

THE BUSINESS OF COGNITIVE STYLISTICS: A SURVEY OF CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS IN BUSINESS ENGLISH

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The cognitive theory of metaphor and its greater explanatory power offers a new and promising approach to the study of metaphors from a stylistic point of view. In this article, principles of cognitive linguistics are applied to the analysis of conceptual metaphors in the headlines of the business section of *The Times* 1970-1990. The use of conceptual metaphors is explored in a corpus of headlines specially collected by means of inferential statistics procedures so as to be representative of the population under investigation. Data extracted from the study of the sample are used to give empirical evidence of how business is conceptualised and presented to the public in terms of a number of repeatedly selected source domains. Ideological considerations behind the use of metaphors are also briefly examined in the course of the discussion of the material.

The cognitive theory of metaphor offers a new and promising approach for stylistic analysis, providing a framework especially suited to the description and interpretation of both literary and non-literary texts. This article applies techniques of cognitive linguistics to the study of a variety of media language. The use of conceptual metaphors is explored in the headlines of the business section of *The Times* newspaper during the period 1970-1990. Following a corpus-based approach, the sample studied has been collected by means of inferential statistics procedures so as to be representative of the population under investigation (López Maestre 1997a). Hence, the body of material studied provides a suitable context and corpus source for the analysis of conceptual metaphors in the newspaper studied.

This article also explores the ideological implications behind the use of metaphors. Research has shown that the conceptual metaphors of a linguistic community correspond to the conventional patterns of thought of that community (Gibbs 1994:192). Choices of metaphor reflect common values and assumptions of

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the society that uses them. This is an important aspect which will be briefly dealt with in the course of the discussion of the material.

It should be pointed out that there are two main parts in this article. The first two sections have a more theoretical orientation and deal with methodological issues: Section 1 considers the theory of metaphor and its application in stylistic analysis, and section 2 briefly examines some relevant aspects of the corpus studied and the sampling method. The third section is more practical and presents the results of the research conducted. It explores how business, an abstract activity, is presented in terms of a number of domains which are more concrete and which involve more clearly perceived structures. These source domains, how they operate and what they tell us about the cognitive use of metaphors in the headlines, will be the main focus of attention in the present article.

1. STYLISTICS AND THE COGNITIVE THEORY OF METAPHOR

Cognitive linguists have developed a theory of metaphor very different from traditional views. This theory of metaphor has “evolved as an essential part of a broader quest for a more satisfying account of the nature of human cognition in general and of linguistic meaning in particular” (Barcelona 1998: 45). Traditionally, metaphors have been characterised in terms of their deviance from ordinary non-metaphorical language (Levin 1964: 314). Metaphor has been considered part of a figurative language that contrasts with a literal, non-figurative language. “*Literal* language, including *dead* (but not literary) metaphors, would be unmarked and ordinary, but figurative language, including literary (but not dead) metaphors, would be deviant, foregrounded, highlighted, made strange. The *deviance* is with respect to a language-universal set of semantic features and combinatory rules external to individual cognition” (Freeman 1996: 280). This characterisation of metaphor is explicitly rejected by the theory of cognitive metaphor.

In this view, metaphor is seen not as a literary form or as a deviation from some supposedly literal language, but rather as one of the building blocks of our thinking at both the level of language acquisition and language use. For Lakoff and his colleagues, metaphor is a fundamental embodied cognitive mechanism by means of which we ordinarily understand one abstract domain of experience in terms of another more concrete source domain, a schematized real bodily experience (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Johnson 1987; Lakoff 1987, 1988, 1993; Gibbs 1993; Barcelona 1997 etc.). We, as human beings, share a range of physical experiences that take on structure and coherence from the non-propositional schemata we extract from them. That is, we project elements of the structure and components of our physical experience onto our non-physical abstract experience. It is precisely “this sense of projection from schematized bodily experience [what] constitutes the claim for metaphor as embodied human understanding” (Freeman 1996: 281).

The locus of metaphor is, thus, not in language but in thought. Metaphors are cross-domain mappings in our conceptual system. They can be expressed in language precisely because human thought processes are essentially metaphorical. Cognitive research has discovered a huge system of everyday, conventional, conceptual metaphors, lying behind much of everyday language (Lakoff 1993: 204). These metaphors give structure to our everyday conceptual system, including most abstract concepts (such as time, states, change, causation, purpose etc.). Of course, not all concepts are metaphorical, there is an extensive range of non-metaphorical concepts. A sentence like “the balloon went up” is not metaphorical, but as soon as one gets away from concrete physical experience and starts talking about abstractions or emotions, metaphorical understanding seems to be the norm. In this respect, metaphor is an indispensable part of our ordinary, conventional way of conceptualising the world. It is “a basic scheme by which people conceptualise their experience and the external world” (Gibbs 1994: 1).

The linguistic expressions activating conceptual metaphors may be fully conventionalised and lexicalised in language or utterly creative. The study of literary metaphor can, therefore, be seen as an extension of the study of everyday metaphor. Research has shown that poets or literary writers generally extend, elaborate and combine conventional metaphors used in everyday language to produce novel linguistic expressions (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 67, 72, 117, 129; Lakoff 1993: 203, 210, 228, 246; Gibbs 1994: 154-57; Barcelona 1998: 46). They do not create new conceptualisations of experience but talk about the metaphorical entailments of ordinary conceptual mappings in new ways (Gibbs 1994: 7). What novel and conventional metaphorical expressions share is the fact that they are based on conceptual metaphors, which are not exclusive to creative, literary or poetic language, but are conventional ways of understanding one domain of experience in terms of another.

