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SEPTEMBER 11, NEO-LIBERALISM AND DISCOURSE – THE COHERING FUNCTION OF METAPHOR

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1. INTRODUCTION

In Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), metaphor is traditionally just one of many textual features to be analysed in order to unveil discursive constructions of reality. In this perspective, metaphor is considered an essential linguistic tool, providing understanding of e.g. political and socio-economic realities, but how it is structured is seldom analysed in detail. However, in recent years a growing awareness of metaphor's potential to systematically structure discourse and its arguments has developed (see e.g. Fairclough, 2003), pointing towards the need for more detailed analyses. This need is addressed in this article through the discussion of theoretical and methodological considerations as well as through the analysis of data from British financial news reports on socio-economic issues and the September-11 attacks.

The combination of two very different approaches to language, thought and (social) action may initially seem a futile enterprise; however, as will be demonstrated below, the adoption of aspects from CDA into the study of metaphor provides scope for analysing the latter in far more critical terms than Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) traditionally allows for. Thus, although scholars in metaphor theory acknowledge the latent ideological function of metaphor, CDA allows the analyst better tools for analysing this function and hence for demonstrating the ability of metaphor to promote and legitimise the ideological viewpoints of particular political groups. Likewise, through the incorporation of aspects from Conceptual Metaphor Theory into the study of discourse, the scholar can make it clear that the articulation of these viewpoints is often very subtle and indirect, making it difficult for readers to consciously and intentionally formulate either consent with or opposition to the arguments presented. Thus, metaphors are ideal instruments for maintaining powerful positions.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. *Socio-cognitive CDA*

Of the many approaches to and methods for analysing text critically, one of the most promising in this context is undoubtedly van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach (e.g. 1988, 1991, 1997*a* and 1997*b*). This approach provides plausible explanations for the interaction of discourse, the social and the cognitive, accounting for why in similar communicative events speakers/writers may choose different discursive and linguistic strategies and with these, different metaphors.

Like Conceptual Metaphor Theory, socio-cognitive CDA places much emphasis on cognition; although in a slightly different way. This approach sees the cognitive as the mediator between the individual and the social as well as the social and discourse, through the storing and the activation of both personal and social knowledge as distinct schematic structures in memory (van Dijk, 2002). As will become apparent, the emphasis on the social dimension of cognition is one of the key features to distinguish socio-cognitive CDA from CMT, and hence the dimension in which it makes its most salient contribution to the study of metaphor.

The capacity to store and activate knowledge in memory entails the understanding that in *discourse production* speakers and writers will initially base their interpretation of the situation on the personal and factual knowledge they have acquired in previous, similar situations. Hence, their understanding of the situation will initially be defined in subjective terms. However, the activation of such a personal mental model is accompanied by the instantiation of shared social knowledge (i.e. scripts and frames), attitudes and ideologies, resulting in the creation of a model that combines both socially and personally derived information. With the constitution of the model, the speaker or writer has a framework for analysing and acting in the current situation; he may, however, choose only to express the parts of the model he deems relevant in the current context. Like discourse production, *discourse understanding* is determined by both personally and socially derived knowledge. Hence, listeners or readers may either accept the construction of reality offered by the speaker or writer or reject it, either partly or altogether. Thus, they will decode the lexical and syntactical aspects of the discourse and draw on their personal as well as their socially shared knowledge and opinions to evaluate the model presented. On this basis, they will construct their own models of the communicative event – models that will cohere with or be in opposition to the model presented by the speaker or writer. Hence, it is not the social situation that makes people speak

or write the way they do, but their personal interpretation of it, i.e. personal interpretation defines the discursive and linguistic strategies of each participant. In this process, the level of and access to social and personal knowledge are paramount for readers to make qualified judgements about what they read: for instance, if the available sources of information, such as the various mass media, convey the same or similar information to the public, readers may find it difficult to construct alternative models, and the reality offered by mass media discourse may eventually become accepted as socially shared truth.

