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A DISCOURSE APPROACH TO CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS: A CORPUS-BASED ANALYSIS OF SPORTS DISCOURSE IN CROATIAN

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Abstract

This paper deals with the analysis of sports discourse in Croatian through the theoretical framework offered by conceptual metaphor theory. Within this framework, certain metaphorical expressions found in sports discourse are analyzed as expressions of two conceptual metaphors: *SPORT IS WAR* and *SPORT IS FORCE*. The analysis of these metaphorical expressions combines the methodology of cognitive linguistics with corpus linguistics, resulting in the proposal of a new method for discourse analysis in general. In our research, we introduce the notion of the specialized digitized corpus as a basis for further quantitative and qualitative research. On the basis of the specialized digitized corpus created for the purposes of this research, it is shown how the formation of sports discourse is dependent on three categories of metaphorical expressions relative to the degree of their conventionalization within sports discourse: (a) conventionalized, (b) semi-conventionalized, and (c) innovative metaphorical expressions. Each of these categories is analyzed according to their frequency and various aspects of meaning that it entails. Through the introduction of the semi-conventionalized metaphorical expression category, we aim to examine the gradable line between language creativity and conventionality as it is formed within the discourse of sports.

1. Introduction

Discourse as a complex structure of an utterance is a site where social forms of organization engage with systems of signs in the production of texts, thus reproducing or

changing the sets of meanings and values which make up a culture (Hodge, Cress 1988). From today's perspective discourse analysis is undoubtedly regarded as a method which provides insight into structures of knowledge and the speaker's understanding of the world. On the other hand, discourse not only reflects the speaker's knowledge of the world, but also actively builds the person's identity in his or her cultural environment. Discourses are not about objects; they constitute them (Foucault 1972). It is through discourse that meanings, subjects, and subjectivities are formed (Wright 2000).

Discourse analysis distinguishes between two types of context, as suggested by Malinowski (1923), who separated the *context of situation* from the *context of culture*. The context of situation refers to the structure of the immediate situation in which an utterance takes place and which a speaker must be familiar with in order to understand a particular instance of language properly. Context of culture, on the other hand, represents the broader structure of a culture a speaker must know in order to understand what is said or written (cf. Lee, Poyton 2000).

In view of these two definitions, it is obvious that every study of a discourse must include an analysis of the context of situation as well as an analysis of the context of culture. The former is necessary in determining the immediate content of a message that the hearer can decode from an utterance. The latter is essential because every specific discourse is situated within a cultural context, and thus a speaker must decode not only the immediate content of a message but also the structures of a specific context of culture. It is thus necessary to regard every discourse as a complex structure of knowledge shared by the speakers of a specific culture.

Although the importance of sports can be seen on many levels of everyday life, we are mostly interested in the linguistic aspects of sports, specifically the discourse practices that surround it. Papers dealing with linguistic phenomena in sports discourse view sport mostly as a source domain used to understand other domains of human activities, such as the media and politics (cf. Blain, Boyle, O'Donnell 1993; Bairner 2001; Callies 2011). They also view sport as a domain that actively shapes the cultural identity of a speech community. Callies (2011), for instance, analyzes the degree to which various metaphors used in American popular sports (such as baseball) form various aspects of American culture and identity on the basis of the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A GAME.

This paper has a somewhat different way of approaching the subject of metaphors related to the sports domain. We will not regard sports as a source domain but conversely as a target domain. Our goal is thus to analyze the basic domains that form our understanding of sports as a part of our culture. If we go back to Malinowski's definition of the context of culture, it becomes clear that an analysis of sports discourse will enable us to extrapolate important elements of the context of culture a certain discourse is related to. Furthermore, since the context of culture is essentially a complex structure of knowledge, an analysis of sports discourse will enable us to describe conventional knowledge about sports that we all share as members of a specific culture.

We also intend to show how these parts of background knowledge participate in the formation of sports discourse. Furthermore, we believe that a careful examination

of metaphorical expressions in sports discourse will contribute to the study of conventionalized and innovative metaphors as gradable categories and their mutual interaction within a discourse. We assume that some of our conclusions might be relevant for the broader Western context of culture being background knowledge for sports discourse shared by different but related speech communities.

The discourse approach to conceptual metaphors we propose is based on building and analyzing a *specialized digitized corpus* (henceforth SDC) of texts exclusively related to the sports domain.

Since the main goal of the proposed analysis is to define how metaphors constitute knowledge about sports in Croatian culture and how they are used to convey this knowledge in sports discourse, the SDC offers many benefits for this kind of research, which will be pointed to in the next sections.

2. Conceptual metaphors, discourse and culture

Since the publication of Lakoff and Johnson's *Metaphors we live by* (1980), conceptual metaphors have been one of the main topics in cognitive linguistics. They have been studied from various perspectives that include philosophical, cross-linguistic, grammatical, corpus, cognitive, and psycholinguistic approaches (e.g. Lakoff, Johnson 1980; Langacker 1987; Lakoff, Turner 1989; Žic Fuchs 1992; Mahon 1999; Steen 1999; Kövecses 2000; Johnson, Lakoff 2002; Kövecses, Palmer, Dirven 2003; Charteris-Black 2004; Deignan 2005; Steen 2007; Stanojević 2013). Many works in cognitive linguistics deal with the way in which conceptual metaphors reflect knowledge and reveal a view of the world as constructed by a specific culture. An analysis of conceptual metaphors contributes to the understanding of the culture itself (e.g. Lakoff 1987; Sweetser 1990; Kövecses 2005).

The initial thesis of this paper is that conceptual metaphors can be viewed as knowledge structures that are integral to a culture. This means that defining metaphors within a discourse presupposes a reconstruction of conventional knowledge characteristic of a certain speech community. Methodologically, this means that an analysis of metaphors in the discourse provides an insight into the metaphorical structures of the context of culture.

Therefore, we assume that the analysis of metaphors in sports discourse enables a reconstruction of metaphorically based knowledge of sports in the Croatian speech community.

Parallel to this assumption is another aspect of metaphorical discourse formation. The thesis that every context of culture is metaphorically structured is similar to Lakoff's thesis that speakers metaphorically understand and structure every situation (Lakoff 1990). According to Lakoff (1990), metaphorical structuring of situation consists of two parts. The first part is made up of a relatively stable set of metaphors that determine our view of a situation, while the second part is actually our ability to apply these metaphors when communicating about that situation. Furthermore, the speaker is able to linguistically form these metaphors in different

ways. It is thus necessary to find and analyze different expressions that function in a discourse as different facets of the same conceptual metaphor. Lakoff's thesis can be incorporated into our analysis of metaphors in sports discourse as well as any other type of discourse. It relates to the fact that discourse reflects the way we view a specific situation. Conversely, the principles of the metaphorical understanding of a situation build and shape the discourse itself.

