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A Comparative Study of LIQUID Metaphors in English and Romanian Economic Language

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Abstract
This article discusses the economic terminology of English and Romanian from the perspective of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, focusing on the way in which the two languages employ lexical items from the semantic field of liquids in relation to the economy. The approach used here is both quantitative and qualitative. Thus, the study analyses the dictionary distribution in the two languages of words and phrases that fit the LIQUID metaphor of the economy, and tries to formulate statistical conclusions regarding the importance of this metaphor in shaping the vocabulary of the subject. The results of the quantitative analysis are illustrated with examples from economic publications, with an emphasis on those cases where English and Romanian do not share the same conceptual metaphors, and which could thus prove problematic for learners of Business English as well as for professionals working with the two languages. Metaphor researchers studying English and Romanian generally agree that English is more metaphorical in the way it discusses economic phenomena. However, dictionaries and newspaper articles may differ in the extent to which they follow this prediction, with the latter showing a higher density of metaphorical language than the former.

Keywords: conceptual metaphor, LIQUID metaphor, Romanian, English, dictionaries, newspapers

1. Introduction

The study of metaphor has been extended in the past decades from literary contexts to non-literary and scientific ones. This shift in interest was mainly determined by a new direction in linguistic research in the second half of the 20th century, which combined the study of language with that of the mental processes underlying language production, elevating metaphor to the status of a cognitive instrument that allows us to understand the world by establishing connections between different aspects of reality and by providing us with the necessary language to speak about it. This type of metaphor is called conceptual metaphor and its importance in organizing human cognition and language is summarized as follows by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their seminal book *Metaphors We Live By*: “Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature” (3).

As Kövecses explains, conceptual metaphors work by establishing correspondences between two distinct domains: the source domain, which is usually more concrete and accessible (for example the human body, food, plants) and the target domain, which tends to be more abstract and less familiar (for example life, love, ideas, society), but which becomes more accessible and easier to understand when seen through the lens provided by the source domain (3). Although they are rarely formulated explicitly in sentences of the type *Source domain is target domain* (for example *Time is money*), conceptual metaphors can be inferred from the existence of metaphorical expressions – the various words and phrases they generate. For example, the expressions *to win an argument, to lose an argument*, and *to defend a position* are the linguistic realizations of the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR, while the expressions *to swallow an idea, to digest an idea,* and *palatable ideas* are based on the metaphor IDEAS ARE FOOD (Lakoff and Johnson 4).

Since metaphor is seen as an instrument of cognition rather than as a mere decorative device, much attention has been given to its role in the formulation of scientific theories in various fields of knowledge, as well as in the creation of specific terminologies for these fields (Boyd; Kuhn; Klamer and Leonard). "Science needs metaphor since it provides the cognitive means to chart the unknown," Arjo Klamer and Thomas Leonard (31) point out.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory has been used in the field of business and economics, both by economists studying the role of metaphor in the formulation of economic theories (McCloskey; Henderson; Klamer and Leonard) and by applied linguists trying to understand the way in which metaphor research could be incorporated into the teaching and learning of Business English (Dudley-Evans; Ennis). Different studies have shown that the understanding of the metaphorical nature of economic discourse and the familiarity with the conceptual metaphors on which this is based can help learners in vocabulary comprehension and retention, but can also improve fluency, clarity and concision in language production (Boers; Charteris-Black; Danesi; MacLennan; Sznajder; Littlemore and Low).

It is generally agreed that understanding the differences that exist sometimes between languages as regards the conceptual metaphors they employ can help foreign language students overcome problematic areas of vocabulary learning and thus avoid translation mistakes or non-native sounding language. Consequently, a large number of metaphor studies in recent years have focused on the comparative analysis of two or several languages, examples including English and Spanish (Ennis; Charteris-Black and Ennis; Herrera-Soler and White), English and German (Charteris-Black and Musolff), English and Italian (Semino), English and Chinese (Sun and Jiang), English and Japanese (Fukuda), English and Slovene (Bratoz), English and Serbian (Grujić), English and Romanian (Herțeg; Popescu; Pecican), and English, Romanian and Serbian (Silaški and Kilyeni "The Money Is a Liquid").

The LIQUID metaphor of the economy, which constitutes the focus of the present article, has been analysed by Nadežda Silaški and Annamaria Kilyeni ("The Money Is a Liquid"), who conducted a contrastive, dictionary-based study of financial terms derived from the MONEY IS A LIQUID metaphor in English, Romanian and Serbian, and by Crina Herțeg ("Money," "The Conceptualisation"), who discussed various lexicalizations of the same metaphor in a corpus of English and Romanian financial newspaper, websites and other online sources. The results of these studies point towards the presence of this metaphor in the economic terminologies of both languages, but also reveal a higher density of metaphorical expressions in English as compared to Romanian.

