THE USE OF PICTORIAL AND MULTIMODAL METAPHORS IN EDITORIAL CARTOONS DEPICTING THE EURO CRISIS

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Abstract: Metaphors have proved essential to the description, explanation and understanding of economic and financial phenomena over the years. Much of the research into this topic has focused only on verbal metaphors so far. The purpose of this paper is to identify and analyse the pictorial and multimodal metaphors used in editorial cartoons for the description of the euro crisis. The cartoons used in economic and financial editorials depict aspects of the euro crisis in an original way making use of metaphors, metonyms, image schemas, symbols and colours. All the editorial cartoons analysed in this paper were taken from The Economist.

Keywords: Conceptual Metaphor Theory; pictorial metaphors; multimodal metaphors; metonyms; image schemas.

1. Introduction

The global financial and economic crisis, which started in 2008, originated in America and was triggered by the burst of the United States housing bubble in 2006. The housing bubble caused a dramatic fall of the securities related to the U.S. real estate pricing, and therefore affected financial institutions worldwide. The European Union was no exception and the financial institutions in this area started to feel the domino effect of the global financial crisis at the beginning of 2009, when ten central and eastern European banks admitted of being in trouble and had no other alternative but to ask for a bailout.

Moreover, economic growth in the eurozone was slow and unequally distributed in the following months, which led to the creation of gaps between the member states in terms of economic performance. Given the difficult economic and financial conditions, the fact that some of the European countries in the eurozone unwillingly admitted to being unable to repay their government debt came as no surprise. The first country facing this situation was Greece, which was soon followed by other countries such as Spain, Ireland, Portugal, Cyprus and Romania. Therefore, they had no option but to ask for financial help from third-party financial institutions like the European Central Bank or the International Monetary Fund.

Besides the effects created at general or governmental and institutional level, the global financial crisis has also produced effects at individual level, since the attempts made to avert the crisis and the measures taken by governments to remedy the situation have had dire consequences for the population of the eurozone countries affected by the crisis.

Taking into consideration the dimension of the events and the consequences they had at European level, the eurozone crisis has received extensive media coverage. It is worth noticing that the texts and images that journalists have used in economic and financial editorials frequently turn to metaphor to describe and explain economic and financial concepts and phenomena, and the eurozone crisis is no exception. In broad terms, the use of metaphors aids comprehension of these phenomena, thus helping readers to better understand these complex realities.

White (1996) argues that metaphors are extensively used in press discourse and provides evidence that help him reach the conclusion that they are essential to textual cohesion and coherence, thus enhancing the communicative aspect of press discourse.

Considering the aforementioned, the aim of this paper is to identify and analyse the pictorial and multimodal metaphors used in economic and financial editorials to describe the

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euro crisis, its effects on the European member states and the measures taken to solve it. Moreover, we highlight that besides their strong linguistic or verbal presence, which has been extensively researched so far, "metaphors can occur non-verbally and multimodally as well as purely verbally" (Forceville 2006: 381), depicting the euro crisis and its effects and at the same time persuading and influencing readers' views .

Van Dijk (1989: 230) notes that "editorials are intended and structured to express and convey the opinion of the newspaper about recent news events". However, this opinion is not conveyed only in the written text, as cartoons are frequently used in these editorials. Kövecses (2010: 64) highlights that cartoons are a rich source for the non-linguistic realization of a metaphor, since conceptual metaphors are literally depicted in cartoons. Kövecses provides an example and explains that the ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER metaphor can be represented by the drawing of a man with smoke coming out of his ears.

The use of cartoons enhances the metaphorical message, as pictorial metaphors have "a more sensual and emotive impact on viewers" (Forceville 2008: 475). Furthermore, another advantage of using pictorial metaphors, as highlighted by Forceville, is the fact that they have "greater international appeal" (2008: 475).

Being inserted immediately after the headline and the standfirst of the editorial, before the main written body is introduced, these cartoons have a strong impact on the readership, by introducing the topic and establishing a metaphorical connection between the title and the written text.

According to Koller, a pictorial or multimodal metaphor "requires the text's recipient to construct a meaningful reading by processing verbal and visual elements together" (2009: 49).