In our research we will discuss two conceptual metaphors which in different ways shape the sports discourse in Croatian. These are *SPORT IS WAR* and *SPORT IS FORCE*.¹ Defining these two conceptual metaphors as very relevant for the sports discourse in Croatian was a result of a careful examination of a specialized digitized corpus of sports texts and the observation of lexical units which systematically draw their meaning from the same source domains. In English, for instance, lexemes such as *offense*, *defense* and *shooter* also show systematic relations with the notion of conflict (i.e. war), each in their own way (through the notions of "attack", "defense" and "attacker", respectively). Also, in expressions such as

- (a) Ljubo srušio Nadala (SDC, www.vecernji.hr)
'Ljubo knocked down Nadal' (tennis)

the notion of "force" is used to denote the victory of one tennis player over the other. Many verbs used in these context, such as *potopiti* 'to sink', *pomesti* 'to sweep up', *otpuhati* 'to blow away' refer to some kind of animate or inanimate agency (the sea, a person handling a broom and the wind, respectively) exerting force over another entity. Put together they point out that metaphorical links are not only confined to individual lexemes, but that their metaphorical use in the sports discourse relies on a wider background conceptual structure that links the two domains and that structure, i.e. a conceptual metaphor. This is the reason we can find many different lexical units related to the same source domain. We must point out that although it is possible to analyze various scenarios related to different sports, our goal was to establish broad conclusions about the structure of the domain of sports in Croatian within the limits of one paper, and for this reason we discuss the sports domain as a whole, and put forth the two conceptual metaphors as an important part of that whole.

It is also important to point out that the analysis of particular lexical units as metaphorical within our corpus was made by cross-referencing existing Croatian dictionaries.² For instance, the lexeme *napad* 'attack; offense' has the following senses listed in Anić (1996): (a) an act of aggression with the intent of causing physical or psychological harm; (b) a short physical or psychological disturbance (e.g. *napad kašlja* 'a cough attack') and (c) a sports action with the goal of achieving a score. The lexicographic data therefore points to its metaphorical meaning in the domain of sports.

¹ Based on the analysis of metaphorical instantiation in sports discourse, it has become evident that the largest number of examples belong to these two conceptual metaphors. Some methodological details will be given in the sections that follow.

² Anić (1996) and Šonje (2000).

Therefore, we intend to (a) analyze expressions that are related to either of the two conceptual metaphors within sports discourse, (b) point out how sports discourse is in large part shaped on a different degree of inclusion and linguistic instantiation of these metaphors, and, consequently, (c) to give a classification of metaphorical expressions based on different qualitative and quantitative criteria.³

3. Discourse analysis and corpora

In her book *Metaphor and corpus linguistics* (2005), Deignan points to differences between the cognitive and discourse approaches to metaphor research,⁴ stressing the existence of two different discourse approaches to metaphor research. The cognitive approach analyzes speech or writing of a particular text-type, generally with the agenda of showing how metaphors are used to present a particular message or ideology. The discourse approach, represented by a smaller group, looks at how speakers use metaphor to develop shared understanding as a spoken discourse unfolds. What the two approaches share is the close analysis of text as a product.

The discourse approach to metaphor research that we propose is somewhat different from those described by Deignan (2005).⁵ In a way, it has some common features with the cognitive approach, since the main intention of the proposed discourse analysis is to define how metaphors are used in line with knowledge about a certain human activity and how they are used to convey this knowledge through discourse communicating this specific activity. However, methodologically it proposes some new procedures for discourse analysis and for metaphor research as related to discourse analysis.

³ One could analyze both the source and the target domain in detail but we decided to delimit our research in two ways: (a) give an overview of the sports domain in general, not particular sports, e.g. tennis vs football etc. and (b) examine texts that describe the competition aspect of sports, i.e. the game itself, and not for instance the politics of sports (such as player transfers and the like).

⁴ Deignan (2005: 123) points to two basic differences between the discourse and the cognitive approach to metaphor research. First, the discourse approach tends to take Conceptual Metaphor Theory as a starting point and does not attempt to test the theory itself. The main intention of this approach is to see how speakers create meaning using metaphor as a tool. Second, the discourse approach is based on naturally occurring texts and therefore does not ask speakers for any metalinguistic interpretation of their own utterances. Speakers are not supposed to invent sentences not produced in natural linguistic and extralinguistic circumstances.

⁵ Cameron and Deignan (2003) and Charteris-Black (2004) conducted their research on metaphors on small corpora that were either hand-sorted corpora or a sample gathered from a larger corpus. Both corpus approaches to metaphors were based on searching data by hand. It has to be pointed out that Cameron and Deignan's small corpus consists of 28,285 words and that it consists of transcribed talk in a primary school in the UK. The large corpus consists of the 9-million-word collection of spoken data from the section of the Bank of English. Cameron and Deignan's corpora were not specialized corpora, whereas Charteris-Black's corpus was topically related to 9/11 and especially to the metaphorical use of the word *crusade*.

3.1. Building a specialized digitalized corpus for discourse analysis purposes

The main benefits of building an SDC for discourse analysis purposes is the possibility for a researcher to do the following:

1. constitute a corpus based on texts that are of special interest to his or her research. Since a specialized corpus is a corpus of domain-related texts, it can give us a coherent overview of the sports discourse as a whole because it serves as a representative sample of the entire discourse;
2. define the extent as well as the structure of the corpus.⁶ It provides insight into a considerable amount of most recent sports-related texts that cannot be obtained any other way, except for manually searching articles on the Web;⁷
3. conduct a statistical analysis of a certain linguistic phenomenon within a discourse. An SDC is more easily manageable in terms of the statistical analysis of frequencies, especially with respect to the analysis of metaphorical expressions.

Furthermore, this methodology significantly differs from the methodology proposed by Charteris-Black (2004), who restricts a general corpus for discourse analysis purposes to texts related to a certain domain.⁸ A convenient aspect of this methodology is that a general corpus serves as a control corpus. However, his findings on metaphorical expressions are based on a manually conducted collection of metaphors from several small corpora extracted from a general corpus. An SDC is built by a researcher interested in texts related to a certain domain and collected from the Web. However, a main disadvantage of such a corpus would be the necessity that texts are available on the Internet, i.e. that they are digitally processed.