2.2. Conceptual Metaphor Theory

As a cognitive approach to language and thought, Conceptual Metaphor Theory (e.g. Lakoff & Johnson, 2003; Lakoff, 1993 and Chilton, 1996) assumes that our access to reality is conditioned by perception, experience and memory –just as is assumed in van Dijk’s approach. In this process, metaphor plays a salient role as the mediator between experience and abstract reality, and hence between experience and discourse. As such, metaphor is cognitive first and linguistic second. This means that whenever we engage in discursive acts involving abstract conceptualisation, metaphor plays an important role in the instantiation of knowledge and experience as well as the degree to which this is made explicit.

In the role of mediator, metaphors are seen as coherent conceptual systems taking the form of tightly structured mappings. These mappings build on a number of *gestalts* or image schemas, which relate to our orientation in space and to our experience with physical objects and substances, providing us with a physical and experiential basis for understanding. Thus, the concept of embodied meaning emerges –a concept which rests upon our continuous physical interaction with the surrounding world. In such an understanding, metaphorical meaning is universal in nature, albeit with individual and cultural variation being acknowledged, i.e. culture is seen as being present in the very experience itself. Hence, metaphors that are regarded as conventional in one culture may be less so in another, due to differences in time, values and priority (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003: 24).

Emphasising the conceptual and cognitive aspect of metaphor, the theory has, however, been criticized for lacking sufficient focus on the more direct interaction between culture, context and the choice of metaphor. Thus, although acknowledging individual and cultural variation in the choice of conceptual metaphors, Lakoff & Johnson (2003) fail to fully account for the dialectics between the situational, social context and language and thought. As a result, other theoretical approaches –such as van Dijk’s approach– are

necessary for uncovering the full meaning and functional potential of metaphor in discourse. This will be discussed in more detail below.

Being based on image schematic structures, metaphors are conceptual systems that add systematicity and coherence to discourse by allowing for a number of structured mappings across experiential domains. Thus, a mapping from a familiar source domain to a less familiar target domain involves transferring the logic and structure of the source onto the target, rendering one conceptual mapping, but potentially many linguistic instantiations that contribute to our understanding of the target. However, the orientational and ontological image schemas mentioned above are not rich or detailed enough to provide us with very many options for talking about concepts. In consequence, if we want to elaborate on concepts and talk about them in more specific terms, we need tools for doing so. These tools typically take the form of instances of the general classes of objects, human beings and organisms; all of which are very familiar to us and for the very same reason are objects that are easy to handle and interact with. Transferred to the conceptual mapping between abstract domains, this experience facilitates the way we handle and manipulate these categories (Ungerer & Schmid, 1996).

Thus, when conceptualising the terrorist attacks of September 11, one of the basic image schematic structures to be applied is that of ENTITY, i.e. our understanding is in part conditioned by our experience with various physical entities. However, entities may take on an almost endless number of shapes, colours and meanings and do consequently not provide a very detailed frame for understanding the target. But once this mapping is further extended through the lower-level metaphor of TERRORIST ATTACKS ARE OBJECTS and even further through TERRORIST ATTACKS ARE MISSILES (e.g. “(...) the economic impact of the attacks”, *The Guardian*, 13.09.01; “The immediate fallout seems bound to be negative”, *The Economist*, 17.09.01), we get a much more detailed and specific idea of what the terrorist attacks are, and what their influence on the economy is perceived to be¹. Underlying such a structure is the understanding that due to the universal nature of metaphors, we have relatively fixed and shared sets of thinking and talking about abstract categories, despite our cultural and individual differences.

However, research indicates that, depending on the context, the target domain may be structured along more than one source domain, rendering different associations with the target (see e.g. Holmgreen, 2005).

¹ Central to the understanding of conceptual metaphors is the idea that they are ordered in inheritance hierarchies, in which lower-level mappings inherit the structures of higher-level mappings (Lakoff, 1993). Such hierarchical structures demonstrate that metaphorical mappings do not occur in isolation from each other, but are organised on a cline from the general to the more specific.