This approach to metaphor seems to be especially promising for stylistic analysis. Stylistics, “the (linguistic) study of style”¹ (Leech and Short 1981: 13), has naturally benefited from advances in linguistic theory and practice (Carter and

¹ According to Simpson (1993: 3) what captures the essence of the stylistic method is the primary importance which it assigns to language. A text is a linguistic construct and we process it as a linguistic construct before anything else. And, the argument runs, if there is to be any serious attempt to engage with the meaning of a particular text, then there must be some concomitant engagement with the language of that text. It must be noted, however, that nowadays “linguistic science does not have a monopoly in methodology and description any more than linguists can have sole possession of insights into language and its workings” (Carter 1992: vii). The goal of most stylistic studies “is not simply to describe the formal features of texts for their own sake, but in order to show their functional significance for the interpretation of the text; or in order to relate literary effects to linguistic ‘causes’ where these are felt to be relevant” (Wales 1991: 437). Aspects of style have, by far, been studied in literary texts, although this is by no means the emphasis of “more recent stylistics, which might deal with texts taken from anywhere from journalism to medical reports and even from stylistic criticism itself” (Shepherd 1998: 91).

Simpson 1989). Stylisticians have traditionally drawn on the models and terminology provided by whatever aspects of linguistics are felt to be relevant for the description and interpretation of texts:

In the first half of the century structuralism was influential, in the late 1960s generative grammar; in the 1970s and 1980s discourse analysis and pragmatics. Stylistics also draws eclectically on trends in literary theory, or parallels developments in this field. So the 1970s saw a shift away from the text itself to the reader and his or her responses to the text (affective stylistics, reception theory). (Wales 1991: 437)

Throughout the years, stylistics has proved to be a very dynamic discipline “continually changing in response to new ideas and the new application of terms, whether from cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, or critical theory” (Wales 1993: 30).²

In particular, the more sophisticated type of stylistic analysis of the 1990s has turned its attention to cognitive linguistics and the associated theory of metaphor developed by Lakoff and his colleagues, as a valuable tool for the analysis of language in texts. Their theory has been said to be of “potential use to stylistics” (Weber 1996: 6), providing “a promising basis for analysing figurative language” (Freeman 1996: 280). This new interest has generated a very exciting body of works. Among others, special attention must be paid to Freeman’s analyses of Shakespeare’s tragedies *King Lear* (1996: 280-297) and *Macbeth* (1995) and Barcelona’s study of romantic love in *Romeo and Juliet* (1995: 665-89). Jean Jacques Weber’s stimulating reading of Doris Lessing’s story “To Room Nineteen” (1995: 32-45) also deserves a mention. This article is particularly remarkable not only for its application of principles of cognitive linguistics in stylistic analysis but also for its attention to how the choice of a particular metaphor can have social and ideological consequences. This is also an area of particular interest to contemporary stylisticians. Recently, critical stylisticians have studied the ways in which wars, epidemics and other sociopolitical situations are metaphorically represented in the media. They show that choice of metaphor provides insights into the values and attitudes that are part of the common sense of a particular culture. I believe this is one of the strong points of the cognitive theory of metaphor. It is particularly valuable for its heuristic and critical potential, not only to learn about particular aspects of language and cognition and their realisation in texts, but also to show how ideas, values and assumptions are encoded in language and culture.

² “As techniques in linguistics become more sophisticated, so stylistic models become enriched and revitalized. Stylisticians are thus continually re-assessing their methods in the light of new developments in linguistics” (Simpson 1993: 4).

2. THE CORPUS STUDIED

In this article, a corpus-based approach is followed. When the corpus was compiled special attention was paid to the problem of sampling, as it is a very serious issue that can decisively affect the validity of the results obtained (Kane 1987; García Ferrando 1987; Haan 1989; Woods et al. 1991; Clear 1992). In this respect, it must be noted that the sample examined in this article is part of a larger corpus compiled, using inferential statistics techniques, for the study of language use and variation in six sections of *The Times: Front Page, Home News, The Arts, Business News, Sport and Letters to the Editor* during the period 1970-1990.³ In this paper, language variation is examined in just one of the sections: the *Business News* section.

3. CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS IN THE BUSINESS SECTION OF THE TIMES

In the headlines of *The Times*, business is frequently conceptualised through several conceptual metaphors. Two main types were identified: structural conceptual metaphors, that is, metaphorical patterns in which one domain is structured in terms of another (for example “business is war”), and spatial conceptual metaphors in which a domain is structured by means of a particular image-schema, such as up-

³ When designing the corpus there were two basic questions that had to be answered: first the size of the sample to be studied (how many headlines had to be studied to obtain a corpus large enough to yield reliable information on the frequency and distribution of linguistic structures) and second what the appropriate sample collection method would be. To solve these questions Inferential Statistics techniques were used. After counting a random sample of headlines from issues of *The Times* in the “Biblioteca Nacional” in Madrid, the total population of headlines in the period (20 years) was estimated to be more than 20,000. For a confidence level $\alpha=2.95.5\%$ the total number of headlines to be analysed was 1,200, the margin of error being then less than 3%. The number of headlines to be studied per section was 200; the margin of error, in that case, was 7%. The size of the sample was of equal importance to the headline selection process, thus the next step was to choose the specific issues of the paper which would be studied, the specific pages within the sections and the specific headlines on the page. To do this tables of random numbers were used. To figure out the issues of the newspaper to be studied a table of random numbers was generated: from 1 to 6268 —that is the total population of newspapers published between 1970 and 1990. The numbers in our table of random numbers were added to the publication number of the first newspaper published in 1970. The specific numbers of the issues to be studied were obtained in this way. The process was continued until all the members of the sample had been determined. After that, the pages from which the headlines were to be extracted had to be determined. As six sections within each newspaper were to be examined, 6 pages from each issue were chosen, one from each section. As before, another table of random numbers 1 to 6 (maximum number of pages being 6, minimum 1) was consulted to do this task. Finally, to choose the headline within the page another table of random numbers was used. A grid dividing the page into sections numbered 1 to 12 was prepared, and the headline nearest to the intersection marked with the number provided by the table of random numbers was selected. In short, this is the sample collection method followed, which should be made explicit as it may be relevant for comparison or for use in other replica studies. For a more detailed explanation of the sampling method see López Maestre 1997a, 1997b.

down, in-out, source-path-goal, etc. (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 14-21; Johnson 1987; Lakoff 1987: 271-80; Taylor 1989: 134).