In building our SDC, we used the BootCat (short for Bootstrapping Corpora and Terms from the Web) tool engine to gather and sample texts from the Internet. BootCat is a recently published software that collects various texts from the Internet and builds a corpus through a set of instructions provided by the researcher (for a detailed description, see <http://bootcat.ssmil.unibo.it>). These instructions can be modified according to the type of corpus a researcher is interested in. In our case, we wanted to get the most recent synchronic overview of sports discourse. Also, we wanted to further restrict our search only to highly relevant sports related texts, so we gathered articles from newspaper portals of *Jutarnji list*, *Večernji list* and *Sportske novosti*.⁹ This means that we were interested primarily in texts describing

⁶ Building specialized corpora leaves it up to researchers to define how large the corpus should be and what kind of texts it should consist of.

⁷ The Croatian National Corpus ver. 2.0, a large, 100-million-word general corpus, has a limited overview of sports-related texts, none of which are more recent than 2005.

⁸ Methodologically, it is not clear enough whether the extracted texts form separately manageable small corpora. From a corpus linguistic point of view, this should be an important methodological question. Since there are no statistical data (even the size of the small corpora is not mentioned) we assume that these were not separately manageable small corpora.

⁹ We wanted to collect texts that are explicitly part of public communication about sports. We therefore decided not to include texts from forums and blogs, though these could be added in further analysis. Judging by the number of readers and their overall popularity, these are the most influential newspapers and magazines in Croatia.

sports competitions, and not peripheral topics such as transfers of football players in order to delimit our research. The corpus contains 1,195,883 tokens. From a corpus linguistics point of view, this is considered a small corpus sufficient and relevant (Sinclair 2001) for this type of research. It can also be expanded by adding new texts if the need arises.

In this respect our methodology is more in line with the research conducted by Skorczynska and Deignan (2006) on metaphors in the economical domain. Skorczynska and Deignan (2006) compiled their texts from two journals dealing with economical topics, one in a scientific and the other a popular way, in order to compare the two periodicals and draw conclusions on their functions in the economical discourse. However, there are a few differences between our approach and the one made by Skorczynska and Deignan. Whereas the comparison made by Skorczynska and Deignan is made between two already specialized corpora our comparison will be based between the SDC and a general corpus of Croatian. Also, our work results in formulating two salient conceptual metaphors in the sports discourse and their comparison in terms of the degree of conventionality, whereas Skorczynska and Deignan focus more on the metaphor vehicles stemming from various domains without positing conceptual metaphors in terms of X IS Y (e.g. SPORT IS WAR). Our specialized digitized corpus is furthermore compiled and processed semi-automatically from a variety of texts gathered from general newsportals, not specialized sport periodicals.

4. Classification of metaphors

Implementation of a corpus-based analysis of sports discourse is especially useful for examining and studying metaphorical linguistic expressions as instantiations of the conceptual metaphors SPORT IS WAR and SPORT IS FORCE. As we have already pointed out, these two conceptual metaphors are highly representative in the SDC via diverse linguistic instantiations, but with different frequencies, which further confirms our initial thesis of their different salience and relevance not only in sports discourse but in construing knowledge about sports as part of the context of culture as well.

This brings us to another important aspect of this study. Since we stressed that our discourse approach to metaphor research is similar to that of scholars who are interested in use of metaphors in communicational purposes as conveying knowledge structure about something in the world, an SDC can provide some interesting statistically supported evidence about the linguistic instantiations of metaphors. An overview of the SDC revealed that conceptual metaphors SPORT IS WAR and SPORT IS FORCE participate on different levels and with differing frequency based on their linguistic instantiations in sports discourse.¹⁰ With respect to their linguistic

¹⁰ According to Kövecses (2000), source domains of WAR and FORCE are separate but closely related conceptual domains. This relation can be illustrated by words such as *demolition* and

instantiation, these two conceptual metaphors are not conventionalized to the same degree. Based on these observations, we propose three different levels of their instantiations which determine the linguistic actualization of any conceptual metaphor, not just of the ones studied in this paper. These are (a) *conventionalized metaphors*, (b) *semi-conventionalized metaphors*, and (c) *innovative metaphors*.

Authors usually talk about the gradability or the continuum between conventionalized and innovative metaphors because the degree of conventionalization can be determined on various levels (e.g. Žic Fuchs 1992; Deignan 2005; Kövecses 2002; Stanojević 2013).¹¹ The proposed classification of conventionalized metaphors in this paper differs in part from other classifications (cf. Deignan 2005). It is our opinion that metaphor research based on searching an SDC could provide some new evidence in the principles by which metaphors structure (sports) discourse. In the following sections we will examine the criteria of our classification in more detail. We believe that with this kind of classification of metaphors we will be able to (a) demonstrate the various degrees of their inclusion in sports discourse and (b) contribute to a more systematic reconstruction of the context of culture of sports discourse.

Therefore, we state that the intermediate category of semi-conventionalized metaphors is necessary for explaining more systematically the way conceptual metaphors participate as background knowledge in the structuring of (sports) discourse.

4.1. Criteria for the classification of metaphors

Our classification is based on several quantitative as well as qualitative criteria.¹² These are (a) *frequency of use*, (b) *affective markedness*, and (c) *individual use*. Table 1. shows the way these criteria participate in the classification of metaphors in the sports discourse.

a) Frequency

Frequency of use is the most typical quantitative feature of an analyzed expression and the only one of the three criteria that is related to quantitative analysis. The other two criteria are related to the semantic features of the analyzed expression. Since our corpus

destruction, whose meanings are closely tied to both a WAR scenario and a scenario of exerting FORCE. Such is the example of *srušiti* 'destroy, tear down', e.g. *u ratu su srušeni mnogi spomenici* 'many monuments were destroyed in the war'. Thus the lexical (sub)system related to the two source domains of WAR and FORCE indeed serves as a window into the structure of the underlying system of metaphors (see also Kövecses 1986). On the other hand, in our research we also present arguments that support the division of the two conceptual metaphors SPORT IS WAR and SPORT IS FORCE.

¹¹ It is worth stressing that Žic Fuchs' criteria for the classification of metaphors as conventionalized and innovative are strictly qualitative, whereas Deignan's are a combination of qualitative and quantitative criteria although it seems she considers them as separate entities and not as a group.

¹² Charteris-Black (2004) and Deignan (2005) point out that the corpus approach to metaphor research provides us with a quantitative and qualitative analysis of linguistic data. Quantitative analysis mostly deals with the frequency of an expression, and qualitative analysis deals with its meaning.

