

Corpus-based Analysis of Conceptualization of Economy in Business Newspaper Discourse

Xuefei Zhao

College of Foreign Languages, Ocean University of China, Qingdao 266000, China

Abstract

This paper intends to build a corpus based on the commercial articles retrieved from UK quality newspapers from 2017 to 2021 as a research platform, and analyze the different conceptualizations of business English newspapers relying on previous research related to metaphorical business discourse. To identify conceptual metaphors by means of concordance programs, the titles of different source and target domains were inserted into the program, with the result processed and produced manually. Based on the research methods of corpus linguistics and the fact that metaphors and conceptual metaphors can easily penetrate and pervade into business English conversation and its rhetoric devices, This proposal intends to reveal the potential categories of conceptualization of economy in business newspaper discourse.

Keywords

Conceptual Metaphors; Business English Press; Source Domain; Target Domain.

1. Introduction

Metaphors pervade our daily life. It covers many aspects, backgrounds, contexts, and disciplines: philosophy, applied linguistics, cognitive linguistics, corpus application and pedagogy. Such pervasiveness takes advantage of the interdisciplinary nature of metaphor, since it is not limited to ordinary language but is rooted in discourse of specification. As a result, an increasing number of studies have emphasized the role of metaphors in research findings as well as specialized language use. In 2008, Vereza discovered that metaphor, as an ubiquitous phenomenon in the use of most languages, shifts from ordinary discourse to scientific discourse. In 2012, Skorczynska presents the vertical variants of metaphor, which takes advantage of a vertical cycle of metaphors from the common specialization level to more specialized domains that need to change the pattern of metaphorical collocation. (Skorczynska 2012).

We will focus our research in the field of specialized use of the English language, and more specifically in a broad range of business types, on the business and economic discourse described by the British mainstream business press.

2. Literature Review

Cognitive linguistics embeds metaphor in thinking. Corpus-based Linguistics connects metaphor with the language in use. The application of a two theory has led to a debate about which theory produces comprehensively abundant results with an increase in effectiveness and accuracy. Researchers in Cognitive linguistics tend to rely on lexical methods, intuition, quality, and the revelation of context-independent metaphors, or hypotheses created in specific contexts to demonstrate and achieve the research purpose. Corpus linguistics prefers instances drawn from natural texts, relies on the method contributed by quantitative analysis and utilizes frequency. Corpus linguists counter that traditional cognitive-language scholars use fictional material, while the coordination program expresses words according to context. Coopers

linguists also object to cognitive language scholars such as Yakov, Johnson, Gibbs, Kovic and others using language to explain the cognitive theory of metaphor.

Zoltan Kovecses, a CMT's supporter thinks that quality, not quantity, is the most important part of the study of conceptual metaphor. Kovecses (2011) practices research on the different levels of analysis of metaphors: lexical as well as the corpus approach, and identifies two approaches that are close to the CMT: the bottom-up approach focuses on the study of metaphor expression in Corpora, whereas traditional CMTs prefer to study the internal structure of metaphorical expression from the top down. He also asserted that corpora and traditional methods must be combined for a complete metaphorical analysis, and that the quantitative perspective has to be complemented by qualitative perspectives: in the study of metaphor, we should see that our different goals and approaches are complementary and compatible, not superior or inferior to the other. This view is shared by Corpus-based linguist, Vereza, who argued that combining the two perspectives to analyze conceptual metaphors would yield better results. The corpus method and the cognitive method should complement each other in order to better analyze conceptual metaphors.

As an alternative to the traditional method, the Corpus-based approach complements the study of conceptual metaphors and brings new insights, as metaphors can be explored in larger data sets. Corpus is useful in calculating and collecting the frequency of existing target metaphor types, and such tools generate advanced results in treating gender and cultural differences, discovering findings about language use that might have been hidden in previous studies. Corpora can be used to identify new categories of concepts. A small corpus allows for an in-depth analysis of metaphors, while a large corpus utilizes the realization and frequency of language metaphors. Corpus linguists believe that the study of metaphor in the corpus can help us better understand metaphor and the textual elements involved in metaphor.

