions in political discourse in general.

The second source in the topicality of ironic headlines, the theme of the American Dream, is related to the historical and cultural experience of the country and the aspirations that in irony are seen as a failure of expectations. In ironic headlines, the mental space of "American Dream" is employed both as a separate input space and as an element (sometimes an implied element) of a more complex structure.

The third field focuses on the input space of Empire, which is metaphorically related to the historical and political experience of America as a country dominating the world of politics. However, in ironic headlines the mental input space of "Empire" is commonly incorporated into a blend with other mental input spaces which bear negative connotations (e.g. illusions, obscenities, etc.).

The fourth field in the topology of irony targeting America is related to social problems. The mental space of "America" is integrated into blends together with the input space of a social drawback. This group of ironic headlines is focused on the corrective function.

Other fields entering the integration system of ironic headlines are based on the models of various conceptual metaphors (e.g. ILLNESS IS A BUSINESS or LOVE IS CONSUMPTION) and are not numerous.

Irony exploits the mechanisms of blending to communicate compressions, evaluation and insights. The mechanism of blending exploited by irony enables the compressions of the following vital relations: Time, Space, Representation, Analogy, Part-Whole, Role-Value, Change, Causality, Identity, and Intentionality.

The vital relation of Time can be associated with memories, cultural or political aspects (Empire, American Dream, American Pie), changes (Downsize Nation), etc. Mental input spaces can be separated in Time but, due to the mechanism of blending, are compressed into one unique entity. In ironic headlines the author gives reference to certain historical, cultural and

evaluative aspects. To present them all explicitly (directly) would be space-consuming, so irony in the headlines makes use of the compressions enabled by blending. All outer space vital relations are compressed into the inner space vital relation of Uniqueness.

The compressions of space enable the reader to see two mental input spaces related to two different physical spaces compressed into one. In the analyzed headlines, the compressions of space could be described as compressions between two locations, one of which is typically imaginary (e.g. America and a Dreamland, America and the Empire of Illusions).

The compressions of Change relate the elements of one mental input space to the elements of the other input space through change: America becomes a sports champion, the American Dream disappears, a forest is turned into toilet paper and the paper into a lover. The vital relation of Change can be accompanied by the vital relation of Identity, e.g. when talking about America as an Empire we focus on the same location due to the functioning vital relation of Identity. On the other hand, the vital relation of Change can function without the vital relation of Identity, e.g. there is no Identity relation between a forest and a lover. Blending enables the compressions of the vital relations of Change/Identity into Uniqueness.

Role-Value compressions are most explicit in the headlines where irony is in the mode of metaphors (e.g., the role of leader is given the value of America, the roles of other sportsmen are performed by other countries, etc.). Here the elements are not roles on their own but only in relation to one another. The Role-Value vital relation is compressed into Uniqueness but, though in the blended space we see a single entity, this does not stop us from simultaneously seeing roles and values as separate elements.

The vital relation of Analogy enables us to draw parallels between two distinct mental spaces and their constituent elements. The vital relation of Analogy is explicit in single-scope networks when irony is in a metaphoric mode (e.g., when a parallel between cancer and a profitable product is drawn). It is usually accompanied by the vital relation of Property, which, e.g., in a

single-scope network connects the "source" and "target" mental spaces to give insight "at the scale of human understanding".

The relation between the mental input spaces and the blended space are always maintained and dynamic. They enable the economy of the ironic headlines and communicate complex information.

Irony targeted at America is most commonly in a metaphoric or metonymic mode. Irony is in a metonymic mode when the focus is on an inessential or negative aspect of life used to refer to the country as a whole. Irony acquires a metonymic mode to perform a status downgrading function (e.g., the whole country is implicitly referred to through fast food, debts, speeding, etc.). Irony in a metaphoric mode exploits the metaphoric patterns that are conventional in political discourse in general. Metaphoric irony in headlines targeted at America exploits the mental model of such base metaphors as POLITICS IS SPORT, POLITICS IS BUSINESS, or LOVE IS CONSUMPTION. In the input spaces, such irony encompasses contrastive elements, the conflict of which signals irony.