Consequently, metaphorical mappings provide the opportunity for focusing on specific aspects of the target and ignoring others, opening up to the possibility of promoting a certain understanding of reality. Metaphorical mappings then become a cognitive response onto a prototypical situation rather than fixed, decontextualised constellations (Ritchie, 2003). This means that in communicative events such as the one taking place between a newspaper and its readers, metaphors can be used with the deliberate intention of influencing and directing the viewpoints of the readership. In other words, ideological common ground can be created.

Such a view, it seems, is in stark contrast with the basic assumptions of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which regards the activation of source domains as an unconscious, unintentional process, making the power of metaphorical expressions subtle and indirect as well as only vaguely dependent on context. For conventional metaphors this holds a certain truth, and on a cline from conventional to creative metaphors, the use of conventional metaphors is arguably a reflection of more stable cultural and social conditions. However, the application of increasingly creative metaphors undoubtedly involves more context dependence and indicates a larger degree of intention and strategic thinking, designated to question, or perhaps even challenge, existing power structures. Hence, it can be argued that when moving towards the creative end of the cline, metaphors are used less with the purpose of sustaining and more with the purpose of creating undisputed and socially shared realities through their systematic and coherent use. Seen from this perspective, it can be claimed that Conceptual Metaphor Theory is not only a constructivist approach to language and thought, but also a *social*-constructivist one, in the sense that metaphor may influence and be influenced by our discursive and social actions.

Correlating this position with the basic claims of socio-cognitive CDA, we see that in combination the two approaches add important new understandings to communication, cognition and metaphor. The two approaches contribute different salient aspects that provide arguments for viewing metaphor in discourse as an important conceptual, structural and interactive feature. In this perspective, the choice of metaphor will be seen as partly contingent on embodied meaning, personal and social experience as well as on the interpretation of the actual communicative situation.

2.3. *The ideological function of metaphor*

In all CDA approaches, ideology plays a central role in defining power structures in society, and thus, ideology is generally seen as serving the purpose of “establishing and maintaining unequal power relations” (Wodak,

2001: 10). Although agreeing with this definition, van Dijk elaborates on the concept to have it embrace the idea of social systems, along which all groups in society coordinate their social acts and practices, internally and in contrast with other groups. However, it is in the understanding of ideology as mental representation, serving the function of “group-specific *grammars* of social practices” (van Dijk, 1997b: 28) that van Dijk differs the most from his peers and where the integration of Conceptual Metaphor Theory into CDA once again becomes relevant. In the function of *grammars*, ideologies represent the underlying principles of social cognition, i.e. in the format of a group schema, they define the identity and interests of the group, particularly in opposition to other social groups. Such a group schema would include features that refer to membership, activities, goals, values and norms, emphasising the importance of group interests above individual ones in the formation of conceptual and linguistic structures (van Dijk, 1998). In the light of the above discussion, a group schema will undoubtedly in part be instantiated through metaphor and in part through more direct or *one-to-one* references between our interpretation of the social situation and linguistic instantiations. In such a construction, metaphorical structuring is a universal and internal process, while at the same time it defines and is defined by context. This means that metaphorical structures may not only function as a means of explaining and understanding abstract concepts, but also as a way for writers to express, confirm or contest ideological viewpoints in context. In (media) discourse, this entails the incorporation by the writer of metaphors that would not only fill lexical gaps, but also reflect the interests of the political and economic establishment.

3. METHOD AND DATA

In the introduction, the aim of this analysis was stated to be that of establishing a theoretical framework for analysing metaphor in discourse and subsequently demonstrating the cognitive basis and dialectical relationship between the choice of metaphors in discourse, economic ideology (neoliberalism) and the events of September 11. Hence, the objective of the analysis of data is to demonstrate how metaphorical structures in discourse may interact to create a coherent, intertextual and interdiscursive image of the economy and in this way facilitate the promotion of a specific economic ideology and with that the interests of dominant political groupings.