Supporters of the Corpus-based approach reveal the advantages of corpus in conceptualization and its relative research, and point out the limitations in exploring conceptual metaphors, which they can not identify metaphors that are innovative. A headword inserted into a concordancing program does not produce a metaphorical implementation. Researchers have to rely on intuition to identify its metaphorical realisations. (Dignan 1999). In many cases, researchers rely more on intuition than on programs to identify conceptual metaphors.

Corpus linguistics provides a conceptual metaphorical analysis of the language in use in terms of pragmatics and ESP. Zanotto and others argued in 2008 that embedding metaphors in a text provides a multifaceted phenomenon and an advantage for research in the real world. (ZanottoEtal.2008:2).

The economists, Blake and Ennis (2001), draw on the universality of metaphors in academic writings, outline the existence of metaphor in the economic literature, and regard metaphor as a stylistic resource on which financial affairs journalists rely. Charter and russo regard the pragmatic nature of metaphor as a rhetorical device to influence opinion that the language user shapes the speech and thus the metaphorical language.

Inside business discourse, conceptual metaphors, as a frequent rhetoric device applied, can be obtained by processing scientific as well as academic sources accompanied by examining - commercial - quality newspapers. Previous studies on metaphors in business contexts have explored a number of aspects related to conceptual metaphors in professional discourse: genre - specific the metaphors ,the metaphor probability in cross language corpora and specialized discourse metaphor variation, as well as hyperbole in discourse in business. We will consequently apply and employ the approach to conceptual metaphors in the target business discourse in the study. In all cases, corpus has demonstrated itself as a valuable tool for quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Koller conducted quantitative analysis to detect the frequency of war and relational metaphors, and to analyze how cognitive patterns behind discourse are embodied in advertising and marketing. Her methodology was corpora-based, which the author accumulated and collected, involving articles occurred in business magazines and newspapers, and meanwhile extracted conceptual metaphors in primary discourse: advertising and secondary discourse, magazines and business newspapers. (Koller, 2008)

Metaphor studies lie in a wide range of economic genres, including Belinda Crawford Camiciottoli, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, who conducted a Corpus-based survey of the hyperbole devices used in economics lectures and business ones. The methodology adopted a qualitative approach in data analysis, the results of which were based on the fact that business and economics courses used hyperbole to persuade listeners and to motivate students to perceive critically. The authors argue that perception of the function and effectiveness of figurative usage in hyperbole can provide insights into more subjects while revealing novel tendencies in the pedagogy of the relevant subjects.

Hanna Skorczynska studies metaphors in the discourse of business management. The basic idea is that the metaphor used in the general business genre runs through the more specialized commercial genres that form different metaphorical structures. The author first hypothesizes that some general metaphors from a particular domain are reused at a more professional level, providing different cognitive structures and various metaphorical expressions. This method is based on corpus, and the author collects two kinds of corpus: general business discourse for material and project management. The results indicate that there exist distinctions in applying metaphors in both general and more specialized discourse samples within the same domain of knowledge (Skorczynska, 2012).

Popescu analyzes the economic conceptualization of the Romanian and British media. Her credo is that metaphor for the cultural categories embodied in community languages that share common features in a given cultural heritage matrix. Her research draws on corpus linguistics and cultural linguistics (Popescu, 2017). The corpora are based on sources which range from research papers, business press, university lectures, and websites (Skorczynska 2012, Holmgreen 2012, Koller 2008).

3. Research Design

3.1. Preparation for Research

3.1.1. The Research Corpus

We start from the premise stressed by linguistic metaphor and trigger the existence of conceptual metaphor in a particular discourse. For our analysis, we have assembled a corpus of articles from commercial newspaper articles, from Britain's top publishing houses. The collection contains more than 600,000 words and the articles cover the period from 2017 to 2021. This paper intends to use newspapers discourse and its textual contents from the assembled corpus from September 2017 to June 2021 to build a corpus for analysis.