In some cases the ironic evaluative attitude is reinforced and signaled by demonstrative pronouns (e.g. this), particles (e.g. even), or adjectives (e.g. really).

Irony results from the clash of the mental input spaces, the incompatibility of the constituent parts of the blend and the incongruity with the context.

The element of pretense (pretended author's position) is an indispensable element of irony, which contributes to creating the ironic meaning of the utterance.

Irony in headlines targeted at America performs a number of social functions: aggregative, corrective, critical, ludic, assailing, reinforcing, provisional.

Irony directed at America is dominated by the social corrective function. The majority of the headlines are targeted not only at assessing the

country, but to a specific social aspect (speeding, debts, materialism, consumerism, etc.).

The aggregative function of irony in headlines addressing America can be approached from two different angles. First, it can be seen as sharing the position of the author. Second, it can be seen as a witty play among the "selected" members of a community, as the majority of the discussed headlines are based on intertextuality. The elements of intertextuality might not be accessible for all the readers.

The conventionality of ironic headlines directed at America is of three types. First, the conventionality of the frame which can be filled with different lexical items; this type is connected to metaphors that are conventionalized in political discourse. Second, to some extent, the case of the American Dream, as the ironic meaning of the phrase may be seen as partially salient. Third, when the utterance is conventional but does not have an ironic meaning outside the context (in the pilot study such references were usually identified as describing America, but if taken out of the context were not recognized as ironic, e.g., Empire or Superpower). The ironic meaning emerges due to the immediate and broader context.

The conventionality of an ironic reference can be decided relying on the integration of implicit mental spaces into blending networks, i.e., if the author relies on the conventionality of the reference the mental input space of "America" is not explicit.

Context and background knowledge play an important role in the construction of the integration network.

**CONCLUSIONS**

1. Irony is a complex mental operation, which exploits the mechanism of conceptual blending. The double-scope integration network that encompasses conflicting mental spaces is necessary for irony.

2. Both Lithuanian and American ironic headlines exploit complex mechanisms of mega blending which incorporate mental input spaces that are separate blends themselves. In both Lithuanian and American headlines, the main role is played by the double-scope integration structure which incorporates two inputs, a mental blended space corresponding to the text of the headline and a mental space of context/background knowledge/author's position.

3. A characteristic feature of the blending mechanisms employed by ironic headlines (both Lithuanian and American) is the integration of implicit mental spaces and elements.

4. The mental spaces of the double-scope integration network are always in conflict and the conflict is solved by integrating them into a common blended space.

5. The dominant type of integration in Lithuanian ironic headlines is a mirror network whose input spaces share the same organizing frame. The mirror network here has integrated ready-made blends as its input spaces. American ironic headlines exploited integration networks that are more diverse and frequently more complex, have more levels and encompass a bigger number of mental spaces. In the blending structures of American headlines, irony is often the result of a clash in a few different places within the structure, which is not typical of Lithuanian irony.

6. Ironic references directed at Lithuania have a characteristic feature of irony in the mode of metonymy. The structures incorporate mental input spaces providing a metonymic reference (based on a certain dish) to other countries (Banana Republic, Cheburek land, Kebab land), which can be related to the functions of auto-irony enumerated by Twark, i.e. the assertion of identity and the tendency to downgrade one's status. It was

noticed that the countries that metonymically enter the integration networks are generally considered to be of a lower status than Lithuania (in terms of politics, culture, standard of living, etc.), and therefore the implicit juxtaposition of these countries and Lithuania can be exploited to express criticism towards Lithuania. Meanwhile, the ironic headlines directed at America did not contain a single comparative reference to other countries.

7. Both Lithuanian and American ironic headlines make use of a metaphoric mode, as the integration structures exploit the mental models of conceptual metaphors, e.g., POLITICS IS SPORT (the compressions of intentionality are emphasized). Lithuanian irony is occasionally based on the model of the conceptual metaphor POLITICS IS A TALE, which was not encountered in American ironic headlines. In American headlines, irony exploits a wider range of linguistic metaphors (based on various conceptual metaphors, e.g. POLITICS IS BUSINESS, or POLITICS IS POWER). In American ironic headlines, linguistic metaphors are incorporated into more complex structures (which may already contain other metaphors); here metaphors are employed not only as frames but also as constituent elements. In American ironic headlines, the constituent elements of frames are in some cases organized along the model of orientational metaphors, which is not typical of Lithuanian ironic headlines. The use of the conventionalized models of metaphors enables irony to be accessible without its context.