3.1 Business is a fight

Business is often presented in terms of fighting as a physical conflict or clash between two adversaries. As a result, there is a tight mapping according to which entities in the domain of business systematically correspond to entities in the domain of FIGHTING. This mapping preserves the image-schematic structure of the source domain (Lakoff 1990) because the image schematic structure of the source domain is projected onto the target domain. The ontological correspondences are the following:

Business activities are fights/struggles/combat. Companies are hostile enemies. Business activities are blows and other actions that take place in the course of fighting. Businessmen are fighters. Companies/business activities-transactions are attacked, defended, challenged, defeated etc.

A special version of this metaphor is “business is war”. It involves a more elaborate type of fighting with a larger number of people and heavier weapons.⁴ The ontological correspondences are similar to the fight metaphor:

The businessman is a warrior. Businessmen are soldiers in an army. Companies are armies. Competition between companies is confrontation between armies. Business transactions and operations are battles. Profit is victory in a battle. Loss is defeat in battle. Redundancies, bad investments are tolls in battle. Businessmen’s tools/actions are weapons used in battle. Compromise is a peace deal, etc.

Next, a selection of examples to illustrate the war/fight conceptual metaphor follows:

28-08-70 *BATTLE* LIKELY ON ARCHITECTS’ REVISED CODE OF CONDUCT
 26-04-76 RANK *BLOW* TO WEST YORKSHIRE JOBS
 01-12-76 INFLATION ACCOUNTING AS A *DEFENCE* AGAINST BEING PRECISELY WRONG
 13-07-77 BLUE CHIPS *LOSE GROUND*
 13-04-78 CARTER *FIGHT* TO CUT INFLATION APPROVED
 16-06-78 A *VICTIM* OF LOW DEMAND
 06-10-78 MARKET *RETREATS*

⁴ “Being ‘rational animals’, we have institutionalised our fighting in a number of ways, one of them being war” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 61-65).

- 30-11-78 SHARES *SUBDUED*
 27-04-82 ESSO *TRIGGERS* NEW RISE IN PETROL PRICES
 02-03-85 GOLDSMITH MAY JOIN PHILLIPS BID *BATTLE*
 11-06-86 UK SHARES *HIT* BY WALL ST SLUMP
 19-05-86 *TRADE PEACE* A PRIORITY FOR US
 01-07-86 BULLS ARE STILL *IN RETREAT*
 16-04-87 *FLAGSHIP* FOR WHEWAY
 09-03-88 IMPORTS *HIT* FOOTWEAR MARKET
 26-12-89 RECORD SALES ADD WEIGHT TO DIXONS *FIGHTBACK*
 21-02-90 EUROTUNNEL *PEACE DEAL* PAVES WAY TO NEW
 FUNDS
 04-09-90 US TAX *THREAT* TO BRITISH FIRMS
 12-12-90 TIP EUROPE RISES 17P AS RIVAL TIPHOOK BUYS
 NEAR -10% STAKE

The war/fight metaphor was very productive in the corpus. Instantiations of this metaphor were found in 13.5% of the headlines studied. This percentage suggests that business is seen in a particularly aggressive way. In fact, such conceptualisation of experience in terms of force and violent confrontation is not exclusive of business operations but reflects wider patterns of cognition which affect whole areas of our experience.⁵ The experiential grounding for such metaphors seems to be based on man's ultimate animal condition:

Animals fight to get what they want —food, sex, territory, control etc.— because there are other animals who want the same thing or who want to stop them from getting it. The same is true of human animals, except that we have developed more sophisticated techniques for getting our way. (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:61-65)

Throughout the centuries, man has had to fight for survival and enter into competition with others for the acquisition of food, shelter, mates etc. This natural inclination to “aggressiveness” of man as an animal delimiting and defending his territory, though supposedly suppressed and controlled by society and culture, subtly arises from the undercurrent of our deep consciousness in the form of metaphorical expressions which show how “aggressive” certain aspects of the conceptualisation of our life and culture can be.

⁵ This is a metaphor we live by in our culture and by means of which we conceptualise not only business but also many other experiential domains such as the domains of argument (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:4, 61-65; Johnson 1987: 105), love (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 49, 124; Gibbs 1994: 256; Barcelona 1992: 7-8), death (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 16), lust (Lakoff 1987: 411), politics (Bolinger 1980: 147; Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 156; Lakoff 1992; Gibbs 1994: 140-42; Boers and Demecheleer 1995: 687).