2. Pictorial and multimodal metaphors in the theoretical cognitivist framework

The Cognitive Metaphor Theory (CMT) initially developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and later highly explored by other scholars (Lakoff 1987; Lakoff & Turner 1989; Gibbs 1994; Grady, 1997; White, 1997; Kövecses 1990, 2000, 2002, 2005, 2010; Charteris-Black, 2004; Koller 2004; Deignan, 2006, 2008; Gibbs 2011) highlights the pervasiveness of metaphor in both everyday and specialized language. Moreover, the starting point for the CMT is the argument that metaphor is a conceptual rather than linguistic device. Gibbs specifically stresses the fact that "metaphor is not simply an ornamental aspect of language, but a fundamental scheme by which people conceptualize the world and their own action" (2008: 3). To put it another way, our way of thinking is largely metaphorical.

Although there have been different theoretical approaches to the interpretation of metaphor, the basic principle researchers agree on is that a particular domain, the **target**, is instantiated in terms of another domain, the **source**. Thus, the target is understood in terms of the source. The first step for such an understanding is to identify the source and target domains and the second step is to establish correspondences or mappings between the two domains that reveal which features of the source also apply to the target. The second step is generally called cross-domain mapping.

Forceville (1996, 2006, 2008, 2009) claims that, in spite of Lakoff and Johnson's insistence that "metaphor is primarily a matter of thought and action, and only derivatively a matter of language" (1980: 153), most research on metaphor has focused primarily on the analysis of verbal metaphors for evidence. However, pictorial metaphor and forms of metaphor that involve multiple communicative modes have inspired an increasing number of recent studies over the past two decades (e.g. Carroll 1994, 1996a, Forceville 1996, 2008, 2009).

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Forceville (2009) begins his distinction between monomodal and multimodal metaphors with a broad explanation of what a mode is. According to him, "a mode is a sign system interpretable because of a specific perception process" (2009: 22). Therefore, he makes a direct correlation between modes and the five senses, which leads him to the following list: (1) the pictorial or visual mode; (2) the aural or sonic mode; (3) the olfactory mode; (4) the gustatory mode and (5) the tactile mode. However, in his subsequent elaboration on this list, he reaches the conclusion that other factors need to be considered such as the manner of production. Thus, he extends the list of modes so that they contain the following nine aspects: (1) pictorial signs; (2) written signs; (3) spoken signs; (4) gestures; (5) sounds; (6) music; (7) smells; (8) tastes and (9) touch.

Forceville defines monomodal metaphors "...as metaphors whose target and source are exclusively or predominantly rendered in one mode." (2009: 23). Moreover, he highlights that the verbal metaphor has been the most common type of metaphor studied, being associated with metaphor in general. However, he argues that another type of monomodal metaphor, i.e. the pictorial or visual metaphor, has aroused considerable interest and has become the central issue of sustained research.

When defining the multimodal metaphor, Forceville claims that these "... are metaphors whose target and source are each represented exclusively or predominantly in different modes." (2009: 24). Furthermore, he explains that the use of "exclusively or predominantly" is necessary, as the target and/or source of non-verbal metaphors are often cued in more than one mode at the same time.

Forceville (2008) makes a comparison between pictorial and multimodal metaphors and verbal metaphors and identifies four aspects which differentiate nonverbal metaphors from verbal ones. Firstly, they are characterised by a high degree of specificity grounded in their perceptual immediacy. Secondly, they have medium-determined ways of cueing the similarity between the target and source domains. Thirdly, they are more accessible and easily recognized at international level, i.e. across languages and cultures, "since they do not (exclusively) rely on language codes" (2008: 477). Fourthly, they have a stronger emotional impact on viewers.

It is worth mentioning that pictorial or visual metaphor and multimodal metaphor are the most examined types of non-verbal metaphor. Initially this research dealt with the analysis of pictorial and multimodal metaphors in advertising and film, but more recently researchers have been interested in the metaphors used in editorial cartoons as well (El Refaie 2003, Schilperoord and Maes 2009, Teng 2009).