The present study discusses the LIQUID metaphor of the economy in English and Romanian, combining quantitative data and qualitative considerations regarding its lexical realizations in the two languages. First, I analyse the statistical distribution of liquid-related lexical items in English and Romanian specialized dictionaries, and then I illustrate the employment of these lexical items in the business press, focusing on those cases where the two languages use different conceptual frameworks and linguistic resources. The general hypothesis of the study is that the LIQUID metaphor is largely shared between English and Romanian, as shown by other studies, and that even in those cases where dictionaries seem to suggest otherwise, naturally occurring language texts may use words and phrases sourced from this highly familiar and accessible domain.

2. Methodology of Research

The Longman Business English Dictionary (hereafter LBED), including over 20,000 lexical items, was manually searched for words and phrases based on the LIQUID metaphor of the economy. For this purpose, I used the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) (Pragglejaz Group),[1] which states that a lexical item is metaphorical if, in addition to its contextual meaning, it also has a more "basic contemporary meaning" through which it can be understood (the basic meaning is more concrete, related to bodily action, more precise and historically older) (3). For example, the word *floating* is metaphorically used in terms such as *floating* *currency* or *floating interest rate* because its meaning in these phrases ("change freely") is different from its more basic meaning ("move on water") but can be understood in comparison with it. Similarly, the word *haven* is considered to be metaphorical in the phrases *safe haven* and *tax haven,* because its basic meaning "harbour, port" is both more concrete and historically older than its contextual meaning "a place offering favourable opportunities."

The metaphorical words and phrases identified in LBED through this method were then searched for equivalents in three specialized English-Romanian dictionaries: Andrei Bantaș and Violeta Năstăsescu's *Dicționar economic englez-român*, Lucia Pop's *Dicționar englez-român de afaceri* (containing about 16,000 words and phrases), and Mihai Pătraș and Corina Pătraș's *Dicționar economic financiar-bancar englez-român* (125,000 words and phrases). The English terms which were not found in any of these specialized sources were further searched in Leon Levițchi and Andrei Bantaș's general *Dicționar englez-român*, containing 70,000 words. The reason for using a general dictionary for this study is that an everyday word may eventually enter the economic jargon to denote a new concept for which no other term exists in the language.

Next, the Romanian equivalents of the LBED words and phrases were analysed in terms of their metaphorical origin. For example, according to MIP, the term *diluare* (cf. *dilution*) was considered to be metaphorical, because its meaning in economic contexts (the increase in a company's number of shares and the decrease in their value) is different from its more concrete and historically older meaning (the act of making a liquid weaker by adding water). Conversely, the adjective *fictivă* in the term *companie fictivă* "fictitious company" (cf. *shell company*) was regarded as non-metaphorical, because it does not have a more basic meaning than the one employed in this context, "fake, invented rather than real."

A term was considered to illustrate the LIQUID metaphor of the economy if it was included as such in at least one of the selected English-Romanian dictionaries, or, in cases where two or several translation equivalents existed for the same English term, if at least one of these equivalents was drawn from the LIQUID source domain. For example, the term *frozen asset* can be translated both as *activ înghețat* "frozen asset" and as *activ imobilizat* "fixed asset" (Bantaș and Năstăsescu 131); since the two phrases are used in similar contexts, I took the former variant into consideration.

The quantitative analysis was also complicated by the fact that an English lexical item can have a metaphorical equivalent in general Romanian contexts but a non-metaphorical one (or one not fitting the LIQUID metaphor) in more specialized contexts. For example, the phrase *safe haven* is generally translated as *liman* "harbour, shore," a word which is based on the conceptual metaphor THE ECONOMY IS THE SEA/A COMPANY IS A SHIP, as in:

Şi totuşi, exportatorii chinezi nu au ajuns la *liman*. (ZF 15/1/2020)
"And still, Chinese exporters have not reached *a safe haven*."

However, in technical contexts where *safe haven* refers to an investment that is expected to retain or increase its value (as in *safe haven currency* or *safe haven stocks*), the Romanian equivalent is *de refugiu* "refuge." Thus, we have sentences like:

Francul elveţian a rămas singura *monedă de refugiu* a investitorilor. (ZF 2/6/2011)
"The Swiss franc has remained the investors' only *refuge currency/safe haven currency*."

Similarly, the noun *drain* can be translated differently depending on context: a *drain on the economy* becomes *povară pentru economie* "burden for the economy" and *drain of capital* becomes *epuizare a capitalului* "depletion of capital," but *dollar drain* is *scurgere a dolarului*. In situations like these, each contextual meaning was counted separately.

Some of the words and phrases identified in this way were then illustrated with examples from online economic publications in English and Romanian. I mainly used the British newspapers *The*

Economist (hereafter TE) and the *Financial Times* (FT), and the Romanian newspaper *Ziarul Financiar* (ZF), but occasionally I also quote examples from other publications.