	Conventionalized metaphors	Semi-conventionalized metaphors	Innovative metaphors
Frequency	more than 100 tokens	between 100 and 10 tokens	less than 10 tokens
Affective markedness	-	+	+
Individual use	-	-	+

Table 1. The classification of metaphorical expressions according to the presence of several criteria. Frequency criteria is based on a one million token corpus.

is an SDC, the meaning issue of the expression does not concern the relation between literal and metaphorical meaning since the analyzed expressions appearing in this SDC are exclusively metaphorical. For example, in sports discourse, the word *napad* ‘offense; lit. attack’ cannot appear in its literal meaning, but exclusively metaphorically. This is because the SDC was manually checked after compiling to exclude examples such as, for example, fights between football hooligans or players on the field, leaving only the instances of “attacks” that refer to the game strategy. Therefore, our qualitative criteria are related to the function certain expressions have in construing a discourse, their additional semantic features, and individual and creative usage.

In view of our own classification, the research presented by Deignan (2005) was of special interest to us. Deignan’s corpus research was based on the corpus analysis of a general corpus of English (Bank of English). To demonstrate the frequency of metaphorical uses of a certain linguistic expression, she uses the *absolute frequency approach* (see Deignan 2005). This approach enables to determine the frequency of metaphorical uses of a certain expressions with respect to literal uses and to the total number of uses.¹³ However, frequency criteria are not equally essential for determining conventionalized metaphors and innovative metaphors. Thus, Deignan (2005: 40) determines innovative metaphors as those linguistic expressions where a particular metaphor is found occurring less than once in every thousand citations of the word form. On the contrary, frequency criteria are not relevant in determining conventional metaphors; i.e. it seems that every expression found more than once in every thousand citations of the word is a conventionalized metaphor. According to Deignan (2005), conventionalized metaphors are dependent on a literal sense and they tend to invoke at some level a literal counterpart.

¹³ In her research of the expression *in the running* Deignan (2005: 28–29) states that from a total number of 124 citations, 61 citations are metaphorically motivated. However, the number of metaphorical expressions could be considered larger with respect to the use of this expression in the sports discourse where this expression is often used in a more general metaphorical sense of competition.

It should be stressed that these data tell us nothing about the relevance of metaphorical expressions structuring the discourse.

If we look at Deignan's criteria as applied to the definitions of conventionalized and innovative metaphors, it is quite obvious how the two criteria (quantitative and qualitative) are used independently to define the two categories of metaphors. Consequently, they do not elaborate on the way innovative metaphors interact with more conventionalized ones or the way one can observe and study the process of conventionalization itself.¹⁴ We therefore decided to use mutually interacting criteria in our analysis of metaphorical expressions. In this sense, they have to be taken into consideration as a group, not separately. In this way, the degree of absence or presence of any of these three criteria is also indicative (a) of the values of the other two criteria and (b) of the degree of conventionalization characteristic of a metaphorical expression. As stated by Bybee and Hopper (2001), frequency is one of the factors that conditions functional change of a word or any linguistic element. Although their main focus is on grammaticalization, we think that frequency is inseparable from the changes that could affect a certain word, such as its function in a discourse or the (non)existence of certain semantic features.

For example, high frequency of use is indicative of the low affective markedness of the metaphorical expression simply because a phrase heard quite often in the same context does not have as strong an emotional impact on the hearer as does an expression heard once or only a few times. Thus high frequency is in contrast with the individual use of a word.

Whereas Deignan used absolute frequency as a criterion, we decided to use the *relative frequency approach* instead, with some references to the absolute frequency of the word when needed. Since relative frequency shows the number of times an expression appears in relation to the absolute number of tokens in a corpus, we believe that it enables us to better examine the relation between a metaphorical expression and a discourse in its entirety.¹⁵ High relative frequency of certain metaphorical expressions is indicative of conventionalized metaphors and their importance in constituting the sports discourse itself. Transitional stages with lower frequency are in the same way indicative of semi-conventionalized metaphors which have a lower impact in structuring a discourse but significantly higher than innovative metaphors. It is important to stress that metaphorical expressions with lower frequency are affectively more marked than those with a higher frequency status.

¹⁴ Deignan (2005: 40) stresses that all conventional linguistic metaphors must have been innovative at some point in history. Innovative language uses are related to individual creative *ad hoc* uses of a language in a certain communicational situation. From a diachronic semantics point of view, this is an important issue elaborated by cognitive linguists (Nerlich and Clarck 1988 and Györi 2002) as much as by structural linguists (Cosieriu 1973) or the prestructural linguist Sterne (1931). For more details see Raffaelli (2009).

¹⁵ It must be noted that such calculations are made much easier by the use of a specialized corpus where one works with a smaller set of tokens and where the expressions are expected to appear mainly in their metaphorical meaning pertaining to a single domain, in our case sport. It is much harder, as Deignan shows, to hand-pick various metaphorical meanings one by one from a general corpus. In other words, in a SDC related to the sports domain, we can hardly expect that a word such as *napad* 'attack; offense' and *obrana* 'defense' would be used in their literal meaning. Therefore, this methodology makes it much easier to define the "real" status of metaphorical expression in construing sports discourse.

Finally, in accordance with Deignan's definition, innovative metaphors appear rarely and thus their relative frequency is negligible, though also indicative of their category status.

Based on this observation and according to our analysis, a provisional frequency limit between conventionalized and semi-conventionalized metaphorical expressions is a frequency of 100 citations in the whole corpus of 1 195 883 tokens.¹⁶ The frequency limits we suggest are in a way different from those proposed by Deignan (2005). First, the criterion to determine innovative metaphors as those expressions which appear in less than one citation in every thousand citations of the word form would categorize all the metaphorical expressions in the SCD as innovative metaphors.¹⁷ This is also a matter of the small size of the SDC as compared to a general corpus. Based on Deignan's frequency limit, even the most frequent metaphorical expressions in the SDC should therefore be classified as peripheral members between innovative and conventionalized metaphorical expressions. Therefore, the frequency limits we propose are adjusted to the absolute frequencies of the analyzed metaphorical expressions in the SDC.

Since the main goal of the presented research is to determine to what degree expressions belonging to different conceptual metaphors participate in construing sports discourse in Croatian we propose the following frequency limits: (a) most of expressions that are categorized as conventionalized metaphors appears in more than 100 citations in the corpus,¹⁸ (b) expressions appearing in citations between 100 and 10 are categorized as semi-conventionalized, and (c) those expressions that appear in less than 10 citations in a 1-million-word corpus are categorized as innovative metaphors.

b) Affective markedness

The second criterion, affective markedness, is what Leech (1974) defines as affective meaning, the type of meaning which includes the speaker's attitudes and feelings towards the thing he or she is talking about. Affective meaning is often explicitly conveyed through the meaning of the words used. In discourse analysis, affective meaning, or affective markedness in our terminology, can be correlated with a larger degree of innovation of certain expressions in the discourse. The less frequent the expression is, the less it is conventionalized and more it is affective. This is the part of the discourse where variability and the speaker's creativity come into play. Relatively frequent expressions such as *razbiti* 'to demolish', *sломити* 'to break', and *zгazити* 'to stamp out' (an opponent) in the sense of *to defeat an opponent* all bring additional semantic features to the utterance, intensifying the meaning of *defeat* and adding certain emotional overtones to sports discourse. Affective markedness thus shows us that such a metaphorical expression brings some additional semantic information

¹⁶ For the clarity of presentation, we will henceforth refer to the corpus as a one-million token corpus.

