

## Metaphors as Relevance Maximizers in Malaysian Newspaper Headlines<sup>1</sup>

Ahmad Abu Dalu

Department of Arabic Language and Literature, Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan

Emad S. Awad

Language Center, Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan

Received on: 28-8-2017

Accepted on: 14-8-2018

### Abstract

This study examines metaphors in newspaper headlines from a relevance-theoretic perspective (Sperber and Wilson 1995). The data are drawn from the Malaysian tabloid *The Star*, issued in English. The study seeks to draw the major conceptual metaphors prevalent in the headlines. It embarks on how the metaphorical construction contributes to the formation of the headline genre. More specifically, the study seeks to prove that the metaphors are used in newspaper headlines as a tool to maximize the relevance of the content of the newspaper article to the readers. This theorization is hoped to build on what Molek-Kozakowska (2014) has started in tackling the role of metaphors in news headlines. The study utilizes frame semantics (Fillmore 2006; Fillmore 2010) as an explanatory tool for how the relevance maximization potential operates.

**Keywords:** headline genre; headline analysis; genre analysis; relevance theory; frame semantics; metaphor.

*Headline writers combine the playfulness  
of poets with the precision of physicists.  
(Smith and Montgomery 1989, 56)*

### Introduction

In a speech during the 2015 election campaign which he ultimately won, the British Prime Minister David Cameron compared himself to a firefighter who was putting out a blaze in a building which had been started by the last Labour government (Lazenby 2015). Metaphor is part and parcel of all terrains of language use, politics included! "Politics without metaphors is like a fish without water;" this is how Thompson (1996, 185) puts it, and metaphorically he puts it (Thompson's metaphor is itself the title of his paper). Media and journalism are not an exception. The inclusion of a metaphor in a newspaper headline represents the third layer of relevance maximization process, the first one being the inclusion of the story itself in the newspaper, and the second the choice of an attractive and eye-catching headline.

In the following headline<sup>2</sup>:

*Milan The Victims of Vucinic*

a number of factors are at play at the same time. The story is about a football match between Milan and Juventus in the Italian Football Cup, where Milan was beaten as a result of a decisive goal scored by the influential player Vucinic. A number of frames are established by the news editors in this headline to maximize the relevance potential, and a variety of variables related to the shared knowledge and

background information are utilized. First, the name Milan is the name of the team, not the city. Besides the background knowledge, the very existence of such a headline in the Sports section is itself part of the background knowledge, as it capitalizes on the genre expectations of the audience (see Forceville 2005, 247; Zwaan 1994). Second, a system of frames is established between Milan, the first team, and one influential player in the other team, Juventus, called Vucinic. This framing runs contrary to expectation, as it would be more logical for the frame, or simply the comparison, to be established between the two teams. Violating the frame expectation (after Deppermann 2005, 309), the headline compares Milan to Vucinic, as his second goal was decisive in defeating Milan. Third, the use of the term *victim* (referring to Milan) invokes *the victimizer* (Vucinic or Juventus), *the place* where the murder took place (the football field), and *the event* itself (the football match). This framing, or cross-domain mapping, using metaphor terminology, yields the following conceptual metaphors:

PLAYERS/TEAMS ARE VICTIMIZERS

PLAYERS/TEAMS ARE VICTIMS

THE FOOTBALL MATCH IS A MURDER

THE FOOTBALL FIELD IS A CRIME SCENE

By conceptual metaphor we mean the systematic set of correspondences or mappings between the source domain and the target domain (Heywood and Semino 2007, 25). These conceptual metaphors are just a few of the metaphors that are being drawn and recontextualized from the more elaborate and deeply engrained view of sports and football as warfare, but without weapons or shooting (Bergh 2011; Mangan 2003, 194; Awad 2012). In the above headline, relevance is maximized for the audience using metaphor as a cross-domain mapping in order to build comparisons or frames to attain the maximum cognitive effect with the least processing effort. It is set as an example that comprises the major themes that are tackled throughout this study. The metaphors in newspaper headlines are the data of the study. They are analyzed in light of relevance theory and frame semantics. The news genre and the genre analysis are introduced as notions that are to be considered as presuppositions for headline analysis and headline genre, two notions that this study seeks to adduce.

The present study is a discourse analysis of the metaphors in the headlines of the Malaysian newspaper/tabloid *The Star* (issues between 23 December 2012 and 11 January 2013). It attempts to prove that metaphors are used in newspaper headlines as a tool to maximize the relevance of the content of the newspaper article to the readers. The theoretical framework employed to explain metaphor is the relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson 1995). This theory is used to provide an explanation to language and communication, whereby the objective is to attain the maximum positive cognitive effect with the least possible processing effort. This theory fits perfectly well in explaining the newspaper headlines. The headline is seen as a telegram or a short message (SMS) that is intended to convey most of the content of the story in an attractive way, and at the same time seek to dramatize and sensationalize it. The crux of the study is the connection between the headline and the metaphor. More specifically, the study seeks to prove that headlines aim at foregrounding certain aspects or attributes in the newspaper story and at the same time downplaying other aspects or attributes. The same applies to the metaphor, which is the linguistic expression of a cross domain mapping in thought. It is an analogical comparison technique

employed to identify one item in terms of another. It aims at drawing a similarity or relationship between two things that have a significant feature. Below are two examples from *The Star*. The first phrase in each set is the actual headline, the second is the source domain, and the third is the suggested conceptual metaphor.