8. The mechanism of blending has proven to be essential in enabling efficient compressions in irony. One of the central compressions in Lithuanian irony is the compression of Analogy into Uniqueness (employed for the identification of the status). One of the central compressions in American irony is the compression of Intentionality (which enables the reader to see negative events as intentional). Compressions of Intentionality were also found in Lithuanian ironic headlines.

9. The ironic reference to Lithuania as Mary's Land is considered salient and conventionalized. A highly salient ironic reference to America in American headlines was not discovered, though ironic references

centering around the "American Dream" (in headlines the phrase is used both ironically and non-ironically) may be regarded as partially salient.

10. A generalization follows that Lithuanian and American auto-irony (irony directed at one's own country) is based on mental models organized in different ways, which are reflected in the integration mechanisms of blending. This diversity can be accounted for by the different socio-cultural and historic situations, which condition the shared background knowledge of the participants of the communicative act of irony (the authors and readers of the headlines).

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**Appendix 1**

A pilot study was prepared and carried out during the 2009–2010 academic year. The findings were presented at two international conferences: "Cultures, identities, and Languages in Northern-American Contexts", at VDU, Kaunas, 2010; and "Texts and Contexts: Conflicts and Secret Agreements" at VUKHF, Kaunas, 2010.

10 lecturers (philologists at the VUKHF Department of Foreign Languages) and 10 4th year students of philology were asked to fill in the questionnaire given below.

The respondents were given three definitions of irony taken from three different sources (Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary, D.C.Muecke, and the Dictionary of Literary Terms) to avoid misinterpretations of the concept. The respondents were informed that the headlines had been taken from on-line news websites and were related to politics. The respondents were asked to mark the headlines as "ironic", "not ironic" or "difficult to decide" and to comment on their decisions. The respondents were also asked to identify the possible denotant of the utterance in separate cases. The sample questionnaire given below provides a summary of the findings.

**QUESTIONNAIRE  2010**

**Irony :**
- incongruity between what is said and what is meant; sarcasm
- saying things that are different from or opposite to what one means expecting that the adresee will understand (process) the implied (real) meaning
-  a rhetorical device or literary technique in which there is an incongruity or discordance that goes beyond the simple and evident meaning of words
  Please mark the folowing headlines/phrases as ironic, not ironic, or put a dash if you cannot decide:

| No | phrase | ironic | not ironic | ? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Marijos Žemė ( The Land of Mary) | 6 | 7 | 7 |
| | Sodoma ir Gomora Marijos žemėje (Sodom and Gomorrah in Mary's land) | 19 | 1 | |
| 2 | Lietuva-Kebabų Kraštas ( Lithuania is Kebab Land) | 12 | 5 | 3 |
| 3 | Į Kauno sav. administracijos direktores – E.Gudišauskienė ( E.Gudišauskienė to become the administrative director of Kaunas municipality ) | | 20 | |
| 4 | Čeburėkų Šalies perspektyvos (The Perspectives of the Cheburek Land) | 15 | 3 | 2 |
| 5 | Paksas net ir Afrikoje Paksas ( Paksas is Paksas even in Africa) | 19 | | 1 |
| 6 | Lietuva- Bananų respublika (Lithuania is the Banana Republic) | 20 | | |
| 7 | Stebuklų Šalis: Stebuklų šalies pasakos. Gedimino sapnas (The Land of Miracles: Gediminas's dream) | 16 | - | 4 |
| 8 | Politikai vyksta į Turkiją ( Politicians to visit Turkey ) | | 20 | |
| 9 | Šaukštas Deguto Kubilą Medaus Pagadina ? | 6 | 7 | 7 |
| 10 | JAV išsklaidė abejones dėl derybų su Rusija (USA resolves doubts about negotiations with Russia) | | 20 | |
| 11 | Abejingumo Savo Piliečiams Lyderė (The Leader of Indifference to its Citizens) | 16 | 2 | 2 |
| 12 | Europos Girtavimo Vicečempionė (The Vice-Champion of Drinking in Europe) | 18 | 1 | 1 |
| 13 | Klaipėda neatiduos Vilniui rotušės (Klaipėda unwilling to give away the Town hall for Vilnius) | | 20 | |
| 14 | America –Country Number 1 (Amerika-Valstybė Numeris 1) | 5 | 6 | 9 |
| 15 | Downsize Nation: Welcome to the New, Smaller American Dream (Sumažintų ambicijų tauta: sveiki atvykę į naują, mažesnę amerikietišką svajonę) | 18 | | 2 |