¹⁷ Its absolute frequency in the SDC is 1,439 citations.

¹⁸ The nonmetaphorical word *utakmica* 'match' appears 4,430 times. These are the two most frequent expressions related to the sports domain and according to Deignan's frequency limits, hardly conventionalized.

into the discourse in contrast to those expressions that are categorized as conventionalized. Metaphorical expressions such as *razbiti* 'to demolish', *slomiti* 'to break', and *zgaziti* 'to stamp out', with the meaning of *to defeat an opponent*, are more affective than the expression *pobijediti* 'to win', which lacks any affective features and is highly schematic.¹⁹ Such metaphorical expressions are less frequently used than conventionalized metaphors. Therefore, they will be placed in the category of semi-conventionalized metaphors.

c) Individual use

The third criterion is individual use, which simply refers to the uniqueness of the expression the speaker uses, i.e. the speaker's creativity. It correlates well with the frequency criterion since expressions that could be defined as individual speaker's use have very low frequency (less than 10 citations in the one-million-word SDC), often highly affective and belong to the category of innovative metaphors. As we will demonstrate in the sections to follow, innovative metaphors in sports discourse exhibit some specific semantic and syntactic features that have to be pointed out.

As mentioned previously, the three criteria are interrelated and do not form absolute categories themselves. In other words, all three are also gradable in the sense that, for instance, semi-conventionalized metaphors have a greater degree of affective markedness and individual use than conventionalized metaphors, which have none or close to none. But also, semi-conventionalized metaphors also have a lower degree of affective markedness and individual use than innovative metaphors, which in turn have both as their distinguishing features.

As will be pointed out, the categorization of metaphorical expressions should be based on the interaction of all three criteria at the same time. Frequency as a quantitative criterion is relevant because it correlates significantly with some functional changes of words in a discourse and their semantic features. It should be regarded in interaction with the other two, qualitative criteria.

5. Three types of metaphorical expressions

In this section we turn to look at the types of metaphorical expressions based on their degree of conventionalization in sports discourse. As we have already stated, our classification differs from existing classifications because it introduces a new intermediate category between conventionalized and innovative metaphors, that of semi-conventionalized metaphors.

¹⁹ *pobijediti* 'to win' has two senses in Anić (1996): a) to overcome an opponent and b) to contain something or someone. Because it is highly schematic in its meaning we will use it as a reference point for the comparison of actual metaphorical extensions from the domain of WAR, but it will not be itself analyzed as a metaphorical expression.

5.1. Conventionalized metaphors

Conventionalized metaphors form the backbone of sports discourse. They are an essential part of the vocabulary used to talk about sports, and as such have very high citation frequencies (see Table 2).²⁰ If compared with the frequencies of semi-conventionalized expressions (see Tables 3 and 4, below) it is obvious that frequencies of conventionalized metaphors are significantly higher compared to those of semi-conventionalized metaphors. The two most frequent metaphorical expressions are *osvojiti* 'to seize' and *dvoboj* 'duel'. The expression *osvojiti* appears in 983 citations and *dvoboj* in 859 citations in the SDC.

Metaphorical expressions	No. of tokens	Relative frequency
<i>osvojiti</i> 'to seize; to win'	983	0.0825%
<i>dvoboj</i> 'duel'	859	0.0718%
<i>obrana</i> 'defense'	852	0.0717%
<i>napad</i> 'offense', lit. 'attack'	535	0.047%
<i>napadač</i> 'striker', lit. 'attacker'	525	0.044%
<i>strijelac</i> 'shooter'	506	0.0423%
<i>izboriti</i> lit. 'fight out'	482	0.0403%
<i>savladati / svladati</i> 'overcome'	442	0.0369%
<i>izbaciti</i> 'throw out'	125	0.0289%
<i>obraniti</i> 'to defend'	214	0.0178%
<i>zaustaviti</i> 'stop'	179	0.0149%
<i>veteran</i> 'veteran'	129	0.0107%

Table 2. Conventionalized metaphors in SDC

Although a scalar structure of the category of conventionalized metaphor is pertinent with respect to the frequency criterion, almost all of these conventionalized expressions also function as key-words of the sports discourse. What we mean by key-word function of certain metaphorical expressions will be explained in the next section.

5.2. Conventionalized metaphors as key-words of sports discourse

The relevance of conventionalized metaphors for sports discourse is also seen in the way they reveal important elements of the context of the culture of sports discourse.

²⁰ The only two expressions with significantly lower frequencies are *veteran* 'veteran' and *bunker* 'bunker, a style of defensive play'.

It is through this perspective that they can be viewed as key-words of sports discourse. What is meant here by key-words is as Matoré defines them: “lexicological units expressing a society... a person, a feeling, an idea which are alive insofar as society recognizes in them its ideal,” (Matoré 1953: 68). An example of this is the French term *bourgeois*, which according to Matoré (1953: 69) compiles the dominant cultural meanings of its historical period.

Many studies based on Matoré’s assumptions deal with diachronic research whose goal is to describe the dominant ideas of a certain historical period, an author’s work, or a specialized historical activity (Ullmann 1962: 252–253). From a synchronic perspective, key-words were the subject of research led by Wierzbicka (1997), who based her comparative cultural analysis on the discovery and analysis of culturally specific lexemes.

What both the diachronic and the synchronic approach have in common is the wide scope of phenomena they include in their investigations. They both focus on key-words that directly represent the society as a whole, extant in various discourse practices and contexts. On the other hand, they exclude key-words that shape a single discourse practice within a society. This way of approaching key-words is highly important because we consider key-words as elements that represent the way speakers view and understand a single activity which is the topic of a specific discourse. It was thus our goal to limit ourselves to those words that can be interpreted as key-words in sports discourse and which thus represent the core structure of the context of culture involved in Croatian speakers’ understanding of sports. These key-words are metaphorical instantiations of conceptual metaphors by which sports are mostly conceptualized.²¹

Such is the example of *izboriti finale* lit. ‘fight out the final’. Even in cases where this metaphorical expression can be substituted with another metaphorical expression based on another conceptual metaphor such as SPORT IS A JOURNEY, e.g. *izboriti finale* lit. ‘fight out the final’ vs *ući u finale* ‘enter the final’, the metaphorical expression which is the instantiation of the conceptual metaphor SPORT IS WAR is seen more frequently, having semantic features (such as endurance and supremacy over the opponent) that the other metaphorical expression, *ući u finale* ‘enter the final’, does not possess because it lacks the concept of ‘competition’ coded in the expression *izboriti finale* ‘fight out the final’.