UK newspapers include: The Economist, the Telegraph, the Guardian and The Financial Times. The headwords analyzed are clustered around economy, our special focus being the way economy is conceptualized. Search the following headwords by the assembled corpus: Ailing, Branch, Decline, Growth, Heart, Infect, Lifeblood, Prosperous, Rich, Root, Stable, Stagnant, Strength, Strong, Trap, Wealth, Well-being.

3.1.2. The Establishment of Business English Newspaper Corpus

1. Convert the document to text in TXT format using AntFileConverter.
2. Alter filenames with Rename-superb Batch Renames.
3. Employ EncodeAnt to switch the encoding of text to UTF-8.

4. Apply PowerGrep to add text to the original source to ensure the RAW text be transited to metadata.
5. Select words in the target domain and also the source domain.
6. Tag part-of-speech and headwords from both target and source domain with TreeTagger.
7. Use the Online English tagger to accomplish word semantic and lexical tagging.
8. Set up corpus after inspection, proofreading ,organization of the tagged discourse.

3.1.3. The Application of Corpus Analysis Tools

Corpus analysis tools are essentially employed in further research, including the following concordancers : AntConc, Sketch Engine, WordSmith Tools, BNC, etc.

3.2. Research Steps and Methods

Metaphor is studied from a new perspective in corpus linguistics. We agree that corpus opens up new avenues for studying conceptual metaphor. We think corpus can capture gene-based metaphor, gender differences, cross-language comparison of different conceptual approaches, and cultural differences. The benefits of a Corpus-based approach in conceptual metaphor research are well known. We will discuss the processing and exploration strategies used by Corpus-based researchers studying conceptual metaphors. We believe that analyzing a specific subclass is more efficient than identifying a corpus using keywords. However, treating a wide range of business types allows us to examine the vertical shift of metaphors in commercial contexts. (Skorczynska 2012)

We begin with the premise emphasized by linguistic metaphor and trigger conceptual metaphor in a particular discourse. We used articles from The Economist, Telegraph, Guardian, and Financial Times as a corpus for our analysis. The collection includes over 600,000 words and articles from 2017 to 2021. We used the corpus method to analyze Ennis (2001), Musolf (2003), Veronika Koller (2006), and Anatol Stefanowitsch (2006) visions: choosing words from the target and source domains, running the indexing program, and interpreting the results. The paper's focus is on the economy's conceptual framework. The headings all produce results within the text, but we only choose and cite them economically. In some cases, market and financial outcomes are more symbolic than economic and system outcomes.

The first phase of our research includes a coordinated program to identify linguistic metaphors. The number of hits generated by headlines is not a sign of metaphorical meaning, and these findings are manipulated to determine conceptual metaphors. The artificial processing stage recognizes conceptual metaphors based on linguistic metaphor, clusters metaphors around conceptual categories, and analyzes their frequency and language implementation. We will focus on implementing conceptual metaphors.

4. Research Results

4.1. The Categorization of Potential Conceptualizations of Economy

4.1.1. Economy is Plant

The conceptual category is realized through lexical units, such as growth, branches, and roots. Most clicks refer to a company / company offshoot as a subsidiary, a root and branch reform, and a reorganization, with a major mix of branching: opening / closing / selling / buying / operating / establishing a branch. This plant has no metaphorical meaning in the corpus.

1. The introduction of a digital currency **boost economic growth** in developing countries, though but it is not without risks, Bank of America said (FT, 2018, May 2nd)

4.1.2. Healthy Economy is a Healthy Organism

A strong economy is usually described as a healthy economy, and in the main body, the emergence of a strong / powerful / strengthened economy refers to finance. A healthy economy is moving forward, while a collapsed one is going backwards.

