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PRAGMATIC POTENTIAL OF BODY METAPHORS IN ARTICLE HEADLINES OF MODERN MASS MEDIA DISCOURSE

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Abstract. The article focuses on metaphoric expressions, which are viewed from the point of view of cognitive hypothesis, as a permeating feature of everyday language. The study investigates the linguistic aspect of employing body metaphors and their pragmatic potential in modern mass media discourse. The data appear to show that body metaphor is a complex phenomenon with complex directions of mappings, which can be represented by a huge variety of patters. A conclusion was also made about the main functions of metaphors in the analyzed discourse as well as their pragmatic value.

Key words: metaphor, conceptual metaphor, body metaphor, mass media discourse, cognitive linguistics, linguistic pragmatics.

Introduction

Modern society is greatly dependent on information and information technologies, so mass media retain immense popularity during the last decades, having influence on readers' judgements and opinions as by performing not only an informative function, but also a persuasive one.

Headlines perform an essential function in modern mass media, as they are aimed at capturing the readers' attention and generating their interest in the content of the article. Another vital function of the headlines is to set expectations for the type of information that is represented in the article. Thus, headlines are characterized as containing formal means of expression, designed to reproduce material in an information-rich and concise way [7]. While trying to draw readers' attention to important events or inducing the readers to adopt a certain standpoint, authors resort to using different linguistic forms, metaphors in particular.

Metaphor is an expression that describes a person or object by referring to something that is considered to have similar characteristics to that person or object. Visual and linguistic communication inherently includes the use of metaphors. Studies have demonstrated that certain metaphors can impact various cognitive processes, including memory, reasoning, and judgments [5, pp. 385-406.]. Cognitive linguists define metaphor as reference to one domain (known as the target, theme, or base domain) with vocabulary more commonly associated with another domain (known as the source domain, or vehicle). Thus constructed, metaphoric language is the manifestation of conceptual structure organized by a cross-domain mapping: a systematic set of correspondences between the source and target that result from mapping frames or cognitive models across domains [4]. Perceiving metaphor as a conceptual mapping from source domain (a broad concept) into target domain (a narrow concept), allows us to make a conclusion that metaphor is permeating not



only as a stylistic device employed in literature, but in every sphere of human communication [8].

Metaphor has a profound effect on creating and interpreting the meaning the author wants to convey. It is used to elucidate and explain feelings, emotions and relationships. Writers also use metaphors as a way of describing objects, giving additional explanations or referring to something else in a brief and effective way. In this respect, metaphor is widely considered to be very productive in terms of creating concomitant names of the objects while reproducing the author's opinion on certain topics. This determines the importance of conducting research on body metaphors in modern mass media discourse.

Overview of the external environment

From ancient times human body and physicality have become an object of philosophical, psychological, sociological, cultural and anthropological research. In modern sciences the concept of 'body' represents not only the body with its physical qualities, but it also symbolizes a human's life as the highest value [1]. Thus, such characteristics as "dead" / "alive", "healthy" / "sick", "clean" / "dirty" as well as the notions of body parts, their functions, diseases, symptoms and effects are related to the linguistic concept of body.

A significant contribution to studying human body was made by M. Johnson. In his book 'The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason' he contemplated on how body produces meaning and made a conclusion that a person's imagination and mental activity arise from bodily experiences, which create a field for developing thought and language. Having conducted a multi-dimensional analysis of meaning, which includes qualities, images, emotions and metaphors, he determined that it has roots in a human body [6].

In the twenty-first century body metaphors are studied from the point of view of linguoculturology (Z. Kövecses, A. Musolff, N. Yu), phraseology (F. C. Chinyuka, O. V. Trofimova), functional linguistics (V. I. Shebanova), comparative linguistics (I. Ibarretxe-Antunano). In spite of numerous research on body metaphors, the tendencies of employing body metaphors in mass media discourse and their linguistic-pragmatic value have not been fully elucidated.

Input data and methods

Therefore, the main aim of the research is to identify and describe the role and linguistic-pragmatic features of using body metaphors in modern mass media discourse.

The objectives of the research encompass studying the theoretical foundations of cognitive mappings through metaphorical conceptualization in modern English mass media discourse, selecting a set of examples from article headlines that contain metaphors that refer to a 'body concept', defining the functional and semantic roles in conveying the author's beliefs and ideas and making a conclusion about the usage of body metaphors in mass media discourse.

According to the aim and objectives of the research, we have used qualitative and quantitative linguistic methods. The methods of critical analysis and definition analysis were applied to gain some information about the theory of body metaphors. The method of sampling was used to elicit and provide the examples. The method of



cognitive modeling was used to define the most important features and qualities of the body metaphors and identify the main kinds of cognitive transfers in mass media discourse. The method of contextual interpretation was applied to offer insights into how the theoretical foundations of body metaphors make sense in a certain context.

Results of the research

To carry out our analysis we have chosen a corpus of 10 article headlines from a daily newspaper 'The Telegraph', published in 2023, containing the concept "body" to carry out an analysis. The conclusion was made about the role of body metaphors in mass media discourse and linguistic-pragmatic value while creating the author's individual world mapping. By employing body metaphors in article headlines, writers interpret some events in their own way and set a background for the events, happening in the main part of the article. With the help of it, they impart personal views, ideas and beliefs, producing some influence on the readers.

Discussion and analysis of results

In this section we would like to present the analysis of article headlines containing body metaphors.

1. *Suella Braverman survives **bruising day** but many Tories say she cannot last much longer* [16].