Some other examples are expressions such as *osvojiti* ‘to seize’ (which occurs with objects such as *prvenstvo* ‘championship’, *zlatnu medalju* ‘gold medal’, *naslov prvaka* ‘title’), *izbaciti* ‘to throw out’ (*iz prvenstva* ‘from the championship’, *iz finala* ‘from the final’, *iz natjecanja* ‘from the competition’), *obraniti* ‘to defend’ (*naslov* ‘title’, *gol* ‘the goal’) and *strijelac* ‘the shooter’ (*pobjedničkog pogodka* ‘of the winning shot’), which also lexicalize some parts of sports competitions that are fundamental when communicating about the sport and cannot be expressed in some other way. It is impossible to refer to these events with any other lexical unit or expression, and as such, they are affectively completely neutral.

²¹ Charteris-Black (2004: 37).

Key-words are not marked for affective meaning and are not part of an individual usage. To say that someone is a *football veteran* (*nogometni veteran*), will bear no special unique meaning to the hearer and will be a common way to talk about the persons denoted by the expression. It is clear that both of these metaphorical expressions are taken from the domain of WAR, but through the process of conventionalization they have lost semantic features related to the source domain and formed new ones pertaining to the domain of sports. Thus, when we talk about Davor Šuker as a *football veteran*, we do not think of a possibly troubled, physically and psychologically scarred individual, but of an experienced retired sportsman with notable prior achievements in his profession. These features – experience, retirement, and earned appreciation – motivate the metaphorical meaning of the lexeme *veteran*.

By defining conventionalized metaphors as key-words of sports discourse, we point out the reciprocity of the context of culture and discourse as mediated through the key-words of the discourse. This means that by examining the expressions which are instantiations of the conceptual metaphors SPORT IS WAR and SPORT IS FORCE, we are (a) examining the dominant ways in which sports are understood and talked about in Croatian culture, i.e. (b) getting an insight into the background knowledge that is fundamental in shaping sports discourse in Croatian.

5.3. Semi-conventionalized metaphors

Semi-conventionalized metaphors are the intermediate and also the most unstable category of metaphors in sports discourse. Their frequency is significantly lower (less than 100 citations in the SDC) than that of conventionalized metaphors but still relevant to their presence in sports discourse (see Tables 3 and 4).

The relation between the conventionalized and semi-conventionalized metaphors can be viewed as highly indicative of the relation between the conceptual metaphors SPORT IS WAR and SPORT IS FORCE. As both categories are instantiated through relatively stable sets of lexemes, they are the ones which reveal most about the metaphorical structures of the context of culture as background knowledge of the sports discourse.

Almost all of the examples of conventionalized metaphors listed in table 2 are metaphorical expressions based on the conceptual metaphor SPORT IS WAR. This shows us how deeply embedded the conceptual metaphor SPORT IS WAR is in the Croatian sports discourse. If we return to our discussion of conventionalized metaphors as key-words of the sports discourse it can be said that viewing sport as WAR is one of the commonest ways of understanding sports in Croatian culture. On the other hand, it is clear that the conceptual metaphor SPORT IS FORCE is not as conventionalized in our understanding of sports as the conceptual metaphor SPORT IS WAR is. This is seen in the fact that metaphorical expressions based on the conceptual metaphor SPORT IS FORCE mostly fall within the category of semi-conventionalized expressions (see Table 3 below). Verbs such as *razbiti* ‘to break; to smash’, *sломити* ‘to break’, *srušiti* ‘to knock over’, *potopiti* ‘to sink’ all refer to

Parasynonyms of 'to win'	No. of tokens	Relative frequency
<i>razbiti</i> 'to break; to smash'	98	0.0081%
<i>pokoriti</i> 'to conquer'	62	0.0051%
<i>potopiti</i> 'to sink'	45	0.0037%
<i>poraziti</i> 'to defeat'	35	0.0029%
<i>demolirati</i> 'to demolish'	32	0.00267%
<i>pomesti</i> 'to swipe out'	29	0.0024%
<i>srušiti</i> 'to knock over'	26	0.00217%
<i>pregaziti</i> 'to run over; to stomp on'	22	0.00183%
<i>slomiti</i> 'to break'	21	0.0018%
<i>nokautirati</i> 'to knock out'	19	0.00158%
<i>razvaliti</i> 'to destroy; to break'	10	0.0006%

Table 3. Verbal semi-conventionalized metaphors. Parasynonyms of *pobijediti* 'to win' and their frequencies

Parasynonyms of 'match'	No. of tokens	Relative frequency
<i>sukob</i> 'conflict'	91	0.0076%
<i>sraz</i> 'collision'	90	0.0075%
<i>bitka</i> 'battle'	81	0.0067%
<i>sudar</i> 'clash; crash'	62	0.0051%
<i>okršaj</i> 'skirmish; clash'	30	0.0025%

Table 4. Nominal semi-conventionalized metaphors. Parasynonyms of *utakmica* 'match'

the kind of force (natural or physical).²² On the other hand nominal expressions that fall within this category are instantiations of the conceptual metaphor SPORT IS WAR which points to the interesting distribution between nominal and verbal expressions as instantiations of the two conceptual metaphors.

²² Although Kövecses (2003) distinguishes between natural and physical force, we do not consider such a distinction relevant for our analysis. Second, we consider that this distinction is not clear cut and as such not plausible for our research.

With respect to the analysis of linguistic expressions it has become obvious that the status of the two conceptual metaphors is not equal in structuring the sports discourse and thus do not represent in the same way background knowledge representative for understanding sports in Croatian culture. Therefore, one must regard conceptual metaphor SPORT IS WAR as more entrenched and more conventional in structuring sports discourse in Croatian language and culture. Conversely, it tells us that the conceptual metaphor SPORT IS FORCE has become more and more salient in the way we conceptualize sports, producing novel metaphorical expressions, thus becoming more and more entrenched in the sports discourse. Verbs such as *savladati* 'to overcome' or *izbaciti* 'to throw out' have become conventionalized as to their frequencies in the SDC (see Table 2) and are also losing the feature of affective markedness.

