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**LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP ACROSS BORDERS**

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**Abstract:** Proper names occupy a significant part of the news space. Names of countries, cities, international unions are found in great frequency in media texts, as they play a key role in the construction of news. In media reality, countries fight, oppose each other, ally, threaten and warn one another, then unite again, often one country dedicatedly helps and saves another country ‘in need’, trying to protect it from a supposed enemy.

Lakoff’s STATE AS PERSON metaphor and Musolff’s Family scenario are used in articles on international affairs. International relations are represented as personal relationships and a certain line of policy is represented as a type of behaviour. Countries who maintain a stable diplomacy are represented as people with good relationships which vary from ‘friendship’, ‘romance’ and ‘affair’ to ‘marriage’. Problems in diplomacy are viewed as an ‘end of a relationship’, ‘quarrel’, or ‘divorce’

Countries which maintain good political relations between one another are presented as friends and lovers, with variations in those categories. Being friends with someone is equal to maintaining stable diplomatic relations.

The idea of friendship can be expressed even stronger – with the help of the “best friends” metaphor. If becoming friends with a country means establishing and continuing diplomatic relations with that country, to become someone’s best friend means reinforcing already existing relations

Countries are sometimes presented as friends with benefits and said to have a “special relationship”. The use of a notion from the domain of FAMILY (fraternal association) is also a way to stress the importance and strength of the relations between two countries.

Depending on the degree of stability of counties’ relations, the kind of friendship can vary. As a result, countries can be “friends”, “best friends”, or “friends with benefits”.

Relations between nations are often compared to a romantic relationship with its stages – wooing, flirting, love affair, marriage and divorce. When a country tries to establish diplomatic relations with another country, this is described as FLIRT, or WOOING. When those relations become stable, they are presented as a LOVE AFFAIR or a ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP.

Countries that have a long-standing economic and political relations are presented as marriage partners. The topic of international relations is mapped on the topic of family relations. Diplomatic problems are presented as family problems: misunderstanding, frustration, indifference, rejection, hostility. A marriage that has become cohabitation is used to stand for the decline in the diplomatic relations between the two countries. When a country totally ends diplomatic relations with another country or leaves an organization, this is presented as divorce.

**Keywords:** names, metaphor, family scenario.

## 1. INRODUCTION

Place names are presented as persons interacting with each other, building up relationships of friendship, love, rivalry or hostility. In such texts the use of names is metaphorical. The way relationships between counties are represented in the media is analyzed by means of Lakoff’s STATE AS PERSON metaphor (1990), Lakoff and Johnson’s idea of personification (2003) and Musolff’s scenarios (2006, 2009). Lakoff and Johnson argue that the major metaphor that dominates thought about foreign policy is that the state is a person. In Lakoff’s view, a state is conceptualized as a person, “engaging in social relations within a world community” (Lakoff 1990).

Musolff 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) and this is “characterized by the dominance of a few traditional, gender-coded stereotypes of family roles” (Musolff 2009: 1). He has observed three main scenarios: parent-child, married life and love-relationships between single countries and the EU (Musolff 2009).

States are represented as persons, having emotions, interacting with each other, having different kind of relationships, and (mis)behaving in a certain way. International relations are represented as personal relationships and a certain line of policy is represented as a type of behaviour. Countries who maintain a stable diplomacy are represented as people with good relationships. The kind of relationships they have can also vary: they are seen as allies, friends, lovers, or brothers. Unsuccessful diplomacy is viewed as an end of a relationship, quarrel, or even divorce.

## 2. FRIENDSHIP

Countries which maintain good political relations between one another are presented as friends and lovers, with variations in those categories. Being friends with someone is equal to maintaining stable diplomatic relations. In the following excerpt, *UK friends* stands for countries which have good diplomatic relations with the UK. UK's exit is metaphorically represented as abandonment of its friends and "friends" are the other member countries:

**UK will not abandon EU friends**, says Boris Johnson

The **UK's** exit from the EU does not mean it will be leaving Europe or "**abandoning**" its friends, the new foreign secretary has said in Brussels.

Making his debut on the international stage, Boris Johnson said the EU needed a "co-ordinated response" to terrorism in the light of the recent Nice attack.

He also said he wanted to "see restraint and moderation on all sides" in Turkey following the attempted coup.

Mr Johnson was meeting **fellow** EU foreign ministers for talks.

They discussed the Nice attack and the abortive coup in Turkey, but stressed there would be no formal discussions about Britain's EU exit.