3. Discussion of Results

A total of 155 words and phrases based on the LIQUID metaphor of the economy were identified in LBED. These lexical items vary in their degree of specialization, from technical terms not used outside the economic field (*cash flow, circulating asset, tap stock, flotation*) to general words that have acquired specialized meanings and are frequently used in economic discourse (*absorb, plunge, dip, flood, beach-head, downstream, upstream*) and idiomatic expressions informally used by journalists in the business press (*in the pipeline, be snowed under, take a bath*). Some of these terms are based on a clear analogy between economic phenomena and the behaviour of liquids (*liquidity, cash flow, circulation, drain, upstream, downstream, pool, flood, pump,* etc.), while others point indirectly towards the conceptualization of the economic environment as liquid and of various economic elements as solid objects moving in water (*float, sink, plunge, dip, etc.*).

125 of these English terms were found in the English-Romanian economic dictionaries I consulted, and a further 15 were found in Levițchi and Bantaș's general dictionary. As expected, the latter category comprises everyday words such as *drift, dry up, swamp, siphon, haemorhage, infusion, laundry, lifeline, lukewarm* and figurative or idiomatic expressions like *beach-head, rainmaker, be snowed under, to open the floodgates*. Finally, the LBED words and phrases not present in any of the Romanian reference books used for this study are mostly technical terms such as *diluted shares, double dip recession, shark watcher, super sinker bond,* or *free cash flow*.

Of the 125 Romanian lexical items corresponding to the LBED terms, 94 (representing about 75 percent of the total) are based on the general LIQUID metaphor, while 31 are either non-metaphorical (*bancomat* vs. *cash dispenser, fără datorii* "without debts” vs. *afloat*, *cămătar* vs. *loan shark*) or based on other conceptual metaphors (for example, the noun *în creștere* “growing” vs. *buoyant* is rooted in the biological metaphor of the economy). These results confirm the findings of other studies, in particular those of Silaški and Kilyeni (“The Money Is a Liquid” 70), who find that out of the 37 English terms they analyse, 10 have non-metaphorical translation equivalents in Romanian.

Many of the metaphorical terms identified in LBED are formed around the adjective *liquid* and its related forms: *liquid asset, liquid ratio, liquid measure, liquidity, liquidator, liquidation, illiquid, illiquidity, etc*. Others are words describing general properties of liquids and actions associated with them. Thus, shares and other securities may be “diluted” or “watered,” which means that their value is reduced by an increase in quantity (hence the terms *diluted share, diluted stock, dilution, watered stock*); a business can “absorb” costs and a market can “absorb” a product in the same way in which plants or other solid objects take in water from the space around them; an economy or industry may “stagnate,” evoking images of bodies of still water, while prices and other indicators may “fluctuate.” Finally, a “spurt” in activity is a short and sudden increase, while a “trickle” refers to a slow and small progress, by analogy with liquid flowing slowly in a thin stream (hence the terms *trickle-down effect* and *trickle-down economics*). Consider these examples from the business press:

English	Romanian
Bondholders' rights and returns *diluted*. (FT 23/3/2014)	În urma ofertei de listare deţinerile lor *vor fi diluate*, respectiv un pachet de 10% va deveni 7%. (ZF 28/12/2021)
It heaves with mineral riches yet virtually no wealth *has trickled down* to its 60m people. (TE 30/10/2008)	. . . reducerile de taxe pentru cei mai bogați au ca rezultat faptul că bogăția lor cumva ‘*se prelinge’* către toți ceilalți. (Libertatea 16/1/2023)
	Acțiunile publisherilor au beneficiat de *efectul trickle-down*, prin intermediul căruia informatiile *se*

	scurg de la un investitor la altul. (ZF 4/10/2009)
The next five years will see a big *spurt of new jobs*. (TE 21/1/2014)	Problema cu actualul *salt al preţurilor* este că nimeni nu poate şti dacă e pe termen scurt sau de durată. (ZF 20/11/2021)

Although English-Romanian economic dictionaries translate the verb *dilute* as *a diminua valoarea* "to diminish the value," the metaphorical equivalent *a dilua* is commonly used in journalistic texts. Similarly, the verbs *a se prelinge* and *a se scurge* "trickle down," alongside the English borrowing *trickle-down,* are occasionally employed in Romanian to refer to the process of wealth spreading from the rich to the poor, although they are not included in specialized dictionaries. Conversely, *spurt* finds an equivalent in the native *salt* "jump" rather than in *jet, țâșnitură, împroșcare* "spurt." This situation shows that the metaphorical translations of English terms are sometimes used in economic discourse, even if they are not included in specialized dictionaries.