1. The barometer, however, which USES five colors to measure the health of the economy, flashed blue for nine months in a row, indicating a recession.(TELEGRAPH, 2017, September 13th)

2. President Donald Trump inherited a strong economy that continued to grow at a healthy pace during his first three years in office. (EC, 2020 December 14th)

4.1.3. Economy is a Patient

This category is achieved mainly through recycling and pending recycling. Economic recovery occurs to varying degrees: slow, rapid, robust, complete, making progress, stopping / halting depends on the measures taken by stakeholders to improve the economic situation. Weakening / weakening of the banking system, primarily used in the economy of a country, i.e. the evolution and recovery of its currency. The disease / illness is mainly used in the banking system, and we can infer that a sick banking sector is necessarily a sickly economy.

1.Australia' s trade minister said wednesday that if chinese students heeded government warnings not to attend school because of racism, their economies would suffer their first recession in 30 years. (GUARDIAN, 2019 June 28th).

2. The economy is recovering rapidly and will reach the overall GDP levels expected before people hear about Covid-19.(EC, 2017 September 6th)

4.1.4. Economy is an Engine / Machine

1. The next brick in the overheated economic wall could come later this week with the latest data from the us job market. (EC, 2017 May 4th)

2. The wheels to power the country's economic rebound were looking pretty well oiled. (FT, 2019 January 2nd)

4.1.5. Economy is a Vehicle

1. The slowdown is mainly due to a sharp fall in fixed asset investment, the biggest driver of the Chinese economy.(FT, 2018 June 14th)

2.Although china has made great strides in science, technology and innovation since 2019, its ambitions to become an innovative-oriented economy may have reached a crossroads, and the road ahead is even harder, according to the unesco science report, published on june 11th.(TELEGRAPH, 2019 September 19th)

According to the analysis, the following results are expected: the key conceptualization of the economy, as a biological organism, plant and human, is related to the economy. The economy has also been conceptualized as vehicles, engines, people, plants.

5. Conclusion

Based on the above text extracted by the corpus, views on recognizing conceptual metaphors tend to use a unified program supported by manual comments. After the above study, we are convinced that the Corpus-based methodology enables us to have a concise understanding of the embedding between source domains and target domains, as well as the expansion of embedded quantities, both of which enhance and explain the validity of the further refined research.

The evolution of the economic system shows a close connection with that of financial systems in each region in the business discourse, and if the financial system functions well, so will economies. Business schools use metaphor as a stylistic device, using its aesthetic function of

embellishing language, and as rhetorical devices to convince readers that measures must be employed and applied in improving the economy. The potential categorization of differentiated conceptualization analyzed are developed in the means of lexical realization and help to shape different economic images. The limitations of the current study lie in that the present proposal of research is unable to cover all categories of economic conceptualization. Therefore, other categories of conceptualization of the economy should be treated as the subject of future research.

References

- [1] Biber D, Conrad S , Cambridge R R. An Introduction to Corpus Linguistics. Corpus Linguistics : Investigating Language Structure and Use, 2003.
- [2] Charteris-Black J, Ennis T. A comparative study of metaphor in Spanish and English financial reporting [J]. *English for Specific Purposes*, 2001, 20(3):249-266.
- [3] Herteg C. Money and money-related metaphors in business English[J]. *New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2016, 2(7):54-59.
- [4] Koller V. Brothers in arms:contradictory metaphors in contemporary marketing discourse.[M]. 2008.
- [5] Lakoff G, Johnson M . *Metaphors We Live By* [J]. *Ethics*, 1980, 19(2):426–435.
- [6] Popescu T. *METAPHORICAL CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF ECONOMY IN ROMANIAN AND BRITISH BUSINESS PRESS* 1. 2017.
- [7] Skorczynska H. Metaphor and knowledge specialization in business management: The case of project management discourse[M].
- [8] Vereza, S. (2008). Exploring metaphors in corpora. A study of "war" in corpus generated data. *Confronting metaphor in use. An applied linguistic approach* (pp. 163-180). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- [9] Zanotto, M. S., Cameron, L., & Cavalcanti, M.C. (2008). (Eds.). *Confronting metaphor in use. An applied linguistic approach*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.