(BBC, 18/07/2016, [www.bbc.com](http://www.bbc.com))

The idea of friendship can be expressed even stronger – with the help of the "best friends" metaphor. If becoming friends with a country means establishing and continuing diplomatic relations with that country, to become someone's best friend means reinforcing already existing relations. As it is evident in the next excerpt, "best friend" stands for "biggest trade partner". The names of the country and the names of their capitals form metonymic chains and are used interchangeably, as a result:

*Britain = China's best friend = Beijing's best friend.*

The following example supports the idea of metaphor-metonymy interaction:

**Britain** has made 'visionary' choice **to become China's best friend**, says Xi

On the eve of his first state visit to the UK, the Chinese president speaks in glowing terms about the prospect of **closer ties between London and Beijing**

Chinese president Xi Jinping praised Britain's "visionary and strategic choice" to become **Beijing's best friend** in the west as he prepared to jet off on his first state visit to the UK, taking with him billions of pounds of planned investment.

The trip, Xi's first to Britain in more than two decades, has been hailed by British and Chinese officials as the start of a "golden era" of relations which the Treasury hopes will make China **Britain's second biggest trade partner** within 10 years. (<https://www.theguardian.com>)

Countries are sometimes presented as friends with benefits and said to have a "special relationship", as is the case with Great Britain and the United States in the next excerpt. The use of a notion from the domain of FAMILY (fraternal association) is also a way to stress the importance and strength of the relations between the two countries:

**Friends with Benefits: A History of the Relationship Between Great Britain and the United States**

Winston Churchill called the alliance between the **United States and Great Britain** a "**special relationship**." In his 1946 "Iron Curtain" speech in Fulton, Mo., he said that the peace of the postwar world would depend on "**the fraternal association** of the English-speaking peoples... a **special relationship between** the British Commonwealth and Empire and the United States." The empire is gone, and the commonwealth is a shadow. But American and British leaders since Churchill have (mostly) embraced his vision... But **the special relationship** – which is actually 50 years older than Winston Churchill's Fulton speech – has lasted, despite occasional differences, because the two countries share **common interests** and roots... ([www.historynet.com](http://www.historynet.com))

Depending on the degree of stability of countries' relations, the kind of friendship can vary. As a result, countries can be "friends", "best friends", or "friends with benefits".

## 3. ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP

Relations between nations are compared to a romantic relationship with its stages – wooing, flirting, love affair, marriage and divorce. When a country tries to establish diplomatic relations with another country, this is described as FLIRT, or WOOING. When those relations become stable, they are presented as a LOVE AFFAIR or a ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP. When relations between countries are so stable that they are both part of a bigger

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organization, this is represented with the MARRIAGE and FAMILY scenario. When a country totally ends diplomatic relations with another country or leaves an organization, this is presented as divorce. Thus, in the following excerpt, the attempt of France to attract business enterprises to its territory is presented as wooing:

**From Paris with Love: France Woos U.K.** Business Post Brexit Four thousand British executives have received a **love letter** from Paris.

The letter, written by the head of the **Paris regional government** to officials of companies of all sizes a day after the U.K. voted to leave the European Union on June 23, extols the business advantages of the French capital. Listing everything from location and infrastructure to a well-trained workforce and world-class services, it makes a case for them to move operations and jobs to the region. ([www.bloomberg.com/](http://www.bloomberg.com/))

Ideas from the domain of Romance are corresponding to ideas from the domain of business:

France woos UK business = Paris regional government tries to persuade British business to make investments in France

Love letter = business proposal

Countries that have a long-standing economic and political relations are presented as marriage partners. The topic of international relations is mapped on the topic of family relations. Diplomatic problems are presented as family problems: misunderstanding, frustration, indifference, rejection, hostility. A marriage that has become cohabitation is used to stand for the decline in the diplomatic relations between the two countries. In this respect, the following example comes to prove this statement:

**France and Germany** must rebuild their **relationship**, for the good of **Europe**

...Never has it been so important for the nations of the European Union to be united. But never has the European project been more endangered by **indifference, hostility** and even open **rejection**.

...So we are left, as always, with the **Franco-German partnership**. However, the traditional idea of the “Franco-German motor essential to the advancement of Europe” is losing credibility...

...Let’s be clear: the Franco-German relationship has never been a **love affair**. With the exception of the periods in office of Helmut Schmidt and Valéry Giscard d’Estaing or Helmut Kohl and François Mitterrand, happy times were always shortlived, with ulterior motives, numerous **frustrations** and **misunderstandings** ever present. **France still hasn’t digested Germany’s reunification**, and Germany has always distrusted the patronising volatility of the grande nation. Beyond official statements, what was always a **marriage** of convenience has now become a **cohabitation** stamped with distrust. ([www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com), 22/04/2014)

The idea of France and Germany as the most important “couple” in the European Union is expressed in the next excerpt from The Guardian:

‘France and Germany must repair their relationship’ (The Guardian, 22/04/2014)

‘Repair a relationship’ and ‘rebuild a relationship’ are used to mean to stabilize diplomatic relations. *Relationship* is used for already established diplomatic relations, while *love affair* stands for relations that are recently created. When a third country intrudes in France and Germany’s relationship, it is said to have a ‘love affair’ with one of the official ‘partners’, as it is presented in excerpt [179.] from The American Interest:

**Russia’s Love Affair with Germany** ([www.the-american-interest.com](http://www.the-american-interest.com))

In the next excerpt the strength of the love affair is stressed by using a name-based neologism formed by the name of the two countries:

**Germerica: the German Love Affair with America**

What **tyed** Germany and the United States **together** for over two centuries?