With this objective in mind, a small corpus consisting of financial reports² from British broadsheets and magazines (including their internet sites) was

² I.e. leaders, features, commentaries, etc. that all reflect strong personal opinions are omitted.

compiled, covering a period of two months before and after the September-11 terrorist attacks (i.e. from July till November 2001). Although analysing reports from the American printed press may have seemed a more obvious choice in this context, studying the construction of neo-liberal ideology in British broadsheets was regarded as an equally interesting task, as Britain is considered to be America's closest European partner in political and economic terms. Hence, it was interesting to examine whether the British role of peacetime US ally made the construction of September 11 in British media discourse serve the purpose of indirectly supporting and promoting such an ideology.

In choosing newspapers for analysis, emphasis was put on the ones representing the quality financial press and broadly adhering to a free-market ideology. In this respect, the *Financial Times* (FT) is traditionally regarded as being supportive of Conservative policies and thus clearly of the neo-liberal agenda introduced in the Thatcher years and partly continued under Tony Blair, although with a more populist touch. *The Guardian* (G), however, is traditionally considered to be more of a pro-Labour stance, but with the movement of the New Labour Party under Tony Blair towards the middle ground and consequently a broader acceptance of Conservative issues, this becomes less relevant³. The third newspaper or magazine is *The Economist* (E), which places itself to the right of the centre, but with New Labour sympathies.

Being fairly small, the corpus consists of 43 financial reports, or 26,237 words (9,901 before September 11 and 16,336 after). The reports cover developments in the American economy and the world economy in the said period, focusing on macro-economic issues such as national income, unemployment rates, inflation and interest rates, the balance of payments, the rate of economic growth, and cyclical fluctuations. The corpus includes headlines and text.

In the analysis, the basis for identifying and sorting metaphors in the reports was the above-mentioned definition of metaphor as a conceptual mapping between two separate domains. However, since retrieving conceptual metaphors in discourse involves identifying these on the linguistic level, a more detailed sorting mechanism was needed, i.e. one that would make it possible to identify conceptual metaphors on the linguistic level.

³ With its accession to power in 1997, the Blair government introduced the idea of the *stakeholder economy*. This includes the mutual obligation of capital and labour to secure the functioning of the community through e.g. shareholder employees getting influence on their companies by saving up pensions and social security as *shares* of their company. On a larger scale, it means a return to a traditional Conservative liberalism with state involvement in areas where the market fails, at the same time warning against state dependency (Sevaldsen & Vadmand, 1997: 85, 167).

Thus, a number of reports were searched manually to uncover metaphors on the basis of the systematic occurrence of linguistic instantiations. On the basis of these findings, a search for metaphors was carried out electronically in the whole corpus and a selection was made of only the most frequent and/or most relevant to the larger social and political context in terms of economic situation, neo-liberalism and September 11. Thus, only metaphors pertaining to macro-economic issues within the US and/or world economy were included.

Overall, the retrieval and clustering of metaphors provided a picture of how the economy and the September-11 attacks are constructed in discourse. Combined with the analysis across texts within the discourse to point out intertextual chains, this demonstrates the degree to which metaphors may reflect either stability or change in social and cultural structures, while also contributing to the construction of these. In other words, metaphors as tools for sustaining or challenging dominant societal structures became apparent. In order to validate this point of observation, socio-economic and political development in the decade preceding 2001 was also studied. This will be detailed in the following.

4. SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

At the time of the terrorist attacks in September 2001, the industrialised world was experiencing the most impressive economic upturn of the post-war period, primarily due to the success of unrestricted markets and new technologies. Overall, however, the development of this situation was largely attributable to the pursuit of neo-liberal policies in the 1980s and 1990s, initially advocated and pursued by the Reagan and Thatcher governments, but later adopted in modified forms by most governments in the industrialised world⁴.