In this respect, the WAR metaphor generates a coherent network of entailments which provides the ground for certain inferences about business processes with serious ideological implications: companies are seen as enemies, fighters, adversaries; companies are threatened by other companies, if threats are not faced there is no chance of survival etc. Notice how in the headline “GOLDSMITH MAY JOIN PHILLIPS BID *BATTLE*” the two companies are shown as being engaged in a (bid) battle, with Goldsmith about to enter the battlefield. What could be a simple purchase operation is depicted in a very aggressive way. Similarly, in “RECORD SALES ADD WEIGHT TO DIXONS *FIGHTBACK*”, Dixons is portrayed as fighting, opposing resistance to a rival company which threatens its very existence. TIP Europe and Tiphook are also depicted as enemies in “TIP EUROPE RISES 17P AS *RIVAL* TIPHOOK BUYS NEAR -10% STAKE”, with the adjective “rival”, unnecessary in informational terms, emphasizing the hostile nature of the process.⁶

Business is physical confrontation. The use of “forceful tactics” is part of the picture. “IMPORTS *HIT* THE FOOTWEAR MARKET. UK SHARES [are] *HIT* BY WALL St SLUMP”. There was a “RANK *BLOW* TO WEST YORKSHIRE JOBS”.⁷ Even president Carter’s economic policy is explicitly described in fighting terms in “CARTER *FIGHT* TO CUT INFLATION APPROVED”.⁸ Examples like these show how the war/fight metaphor encodes a view of the world which assumes the combat model as the representation of reality.

Fights and wars, being what they are, portray a particularly ruthless and violent world. Their imagery leaves little room to conceive of business in terms of “joint problem solving” and harmonious cooperation. In business only the strongest survive. Success, meaning growth and profit, is victory in combat. Loss is the defeat of the army. Bad investments are tolls in battle. Shares and companies are often shown as the subjugated victims of military operations, as in the headline “BULLS ARE STILL IN *RETREAT*”.

The word “victim” is explicitly used in “A *VICTIM* OF LOW DEMAND”. This headline provides a particularly interesting case, as here the company is not depicted as actively responsible for the difficult situation it is going through, which may well be the result of careless planning, but is shown as suffering from the

⁶ In an article about BS (British Shipbuilders) a business executive is specifically portrayed as a fighter. When appointed to be in charge of BS, after a period of “sad economic state”. Mr. John X, was categorised as a “veteran streetfighter” (*The Times*, 25-07-87). It is interesting how the relaunching of the company is seen in need of the services of a man supposedly skilled in the dubious abilities necessary for streetfighting.

⁷ Notice how in this headline redundancy notices—more than two hundred—are depicted as a “rank blow” to the electronics industry; “rank” being a pun on the name of the company Rank Radio International.

⁸ War metaphorical linguistic expressions are also used in the body of the article: “measures were proposed as a way of *combating* inflation”, “certain proposals evoked *hostility* from Federal workers”, etc.

attack of adverse economic conditions. This example shows how metaphors can involve a potential bias which may be exploited for reasons of persuasion and manipulation.

This persuasive role of metaphors is particularly interesting. Metaphorical mappings necessarily highlight certain aspects of reality and hide others. Focusing on one set of properties may shift our attention away from others, and this can be subject to ideological exploitation, to cause a particular effect on the audience. Take, for example, the headline “CLERICAL STRIKE *THREATENS* DOCKS”; here the connotations of the word “threatens” appeal to the audience’s emotions, creating the impression that irreparable danger will result from the strike. Other features which may be relevant are, thus, obscured. War metaphors and the inferences generated can indeed be ideologically “effective” to justify actions carried out as being for the sake of the people involved. For example, if people view their company, economy etc., as being literally threatened by a hostile enemy, they may more easily accept measures which would otherwise be unpopular. In the same light, if people view their national economy as being threatened by foreign competition, they may more easily accept measures to enhance domestic competitive strength (extra incentives for investors, reducing employers’ labour costs, etc.). Again, if employees view their company as being engaged in a competitive struggle, they may be more likely to accept the necessity of proposed anti-social measures (freezing wages, giving up weak branches, etc.) and so on. According to Gibbs (1994: 145), several studies have shown that metaphors can indeed significantly change people’s attitudes toward various political and other topics (Bosman 1987; Bowers and Osborn 1966; Johnson and Taylor 1981; Read, Cesa, Jones and Collins 1990; Reinsch 1971). Metaphors can have great rhetorical power for communication and persuasion.

3.2 Business are journeys

This metaphor was also very productive. It was activated in 12.5% of the headlines in the sample. Here business is understood as a journey, that is, a directed movement in time through space from point A to point B. This conventional metaphor is part of a superordinate conceptual metaphor that can be labelled “(long term, purposeful) activity is a journey” (Lakoff 1988: 435-40). Our concept of a journey is, in turn, based on a projection onto it of the basic abstract, preconceptual spatial image schema of a path. Journeys are based on the source-path-goal schema (Johnson 1987, 1991; Lakoff 1987, 1988; The ability to impose a structural parallelism between the starting point, the intermediate stages and the endpoint of a path onto the beginning, the intermediate stages, and the final purpose of a business transaction is what makes this metaphor possible. As in the previous conceptual metaphor, there is a tight mapping according to which entities in the domain of business correspond systematically to entities in the domain of journeys. This invariant mapping gives rise to a tight correspondence between the cognitive

topologies of both the source and target domains. Some of the ontological correspondences established between source and target domains are:

Companies, workers are travellers on a journey. Business operations are pathways along which companies/workers move. Actions, transactions are movements made on journeys. Shares, transactions advance and go back, come and go. Profit is the end of the journey. Financial problems are obstacles/impediments on the path of the journey. The company that is successful is the traveller who first finishes the journey. The better a company/product performs, the farther along the path of the journey it gets, etc.