“America, you have it better than our continent, the old one.”

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s famous comment a quarter of a millennium ago bears testimony to the remarkable German-American **love affair** that has endured into the 21st century, despite two world wars. ([www.theglobalist.com](http://www.theglobalist.com))

Romantic relationships are possible between Europe as a whole and a country that is, or at least until recently was, part of it. The following excerpt, accompanied by a photograph of a person hugging a statue is an example of that metaphor:

**Britain’s love affair with Europe:**

What do Jarvis Cocker and a statue of Virginia Woolf have in common?

Answer: They have both just been hugged by a European citizen who is not British.

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The Hug a Brit (aka Please, Don't Go UK!) campaign is asking European citizens in the UK and around the world to find a Brit, given him or her a hug, photograph the hug and post it on Facebook.

The idea is to love-bomb the Brits into staying in Europe by showing them how much **Europe loves the Brits** and wants to keep **British people in the European family**.

The campaign has caught on – hundreds of EU citizens are hugging their British friends not just to express their **affection and appreciation for Britain** but also to say something very practical. (<https://neweuropeans.net>, 04/06/2016)

The article was published after the Brexit referendum. In the above article, the FAMILY scenario is used. Britain is viewed as a person who is part of a family and *European family* stands for the EU and all the countries that are part of it. The decision to leave the European Union is viewed as a family member who leaves his/her family (“Don't Go UK!”). The idea of leaving and separation is

#### 4. DIVORCE

The idea of STATE IS A PERSON and STATE IS A PART OF FAMILY is further developed with the metaphor an EXIT IS A DIVORCE. After Britain voted to leave the European Union, the media started calling that “a divorce”. In the following excerpt from The Financial Times Britain is presented as a person who is getting a divorce after a long marriage:

What a **British divorce from the EU** would look like

How any break-up is carried out will affect Britain for generations

Just like the end of a **long and fraught marriage**, before **the divorce comes the tricky separation**.

After Britain's vote to leave the EU, the closing scenes of the 40-year **partnership** could probably see the UK prime minister sitting in an office, waiting for answers in the dead of night. ([www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com))

Apart from the word *divorce*, other phrases from the domain appeared in the media regarding Brexit: *divorce settlement*, *divorce lawyers*. The political process of leaving the European Union is presented as a divorce process with a “battle” between the suitor and defendant as in the next example:

Give us wine, art and property!: Britain's **Brexit divorce lawyers** will demand a share of the EU's vast assets – including Margaret Thatcher's old Tory party HQ and its 42,000-bottle wine cellar

**UK** expected to battle for share of EU assets in Brexit **divorce settlement**

Among the goods targeted are share of Brussels' wine and art collection

Government also expected to go after former Tory Party HQ in London

Britain will fight for a share of the EU's assets as Government **lawyers prepare to battle with Brussels** over Brexit. ([www.dailymail.co.uk](http://www.dailymail.co.uk))

The divorce scenario is developed by adding more colloquial expressions: *divorce bill*, *divorce reckoning*, as in the following excerpt from The Financial Times:

**UK** faces **Brexit divorce bill** of up to €20bn

Britain is **facing a divorce bill** from the EU for as much as €20bn, according to a Financial Times analysis that shows the bloc's shared budget is emerging as one of the biggest political obstacles to a Brexit deal.

More than €300bn of shared payment liabilities will need to be settled in the **divorce reckoning**, according to EU accounts. It is a legacy of joint financial obligations stretching back decades – from pension pledges and multi-annual contracts to commitments to fund infrastructure projects – that **Brussels will insist** the UK must honour. (<https://www.ft.com/content/3c1eb988-9081-11e6-a72e-b428cb934b78>)

What was noticed is that *Brussels*, *Europe* and *the EU* are used interchangeably in the divorce scenario. In the excerpt from the Daily Mail the phrase is “to speed up ‘divorce’ **from Brussels** after Brexit”, while the article from The Financial Times mentions “a British divorce **from the EU**”.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

International relations in the media are presented as relationships between people. Countries are represented as people participating in social interactions. Countries who maintain a stable diplomacy are represented as people with good relationships which vary from ‘friendship’, ‘romance’ and ‘affair’ to ‘marriage’. The use of a notion from the domain of FAMILY (fraternal association) can be viewed as a way to stress the importance and strength of the relations between two or more countries. Diplomatic problems are presented as family problems: misunderstanding, frustration, indifference, rejection, hostility and even as an ‘end of a relationship’, ‘quarrel’, or ‘divorce’.

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