With the advent of the attacks, this financial and economic bonanza was brought to an abrupt end, signalling the end of one era and the beginning of a new, much more unpredictable one, in which financial turmoil and threatening recession became focal points. In the view of many, neo-liberalism in its late 20th century form was dead, and it was unclear what had come to replace it.

⁴ Neo-liberalism is the term used for the kind of free-market ideology pursued by the Reagan and Thatcher administrations in the 1980s and 1990s. This was also adopted by the subsequent Clinton and Blair governments, although in a weaker form. Cohn (2003: 100) states: "As the changes initiated under Reagan and Thatcher spread to other countries, there were growing pressures on governments to adopt orthodox liberal policies in the 1980s and 1990s, with an emphasis on privatisation, deregulation, and the promotion of free trade and foreign investment".

To understand this development and its influence on constructions in discourse, it is important to study the broader political and economic climate in the post-war period, with the US playing a more active role in international affairs. Thus, in the wake of World War Two, the American government chose to end its politics of isolationism and adopt a more pro-active role in the world community with the aim of securing peace, stability and prosperity in strategic parts of the world, significantly in Western Europe and Japan. Together with the development of IT and communication technologies, particularly in the 1990s, this led to widespread acceptance in the industrialised world of unrivalled US leadership, both politically and economically, and hence, in the 1980s and 1990s to the acceptance of American economic ideology and policies as the guiding principles of growth and prosperity.

For the world economy, and the US in particular, the acceptance of neo-liberalism as the predominant economic ideology meant unprecedented growth rates throughout the 1990s, fostering speculations about the end of the business cycle and the birth of a new economic era. However, in the late 1990s and early 2000s cracks in the system began to show, with companies experiencing increasing financial difficulties, and with the terrorist attacks in 2001, which sent shock waves through financial systems in the US and worldwide, the American economy went into a state of financial panic.

5. ANALYSIS

In the analysis of British financial news reports around September 11, a number of conceptual metaphors emerge. Of these, the most salient are ENTITY, CONTAINER and CYCLE, metaphors which allow us to understand both the economy and the attacks in physical and orientational terms. They are naturally not the only ones to be found in the corpus, but due to their salience they allow us to see how conceptual metaphors can support systematic representations of the state of the US and world economy across reports. This salience is expressed either through the frequency of linguistic instantiations and/or through their relevance to the larger economic and political context, cf. supra. Being ontological metaphors, ENTITY and CONTAINER provide us with a very basic and instinctive point of reference to and categorisation of concepts via their association with *tangible*, familiar objects. For the CYCLE metaphor, the familiarity is connected to its reference to the cyclical aspects of all life. In the present analysis, these metaphors find some of their most salient realisations through the following metaphors: THE ECONOMY IS A BATTLEFIELD, THE ECONOMY IS A PATIENT, THE ECONOMY IS A

BOUNCING BALL and THE ECONOMY IS A ROLLER COASTER, which will be discussed in detail below.

5.1. *The metaphor THE ECONOMY IS A BATTLEFIELD*

In the days immediately following the attacks, the WAR metaphor, and with that the lower-level metaphor of THE ECONOMY IS A BATTLEFIELD, is arguably one of the most powerful metaphors used by politicians and media, both because of its aptness in this particular situation and because of the ease with which its many entailments can be understood⁵. The evocation of the WAR metaphor is not restricted to the attacks and the actual physical damage they caused, but very quickly becomes a means of conceptualising the influence on other parts of American society, including the economy. In this context, the ECONOMY IS A BATTLEFIELD metaphor is important in explaining the perceived effect of the attacks on economic activity, at the same time as it establishes the frame for understanding the full entailments of other conceptual metaphors.