The sentence contains a noun *day* modified by the adjective *bruising*. In a bruising battle or encounter, people fight or compete with each other in a very aggressive or determined way [3]. At the lexical level, the author creates a metaphor, the cognitive basis of which encourages the reader to confront a healthy body with a diseased or sore one. Subconsciously, a person associates bruises with something long-lasting and causing pain as they remind people about their previous unpleasant experience. In our opinion, the author of the article presumes that Suella Braverman will have to face the consequences of her actions or even receive a punishment. Consequently, in the abovementioned political context cause and effect relationship occupies a central place.

2. *Peter Bone loses seat, triggering new **by-election headache** for Sunak* [14].

In this example, as in the previous one, the concept of a "diseased body" is traceable. Metaphorically, headache is used to denote a problem that is hard to solve or a complicated task. Moreover, headache can be not just an illness, which can be cured with a pill, but a symptom of a more serious disease. In this example the issue may be deeper than it appears and it takes time and consideration to come to grips with it, so the metaphor carries out a function of warning.

3. *Israel now **faces a dreadful dilemma*** [11].

The abovementioned metaphoric example is a case of verbalization — a *face* (part of the body) — *to face* (to confront, to cope with). If you face something difficult or unpleasant, you will be affected by it and deal with it. The metaphor is based on the contiguity of functions. The text implies that Israel will have to make a stark choice which might lead to far-reaching consequences, so the main function of body metaphor in the given context is to predict or warn about future events.

4. *Britain is paying **the deadly price** for telling the public to 'protect the NHS'* [10].

A similar function of the body metaphor can be found in this example, but the



expression is based on the contrast of alive and dead body. In various cultures death is conceived in different ways. For some peoples it is merely a new beginning, for others — it is an end, something horrible and inevitable. The author holds the latest view, therefore he uses the lexeme *deadly* put emphasis on the seriousness of the situation and implies that adverse consequences might follow after it.

5. *Sunak's **fatal flaw** is he's not a people person - and bringing Lord Cameron in highlights that fact* [17].

It becomes clear from the headline that the article compares and contrasts two people — Rishi Sunak and Lord Cameron. In this case the metaphoric expression adds additional characteristics to the person being described, i. e. examines an emotive-evaluative aspect, which reflects the interaction between a person and reality.

6. *It **takes guts** to interrupt a president. But Jean-Pierre isn't your average press secretary: she's a Vogue star* [12].

Guts are the organs of human or animal body. Metaphorically *to take guts* means to have enough bravery and determination to do something unpleasant or difficult, which other people cannot do. In the article Jean-Pierre is described as a direct, determined and even blunt person, so the author outlined main characteristics of a person in the headline, trying to capture readers' attention. Such function of metaphor can be defined as pragmatic-emotive; it has influence on the emotinal sphere of the addressee and contributes to forming a specific attitude to a person, object or a phenomenon.

7. *Letters: Russia's latest act of extreme brutality should be **a wake-up call** to the West* [13].

The phrasal verb *wake up*, which transformed into an adjective in the given example, also refers to a 'body' concept as a body, which used to be asleep and inactive changed its state and now it is about to start working. The metaphor in this example performs an argumentative function, in which the author of the article induces some people to take action in difficult political circumstances.

8. *Suella Braverman gets to **the heart of the matter*** [15].

The heart is considered to be one of the most important human organs, since it pumps blood throughout a body. As a cultural and linguistic concept it can be interpreted in different ways — as a symbol of love, grace, tenderness, intelligence, compassion. As the heart is located in the chest, almost in the centre of human body, it is often used to indicate something important in a system or organization. So, due to being culturally-specific, in this example the heart is perceived as a container with a great depth, an object of high value.

9. *BBC's former **head of television** calls for independent review of Israel-Hamas war coverage* [9].

The lexeme *head* has been conceptualized a great number of times and is extensively used as a trite metaphor to describe a person who guides a group or organization. S. Niemeier divides the expressions containing the word *head* into three subcategories according to its meaning: head as a locus of reasoning, head as a control centre and head as a container. Primarily it is seen as the locus of rational thought, which is associated with abilities like intelligence, logic, flexibility,



imagination and perception [2, pp. 195-213]. As we can see in the example above, *a head of something* represents a transference by function in which the first two categories (the head as a locus of reasoning, the head as a control centre) overlap.

10. *'Unspeakable pain' as Ukrainian ministerial team is wiped out in helicopter crash* [18].

The lexeme *pain* is used to describe feelings associated with misfortunes. The metaphor is based on a synaesthetic transference according to the "sound-touch" model, as the noun *pain* is premodified by the adjective *unspeakable*, i. e. something that is too bad to be expressed in words. The synaesthetic touch in this expression foreshadows the description of tragic scenery and provides dramatic setting.

Closing and conclusions

Having conducted our research on body metaphors in mass media discourse, we can make a conclusion that they are widely used in mass media discourse to express and transfer feelings and attitudes of the speaker, persuade the audience with respect to taking a course of action or a point of view, make the reader comprehend the phenomena described in the text better and express some cognitive insights. It should be pointed out that basic conceptual models may undergo certain transformations depending on the authors intention, so the language used by the author benefits to facilitating a specific pragmatic effect.

Language is an effective tool to convey thoughts from the author to reader. Each metaphor used by a writer produces a certain impression on readers and reveals the style of the author from different sides. The usage of body metaphors in mass media discourse is closely connected with the conceptual system of native speakers, the way they view the world as well as assess different objects or phenomena. Some of the examined metaphors have become trite and have almost no value to creating new conceptual images, but most of the analyzed examples depict fresh mappings and require further scientific research.

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