
WAYS OF EXPRESSING DISAGREEMENT IN MEDIA TEXTS ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Aleksandra Aleksandrova

Konstantin Preslavski University of Shumen, Bulgaria, aleksandra_sa@abv.bg

Abstract: In media text on international relations, disagreement between countries is presented metaphorically as a disagreement between people.

The relation between metaphor and discourse is studied by Zinken and Musolf (2009). Musolf studies metaphors related to the EU organized in “scenarios”. In his view, the thematic target (for instance, EU politics) is accessed through a source input for the metaphor complex (family/marriage/concepts) (Musolf 2006) and this is “characterized by the dominance of a few traditional, gender-coded stereotypes of family roles” (Musolf 2009: 1).

The present paper traces the ways disagreement in the sphere of international relations is presented in the media.

In this study, the observed patterns used to represent disagreement between countries are argument, disagreement, conflict, and fight. The level of disagreement varies depending on the metaphoric scenario used to represent it. It was observed that the strongest way of expressing disagreement is based on the “split up”, and “break up” scenario, followed by the “fight”, “conflict” and the “argument” scenario.

In expressing disagreement in media text on international affairs, Lakoff’s STATE IS A PERSON metaphor (Lakoff 1990, 1995) is used. In Chilton and Lakoff’s view, metaphors are not mere words or fanciful notions, but one of our primary means of conceptualizing the world. As they have stated, a metaphor is “a means of understanding one domain of one’s experience in terms of another” (Chilton, Lakoff 1989). Member states are presented as people who quarrel and disagree over issues related to international relations or policies. Along with that metaphor, a place for the institution metonymy is used. As Barcelona has stated, proper names are often metonymic in origin, i. e. they refer to a circumstance or distinctive aspect linked to their referent (Barcelona 2004, 2005). The place for the institution metonymy is found in two variants: the country for the institution and the capital for the institution. For instance, a disagreement between the governments of two countries is presented as disagreement between their capitals, as in “Paris and Berlin fundamentally “disagree” on who should succeed Jean-Claude Juncker” (<https://www.express.co.uk>). The same situation is presented as a disagreement between countries: „Germany and France ‘DISAGREE’ over Juncker replacement” (ibid). In the abovementioned examples, an item from one of the two metonymic chains is juxtaposed to a corresponding item in the other chain:

Paris (place name - capital) — Berlin (place name - capital)

Germany (place name- country) — France (place name- country)

It seems that names from one metonymic chain belonging to a certain class of names (country name, names of cities, capitals, regions, continents, etc.) are juxtaposed to names from another metonymic chain, belonging to the same class of names. However, there are texts in which this is not necessarily the case. A name of city (capital) is often juxtaposed to a name of a country, as in “Paris put its foot down, and won’t let Germany get its way” (www.politico.eu). Expressions may vary depending on the strength of disagreement, ranging from “disagree”, “argue”, “conflict” to “fight”, “split up” and “break up”.

Keywords: media texts, international relations, metonymy, metaphor

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1. INTRODUCTION

In media text on international relations, disagreement between countries is presented metaphorically as a disagreement between people. Those metaphors are organized in “scenarios” (Musolf 2009). The present paper traces the ways disagreement in the sphere of international relations is presented in the media.

In expressing disagreement in media text on international affairs, the STATE IS A PERSON metaphor is used. Member states are presented as people who quarrel and disagree over issues related to international relations or policies. Along with that metaphor, a place for the institution metonymy is used. In this study, the observed patterns used to represent disagreement between countries are argument, disagreement, conflict, and fight.

2. ANALYSIS

The level of disagreement varies depending on the metaphoric scenario used to represent it. It was observed that the strongest way of expressing disagreement is based on the “split up”, and “break up” scenario, followed by the “fight”, “conflict” and “being at odds” scenario.

- **Disagreement**

Disagreement between institutions is presented as disagreement between countries, as in the following excerpt:

EU DIVIDED: Germany and France ‘DISAGREE’ over Juncker replacement - ‘We are OPPOSED’
 France’s Secretary of State for European Affairs Amélie de Montchalin acknowledged on Wednesday that Paris and Berlin fundamentally “disagree” on who should succeed Jean-Claude Juncker at the head of the European Commission. (<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1133727/eu-news-european-union-european-commission-jean-claude-juncker-france-germany>)

In the above excerpt, the metonymy THE COUNTRY FOR THE INSTITUTION and the metonymy THE CAPITAL FOR THE INSTITUTION are used interchangeably, hence the following metonymic chains are formed:

Germany→Berlin→The German government

France→Paris→The French government

Another way of expressing disagreement and difference in viewpoints is using the verb *oppose*:

EU Opposes France on Global ‘Right to Be Forgotten’

European Commission argued that a global application would stretch privacy laws beyond their intended scope

LUXEMBOURG—The European Union’s executive arm on Tuesday joined Alphabet Inc.’s Google and a group of free-speech advocates to oppose expanding the bloc’s “right to be forgotten” beyond European borders.

In arguments before the EU’s top court, the executive arm as well as countries including Ireland and Greece argued that a global application of the right would stretch the EU’s privacy laws beyond their intended scope—echoing at least some of Google’s arguments. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/eu-executive-arm-opposes-france-on-global-right-to-be-forgotten-1536685575>

In the next excerpt, a country’s ruler is made equal to the country. In the headline, the use of the phrase *‘not on same page’* is used to refer to the different viewpoints the France and Germany have. *France* refers to French presidential institution, while *Germany* stands for the German Government. Later on in the article, the relationship between the two countries are presented as a couple who spits up and the political relations between the two countries are equalized as a personal relationship between president Macron and chancellor Merkel :

France and Germany *‘not on same page’* over Brexit, admits Macron

French president Emmanuel Macron has admitted differences with Germany over Brexit.