| 16 | The Ten Wealthiest Financiers in America (Dešimt turtingiausių Amerikos finansininkų) |    | 20 |    |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|
| 17 | Dreamland (Svajonių Šalis)/ It's Called the American Dream Because You Have To Be Asleep to Believe It | 20 |    |    |
| 18 | The Dealer Nation (Dilerių Tauta) | 16 | 3 | 1 |
| 19 | UK Greens win historic first seat in parliament (UK žalieji laimi pirmąją istorijoje vietą parlamente) |    | 20 |    |
| 20 | America's Love Affair with really soft Toilet Paper is Causing an Environmental Catastrophe (Amerikos meilės nuotykis su tikrai švelniu tualetiniu popieriumi gresia katastrofa) | 18 | 1 | 1 |
| 21 | Let's Make September 11 a Day of Peace (Paskelbkime rugsėjo 11 Taikos diena) |    | 20 |    |
| 22 | Fast Food Nation / Junk Food Nation (Greito Maisto Tauta) | 20 |    |    |
| 23 | Debtor Nation (Skolininkų Tauta ) | 20 |    |    |
| 24 | Bush: "I didn't do it! It was like that when I found it." (Bušas: "Čia ne aš padariau! Jau taip buvo kai radau) | 19 |    | 1 |
| 25 | *Health* care reform, Just the Facts (Sveikatos apsaugos reforma, tik faktai) |    | 20 |    |
| 26 | Israeli Prime *Minister* Brags About Giving Orders to Bush (Izraelio ministras giriasi duodantis nurodymus Bušui) | 1 | 19 |    |
| 27 | Cepelinų Lietuva (Lithuania of cepelinai) | 15 | 4 | 1 |
| 28 | Lietuva- paralelių pasaulių lyderė (Lithuania – the leader of parallel worlds) | 18 | 1 | 1 |
| 29 | Forrest Gump's Evil Twin (Foresto Gampo blogasis dvynys) | 13 | 4 | 3 |
| 30 | How Bush stole the elections (Kaip Bušas rinkimus vogė) | 13 | 2 | 5 |
| 31 | George Bush and the axis of evil (Džordžas Bušas ir | 16 | 3 | 1 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | blogio ašis) | | | |
| 32 | R.Paksas Pirmadienį linksmino žurnalistus (On Monday Paksas entertained the journalists) | 19 | 1 | |
| 33 | Paris Hilton More Accountable than the President (Paris Hilton atsakingesnė už prezidentą) | 13 | 6 | 1 |
| 34 | Lietuva – Rusija: Mažojo Būgnininko mirtis (Lithuania-Russia: the death of the little drummer) | 5 | 2 | 13 |
| 35 | Bush the 'Commander Guy' Rejects Spending on His Own War (Bušas"vadovaujantis vaikinas" atmeta savo karo finansavimą) | 20 | | |
| 36 | Paksas negirdi patarimo atsistatydinti (Paksas doesn't hear the advice to resign) | 17 | 2 | 1 |
| 37 | U.S. takes gold in arms Olympics (JV laimi auksą ginklavimosi Olimpiadoje) | 17 | 1 | 2 |
| 38 | Bush's Energy Policy: Begging for More Oil (Bušo energetikos politika: maldavimas gauti naftos) | 20 | - | - |
| 39 | Top Climate Expert: Bush White House Edits Testimony of Government Scientists (Geriausias klimato ekspertas: Bush'o Baltieji rūmai redaguoja mokslininkų įrodymus) | 20 | | - |
| 40 | Face it, the United States is a proud nation of firsts (Pripažinkikt, Jungtinės valstijos –tai išdidi pirmųjų tauta) | 15 | 3 | 2 |
| 41 | Will Papa Bush's Old Pals Prolong the Iraq Occupation? ( Ar tėtušio Bušo bičiuliai tęs Irako okupaciją?) | 18 | - | 2 |
| 42 | Paksas nežino kur dingo būsimieji patarėjai (Paksas does not know where his future dvisers disappear) | 16 | 3 | 1 |
| 43 | Viešieji ryšiai Marijos Žemėje (Public Relations in Mary's Land) | 15 | 2 | 3 |
| 44 | Lakūnas prieš sudužimą (A pilot before the crash) | 12 | 5 | 3 |
| 45 | "I Don't Remember What I Was Doing In 1981" (Aš neatsimenu, ką dariau 1981) | 12 | 5 | 3 |