As we have already mentioned, based on our analysis, nominal metaphorical expressions are instantiations of the conceptual metaphor SPORT IS WAR. This could be explained by the fact that the novelty and metaphorical productivity is not exclusively related to the conceptual metaphor SPORT IS FORCE, but to the conceptual metaphor SPORT IS WAR as well. The category of semi-conventionalized metaphors points to the fact that once a certain conceptual metaphor is considered to be a fully conventionalized structure of knowledge (due to expressions that are instantiated in a certain discourse) its productivity and motivating input could be variable. Based on the analysis of Croatian sports discourse, it has become evident that the conceptual metaphor SPORT IS WAR motivates new metaphorical expressions only within the nominal lexical category. Thus semi-conventionalized nominal expressions such as *sukob* 'conflict', *bitka* 'battle', and *okršaj* 'skirmish' are related to the domain of WAR (on the basis of their lexicographic definitions), whereas two metaphorical nominal expressions that are connected to the domain of FORCE are *sudar* 'crash' and *sraz* 'collision'.

The reason why we introduced the novel category of semi-conventionalized metaphorical expressions is that some metaphorical expressions are a constant of sports discourse, appearing regularly, less frequently than conventionalized metaphors and far more frequently than innovative metaphors. Further, they do not function as key-words. They mostly function as parasyonyms of key-words with a high degree of affective markedness. The expression *potopiti (protivnika)* 'to sink (an adversary)' is much more affectively marked than the schematic expression *pobijediti (protivnika)* 'to defeat (an adversary)'. With respect to the individual use criterion, these expressions are more innovative than conventionalized expressions but are becoming more and more regular in sports discourse.

What is important about semi-conventionalized metaphors is that the bulk of the expressions in this category exhibit different patterns of their use in the discourse. These patterns become pertinent through the comparison of the SDC and a general corpus. The Croatian National Corpus (CNC) ver. 2.0, a general corpus consisting of 100 million tokens, is to some degree diachronic²³ in comparison to the SDC, which consists of more recent sports texts. Comparing the two corpora, the difference

²³ The CNC ver. 2.0 consists of texts from 1990 to 2005, which makes our data collected after that period comparable to the CNC in a diachronic way.

between the relative frequencies of certain words in the two corpora has become evident. The relative frequency of the word *okršaj* 'skirmish' in the SDC is 0.0025% and its relative frequency in the CNC is 0.0011%.²⁴ This statistical data show us that the expression *okršaj* 'skirmish' has undergone a process of conventionalization. To be more precise, the noun *okršaj* 'skirmish' appears in 30 citations in every one million tokens in the SDC, whereas it appears in 11.79 citations in every 1 million tokens in the CNC. This data shows that the word *okršaj* 'skirmish' has become twice as frequent over a period of twenty-five years and thus more conventionalized and entrenched in our background knowledge.

Verbs such as *pomesti* 'to sweep up' and *demolirati* 'to demolish' exhibit similar patterns in the discourse formation. The verb *pomesti* 'to sweep up' in the metaphorical sports sense appears in 50 citations in the CNC. This means that its relative frequency in the CNC is 0.00005%, which classifies this metaphorical expression as being in the category of innovative metaphors because its appearance is totally insignificant. However, its relative frequency is significantly different in the SDC. In the SDC, its relative frequency is 0.0024%, which means that it has become more conventionalized than it was in the CNC. This means that the frequency that the verb *pomesti* 'to sweep up' in the CNC is 0.5 citations which is statistically irrelevant data, contrary to the data obtained by the SDC (where there are 29 citations of the verb *pomesti* 'to sweep up').

The verb *demolirati* 'to demolish' has undergone an even more significant process of conventionalization. Its relative frequency is 0.0026% in the SDC and 0.000013% in the CNC. This shows how the verb could be categorized as a highly innovative metaphorical expression in the CNC, appearing in a negligible number of citations in every 1 million tokens (0, 13 times), whereas in the SDC it appears in 32 citations. Thus comparison of the general and specialized corpora gives us very precise evidence of how a metaphorical expression became more conventionalized over twenty-five years.

Semi-conventionalized metaphors exhibit some interesting features with respect to qualitative data as well. They function mutually as parasyonyms and in relation to some conventionalized metaphorical expressions in the sports discourse. As seen in the examples in tables 3 and 4, most of the lexemes have very similar meanings with different affective markedness and can be replaced by one another in the same context. In other words, a speaker can choose one or the other as part of his own stylistic motivation. For example, when talking about a match between two teams or players, a speaker can report the outcome of the game with various lexemes, e.g.

- (2) Ljubo srušio Nadala (SDC, www.vecernji.hr)
'Ljubo knocked down Nadal' (tennis),
- (3) Lyon razbio Bordeaux (SDC, www.vecernji.hr)
'Lyon smashed Bordeaux' (football),
- (4) Milan potopio Genovu (SDC, www.jutarnji.hr)
'Milan sank Genoa' (football).

²⁴ This is the relative frequency of the word *okršaj* used exclusively in sports discourse in the general corpus. The method was to manually separate meanings related to sports from those related to other domains.

These can be freely replaced with one another and still the main meaning of defeat will be properly denoted, e.g.

- (5) Milan zaustavio / slomio / potopio / nokautirao Genovu
 'Milan stopped / broke / sank / knocked out Genoa'.

The choice seems to be left to the speaker, as he can choose from a set of parasynonymous lexemes with more or less the same denotational meaning. It could be noticed that they are affectively marked when compared to the affectively neutral conventionalized expressions *pobijediti* 'to win' and *poraziti* 'to defeat', e.g.

- (6) Milan porazio Genovu
 'Milan defeated Genoa'

since these say nothing about the gravity of the defeat itself as seen through the eyes of the speaker. The same is true of the nominal expressions *sukob* 'conflict', *sraz* 'collision', *bitka* 'battle', and *okršaj* 'skirmish', which are parasynonyms to the word *utakmica* 'match'.

5.4. Innovative metaphors

The term *innovative metaphor* refers to a metaphorical expression based on a conventionalized conceptual metaphor, in our case SPORT IS WAR and SPORT IS FORCE. Innovative metaphors have extremely low frequencies, appearing less than 10 times in the SDC, and are examples of the creative, individual use of language by the speaker. Because of this, they have the highest degree of affective markedness.