Schilperoord and Maes (2009) identify and explore some characteristics of editorial cartoons. The starting point of their analysis is a comparison between two genres, the commercial advertisements and the editorial cartoons. Their comparison emphasises that the communicative functions of the two genres differ considerably. Forceville (1996) argues that metaphors used in commercial advertisements tend to present positive aspects of the target since their aim is to pursue customers to buy the products. Schilperoord and Maes claim that "the reverse often holds for editorial cartoons" (2009: 216) and their analysis proves that metaphors used in editorial cartoons convey a critical or even negative stance towards the target.

Another key characteristic of editorial cartoons, as identified by Schilperoord and Maes (2009), is their scenario character. Their claim is that the majority of the editorial cartoons use familiar scenarios on which the pictorial metaphor is based. Moreover, these familiar scenarios consist of different elements, i.e. persons, roles, relations, objects and attributes, which can be the basis for other related sub-metaphors.

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Making a comparison between the visual mode and language, El Refaie (2003, 2009) and Forceville (2005) emphasise the fact that a visual representation of abstract meaning is impossible without using symbols, metonyms and metaphors.

Another cognitive device, which plays a central role in our conceptual structure, is metonymy. Kövecses defines metonymy as "a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same domain, or idealized cognitive model (ICM)." (2010: 173). Making a comparison between metaphor and metonymy, he argues that metaphor is based on a relationship of similarity between the two concepts involved, whereas metonymy is based on a relationship of contiguity. He highlights that a metaphor consists of two concepts or entities that belong to two different domains. On the contrary, in metonymy, the two entities are closely related to each other and they belong to the same domain or ICM (Idealised Cognitive Model). Moreover, these domains or ICMs are comprised of several elements that can metonymically replace each other.

Besides metaphors and metonyms, image schemas have been considered in our interpretation of editorial cartoons as well. Mark Johnson (1987) explains that our embodied experience, i.e. our interaction with and observation of the world, generates image schemas within our conceptual system. The most important and ubiquitous image schemas reflect our sensory-perceptual experience under different aspects. Therefore, common image schemas are those associated with the idea of space (up-down, front-back, left-right, near-far, centre-periphery, verticality); containment (container, in-out, full-empty); multiplicity (part-whole); balance (axis balance, point balance, equilibrium), locomotion (momentum, source-path-goal) and attribute (heavy-light, big-small, warm-cold, strong-weak, bright-dark). Evans and Green (2006) explain the importance of image schemas by highlighting that they provide a concrete basis for metaphorical mappings.

In an analysis of pictorial and multimodal metaphors used in magazine covers to describe the financial crisis, Cortés de los Ríos (2010) identifies colour as another element that has a strong persuasive value. She explains that it plays a key role in the way we feel about and react to certain magazine covers. Moreover, she highlights that colours have a subliminal effect on us, since we are unconscious of the effect they have on us and the ideas they induce most of the times. It is well known that, in most cultures, black is stereotypically associated with negative things, whereas white is used to refer to pure things.

3. Data collection and analysis

The data collection used for our analysis consists of 9 editorial cartoons taken from *The Economist* that were published in the online print edition, in 2012 (http://www.economist.com/printedition/covers?print_region=76976&date_filter%5Bvalue%5D%5Byear%5D=2012). This was a period when although many people claimed the European Union was heading towards a recovery, they were contradicted by the economic and financial reality. *The Economist* is an English-language weekly magazine covering different topics, from world news to business. The magazine targets highly educated and specialised readership and argues that they have an audience mainly consisting of influential executives and policy-makers.

Taking into consideration that the aim of this paper is to identify and analyse the pictorial and multimodal metaphors used in economic and financial editorials to describe the euro crisis, its effects on the European member states and the measures taken to solve it, we have selected the cartoons from two main sections of the magazine, i.e. Finance and Economics and Europe. These two particular sections have covered the topic, helping the readership to understand the causes of the euro crisis, the negative consequences it has had, and the measures taken to reduce its effects at European level. Our main selection criterion

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has been that they should contain either a monomodal metaphor of the pictorial type or a multimodal metaphor of the verbo-pictorial type.