As a lower-level metaphor of the WAR metaphor, the BATTLEFIELD metaphor does not detail all the stages of war or battle, but conceptualises the economy in terms of a few central aspects, viz. attacks and their effects. The advantage of such an approach is that it allows the writer to focus quite narrowly on a few points and ignore others that may be deemed irrelevant for the time being. Thus, journalists are able to create a range of expressions that emphasise the importance of the terrorist attacks in determining the development of the economy. This means that although before September 11 there were indications that the US economy was slowing down and possibly heading for recession, it was regarded as being very likely that the attacks would be the factor that sent it sliding into recession. Looking across the articles, we see that this understanding renders the following metaphorical expressions (the source term, i.e. the term used metaphorically, is in italics):

- 1) (...) the immediate economic *impact* of the attacks (G. 13.09.01)
- 2) This time, with the *carnage* [in the economy] at home not abroad, the impact could be even bigger (E. 15.09.01)
- 3) The immediate *fallout* seems bound to be negative (E. 17.09.01)
- 4) (...) the *fallout* from the US [economy] would spread across the Atlantic (G. 21.09.01)

⁵ As an event category, the WAR metaphor incorporates among other things the basic conceptual metaphors of ENTITY, CONTAINER and FORCE. Thus, the metaphor carries with it fundamental ontological and orientational understandings. At the same time, the WAR metaphor is culturally and historically embedded on the background of among other things World War Two and Pearl Harbor.

5) (...) to limit the economic *damage* from the terrorist attacks of September 11 (FT. 01.10.01)

6) September 11 had an immediate and dramatic *impact* on economic activity (E. 31.10.01)

What the above examples indicate is the coherent framing of economic reality as one of war and battlefield, in which the economy (as an entity with a bounded surface and as such inclusive of the CONTAINER metaphor) becomes the subject of attack from another entity (the attacks as missiles or bombs). Depending on the expression used, this conceptualisation provides different degrees of seriousness (e.g. *impact* vs. *fallout*).

Pointing towards aspects of the WAR metaphor seems well-founded in the light of the political and rhetorical strategy of the American president, George W. Bush, and his administration in the days following the attacks. Already on September 12, the President makes references to war in his first formal speech and thus points to the themes that will accompany US policy and actions in the immediate future: “Evil, Terror and the War on Terrorism”; a line of policy that reflects public sentiment very well at the time (Silberstein, 2002). Thus, it seems that the use of the WAR metaphor is not only a clear instance of the cognitive aspect of metaphor, but also of its interdiscursive and intentional aspects, bringing forward and maintaining the discourse of the political establishment.

When speakers or writers introduce a new metaphor with the intention of presenting a new concept, or some new social relationship, we may talk of the *formulation* of a metaphor (Chilton, 1996). Thus, with the WAR metaphor, the writer may present his readers with a picture of the economy and the reasons for its troubles which is very different from the one presented before September 11. Although such a construction is contestable, this is not likely to happen, as in this context the concept of war is both powerful, omnipresent and historically embedded. Combined with more *neutral* conceptualisations of the attacks and their effect on the economy, the WAR metaphor makes it possible for the writer to point to actors outside the economic system, blaming them for the difficulties rather than the system itself. In other words, with the political establishment advocating the pursuit of neo-liberal economic policies to obtain higher growth rates and general welfare, the acceptance of flaws in the system would be problematic. In consequence, the advent of the attacks could be regarded as a *convenient*, but nonetheless horrifying event that would instantly explain the turn in economic prospects. The appeal of this construction is further strengthened through the conceptualisation of the terrorist strikes as nuclear attacks from which the fallout can spread and cause long-term damage and devastation, encouraging

the world community to help fighting the war. Again the reference to the rhetorical strategy of the American president is clear, as in a speech to Congress and the American people on September 20, the President appealed to the world community to stand on America's side, arguing that "This is the world's fight, this is civilization's fight (...)" (Silberstein, 2002: 12).