Within the category of innovative metaphors we find expressions such as *otpuhati* 'to blow away', *torpedirati* 'to torpedo', and the verb *razvaliti* 'to ruin', which appears 10 times in the SDC. Therefore, the latter could be considered as a peripheral member between semi-conventionalized and innovative metaphors. The expressions *otpuhati* 'to blow away' and *razvaliti* 'to ruin' are related to the conceptual metaphor SPORT IS FORCE, whereas the expression *torpedirati* 'to torpedo' is related to the domain of WAR, expressing in its literal sense the way a certain weapon is used to defeat an enemy.

An interesting property of innovative metaphors in sports discourse that should be pointed out is the fact that very often these expressions are complex, and are produced either by combining novel metaphorical expressions from both conceptual metaphors or by introducing new elements into the utterance. The following examples will illustrate the way in which innovative metaphors as complex instantiations are produced in the sports discourse:

- (7) Amerikanci su Kanađanima bacili rukavicu uraganskom prvom trećinom protiv Finaca (SDC, www.vecernji.hr)
 'The Americans threw down the glove before the Canadians with a hurricane-like first third against the Finns',
- (8) Branitelj naslova maršira do finala (SDC, www.jutarnji.hr)
 'The defender of the title marches to the final',

- (9) Igra Danaca je kao mlin koji melje (SDC, www.sportskenovosti.hr)
 ‘The Danes’ game is like a grinding mill’.

Example (7) is a combination of two differently motivated metaphorical expressions. The first part is the existing idiomatic metaphor *baciti (INF) rukavicu rukavicu* ‘to throw down the glove’ not connected to any specific type of discourse but to the more general everyday use of language, although it must be noted that it also originally relates to the domain of WAR. The second, *uraganska prva trećina* ‘hurricane-like first third’ is directly based on the conceptual metaphor SPORT IS FORCE, as represented by the force of the hurricane, i.e. natural force. To use hurricanes to specify the type of strength involved in the game is an innovative way of talking about the match in itself. The innovative metaphorical expression is thus a combination of an existing metaphor (*baciti rukavicu* ‘to throw down the glove’) introduced into sports discourse in a novel way and a metaphorical expression based on a conceptual metaphor already present in the sports discourse but instantiating a novel concept: a hurricane.

Example (8) is a combination of an existing conventionalized metaphor in the sports discourse *branitelj naslova* ‘the defender of the title’, which is combined in a new way with the expression *marširati* ‘to march’. The literal sense of the verb is related to the domains of MOVEMENT and ARMY because it refers to a special, brusque, energetic way in which an army moves. In sports discourse this verb is a novel metaphorical expression and thus introduces some new meanings and new ways of understanding sports.

Example (9) is a case of a purely individual introduction of elements from general language use which changes their meaning simply because of their placement in a discourse which they are not normally a part of. They are still not randomly selected because their understanding in this context is based on and motivated by the conceptual metaphor SPORT IS FORCE, in this case the strength being the force of grinding.

These examples show us how novel expressions can be drawn into a discourse from: (a) already existing conceptual metaphors or (b) other domains that are peripherally related to existing conceptual metaphors (e.g. the verb *marširati* ‘to march’).

6. Some concluding remarks

The main goal of our research was to show how Conceptual Metaphor Theory could be integrated into discourse analysis and what it can reveal about the way speakers structure discourse. We focused on sports discourse for two reasons: (1) sports are highly metaphorically understood and (2) sports are commonly used as a source domain for understanding other concepts; therefore, we wanted to conduct a research to see what domains mostly serve as source domains in understanding sports.

The theoretical framework used for this research was in correlation with Malinowski’s (1923) distinction between context of situation and context of culture,

as well as Lakoff's (1992) statement that speakers understand every situation metaphorically and accordingly have an ability to communicate about this situation using different linguistic expressions. Our analysis showed that the two most prominent conceptual metaphors used in understanding sports are *SPORT IS WAR* and *SPORT IS FORCE* because most of the metaphorical expressions found in sports discourse are instantiations of these two metaphors. However, corpus based analysis showed that these two metaphors, although prominent, are not entrenched in speakers' background knowledge to the same degree. This statement was enabled by using corpus based analysis.

Implementation of corpus based analysis of sports discourse appeared to be very useful in pointing to some new evidence in the way conceptual metaphors participate in the formation of a discourse as part of background knowledge. Our approach to corpus-based analysis was somewhat different from already-existing research (cf. Cameron and Deignan 2003; Charteris-Black 2004; Deignan 2005), since we used a specialized digitalized corpus consisting of more than 1 million tokens for discourse analysis. Corpus analysis based on the SDC pointed to some interesting evidence on how metaphorical expressions are used when communicating about a certain situation. Unlike Deignan (2005), we used a relative frequency approach to show the number of times a certain metaphorical expression appears in relation to the absolute number of tokens in a corpus. This provides evidence of the representation of metaphorical expressions in (sports) discourse.

This enabled us then to propose a modified classification of metaphors with semi-conventionalized metaphors as an intermediate category. The three criteria used in the classification of metaphorical expressions are characterized as quantitative and qualitative but are regarded as a coherent, inseparable group. Frequency strongly correlates with the other two qualitative criteria. This means that expressions with the highest frequency function as key-words of sports discourse, lacking affective markedness.

The category of semi-conventionalized metaphors was introduced into the continuum from conventionalized to innovative metaphors because, based on our analysis, it has become evident that there is a set of metaphorical expressions that differ from both conventionalized and innovative metaphors.

Furthermore, with respect to two principal conceptual metaphors that structure the background knowledge of sports in Croatian culture, it has become clear that they do not participate in the same way in the structuring of sports discourse. Firstly, metaphorical expressions related to the conceptual metaphor *SPORT IS FORCE* exhibit lower frequency than expressions related to the conceptual metaphor *SPORT IS WAR*. Secondly, they function as parasyonyms either of some conventional metaphors (mostly to the verb *pobijediti* 'to win') or of each other.

Innovative metaphors are expressions that are statistically irrelevant in a corpus exhibiting a high degree of the speaker's individual and creative use. In sports discourse they are often complex metaphorical expressions structured from conventionalized metaphors and completely innovative metaphorical expressions sometimes related to less entrenched domains.

The proposed analysis showed some aspects of metaphorical discourse formation that are in high correlation with Lakoff's (1990) assertions. It gives some new empirically (statistically) corroborated evidence on how conceptual metaphors, in our case SPORT IS WAR and SPORT IS FORCE, structure the speaker's background knowledge about a certain situation (sports within the Croatian speech community), what their instantiation are, and how they function in structuring (sports) discourse.

As we mentioned before, we consider this kind of analysis based on the SDC approach suitable for the analysis of any other kind of discourse. This approach thus paves the way for further anthropological, linguistic, and sociological research stemming from discourse analysis.

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