Initially, our sample consisted of 15 editorial cartoons. The first step of our analysis was to group the cartoons into thematic categories according to the source domains identified, i.e. ILLNESS (5); METEOROLOGICAL PHENOMENA (4); CONTAINER (HOLE-2; WOODS-1); MOVEMENT (2) and GAME (1). The second step was to select the core sample for the detailed analysis. Considering the numbers presented above, the most prominent source domains, the ones which depicted the euro crisis as ILLNESS and METEOROLOGICL PHENOMENA, were chosen for the current analysis.

Our analysis focused on both cognitive devices (image schemas, metonymies and metaphors) and other visual images and aspects such as colours, symbols (€) and other objects associated with the EU and its member states (such as flags and maps).

The majority of the metaphors have been identified as monomodal metaphors (6) and the remaining three as multimodal metaphors using a combination of text and images to depict the metaphor. Despite the fact that we have classified metaphors into monomodal and multimodal metaphors, the nine editorial cartoons selected for the core sample have been analysed according to the two source domains chosen by the cartoonists.

3.1. THE EURO CRISIS IS ILLNESS

This metaphor introduces a familiar scenario and makes use of one of the most accessible and close to the human being source domains, namely, our own existence. At various times in our life, all of us experience illness, either in a milder or in a more severe form. This is a universal experience everybody shares, irrespective of gender, age, nationality, race, etc. Therefore, everybody is familiar with the situation in general, the persons involved, the stages we go through, the steps to follow or the usual course of action.

As aforementioned, cartoons are introduced after the headline and the standfirst of the editorial. According to the definition provided by the Macmillan dictionary, a standfirst is "a short summary of a newspaper story or article that appears between the headline and the start of the story or article". Below each cartoon, information is provided regarding the headline, standfirst and date. Sometimes this information is essential for the interpretation of the metaphorical scenario.



Figure 1.

Headline – The Spanish patient

Standfirst – A full bail-out of the euro area's fourth-largest economy is looming

Date – 28th July 2012

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The cartoon in fig. 1 generates an elaborate metaphorical scenario that can be described using the following metaphorical mappings:

- A country affected by the euro crisis (Spain) is a patient affected by illness.
- Financial specialists trying to find a solution to the euro crisis are doctors trying to find a course of treatment.
- A country which needs financial assistance is a patient who needs medical treatment.
- Financial assistance (a bail-out) is medicine (drip).
- A financial chart showing the financial evolution of the country is a medical chart showing the evolution of the patient.

The image-schemas used as basis for some of the metaphorical mappings are:

- SPACE: up-down; and ATTRIBUTE: big-small; bright-dark.

The brighter spot focuses viewers' attention on the specialists who are trying to find a solution to the crisis. The exaggerated dimension of the drip presented as the most probable solution suggests the seriousness of the situation. Moreover, the drip is not a random choice, as it is known that this is the most rapid and efficient way of administrating medicine (assistance from outside) directly into our system. It is worth highlighting that the use of the symbol of the European currency (€) on the drip, whose content is liquid, is an instantiation of the MONEY IS A LIQUID metaphor.

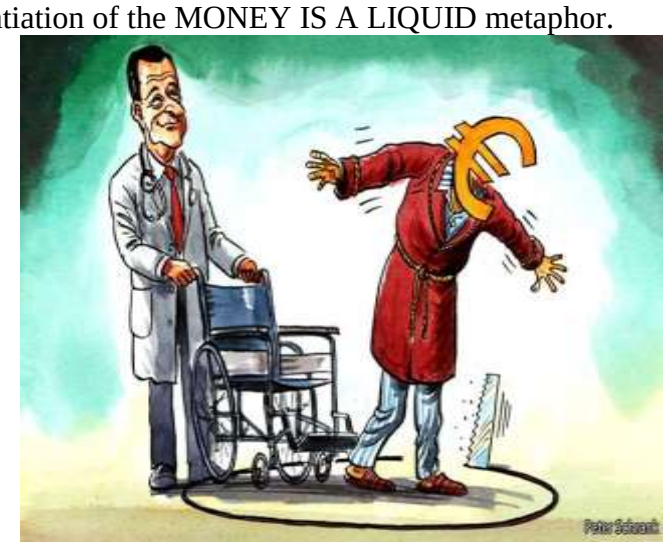

Figure 2

Headline – Still sickly

Standfirst – The euro zone's illness is returning. A cure requires more integration, but Germany isn't keen