| 46 | Hersh: "Hitting Iran is Bush and Cheney's Wet Dream" (Hersh: Smūgis Irakui tai Bušo ir Cheany šlapias sapnas) | 20 | - | - |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 47 | America – the culture of greed (Amerika-godumo kultūra) | 19 | 1 | - |
| 48 | Shutting Down Transparent Government, Bush-Style (Skaidrios vyriausybės išardymas, Bušo stiliumi) | 18 | 1 | 1 |
| 49 | The Greatest Strategic Disaster in American History (Didžiausia strateginė katastrofa Amerikos istorijoj) | 5 | 9 | 6 |
| 50 | V.Landsbergio įsitikinimu, R.Paksui reikia padėti (Landsbergis believes Paksas needs help) | 8 | 7 | 5 |
| 51 | That Other America  (Ta kita Amerika) | 15 | 3 | 2 |
| 52 | Bush "Can't Remember" Disbanding of Iraqi Army and Other Revelations (Bušas neatsimena Irako armijos išformavimo ir kitų apsireiškimų) | 19 | - | 1 |
| 53 | "Clitoral economics"  (Klitorinė ekonomika) | 20 | - | - |
| 54 | Pedofilų šalis- Marijos Žemė (Phedopils'country- Mary's land) | 20 | - | - |
| 55 | This is America, Even Cancer Should Make a Profit (Tai - Amerika, net ir vėžys turi nešti pelną) | 20 | - | - |
| 56 | Removing *America's* Blinders (Praskleidžiant Amerikos uždangą) | 3 | 11 | 6 |
| 57 | R.Paksą nustebino bažnyčios hierarchų laiškas (Paksas surprised by the letter of Church Hierarchs) | 7 | 8 | 5 |
| 58 | Prezidentas prašo aiškintis dėl pokalbių, kurių neprisimena (The president asks to a report on the phone call he does not remember) | 12 | 5 | 3 |
| 59 | The Britney Spears/George W. Bush Connection (Britney Spears ir Bušo ryšys) | 11 | 5 | 4 |
| 60 | Why No One Will Name Their Child 'George' Again (Kodėl niekas daugiau nebepavadins savo vaiko "Džordžu") | 20 | - | - |