In conclusion, the function of the WAR metaphor is twofold. First, it makes us understand the economic consequences of the attacks in specific and recognisable terms and second, it allows writers to pass value judgement and promote an ideological viewpoint. In these functions, the metaphor's linguistic realisations do not appear creative or striking; on the contrary, they are quite conventional, making little fuss about themselves. However, the consistency with which they are used makes them a powerful argumentative tool. In this, it is important to note that the conceptualisation of the attacks as an outside entity that severely impacts on the economy, making allusions to war, provides the writers with the possibility of diverting readers' attention from problems within the economic system itself, focusing on plausible external reasons instead. Being outside direct influence in the media, the reader has little choice but to accept this focus of the discourse.

5.2. *The metaphor THE ECONOMY IS A PATIENT*

A very common way of conceptualising economic activity is in terms of living organisms, i.e. animate entities. In the corpus, this is also the case. Here, one of the most frequently instantiated metaphors is THE ECONOMY IS A PATIENT metaphor:

- 7) The international outlook remained cloudy with *weakness* in many parts of the world (G. 18.07.01)
- 8) New evidence of the global economic *malaise* emerged today (G. 27.07.01)
- 9) The American economy still seems far from *recovery* (E. 04.08.01)
- 10) Mr Solbes said he still expected a *recovery* (FT. 10.09.01)
- 11) It [the current state of the economy] is not very *healthy* (G. 13.09.01)
- 12) (...) it followed a *rash* of bad economic news (E. 15.09.01)
- 13) The rapid slowdown in the US had started to *infect* Europe (G. 27.09.01)

Although this metaphor has already been studied and found pervasive in other studies of financial news discourse (e.g. Boers, 1997; Semino, 2002 and Charteris & Musolff, 2003), the constellation of economic ideology, terrorist attacks and economic performance provides an alternative framework for studying its cognitive and pragmatic contents. Thus, the pervasiveness of the metaphor can in part be explained by the reference to our experience as humans, in which we understand economic performance on the basis of

bodily interaction with the world as well as our general motivations, characteristics and activities (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003: 33). This understanding is then further refined through the association with matters of health. The study of the above examples reveals that both across newspapers and dates, the talk is of the poor state of the economy and its possible turn for the better. Thus, many expressions pertain to *bad health*, *weakness* and *recovery* both before and after September 11. Given the aptness of the metaphor, it may indeed be argued that it provides journalists with the possibility of getting around many aspects of economic development in the post-9/11 economy without having to resort to lengthy argumentative expressions or complex syntactic and lexical structures.

Being highly conventional, the PATIENT metaphor may not strike the reader as being metaphorical at all. This entails the possibility of exploiting the metaphor in subtle ways, by including some inference patterns from the source and excluding others, to promote a certain ideological stand. Thus, the writer can talk about economic development in the way that a doctor talks about a patient's health. In neo-liberal terms, this means transferring the specific aspects of illness and cure that emphasise not only good versus bad health, but also the body's own restoring qualities more than doctoral intervention. When this conceptualisation is combined with the BATTLEFIELD metaphor used to conceptualise the attacks and its devastating effect on the economy, a mental model of the state of economic affairs is created; a model which creates a coherent image of the economy and leaves the reader with a sense that things have changed for the worse in the aftermath of the attacks.

5.3. *The metaphors THE ECONOMY IS A BOUNCING BALL and THE ECONOMY IS A ROLLER COASTER*

Like the above two examples, these two conceptual metaphors are extensions of THE ECONOMY IS AN ENTITY metaphor. However, ENTITY is not the only salient image schema underlying these metaphors – the CYCLE schema also contributes important fundamental understandings. According to Johnson (1987), the CYCLE schema is a result of our experience as humans in terms of reproduction, bodily maintenance and the course of life. This experience is, however, not restricted to bodily experiences per se, but also involves experience with cyclic processes outside the human body (e.g. the cycles of night and day, the seasons, etc.) that are fundamental to our understanding of the world.