Date – 31st March 2012

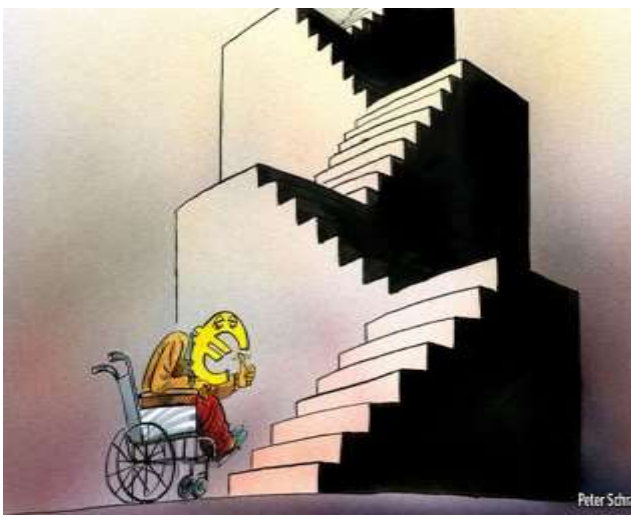

Figure 3

Headline – Too long an illness

Standfirst – Some detect recovery in the euro zone. But if leaders make mistakes there may be a relapse

Date – 25th February 2012

Both cartoons contain the same hybrid metaphor, i.e. THE EURO ZONE IS A PATIENT. Forceville explains that when "two objects that are normally distinct entities are physically merged into a single 'gestalt'" (2008: 465) the result is a hybrid metaphor. This metaphor is based on a metonymy, as the symbol of the euro (€) stands for the euro zone and is used instead of the head of a person. Moreover, the presence of the wheelchair in both cartoons suggests how affected the euro zone is. We know that ill people are weak and can lose balance, thus a wheelchair is used to carry them safely from one place to another.

In figure 2, besides the metaphorical mapping the euro zone is a patient, we also have Mr. Mario Draghi (the president of the European Central Bank) who is depicted as a doctor. The image schemas used here are:

- CONTAINMENT: in-out, suggested by the position of the patient inside the circle created with the saw.

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- BALANCE: axis balance; equilibrium.

The fact that the doctor allows the patient to stand up regardless of his weakness and wobbliness and the fact that the place where he stands up is highly insecure leads us to infer that the stance of the cartoon is rather critical.

In figure 3, the image schema is related to SPACE: up-down. Although the patient is weak, the fact that he is in a wheelchair does not seem to help much, considering that he has to climb some endless stairs. Moreover, he does not have anybody around to help him perform the task.



Figure 4

Headline – Killing the euro-patient?

Standfirst – The doctors think the medicine will work, if the euro does not die first

Date – 2nd June 2012



Figure 5

Headline – Kicking against austerity

Standfirst – France and the Netherlands once again resist the European consensus

Date – 28th April 2012

The metaphorical mapping that is a common feature of the cartoons in fig. 4 and 5 is austerity is medicine. In fig. 4, the seriousness of the situation is suggested by the fact that the patient is almost dead, as he is no longer in a hospital bed but in a coffin. In fig. 5, the metaphorical meaning is based on metonyms, i.e. people stand for countries. The fact that the cartoonist used the flags as labels makes it easier to identify the countries (France and Netherlands). However, if we have a closer look, we can also discover other clues (the red scarf and the moustache of the French and the golden hair and wooden clogs of the Dutch) that lead us to the same conclusion. An important image schema used in this cartoon is related to ATTRIBUTE: big-small. The difference in size of the two people highlights the difference in size between the two countries. The actions performed by the two people (kicking the medicine and crushing the pills) emphasise the strongly negative and critical stance of the cartoon.