| 61 | Bush: If I Were Iraqi, I'd Support My Endless, Illegal Occupation (Bušas: "Jei aš būčiau irakietis, paremčiau mano begalinę, neteisėtą okupaciją) | 20 | - | - |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|
| 62 | Litbelo teisėsauga (The Jurisdiction of Litbel) | 2 | 3 | 15 |
| 63 | W. Has a Dream (W.turi svajonę) | 18 | 2 | - |
| 64 | Bush Conveniently Forgets His Own Role in the Baseball "Steroids Era" (Bušas patogiai pamiršta savo vaidmenį krepšinio steroid eroje) | 20 | - | - |
| 65 | Lietuva ir Baltarusija norėtų aktyvinti turizmą (Lithuania and Belarussia want to develop tourism) | 1 | 18 | 1 |
| 66 | From Afghanistan to *Iraq*: Connecting the Dots with Oil (Nuo Afganistano prie Irako: sąsajos su nafta) | 1 | 19 | - |
| 67 | Šuolis nuo "erelio" ant "agurko" (A jump from an eagle to a cucumber") | 20 | - | - |
| 68 | It's Bush vs. Humanity at UN (Bušas prieš žmoniją JT) | 18 | 2 | - |
| 69 | Bush Forgets His Grandpa Profited from Nazi Slave Labor (Bušas pamiršo, kad jo senelis pelnosi iš nacių vergų darbo) | 17 | 2 | 1 |
| 70 | 40 Million Nonbelievers in America? (40 milijonų netikinčiųkų Amerikoj?) | 3 | 16 | 1 |
| | | | | |

**Appendix 2**

The list of headlines discussed in the dissertation:

1. "Nusipelnę gyventi geriau" (delfi.lt) ("Deserving to live better")
   http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/du-trecdaliai-seimo-nariu-nusipelne-gyventi-geriau.d?id=15320797&com=1

2. "Viešieji ryšiai Marijos žemėjė" (delfi.lt) ("Public Relations in Mary's Land")
   http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/viesieji-rysiai-marijos-zemeje-?id=26775077

3. "Čeburėkų šalies perspektyvos" (delfi.lt) "The perspectives of the Cheburek land" http://blog.delfi.lt/el_cebureku-salies-perspektyvos/?cat=716

4. "Sodoma ir Gomora Marijos žemėje" (delfi.lt) ("Sodom and Gomorrah in Mary's Land")
   http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/comments/article.php?id=7689588

5. "Pedofilų šalis - Marijos žemė" (diena.lt) ("The Country of Pedophiles – Mary's Land") http://klaipeda.diena.lt/dienrastis/miestas/pedofilu-salis-marijos-zeme-139679

6. "Litbelo teisėsauga" (delfi.lt) (" The Jurisdiction of Litbel")
   http://blog.delfi.lt/sauliusstoma/479/

7. "Geroji Seimo Fėja linksmina kolegas" (delfi.lt) ("The Good Fairy of Parliament entertains her colleagues")
   http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/article.php?id=14957980

8. "Lietuva – Europos girtavimo vice čempionė" (delfi.lt) ("Lithuania is the European vice champion of drinking")
   http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/lietuva-girtavimo-vice-cempione.d?id=12220797&com=1

9. "Prezidentui reikia padėti" (delfi.lt) ("President Needs Help")
   http://www.delfi.lt/lt/naujienos/lietuva/prezidentui-reikia-padeti-10d619.html

10. "Pakalniškiai skundžiasi plukdomi *durnių laivu*" (delfi.lt) ("Citizens of Pakalniskis complain about being carried on "the Ship of Fools")
    http://verslas.delfi.lt/country/pakalniskiai-skundziasi-plukdomi-durniu-laivu.d?id=30571213

11. "Ar prisvils Tefloninis ministras?" (delfi.lt) "Will the "Teflon Minister" burn?"
    http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/article.php./8660

12. "Ar perlips rūpintojėlis Gediminas "Dujotekanos" vamzdį?" ("Will Worrying
    Gediminas step over the tube of "Dujotekana"")
    http://blog.delfi.lt/node.1875.portal.php

13. "Ar pavyks G.Kirkilui susitarti su Gazpromu?" ("Will G.Kirkilas Manage to
    Come to Terms with Gazprom?")
    http://delfi.lt/news=dns&q-ar-pavyks-G.Kirkilui-susitarti-su-
    Gazpromu%3F109477

14. Seimas: zuikis tas pats, tik varnos nebe tos  (Parliament: the same Rabbit,
    Different Crows")
    http://www.delfi.lt/archive/article.php?id=7708133&categoryID=2997120&nd
    ate=1129237200