- 02-05-75 EQUITIES *ADVANCE* AGAIN
- 10-10-85 BET *ADVANCES* ON AMERICAN BUYING
- 29-06-74 BARCLAYS *GOES FOR* THE WEALTHIER INVESTOR
- 12-12-83 SYNTERIALS *SET FOR* HEALTHY PREMIUM
- 08-11-76 DUNFORD'S RECONSTRUCTION *MOVE*
- 11-11-86 TASTE OF THINGS *TO COME* FROM THE BIG APPLE
- 24-12-73 ITT'S *DRIVE* AT BRITISH CAR COMPONENTS
- 23-06-90 CHLORIDE'S *MOVE* FACES ACID REACTION⁹
- 20-10-73 MAGMA COPPER *BACK TO* NORMAL
- 13-04-82 A *JOLT* FOR THE BULLDOG BREED
- 19-08-89 *FURTHER* GAINS
- 14-05-82 BASE METALS ON A *SLOW* RECOVERY TREND
- 02-07-82 LOOKING *AHEAD*
- 20-08-74 SHORTAGE OF DIESEL ENGINE PARTS *OPENS WAY*
FOR TRUCK IMPORTERS
- 21-02-90 EUROTUNNEL PEACE DEAL *PAVES WAY* TO NEW
FUNDS
- 23-09-88 *FAST-MOVING* SPRING RAM LEAPS TO A 6.82M HALF-
TIME PROFIT
- 03-12-90 MILLER *LEADS* URBAN RENEWAL

These metaphorical linguistic expressions operate as linguistic realisations of the metaphor "business is a journey". According to the "logic" of the source domain, companies, transactions etc. are capable of movement. Steelmaker Dunford and Elliot's proposals for modification of its unsecured loan stock are depicted as a "RECONSTRUCTION *MOVE*". "BARCLAYS *GOES FOR* THE WEALTHIER INVESTOR", "SYNTERIALS *SET FOR* HEALTHY PREMIUM" and there is a "TASTE OF THINGS *TO COME* FROM THE BIG APPLE". Companies and

⁹ The company Chloride was likely to face criticism (acid reaction) from shareholders at the July 23rd annual meeting. In his study about the language of humour, Walter Nash (1985) refers to cases like these as pun-metaphors, highlighting the combination of word-play and metaphorical elaboration.

transactions move along paths and roads, which can be paved, as in "EUROTUNNEL PEACE DEAL *PAVES WAY TO NEW FUNDS*" or opened: "SHORTAGE OF DIESEL ENGINE PARTS *OPENS WAY FOR TRUCK IMPORTERS*". There are vehicles, too. In "ITT'S *DRIVE AT BRITISH CAR COMPONENTS*", ITT's incursion into the manufacture of car components is conveniently portrayed as a drive, thus comparing the company's performance to the driving of a vehicle.

It is interesting to note how the journey metaphor generates a network of entailments by means of which movement forward is positive: "BET *ADVANCES ON AMERICAN BUYING*", "EQUITIES *ADVANCE*", whereas movement backward is negatively evaluated as in "FINAL QUARTER *SETBACK IN US GROWTH*". Those companies that move fast are highly valued: "*FAST-MOVING SPRING RAM LEAPS TO A 6.82M HALF-TIME PROFIT*". The lead position is to be aimed for "*MILLER LEADS URBAN RENEWAL*". In business, it is not enough to stay quiet at a particular stage; profit is moving forward, advancing along the path to success: "*FURTHER GAINS*".

As these examples show, this metaphor imposes a view of the experiential reality of business as progress and movement. Business is not portrayed in a tranquil way. On the contrary, the necessity of moving forward is imposed onto the concept of business. To what extent can this metaphor be exploited for ideological purposes? It is hard to tell. However, one of its inferences, namely that moving forward is positive, certainly fits in nicely with western economic models that encourage economic growth: while stagnation (immobility) is generally considered as bad, economic growth (progress) is widely considered as a necessity (Boers and Demecheleer 1995: 684). This metaphor shows just one of the ways in which the experiential nature of business operations is perceived.¹⁰

3.3 Business is a living organism

In the corpus studied, we have also found a number of metaphorical linguistic expressions in which business undergoes a process of vivification, including the very pervasive device of personification. In these headlines, business is turned into an actor capable of acting and being acted upon. In its most general dimension, this gives us the metaphor "business is a living organism",¹¹ activated in 7% of the headlines in the corpus. By means of this metaphor:

¹⁰ The journey metaphor is also very productive in our conceptual system. It is used to conceptualise many other areas of experience such as love (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 44, 141; Barcelona 1992: 14; Lakoff 1993: 208, 224; Gibbs 1994: 124, 155), life (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 90; Taylor 1989: 134; Lakoff 1993: 223), purposeful activity (Lakoff 1987: 275, 435-40; 1988: 144), complex events (Lakoff 1987: 275, 1988: 144), argument (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 89-91; Johnson 1987: 105), careers (Lakoff 1987: 437; 1993: 224), progress of society (Taylor 1989: 134).

¹¹ In the headlines studied, metonymies abounded. In particular, the name of the company is often

Companies, products, business transactions have bodies with associated physical properties. Bodies which perform typical bodily functions: which are healthy, suffer from physical states of ailment, recover and get better etc.