Other words and phrases in the corpus are lexicalizations of various lower-level instantiations of the general LIQUID metaphor of the economy. These specific metaphors will be discussed in the following sections.

3.1. MONEY IS A LIQUID FLOWING THROUGH A HYDRAULIC MACHINE

The importance of hydraulics in shaping economic theories and discourse has often been discussed in the literature. For example, Catherine Resche notes that as early as 1891, the American economist Irvin Fisher built a hydraulic machine for calculating prices, and that later, the New Zealand economist Bill Phillips modelled the workings of the British economy by building a machine "with pipes, pumps and siphons" through which water flowed. The MONIAC (Monetary National Income Analogue Computer), as this machine was called, was used for teaching but also for making forecasts, economic forces such as consumption, spending, GDP, income, investment and saving being represented by coloured water flowing through plastic pipes, while different sectors of the economy were represented by separate tanks connected by these pipes. The conceptualization of money as water flowing through a machine can be placed within the general mechanical metaphor of the economy, with the implication that the economist has control over events and the responsibility to intervene when necessary (Resche 249).

The linguistic realizations of this conceptual metaphor in both languages bring to mind images of a liquid flowing through an installation with an entry and an exit (but also with pipes, injectors and tanks) and include technical terms such as *cash flow* (Eng.) – *flux de numerar* (Rom.), *cash outflow* (Eng.) – *ieșire de numerar* (Rom.), *cash inflow* (Eng.) – *intrare/aflux de numerar* (Rom.), *circulating asset* (Eng.) – *activ circulant* (Rom.), *leakage* (Eng.) – *scurgere* (Rom.), *injection* (Eng.) – *injecție* (Rom.), *pump* (Eng.) – *a pompa* (Rom.). Almost 20 percent of the liquid-related words and phrases in my English corpus fit the hydraulic metaphor of money, and, as Ya Sun, Zixuan Cui, Yang Hu, and Qiong Wang note, many of these terms are made up of a word drawn from the source domain of liquids (*flow, dispenser, drain*) and another term from the target domain of finance (*cash, capital, funds*) (101).

Several English expressions, mostly informal or idiomatic ones, have non-metaphorical translations in Romanian dictionaries, although their metaphorical equivalents are occasionally used in the business press. For example, the phrase *on tap* is used in English to refer to something that is ready for immediate use (for example cash or workers), while the term *tap stock* refers to a special type of British government stock that is sold not when it is issued, but when the government needs to. Both expressions are based on the analogy between money and a liquid (such as beer or wine) that can be drawn from a casket by the opening of a tap. In Romanian, *on tap* is translated non-metaphorically as *gata pregătit, la îndemână* "ready-made, on hand," while *tap security* finds an equivalent in the phrase *titluri emise în mod continuu* "securities issued continually" (Pop 421). However, the metaphorical expression *robinetul de bani* "the money tap" is sometimes used informally by business journalists, as in the second example below:

English	Romanian
The Ministry of Finance has the means to fight, with almost Y50,000bn additional intervention funds *on tap*. . . . (FT 1/19/2005)	Au o resursă *la îndemână* și aproape gratis, pentru care se plătesc mulți bani. (ZF 8/4/2010) S-a închis *robinetul de bani.* (ZF 29/9/2023)

Similarly, the English phrase *in the pipeline* presents different activities (mostly deals and projects) as a liquid flowing through a pipe, an analogy which is not conveyed by the Romanian translation equivalent *în pregătire* "in preparation." Again, the metaphorical translation *pe țeavă* "in the pipeline" is sometimes used in newspaper articles, although it is not included in any of the Romanian dictionaries I consulted. Note the employment of this vocabulary in the following examples:

English	Romanian
Moreover, *big deals in the pipeline* can take months to close . . . (TE 21/8/2008)	. . . în prezent sunt numeroase proiecte *în pregătire* și implementare. (ZF 4/12/2020) Dezvoltatorii *n-au pe țeavă* niciun proiect rezidențial. (ZF 8/1/2009)

The phrase *a drain (on the economy)* refers to something that uses a lot of resources, by analogy with a hole in a sink or another vessel that allows water to flow away. In Romanian, the same idea is conveyed by means of more general words such as *povară/efort/presiune (asupra economiei)* "burden/effort/pressure on the economy." On the other hand, the verb *a secătui* "drain" is commonly used in relation to the economy. This word, alongside other lexical items such as *leakage* (Eng.) – *scurgere* (Rom.), *siphon* (Eng.) – *a sifona* (Rom.), *inject* (Eng.) – *a injecta* (Rom.), *injection* (Eng.) – *injecție* (Rom.), and *pump* (Eng.) – *a pompa*

(Rom.), provides evidence of the conceptual metaphors LOSING MONEY IS LOSING LIQUID/OBTAINING MONEY IS OBTAINING LIQUID proposed by Silaški and Kilyeni ("The Money Is a Liquid" 70) in their contrastive study of English, Romanian and Serbian. Thus, we get sentences like:

English	Romanian
Foreign energy imports are *a drain on the economy*, says the government. (FT 29/5/2012)	Producătorii auto din Detroit sunt *o povară pentru economia* statului Michigan. (ZF 11/12/2008)
A conflict would also *drain the economy* and increase the country's isolation. (FT 10/1/2022)	Descurajează antreprenorii, ceea ce *secătuiește de viață economia*. (C 21/10/2004)
It is startlingly easy *to siphon money* out of America's social-welfare programmes. (TE 6/4/2023)	Mafia rusească *sifonează sume uriaşe* din sistemul de sănătate german. (ZF 21/4/2016)

3.2. THE ECONOMY IS THE SEA/MARKET TRENDS ARE WAYS OF MOVING IN THE WATER

It has been shown in the literature that the conceptualization of the economic environment as a body of water, in particular as the sea, provides an important framework for the discussion of economic phenomena (Ennis; Bratoz; Charteris-Black and Ennis). A particular entailment of this conceptual metaphor is the representation of different economic elements as solid objects moving through water. Thus, Jonathan Charteris-Black and Timothy Ennis propose the metaphor MARKET MOVEMENTS ARE WAYS OF MOVING IN THE WATER as underlying some of the vocabulary that describes market trends. For example, prices, sales, shares, demand, profits and other economic indicators may *dip* (decrease slightly and not for long), *plunge* (decrease suddenly) or *sink* (decrease or become weaker). These verbs have both non-metaphorical and metaphorical translations in Romanian – *a scădea* (*puternic, ușor)* "decrease (sharply, slightly)," *a se micșora* "diminish," but also *a plonja* "plunge" and *a se scufunda*/*a se* *afunda* "sink" – although the non-metaphorical forms are more often used than the metaphorical ones. Consider the first two Romanian sentences below: they are both from the same newspaper article, but while the forms *a scădea* and *scădere* are used several times in the body of the article, the verb *a plonja* occurs only once in the headline.

English	Romanian
Inflation just *plunged* to an almost normal 3% (FT 28/7/2023)	Producţia industrială *a plonjat* la minus 4% în noiembrie 2022 (headline)(ZF 20/1/2023)
	Industria românească *a scăzut puternic* în noiembrie 2022 (ZF 20/1/2023)
Euro *sinks* against the dollar, yen and pound (FT 21/1/2016)	Euro *a slăbit* până la un nou minim al ultimilor 20 de ani (Mediafax 22/9/2022)
	Euro *s-a scufundat* cu până la 0,4% (Mediafax 13/7/2022)
House prices *are dipping*. (TE 2/7/2008)	Prețurile lunii iulie *au scăzut ușor* in SUA (ZF 19/8/2004)

Technical terms formed with the verb *sink* include *sinking fund*, *sunk costs*, and *super sinker bond*. Silaški and Kilyeni ("The Money is Solid" 78) believe that these terms are derived from the conceptual metaphor LOSING MONEY IS SINKING, which presents money as solid objects that will sink when they become too heavy. This analogy is absent in Romanian, where the corresponding terms establish no connection with the LIQUID source domain: *fond de amortizare* "amortization fund" (cf. sinking fund), *cost învestit/irecuperabil* "invested/irrecoverable cost" (cf. sunk cost).

The metaphor MONEY IS A SINKING OBJECT is also evident in the phrase *rock bottom*, used in relation to prices and rates to indicate their lowest possible level. Thus, a *rock bottom price* is the lowest price possible, and when a business *hits rock bottom* it reaches the lowest possible level. In Romanian, this phrase is translated non-metaphorically as *cel mai scăzut* “lowest” (e.g. a *rock bottom price* is *prețul cel mai scăzut*). For example:

English	Romanian
Fed signals *rock-bottom rates* until at least end of 2023. (FT 16/9/2020)	*cele mai scăzute rate ale dobânzii* din istorie au făcut din consumul privat un factor cheie pentru dezvoltare. (ZF 13/7/2016)

Another facet of the conceptual metaphor MARKET MOVEMENTS ARE WAYS OF MOVING IN THE WATER is that in which various economic elements are represented as floating solid objects. This scenario is largely organized linguistically around the adjective *floating*, used in relation to economic indicators that are not fixed but allowed to change freely according to market conditions. Thus, we have terms like *floating exchange rate* (Eng.) – *curs flotant* (Rom.), *floating interest rate* (Eng.) – *dobândă flotantă* (Rom.), and *floating charge* (Eng.) – *taxă flotantă* (Rom.).