15. "Seimas – geriausias vaistas nuo noro dirbti" (delfi.lt) ("Parliament –the Best
    Treatment against Willingness to Work")
    http://www.delfi.lt/news/ringas/lit/edigryte-seimas-geriausias-vaistas-nuo-
    noro-dirbti.d?id=15005039

16. "Čiukčianovas ir Neftianovas atvyksta į Lietuvą" (delfi.lt) (Chukchanov and
    Neftanov come to Lithuania)
    http://www.delfi.lt/archive/article.php?id=4408133&news3447120&ndate=005
    42218

17. "Kodėl Ivano ir Frico vamzdis kelia baimę?" (delfi.lt) ("Why the Barrel of
    Ivan and Fritz Causes Fair?")
    http://www.delfi.lt/news/article.php?id=4401843&categoryID=2node0&ndate5
    54177

18. "Bliūkšta Kėdainių caro mitas" (delfi.lt) ("The myth of Kedainiai Tsar fades")
    http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/article.php?id=15911872&com=1

19. " Lithuanians –the champions of self-treatment" (veidas.lt) ( „Lietuviai-
    savigydos čempionai")
    http://www.veidas.lt/lietuviai-%E2%80%93-savigydos-cempionai

20. "Neteisingų mokesčių lyderė" (bernardinai.lt, zebra.lt) ("The leader of inadequate taxes")

http://archyvas.bernardinai.lt/index.php?url=articles/102077

21. "*Lietuviai* – tarp kyšininkavimo *lyderių*" (delfi.lt, 15min.lt ) ("Lithuanians among the leaders in bribery")

http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/lietuviai--tarp-kysininkavimo-lyderiu.d?id=22463627&pictureID=22463694

22. "*Lietuviai - suklastotų vairuotojų pažymėjimų lyderiai*" (*lrytas.lt*) ("Lithuanians are the leaders in fake licenses")

http://www.lrytas.lt/-12055125781203724649-lietuviai-suklastot%C5%B3-vairuotoj%C5%B3-pa%C5%BEym%C4%97jim%C5%B3-lyderiai-norvegijoje.htm

23. "Alkoholio suvartojimo rungtynėse Lietuva- aštuntoje vietoje"(zebra.lt) ("In the championship of alcohol consumption Lithuania takes 8th place"

http://www.zebra.lt/lt/laisvalaikis/ivairenybes/tyrimas-alkoholio-suvartojimo-rungtynese-lietuva-astuntoje-vietoje-245146.html

"Mirtingumo atlasas": Lietuva – vėl tarp Europos „lyderių" (delfi.lt) (*Death atlas: Lithuania is among the "leaders" once again*")

 http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/Health/mirtingumo-atlasas-lietuva-vel-tarp-europos-lyderiu.d?id=23864084

24. "Lietuva-absoliuti lyderė vaikų savižudybėse"(zebra.lt) ("Lithuania –an absolute leader in youth suicides")

http://www.zebra.lt/lt/laisvalaikis/ivairenybes/lietuva-absoliuti-lydere-pagal-vaikinu-savizudybiu-skaiciu-regione-54432.html

25. "Putinas nekaltas, aplinka kalta" (15min.lt) ("Putinas is not guilty, the environment is to blame")

http://www.15min.lt/naujiena/pasaulio-idomybes/europa/vputinas-nekaltas-kalta-aplinka-265-91805

26. "The proud nation of firsts" (alternet.org)

http://www.alternet.org/story/477160/?page=entire

27. "The USA takes gold in Arms Olympics" (alternet.org)
http://alternet.org/engelhardt/?articleid=story/10993

28. "White House Claims the Dog Ate Its Emails" (alternet.org)
http:// alternet.org./2007/11/white-house-claims-dog-ate-its-emails.htm

29. "Forrest Gump's Evil Twin" (alternet.org) www.alternet.org/story/35238/

30. "Bush Conveniently Forgets his Own Role in the Baseball Steroids Era"
(alternet.org)
http://www.alternet.org/blogs/peek/70718/

31. "The Turks are coming—so what?" (time.com)
http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0/8599/16808ph27/0.html

32. "How Bush stole the elections" (alternet.org) www.alternet.org/story/325587/

33. "From Backslapper to Back Stabber" (nytimes.org)
http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/05/opinion/05thu2.html,