Notice how bodily experiences are imposed on business transactions in the headlines below:

16-01-76 FINAL QUARTER SETBACK IN US *GROWTH*
 18-01-74 SLOWER *GROWTH* BEFORE 3-DAY WEEK
 15-03-90 *BARE ALL*, BERISFORD¹²
 12-11-81 LITTLE *COMFORT* FOR FURNITURE MAKERS

Often the focus is placed on the physical state of being healthy or ill. Business transactions and operations are presented as being healthy and fit; conversely, they are affected by various kinds of ailments and maladies from which companies suffer and eventually recover, or sometimes not, as the case may be. This metaphorical mapping is clearly based on bodily experiences related to our interaction with our environment. Physical health is associated with life expectancy and life quality, while illness and injury are associated with pain and death. Health is valued positively. Illness or injury typically undermine a patient's energy and mobility and consequently are considered as negative symptoms (Boers and Demecheleer 1995: 685). These associations are preserved when describing economy in terms of health, as in:

12-12-83 SYNTERIALS SET FOR *HEALTHY* PREMIUM
 20-10-73 MAGMA COPPER BACK TO *NORMAL*
 16-04-82 *SMARTING* FROM WINTER *SHOCK*¹³
 25-01-89 WATERFORD *RECOVERY* PUT ON THE SHELF
 14-05-82 BASE METALS ON A SLOW *RECOVERY* TREND

given for the name of the managing director or the executive board. According to Lakoff and Johnson 1980, metonymy is very common when institutions, businesses, organisations, countries, etc. are referred to. Metonymy and metaphor have often been described as distinct cognitive processes, but closer examination reveals fuzzy boundaries between the two phenomena (e.g. Goossens: 1990). It appears that they are in fact complementary (e.g. Boers: 1994). Taylor (1995: 139) and Barcelona (1997) have discussed the possible metonymic basis of metaphor. In the headlines studied, I have often found complex cases in which metonymy leads to personification. That is the case when companies and organisations are attributed characteristics of living creatures which result in personification. In these cases, metonymy may gradually move over to personification and consequently to metaphor: "Euro Route names chief executive" (19-06-85); "Low cost imports worry British textile industry" (22-03-73); "Dunford's reconstruction move" (08-11-76), etc.

¹² Apparently some information had been withheld from Berisford shareholders.

¹³ This refers to the company Combined English stores (specialist retailers) which at the time had a decrease in profits.

Notice how in “SYNTERIALS SET FOR *HEALTHY* PREMIUM” the intended premium is described as *healthy*. Similarly, in “SHARES *STRONG* AGAIN”, shares are depicted as having vigorous bodies, able to withstand the force of the market once again. On the contrary, in “*SMARTING* FROM WINTER *SHOCK*”, the company Combined English Stores (a specialist retailer) is in a painful state, suffering from a (£1m) decrease in profits. Companies can be affected and infected by all sorts of illnesses and diseases. Fortunately, after time and/or remedial action companies/ transactions eventually recover: “BASE METALS [are] ON A SLOW *RECOVERY* TREND” and get “BACK TO NORMAL”,¹⁴ being restored to a “fit” condition.

Again, we might wonder what the potential bias of this metaphor is. According to the logic of the health metaphor, the patient is not to be blamed for being affected by illness; accordingly companies are not to be blamed for falling ill. It does not matter if the cause of the malady is bad or irresponsible management on the part of the executives in charge, the company is nevertheless portrayed as an innocent victim suffering from ill health and in pain. If the patient does not get better, strong medication is required. It can be in the form of redundancies or any other appropriate measures.

Business can not only suffer from the common physical states that affect a living organism but also from psychological afflictions which imply a higher order being. Thus business is presented as a sentient being, with feelings and emotions such as tension, nervousness, shock and uncertainty. This metaphor has also been reported by White (1997) who points out that, in this case, the feeling dimension of the person predominates: “GILTS REMAIN NERVOUS” (02-11-74); “LOW COST IMPORTS WORRY BRITISH TEXTILE INDUSTRY” (22-03-73). The characteristic of the market that is put forward is that of vulnerability and fragility with reactions that are sometimes more of an emotional nature (White 1997: 237). Here, processes and decisions are shown not as the direct result of the activities of managers and workers but as the result of psychological states that may be difficult to control.

Business is not only presented in this passive role; as a sentient being, it is also portrayed as a rational agent, capable of performing rational functions such as those of interpretation, evaluation, judgement and decision taking. In these cases, it is the endogenous source of intellectual acts:

14-12-84 END CURBS ON TEXTILE IMPORTS, *SAYS STUDY*

¹⁴ This metaphorical representation of social problems as diseases is quite common. Norman Fairclough gives an interesting example when he discusses the representation of social riots in terms of the spread of cancer in a newspaper article. He shows that this metaphor implies a particular way of dealing with the problem: “one does not arrive at a negotiated settlement with cancer.... Cancer has to be eliminated, cut out” (Fairclough 1989: 120).

- 29-10-82 DISPOSAL *HELPS* MCKECHNIE
 19-06-85 EURO ROUTE *NAMES* CHIEF EXECUTIVE
 19-12-77 AUSTRALIA SEES NEW *HOPE* FOR URANIUM
 01-11-72 ANTI-INFLATION ACTION *HOPES HELP* THE POUND
 PUT ON 1.12 CENTS WITHOUT SUPPORT

These two characterisations of business, both as a sentient being affected by psychological states and as a rational being capable of right judgement, give us a particularly interesting contrast. It makes it possible to justify particular actions and decisions as the result of irrational forces or as the result of the “logic” of rational processes, as it suits the point of view adopted.

So far, we have seen diverse aspects of the conceptualisation of the metaphor “business as a living organism”. We can now move a step down the Great Chain of Being to the animal level. According to the Great Chain of Being metaphor—probably the most traditional and productive of our metaphorical resources according to Lakoff and Turner (1989: chapter 4)—, while still operating within the general domain of living organisms, the particular stage on the hierarchical level which is chosen is of primary significance. In business, when the animal level is used as a source domain, we have the metaphor “business is an animal”. It was activated in 2.5% of the headlines studied. The ontological correspondences are the following:

Companies/workers are flocks, herds, groups of animals. Good workers, business executives are pedigree/predator animals. Workers are animals. Companies are prey to predators, etc.