Other lexical items that evoke images of solid objects floating on water are the adjective *buoyant* and the corresponding noun *buoyancy,* commonly used in the language of the subject to describe the tendency of various economic elements to maintain themselves at a high level. Note the employment of *buoyant* in the example below and the way in which the metaphor on which it is based is still generating novel, imaginative language in journalistic prose. The Romanian translation equivalents *plutitor, portant, flotabil* “buoyant” are used only in relation to liquids and have not been extended to the economic language, which describes upward market trends by means of more general adjectives such as *în creștere* “growing” and *activ* “active.”

English	Romanian
Investment platforms . . . enjoyed a bumper year in 2021 as *investors surfed buoyant markets* . . . (FT 16/6/2022)	În România am avut *o piaţă activă*, cu un interes al investitorilor în toate sectoarele. (ZF 13/3/2023)

3.3. THE ECONOMY IS THE SEA/ COMPANIES ARE SHIPS ON THE SEA

An important consequence of the metaphor THE ECONOMY IS THE SEA is the conceptualization of companies as ships sailing on the sea. In a contrastive study of English and Slovene economic language, Silva Bratoz (184) points out the systematic mappings between the source and the target domain on which this conceptual metaphor is built: the "ship" is the economy, the "captain" of the ship is usually the president of the central bank and the "crew" his team, the "sea" is the socio-economic environment, while the "destination of the voyage" is represented by the economic strategic objectives. The linguistic realizations of the SHIP metaphor include terms related to different stages of a sea voyage: the beginning (evident in words such as *to float* (a company), *to launch (*a product)*, company flotation, product launch*), the difficulties encountered during the journey (*bailout, lifeboat, lifeline, piracy*), the end of the journey and the reaching of the destination (*safe haven, tax haven, to be on the rocks*).

Thus, a company whose shares are sold for the first time to the public is said to be *floated* on the stock exchange, and the action in question is called a *flotation*; if the company has enough money to operate and stay out of debt, then we say it *stays afloat*. In Romanian, the verb *float* can be translated as *a flota* "float" or *a lansa* "launch," but also as a *plasa* (un împrumut) "to place (a loan)." Moreover, the preferred term corresponding to the English *flotation* is a translation of the American English phrase *initial public offering – ofertă publică inițială*. For example:

English	Romanian
It is the first time that the firm has reported a drop in annual profits since *it was floated* on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange in 2011. (TE 31/3/2015)	Domo *va fi lansat* la Bursa de la București în T3 (ZF 5/8/2008)
At long last, Alibaba reveals details of its massive *public flotation* (TE	Ferrari a atras 893 mil. dolari prin *oferta publică iniţială lansată* la

6/9/2014)	bursa din New York (ZF 28/10/2015)

If a company, especially a bank, is in danger of going bankrupt, the government can "bail it out," or save it. This action is called a *bailout*, and the system or plan used is called a *lifeboat*. The same situation is more generally described in Romanian by phrases such as *a scoate din dificultate financiară* "to get out of financial difficulty" or *a salva* "save," although the term *lifeboat* finds a metaphorical equivalent in the phrase *barcă de salvare* "rescue boat." Thus, we get sentences like:

English	Romanian
The German government has begun preparations for a possible state *bail-out* of Commerzbank. (FT 14/12/2011)	Alternativa la *salvarea* băncii AIB era colapsul Irlandei. (ZF 3/10/2010)
Buy-outs, this suggests, could be *a lifeboat* for the struggling industry. (TE 17/2/2022)	Construcţiile vor fi şi în 2021 „*barca de salvare*“ a unei economii fragile şi afectate puternic de pandemie. (ZF 4/1/2021)

Another danger that a company can encounter during a "sea voyage" is "piracy" (hence the terms *piracy* – *piraterie* in both languages), while a business that is having a lot of problems and is likely to go bankrupt is said to be *on the rocks*, by analogy with a ship that hits rocks and breaks. The Romanian equivalent of this phrase, *pe butuci* "on the hubs," comes from the source domain of land vehicles, evoking images of broken wheels rather than of destroyed ships. On the other hand, the basic meaning of the Romanian verb *a eșua* "fail" is that of a ship running aground and getting stuck in mud; this is the only instance in my corpus when a Romanian metaphorical word has a non-metaphorical correspondent in English:

English	Romanian
The high-street fashion empire of Philip Green is *on the rocks*. (FT 18/6/2019)	Industria Ungariei este *pe butuci*. (ZF 17/3/2009)
The Bank that *failed* (headline) (TE 20/9/2007)	Wal-Mart, cel mai mare retailer din lume, *a esuat* pe piața germană. (31/7/2006)

An interesting instance of the analogy between business organizations and ships comes from the phrase *market rigging*. Starting from its basic meaning as "fit out a ship with sails," the verb *rig* has come to refer to the action of influencing something in a dishonest way; hence *market rigging* is used to describe a situation when "some of the companies in a market act together to stop a market working as it should in order to gain an unfair advantage" (LBED 419). The equivalent term in Romanian – *manipulare a pieței* "market manipulation" – is less specifically connected to nautical activities:

English	Romanian
BP fights to blow away *gas market rigging* case. (FT 16/8/2015)	*Manipularea pieţei de capital* este foarte delicată şi foarte greude stabilit. (ZF 13/7/2010)

Finally, the term *beachhead* conceptualizes the general economic environment as the sea, and markets as land that must be conquered, thus combining the LIQUID metaphor of the economy with that of COMPETITION AS WAR. The word *beachhead* was originally used in military contexts to refer to a strong position occupied by an army on an enemy beach and from which it could launch an attack. By metaphorical extension, the term has come to refer to a part of a market that a company enters in the hope of obtaining more of the same market. The Romanian equivalent *cap de pod* "bridgehead" conveys the same meaning and is used in similar contexts:

English	Romanian
The Canadian strategy is *to establish a beachhead* in the medical-marijuana market in other countries, which can be. . . (TE 5/7/2018)	Modpack System *construieşte un cap de pod* al businessului românesc în Cehia. (ZF 26/9/2014)

3.4. THE ECONOMY IS A FLOWING STREAM

The LIQUID metaphor of the economy sometimes involves the idea of a flowing stream rather than that of a still body of water. Evidence of this conceptual metaphor can be identified in words such as *flow* (with its phrasal forms *cash flow, flowback, flow chart, flow of funds*), *current* (*current assets, current liabilities*), and *stream* (*mainstream, upstream, downstream, midstream, streamline*).

Starting from its literal meaning as "a long, narrow river," the word *stream* is used in business contexts to refer to "a long and almost continuous series of things" (LBED 471), appearing in combinations such as *income stream* or *revenue stream,* but also in the compounds mentioned above. In detail, the word *mainstream* refers to prevailing ideas, opinions or way of doing things and is used in combinations such as *mainstream business* and *mainstream market*. In these contexts, Romanian uses non-metaphorical adjectives such as *convențional*, *tradițional*, but also the borrowed form *mainstream,* as shown in the first two examples below. Similarly, the words *upstream* and *downstream* conceptualize business processes as a river, and different stages of these processes as different parts of the river: an upstream activity is an activity or product on which other activities depend (for example exploration in the oil and gas industry), while a downstream activity is one that depends on another activity or happens after it (for example converting gas into a finished product) (online Investopedia Financial Terms Dictionary). The corresponding Romanian terms convey the same liquid imagery: *în aval, în direcția curentului* (cf.

downstream) and *în amonte* (cf. upstream). Note the employment of this vocabulary in the examples below:

English	Romanian
The entry of weed into *the mainstream market* has caused a shift in drug culture. (TE 14/11/2019)	Sunt companii care perturbă *piaţa tradiţională*, apar modele de business noi. (ZF 21/5/2021) Piaţa *mainstream* este cel mai puternic afectată de scăderea vânzărilor din sectorul de real-estate. (ZF 1/8/2023)
That diverse *downstream market* will be more difficult to dominate . . . (FT 13/6/2023)	Gett's are astăzi diverse activităţi conexe, *în aval şi amonte*, aferente acestui domeniu. (ZF 3/9/2017)
The UK group said it would reduce its 18,000-strong *upstream workforce* by about 540 over the course of this year. (FT 22/5/2018)	Nu se leagă *în amonte furnizori* sau *în aval clienţi* astfel încât să se ridice toată zona. (ZF 27/7/2023)

3.5. THE MOVEMENT OF MONEY IS THE CYCLE OF WATER IN NATURE

Another LIQUID metaphor of money uses the cycle of water in nature as a source domain. Thus, money is seen as water falling from the sky and existing in different states: liquid (evident in the metaphorical expression *rainmaker*), solid (*frozen assets*, *price freeze, snowballing),* in-between (*slush fund*), and gas (*dry up*).

Literally referring to a man endowed with the magical power of making rain fall, the noun *rainmaker* is used in informal business contexts to describe someone who makes a lot of money for a company. In my Romanian corpus, the metaphorical expression *omul care aduce ploaia* "the man who brings the rain" is used only in the translation of the book title *How to become a rainmaker* (by Jeffrey Fox) – *Omul care aduce ploaia ... de bani*, in other contexts, the preferred form being *omul care aduce bani în firmă* "the man who brings money in the company." Similarly, a "slush fund" is money coming from illegal activities, by analogy with partly melted, dirty snow, while in Romanian the same idea is conveyed by the non-metaphorical phrase *fond secret* “secret fund” (Pop 406). Finally, economic resources such as assets, funds, salaries, credit but also markets and various activities, can be “frozen,” which means that they become unavailable, are stopped or kept at the same level. Thus, we have terms such as *frozen assets* (Eng.) – *active înghețate/imobilizate* (Rom.), *frozen accounts* (Eng.) – *conturi înghețate* (Rom.), *credit freeze* (Eng.) – *înghețare/blocare a unui credit* (Rom.), *price freeze* (Eng.) – *înghețare a prețurilor* (Rom.), *salary freeze* (Eng.) – *înghețare a salariilor* (Rom.), or *rent freeze* (Eng.) – *înghețare a chiriilor* (Rom.). For example:

English	Romanian
HR departments often defend the boss – especially if he is seen as a *rainmaker*. (TE 19/12/2017)	Așa îl prezintă Jeffrey Fox pe *omul care aduce bani în firmă*.
The former party treasurer confirmed the existence of *a slush fund*, saying it was used to make undeclared cash payments to senior party leaders. (FT 30/6/2013)	Putin alocă sume fără precedent din *fonduri secrete* pentru a accelera baza militară de apărare a Rusiei. (4/6/2015)
Since July these *markets have frozen up* almost completely for European banks. (TE 1/12/2011)	*Pieţele au îngheţat* după ce a picat Lehman Brothers (ZF 21/11/2011)

A shortage of resources is sometimes represented metaphorically as water evaporating and leaving an area dry. Thus, capital, investment, sales, business, trade and other activities can “dry up” or become unavailable. In Romanian, the equivalent verb *a seca* is not very common in economic discourse, an Internet search revealing only four occurrences for the phrase *bugetul a secat* “the budget dried up” and only one for *investițiile au secat* “investment dried up.” In these contexts, Romanian prefers more general words such as *a se opri* “stop,” *a se epuiza* “run out,” *a scădea* “decrease” or *a dispărea* “disappear.”

English	Romanian
With the economy battered by coronavirus, *risk capital has dried up* in India. (TE 3/10/2020)	*Bugetul a secat* atât de mult la capitolul investiții, că . . . (Știrile Protv 19/8/2010)
Between 1989 and 1991, as *home sales dried up*, almost 60,000 of the nation's 820,000 realtors closed shop. (FT 30/6/2005)	... *investițiile au secat*, iar cererea de bunuri produse de companiile bulgare a scăzut. (ZF 2/9/2009)
	Investiţiile s-au oprit, salariile nu au mai crescut . . .*(ZF 4/1/2015)*
	Ne-am trezit într-o zi că *vânzările au dispărut.* (ZF 24/11/2020)

3.6. MONEY IS BLOOD FLOWING THROUGH THE BODY

Another instance of the LIQUID metaphor of money is evident in its representation as blood flowing through a body. As Willie Henderson points out (359), this view was determined by William Harvey's discovery of the circulation of blood and finds its linguistic expressions in phrases such as *circulation of money*, *circulating assets*, *circulating capital* (although these terms can also be interpreted as fitting the hydraulic conceptualization of money), but also in more figurative expressions such as *to bleed* and *bloodletting*. For example, the verb *bleed* can be used either intransitively to refer to a situation when a company is losing money, or transitively to describe the action of making someone pay a high amount of money for something; both uses are based on the conceptual metaphor LOSING MONEY IS LOSING BLOOD. Similarly, the term *bloodletting* is informally used in the discourse of human resources to describe the act of dismissing a large number of employees. In Romanian, the verb *bleed* finds an equivalent in the phrase *a stoarce de bani* "to squeeze of money."

English	Romanian
tax refund fraud . . . *was bleeding* the state of tens of millions of dollars each year. (FT 16/18/2013)	Costul locuinţelor *„stoarce"* cel mai greu clasa de mijloc. (ZF 19/4/2019)

4. Conclusion

The discussion in this article has shown that the LIQUID metaphor of the economy is to a large extent present both in English and in Romanian. As other researchers have pointed out, this situation is the result of the fact that liquids are a highly accessible and familiar domain; thus, "our bodily experience with liquids (water in particular) is universal" Silaški and Kilyeni ("The Money Is a Liquid" 63) note, and "what water is to human life, money is to business," Sun et al. (101) also believe. Although according to specialized dictionaries only about 75 percent of the English terms based on the LIQUID metaphor have a translation equivalent in Romanian that fits the same metaphor, some of the remaining 25 percent words and phrases have metaphorical synonyms that are occasionally used in the business press, a situation which suggests the idea that this conceptual metaphor is more active in Romanian than dictionary counts seem to indicate.

Note:

[1] Pragglejaz is a group of scholars who developed a detailed method for identifying metaphors in a text. The original members of the group were Peter Crisp, Raymond Gibbs, Alice Deignan, Graham Low, Gerard Steen, Lynne Cameron, Elena Semino, Joe Grady, Alan Cienki, and Zoltan Kövecses.

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