34. "Finality and Fallibility" (nytimes.com)
http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/09/opinion/09leo.html,

35. "How odd of Rod" (alternet.org) www. alternet.org /gba/ofrod/11504
article/0/..../

36. "We are Number 1" (alternet.org)
http://www.alternet.org/story/52169/?page=entire

37. "Bitter Orange" (nytimes.com)
www.nytimes.com/2006/01/01/magazine/01tymoshenko.html?...all

38. "For Putin and the Kremlin, a Not So Happy New Year" (nytimes.com)
http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/03/international/europe/03putin-
Q.html?th&emc=th
"You are a Genius!" (alternet.org)
http://www.alternet.org/441/blogs/peek/00251/

39. "U.S.A Takes gold in ice fishing" (suntimes.com),
http://blogs.suntimes.com/bowman/2010/03/usa_usa_takes_gold_in_ice_fish.h
tml

40. "USA Takes Gold in Downhill" (cbsnews.com),
http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2010/02/17/sportsline/main6217264.shtml

41. USA Takes Gold at FEI World Reining Championship (horsesinthesouth.com) ,http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2010/02/17/sportsline/main6217264.shtml

42. The American Dream Is Alive and Well ... in Finland" (alternet.org),

43. "Living the American Dream, in one Room Apartment" (alternet.org) http://www.alternet.org/story/47708/

44. "It's really a Dream Because you Have to be Asleep to Believe it" (alternet.org) http://www.alternet.org/blogs/video/61955/

45. "Which Will It Be America, Empire or Democracy?" (alternet.org) www.alternet.org/story/47455/

46. "The Empire of Illusion" (alternet.org) http://www.alternet.org/media/145152/

47. "In the Empire of the Obscene" (alternet.org) http://www.alternet.org/story/16315/

48. "Bye Bye Ms. American Empire" (alternet.org) http://www.alternet.org/books/149103/bye_bye_ms._american_empire_--_can_we_talk_about_seccession_now/

49. "How to Manage an Empire in Decline?" (alternet.org) www.alternet.org/story/.../how_to_manage_an_empire_in_decline/

50. "U.S. takes gold in Couch Potato Olympics" (mlive.com), http://www.mlive.com/news/index.ssf/2010/02/us_takes_gold_in_couch_potato.html

51. "US takes gold at computer-gaming 'Olympics'" (newscientist.com), http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn8353-us-takes-gold-at-computergaming-olympics.html

52. "USA Takes the Gold... In Whining" (*blogcritics.org*) http://blogcritics.org/culture/article/2008-olympics-usa-takes-the-gold/

53. "Bye Bye American Pie: 10 Reasons Why America's Economic Pie Is Rapidly Shrinking" (*therealnewsradio.com*), http://www.therealnewsradio.com/Articles/tabid/827/ID/6467/Bye-Bye-American-Pie-10-Reasons-Why-Americas-Economic-Pie-Is-Rapidly-Shrinking.aspx

54. "Un-American Pie" (alternet.org)

http://www.alternet.org/story/19283/

55. Tea Party As American As Apple Pie" (alternet.org)
http://www.alternet.org/rss/breaking_news/324469/obama_calls_tea__party_%
E2%80%9Cas_american_as_apple_pie%E2%80%9D/

56. "Saving Room for the Rotten Pie" (alternet.org), etc.
http://www.alternet.org/story/20584/saving_room_for_the_rotten_pie/commen
ts/

57. "The Empire at Oil's End" (alternet.org),
http://www.alternet.org/story/18826/the_empire_at_oil%27s_end/

58. "America's Empire of Bases" (www.thenation.com),
http://www.thenation.com/article/157595/americas-empire-bases-20

59. "Which Will It Be America, Empire or Democracy?"(alternet.org),
http://www.alternet.org/story/47455/

60. The Theology of American Empire" (alternet.org)
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3. Vengalienė, D. (2005) The Functions of Irony in Headlines. - Žmogus kalbos erdvėje, Kaunas, p. 139-143, ISBN 9986-19-798-8.

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