Macron told reporters that he and German chancellor Angela Merkel were "on Brexit, not completely on the same page".

But he added that "fruitful confrontations" and compromises were part of ties between their two countries. The frank admission of *splits* in the Franco-German couple was rare from Macron who has sought to build a close relationship with Merkel to launch an ambitious reform programme for the EU. <https://www.thelocal.fr/20190426/france-and-germany-not-on-same-page-over-brexit-admits-macron>

The State for the person metonymy in the above text can be presented in the following way:

France → president Emmanuel Macron

Germany → chancellor Angela Merkel

Partners in a couple can become closer, should make compromises, can have a close relationship or split up. Concepts from the domain of romantic relationship are used in the above text to refer to political relationship between EU member states. The relation between the source concept and the target concept is represented in the table below:

Source concept	Target concept
To build a close relationship	To stabilize diplomatic relations
Franco-German couple	The diplomatic relations between France and Germany

The stronger the disagreement, the stronger the words used to express it. In the next excerpt, a disagreement is called “a row”:

UK urges restraint over *disagreement* between Saudi Arabia and Canada

LONDON (Reuters) - Britain urged Canada and Saudi Arabia to show restraint on Tuesday amid a diplomatic *row* triggered by Canadian comments expressing concern over the arrests of activists in Saudi Arabia.

“Canada and Saudi Arabia are both close partners of the UK, and we urge restraint during the current situation,” a foreign office spokeswoman said.

“The UK is a strong supporter of human rights. We regularly raise our concerns with the Saudi Government about human rights issues, including the recent arrests of human rights defenders.”

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-saudi-canada-britain/uk-urges-restraint-over-disagreement-between-saudi-arabia-and-canada-idUKKBN1KS1SX>

- ***Split over***

When a disagreement is really strong, it is presented as a fight, as in the next excerpt:

France and Germany split over Nord Stream 2 pipeline

Berlin’s efforts to block the Gas Directive dealt a blow, but the project is unlikely to be stopped.

Germany’s effort to block EU rules from applying to the Russia-backed Nord Stream 2 pipeline suffered a blow Thursday when France balked at backing Berlin.

The *fight* boils down to a set of EU gas rules up for discussion by member countries on Friday. Germany wants to halt the update of the Gas Directive, which it worries will interfere with its appetite for Russian gas. But Paris *put its foot down*, and won’t let Germany get its way.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/france-and-germany-split-over-nord-stream-2-pipeline-russian-gas-regulation>

The disagreement is presented as a quarrel between people, using phrases like *fight*, *to put one’s foot down*, and *to get one’s way*.

- ***Being at odds with***

Another way of expressing disagreement is using the phrase *to be at odds with someone*, as in the following excerpt:

Germany at Odds With France Over Tariffs on U.S. Cars

Germany is willing to offer the U.S. concessions to stop President Donald Trump from slapping tariffs on European steel and aluminum, exposing a divide with France on how to avert a trade war.

Germany is ready to discuss with the European Union in every respect measures to counter the U.S. threat to impose tariffs, according to a government official in Berlin. That flexible approach to protecting Germany’s export-led industry risks alienating other EU countries including France, which according to a French government official doesn’t want the bloc to make any concessions.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-03-27/germany-said-to-be-at-odds-with-france-over-tariffs-on-u-s-cars>

In the next excerpt, the disagreement between Britain and France is described as a problematic personal relationship:

Britain and France *'at odds with one another*, again'

It has not been news for several centuries to report that Britain and France are often *at odds* with one another and that *tension* hangs across la Manche like a stubborn mist on the sea's face.

But of late *the relationship* has been pretty dire.

Tory ministers openly mock Francois Hollande's high tax economic policies and mull using his image in anti-Labour election posters. The Tory chairman Grant Shapps says France's economy has been "run into the sand".

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-25975394>

Expressions like *tension*, and *the relationship*, typical for the domain of people’s relationships are used to refer to diplomatic relations between countries.

At cross purposes A disagreement caused by misunderstanding can expressed with the phrase *at cross purposes*, as in the following headline:

Brexit: Britain and Ireland talk *at cross purposes* on the border

<https://www.ft.com/content/3beaa8cc-d366-11e7-a303-9060cb1e5f44>

- ***Break up***

A really big disagreement is presented as an end of relationship. In the next excerpt, France and Germany are presented as romantic partners who are putting an end on their relationship due to lack of agreement, ‘intractable problem’ and ‘fundamental differences’. The expression *break up* is used to an end of diplomatic relations, or end of cooperation:

Are France and Germany Breaking Up?

Paris and Berlin *can't agree* on how to lead Europe forward.

This latest deal aside, France and Germany, both founding powers of the European Union and its most powerful members, have been *growing increasingly at odds*. The *discord* is driven in part by *differences* over concrete policy proposals. But the bigger, *intractable problem* is a *fundamental difference* in their visions for Europe. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/25/opinion/macron-merkel.html>

- **Clash**

Another strong way of expressing disagreement is using the verb *clash*:

France and Germany *clash* over future EU leadership

(<https://www.ft.com/content/a93e2416-8063-11e9-9935-ad75bb96c849>)

3. CONCLUSION

Member states are presented as people who quarrel and disagree over issues related to international relations or policies. Along with that metaphor, a place for the institution metonymy is used. It is found in two variants: the country for the institution and the capital for the institution. Expressions used to present disagreement between countries include “disagree”, “argue”, “conflict” to “fight”, “split up” and “break up”.

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