This metaphor is activated in headlines like the following:

- 06-03-87 DOW *RACES AHEAD* AGAIN
 23-06-72 POWER PLANT SUPPLIERS WANT HOME MARKET
 BOOST TO *SPUR EXPORTS*
 13-04-82 A JOLT FOR THE BULLDOG *BREED*
 11-09-86 JEFFERSON DERIDES LABOUR’S “*WEB OF*
 GOVERNMENT CONTROL”

Here business is presented as a horse, dog, spider, wolf, snake, etc., and consequently it is seen in connection with the attributes of strength, power, resistance, viciousness, traditionally associated with these animals. A particularly unsettling example is the implicit comparison of the Labour party with a spider in “JEFFERSON DERIDES LABOUR’S ‘*WEB OF GOVERNMENT CONTROL*’”. In this article, the Labour Party’s plans to “renationalize British Telecom were condemned ... as a respinning of the web of government interference and control”. The Labour Party’s economic policy is, therefore, compared with a spider web. It is a vicious trap designed to capture and control innocent victims and keep them as

“food”, prey to a cruel and merciless destiny. It is interesting to note how by means of this metaphor it is possible to depict aspects of business transactions as behaving in a way they should not (like predatory animals), with the implication that such behaviour in terms of the devouring of the weaker is to be censured as merciless. No doubt, there is a potential ideological bias in the use of metaphors such as these.

3.4 Business as a physical phenomenon

Business is also conceptualised as a physical phenomenon in 5.5 % of the headlines in the corpus. Here business transactions are depicted as entities, substances, and qualities of entities found in the natural world. See for example:

- 31-07-71 *FRESH* GAIN FOR BOVRIL
- 17-04-78 A *FRESH* VIEW OF PRODUCTIVITY
- 24-11-83 *AIR* OF OPTIMISM IN CURRENT SURVEYS
- 04-01-82 THE BANK FACES *LIQUIDITY* CRUNCH
- 16-10-86 JOBLESS PICTURE *BRIGHTENS*
- 22-03-73 MP SUGGESTS AUCTION OF IDCS BY WHITEHALL IN
“*OVERHEATED*” AREAS
- 26-12-89 RECORD SALES ADD *WEIGHT* TO DIXONS FIGHTBACK
- 13-04-78 CARTER FIGHT *TO CUT INFLATION* APPROVED
- 11-11-86 *TASTE OF THINGS* TO COME FROM THE *BIG APPLE*
- 30-11-90 BANKS UNDER *PRESSURE*
- 09-10-74 MARKS & SPENCER UNDER *PRESSURE*

Notice how business operations can be “savoured” as in “*TASTE OF THINGS TO COME FROM THE BIG APPLE*”, a pun metaphor already seen in connection with the journey conceptual metaphor. Inflation can be cut. “RECORD SALES ADD *WEIGHT* TO DIXONS FIGHTBACK”. And there is an “*AIR OF OPTIMISM IN CURRENT SURVEYS*” and a “*FRESH GAIN FOR BOVRIL*”. The positive connotations associated with light and brightness are exploited in “JOBLESS PICTURE *BRIGHTENS*”, while in contrast the danger that may result from heat is highlighted in ““*OVERHEATED*’ AREAS” (as in the headline “MP SUGGESTS AUCTION OF IDCS BY WHITEHALL IN ‘*OVERHEATED*’ AREAS”). When natural phenomena are used as source domain, the rationale of natural processes are imposed onto business operations.

Before finishing with the revision of the most prominent structural conceptual metaphors, it must be pointed out that occasional metaphorical linguistic realisations of other conceptual metaphors have also been found, for example BUSINESS IS SPORT:

- 03-06-75 SIEBE GORMAN 1-FOR-4 RIGHTS AND *RECORD*
PROFIT
- 28-08-70 *RECORD* QUARTER FOR WORLD SHIPPING ORDERS

23-09-88 *FAST-MOVING* SPRING RAM *LEAPS TO A* 6.82M
HALF-TIME PROFIT

26-12-89 *RECORD SALES* ADD WEIGHT TO DIXONS FIGHTBACK

I do not mention all these cases here, since in this study the emphasis is placed on the cognitive domains which are repeatedly selected. Only those conceptual metaphors which gave rise to at least five linguistic realisations have been considered.

3.5 Spatial conceptual metaphors, up-down scale schema

In this conceptual metaphor, the measurement of the profit made is conceived of in terms of scales. Business transactions move up-down along a vertical line: UP-DOWN. The scale schema (Johnson 1987:121-24) grounds this metaphor. This schema is a recurring pattern of our perceptual interactions and motor programs extracted from our recurring bodily experiences with the world. We experience things as being up or down on a vertical path going from A to B. The ontological correspondences are the following:

The more profit made, the higher the position on the vertical scale. The better a company/worker performs, the higher the company/worker is on the vertical scale. The worse a company/worker performs, the lower the company/worker is on the vertical scale. The higher the cost, etc., the higher the position on the vertical scale

This metaphor was activated in 10.5% of the headlines in the corpus. A selection of examples follows:

- 26-09-85 BANK'S *RISE*
- 12-12-90 TIP EUROPE *RISES* 17P AS RIVAL TIPHOOK BUYS
NEAR - 10% STAKE
- 15-01-83 *HIGH* INTEREST PLUS A CHEQUE BOOK
- 02-11-72 SIR PHILIP DE ZULUETA TAKES *TOP* POST AT
ANTONY GIBBS
- 17-02-73 PAYE CODING AND *HIGHER* TAX PAYMENTS UNDER
UNIFIED SYSTEM
- 21-03-78 *HIGHER* EXPENSES
- 06-01-78 GILTS *FALL BACK*
- 26-10-74 WIDESPREAD *FALLS* IN GILTS
- 16-07-82 *DRAMATIC DROP*
- 11-06-86 UK SHARES HIT BY WALL ST *SLUMP*
- 16-06-78 A VICTIM OF *LOW* DEMAND
- 16-10-76 *LOW-COST* COVER FOR WHEELCHAIRS
- 13-06-85 SHARES *SLIDE*

01-12-75 UPHILL GOING BECOMES HARDER FOR EQUITIES

In business, the more money you earn the better. Here PROFIT IS UP. PROFIT IS UP has, therefore, a clear experiential basis in the amount of money received in exchange for goods or services. It is coherent with MORE IS UP and GOOD IS UP. It must be noted, however, that MORE IS UP can also be used in a negative sense to refer to increases in costs, because MORE IS UP seems to have priority over GOOD IS UP, as can be seen in examples like “Inflation is rising” or “the crime rate is going up” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 23). It is not that there are many different ups; rather, verticality enters our experience in many different ways and so gives rise to many different metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:19).

The cultural elaboration of this physical experience can be seen in our imposing numerical gradients on a scale and in how we calibrate scales in terms of fixed units of measurement. In business this is the typical presentation of profit making, for example in the Stock Exchange index. This explains why so often we speak about rises and falls in shares and gilts, when they are impervious in themselves to such physical changes etc. The mere mathematical figure in itself does not say much, except maybe for the expert, but the concept of a rise or fall is more easily apprehended. It focuses on the aspect which presumably is of most interest to the reader. The schema of scale likewise functions as the source domain for many other metaphorical mappings which are understood in terms of an up-down distinction.¹⁵

3.6 Container

In these headlines, the source domain or image-schema of container (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 29; Lakoff 1987: 271-73, 434, 1988: 141; Johnson 1987: 21-22, 34-35; Taylor 1989: 134) is also very productive. It was found in 5 % of the headlines in the sample. The container schema consists of a boundary distinguishing an interior from an exterior and defines the most basic distinction between in and out. The ontological correspondences highlighted in this metaphorical mapping are:

Business transactions are spatial bounded regions or containers. Business actions enter and take place within the bounded region. Business actions get out of containers.

The following examples contain linguistic realisations of this metaphor:

¹⁵ Such as the more-less in measurements of intensity, weight, speed, pressure, etc. (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 16; Lakoff 1993: 214). Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 14-17) give many examples of metaphors in which the up-down schema is the source domain structuring concepts such as happy-sad, conscious-unconscious, healthy/alive-sick/dead, controlled-uncontrolled or strong-weak, high status-low status, good-bad, rational-emotional, etc.

- 28-12-85 THE YEAR WHEN SO MANY INVESTMENTS *WENT INTO*
THE RED
13-05-87 PROFIT-TAKERS *MOVE IN*
18-04-78 MOST PAY SETTLEMENTS "*WITHIN* THE GUIDELINES"
04-12-87 ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND *IN* PROFIT
01-04-88 *BUYOUTS* AT DUTCH HABITAT
26-07-75 PICKING *OUT* PERSONAL POLICIES
31-01-83 UNIVERSITIES MAY *EXPLOIT* RESEARCH
10-09-77 WHEN THE FLAT'S THROWN *IN* WITH THE JOB¹⁶

The container image-schema is deeply grounded in the most immediate of all our experiences, our own human body. The experiential base of containment is the human body with its surface, the skin, separating the inside from the outside, the rest of the world. The human body is a three-dimensional container into which we put things and out of which other things emerge. We also manipulate objects placing them in and taking them out of containers. The schema of container is so important in our conceptualisation of the world that, not surprisingly, it functions as the source domain for many other metaphorical mappings which extend our body-based understanding of things in terms of container schemata to a large range of abstract concepts.¹⁷

CONCLUSION

Clearly this study focused only on the most prominent metaphors used in the headlines of the business section of *The Times* newspaper between 1970 and 1990. To get a full picture of the conventional patterns of thought used to conceptualise business operations, a corpus-based study of the frequencies and distributions of conceptual metaphors in the text of the articles is needed. Only then shall we get a more complete overview of the assumptions, values and attitudes which are part of the way this activity is conceived of in the newspaper studied.

¹⁶ This headline refers to a Finance Act which received the Royal Assent on July 29th. It contained some important provisions, one of them concerning living accommodation provided for employees at inexpensive or zero rent.

¹⁷ These intangible concepts are, for example, personal relationships (Lakoff 1987: 272, 1988: 141), emotional and physical states (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 130; Taylor 1989: 134), visual fields (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 30; Lakoff 1987: 272, 1988: 141), activities (areas of human interest, study, occupation, etc.), argument (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 92; Johnson 1987: 105), classical categories (Lakoff 1993: 212), ideas (Reddy 1979; Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 10), life (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 51), linguistic items (Reddy 1979: 190-91; Taylor 1989: 134), locations (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 30), people (or their bodily parts, e.g. eyes, heart, mind), etc.

Other aspects also deserve further investigation: for example, it would be interesting to examine: the conceptual metaphors used by different newspapers (quality vs. tabloid) and the ideological implications involved; the conceptual metaphors associated with different varieties of business discourse such as business letters, reports etc.; the use of metaphorical language which reflects different ideological perspectives (e.g., free market vs socialist), etc. All this would contribute to shed light on to how reasoning about business is performed in the particular culture and society studied.

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