3.2. THE EURO CRISIS IS A METEOROLOGICAL PHENOMENON

Meteorological phenomena are difficult to avoid and control. Thus, conceptualizing the euro crisis as a meteorological phenomenon, the cartoonists imply there is little we can do about it.

The cartoon in fig. 6 instantiates the EURO CRISIS IS DROUGHT metaphor, which is based on the MONEY IS LIQUID (WATER) metaphor. We know from our embodied experience that we cannot survive without water. Similarly, money is vital to economies and financial institutions. The scarcity of money is highlighted by the large part of the cartoon coloured yellow. The star-shape containers instantiate European countries with different levels of money reserves. The dehydrated person crawling in the desert and looking for

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water metonymically corresponds to the economies and financial institutions in need of money.

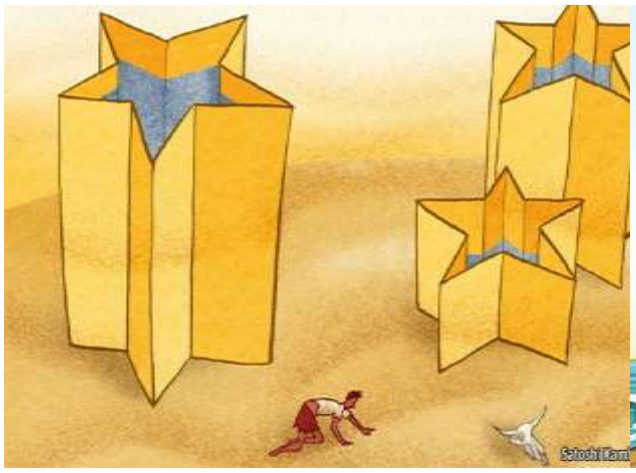

Figure 6

Headline – Home and dry
Standfirst – Europe's weaker euro economies are in the grip of a worsening credit crunch
Date – 26th May 2012



Figure 7

Headline – April showers on the
Standfirst –The euro crisis is back, and resolving it is not getting any easier
Date – 21st April 2012

The cartoon in fig. 7 depicts three metaphors. Firstly, THE EU IS A PERSON, which is triggered by the EU flag vest the man is wearing. Secondly, RECOVERY IS A SAND CASTLE. Thirdly, THE EURO CRISIS IS A THUNDERSTORM. Two important image schemas used in this cartoon are related to ATTRIBUTE: big-small; bright-dark. The size of the sand castle compared to the dimension of the clouds suggests the critical stance towards how insignificant and fragile the recovery is. Moreover, the darker colour of the clouds, the fact that they take the shape of the EU map and the thunderstorms indicate exactly which of the member states (Spain and Italy) endanger the recovery.



Figure 8

Headline – Weather report
Standfirst – The euro crisis casts a chill over a sunnier economic picture
Date – 21st April 2012



Figure 9

Headline – A false dawn
Standfirst – The recession has been mild so far. But things are likely to get much worse
Date – 14th January 2012

Both cartoons instantiate the EURO CRISIS IS COLD WEATHER metaphor. The suits in both cartoons metonymically stand for the investors or the businessmen. Some of the

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distinguishing image schemas in both cartoons are related to ATTRIBUTE: bright-dark and big-small. In fig. 8, the gloomy clothes and the big grey cloud in the shape of the EU currency contrast sharply with the pink trees in blossom and the small pale sun. In fig. 9, the pale sun is not bright enough to melt the ice which has frozen the entire euro zone. Again, the pale yellow of the sun contrasts sharply with the black continent.

4. Conclusions

The analysis undertaken in this paper has identified some of the common pictorial and multimodal metaphors used by cartoonists to depict the euro crisis. Although several metaphors were identified in an initial stage of our analysis, only the metaphors instantiated by the source domains of ILLNESS and METAPHORICAL PHENOMENA have been described. The analysis of the cognitive devices and the other visual elements used in editorial cartoons has revealed that pictorial and multimodal metaphors are powerful tools that enhance the metaphorical message of specialised press articles.

Moreover, the preference for certain images, colours and symbols in a particular context highlights the cartoonist's intention of underlining certain aspects of the euro crisis.

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