In terms of economic activity, the CYCLE schema underlines what is today understood as being the inevitable and continuous alternation between rise and fall. In the BOUNCING BALL metaphor, this alternation is conceptualised

as being quick with very short highs and lows, whereas in the ROLLER COASTER metaphor, focus is on the slightly longer stretches of distance and time on each level. Moreover, in the ROLLER COASTER metaphor the circular aspect is salient, meaning that not only is economic change conceptualised in terms of ups and downs, but it is also underlined that the sequence of passing these stages is repeated again and again. The subtle differences between the two metaphors become apparent when we see that the BOUNCING BALL metaphor is realised almost entirely before September 11:

- 14) (...) the economy may have bottomed but had not yet shown clear evidence of a *rebound* (FT. 19.07.01)
- 15) Consumers' faith that the economy is about to *rebound* may be weakening (E. 04.08.01)
- 16) Treasury chief says US economy is in a cyclical downturn and will *bounce* back this year (FT. 10.09.01)

and the ROLLER COASTER metaphor almost entirely after:

- 17) Before last month's attack, economists had hoped for an *upturn* in the US economy this autumn (G. 03.10.01)
- 18) Another reason for thinking that America's recession may turn out deeper than expected is that the world is in an unusually synchronized *downturn* (E. 20.10.01)
- 19) (...) the US *downturn* could turn into a sustained slump and drag the rest of the global economy down with it (G. 07.11.01)

Generally, the image provided by THE ECONOMY IS A BOUNCING BALL is one in which the unpleasant aspects of an economic deterioration are significantly downplayed. By drawing on the image of a ball hitting the ground and swiftly moving up again, the journalist conveys an understanding of the current economic situation and its prospects that is generally optimistic. Thus, before September 11, the general belief was that, although doing badly, the economy would quickly return to the level of the mid-1990s once it had started recovering. With THE ECONOMY IS A ROLLER COASTER, alternating stages are also a salient aspect; although with the significant difference that in this metaphor, the alternations are more long-term, with a return to some previous economic state, which forms the starting point of yet another, and similar, sequence. In this way, the ROLLER COASTER metaphor underlines the regularity and long-term predictability that most people consider a salient feature of modern economic development. In the present context, the use of the ROLLER COASTER metaphor after September 11

reflects, however, the negative side to this understanding, i.e. it provides an almost exclusive focus on the downturn, leaving little hope for an upturn in the near future. The reason for its predominance may be found in the fact that with the attacks and their conceptualisation in terms of war and battlefield, the last hopes for a sustained or improved economic level in the short term disappeared, suspending most economic activity.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this article, salient metaphors in the September-11 economy have been analysed. The analysis demonstrates that metaphorical structures in discourse can contribute substantially to our perception of reality by focusing our attention on particular aspects of the target domain, leaving the reader with a systematic and structured view of e.g. economic development.

Moreover, a combined CMT and CDA approach provides a deeper understanding of metaphor and its functions, through the acceptance of both the cognitive and the social as important components in the construction of metaphorical meaning. Thus, we get a set of tools for explaining why metaphorical structures may not only function as a means of explaining and understanding concepts, but also as a way for writers to express, confirm or contest ideological viewpoints in context.

The data analysed in this article indicate that the use of metaphor is influenced by events and ideology in the socio-economic field. Although covering a rather limited corpus and focusing on a few significant metaphorical clusters, the analysis demonstrates that metaphors in British financial news discourse are both systematic and pervasive, and that consequently they partly structure the way we talk of and understand economic concepts. Furthermore, there are indications that violent events such as September 11 can be used by writers to establish very powerful clusters of metaphor in that they set the frame for understanding other clusters of economic metaphors in the discourse as well as provide support for a neo-liberal economic policy by directing attention to outside reasons for the trouble of the economy. This said, the corpus is not large enough to establish a clear relation between neo-liberal ideology and the choice of metaphor. There are indications that a connection exists, but the question remains if the same metaphors would be interpreted differently in a different context.

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