- *Merry, Merry Business*

(cf. Merry, Merry Christmas)

CHRISTMAS IS BUSINESS.

- *War of Words over Awards.*

(cf. War of/by weapons)

PARLIAMENTARY ARGUMENT IS A WAR.

There has been extensive research on metaphor in general and on headlines and their structure. Relevance theory in discourse is a field of inquiry that has received due consideration as well. The closest research to the present study is Krennmayr's (2011) treatment of metaphorical language use in news, but it does not emphasize the relevance or genre perspectives in the treatment of metaphor. Ifantidou (2009) and Dor (2003) discuss headlines from the relevance-theoretic perspective but do not clarify how metaphor can fit in their framework or how metaphors contribute to the treatment of the headlines as a genre. Yasynetska (2005) compares the headline metaphors used in the American and Ukrainian presidential campaigns of 2004. Although Yasynetska does not tackle relevance or genre in her framework, her significant contribution is the comparison between conceptual mappings across languages. For his part, Jinhong (2010) investigates metaphors used in the economic report headlines of *Business Week* and *The New York Times*. He deduces the conceptual metaphor ECONOMY IS A JOURNEY via referring to phrases used in the reports such as *starting a firm, on the road to economic reform, economic barriers* and the like. Drawing from expressions in the US political context like *landed some punches, throwing hat in the ring* and *heavyweight*, Chen (2009, 13) deduces the conceptual metaphor POLITICS IS A BOXING GAME. Shie (2011) compares two newspapers, *New York Times* and *Times Supplement*, in terms of metaphors and metonymies used in their headlines. Shie's approach is very relevant to our present study as it tackles the role of metaphors and metonymies in foregrounding some pragmatically relevant aspects of the newspaper story. This last part concerning the foregrounding and the economy of expression inherent in metaphoricality is what has attracted the attention of Molek-Kozakowska (2014, 150) as she tackles the properties of headline style from the perspective of the potential coercion. However, and to the best of the researchers' knowledge, no study has tackled metaphor as a relevance maximization tool in newspaper headlines in particular. Moreover, applying such a theoretical framework on the Malaysian context in specific is another new and promising field of inquiry. For example, Rajandran (2013, 19) is among the scholars whose research work scratches on the surface of metaphor as a conceptualization strategy in the Malaysian context. Rajandran utilizes conceptual metaphor theory to analyze the talks of the Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak about Economic Transformation Programme (ETP). Rajandran deduces the two conceptual metaphors ETP IS A

JOURNEY and ETP IS A VEHICLE that characterize and conceptualize ETP. All in all, the present study is hoped to open new avenues for the systematic analysis of headline style as a distinct genre.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. A short section presents the significance of the study. The next section provides a survey and a literature review of the notions of the study. The objective of this survey is not to delve into the details of these notions but to grasp the most salient aspects that pertain to metaphors and headlines in relation to relevance theory. The following section is an analysis of six sample headlines from *The Star*. The final part is a general discussion and concluding remarks.

### **Significance of the Study**

The importance of the study lies in its treatment of metaphor as a relevance maximization tool in newspaper headlines. The study capitalizes on the connection, and interaction, between metaphors and headlines as tools employed by news editors to maximize relevance to the readers. News editors choose the most relevant and most attractive part of the story and put it forth in the headline. In cases where a metaphor is used in the headline, the metaphor itself is deployed in order to foreground certain aspects of the story and, at the same time, downplay other aspects.

### **Literature and Definition of Terms**

#### **Metaphor**

Metaphor is an analogical comparison technique employed to identify one item in terms of another. It seeks to access abstract themes such as feelings and emotions using physical and concrete notions or experiences. It aims at drawing a similarity or relationship between two things that have a significant feature. Aristotle assumes that it is a "comparison between two terms that is made in order to explore the nature of one" (Holme 2004, 1). Take this example:

Tom is a lion.

If this sentence is interpreted literally, it will show that *Tom*, who is supposedly human, roars and walks on four legs. However, this is not what metaphor is intended for. The intention is that *Tom* is brave and strong. In other words, when *Tom* is described in light of a feature or attribute that is generally associated with *the lion*, then the use is said to be metaphorical. The word *lion* in the above example is referred to as the vehicle or the source domain, whereas *Tom* is referred to as the tenor or the target domain (Taylor 1990, 70; Heywood and Semino 2007, 25). Therefore, an attribute of *the lion*, namely bravery, is being deployed or transferred from the source domain (*the lion*) to the target domain (*Tom*). The theme of transferability can further be intensified by the Greek origin of the word 'metaphor'; metaphor in Greek means 'transference'. The features or attributes that are often ascribed to *lions* are transferred into *Tom*.

The frequency of certain metaphors and domains is indicative of what these domains represent to a particular community. News and the media are intended to highlight certain aspects of a notion and at the same time conceal other aspects, ultimately aiming at persuading the audience into certain ideological convictions. A number of conclusions can be inferred concerning the beliefs, attitudes and identities of a particular community from the metaphors used. When the English football team is nicknamed 'The Three

Lions' and the Southeast Asian countries are described as 'The Asian Tigers', these are the types of analogies and comparisons the British and the Southeast Asian nations would like to be associated with. Tigers and lions are usually associated with beauty, strength and grandeur (see Awad 2012, 72; Pedersen 2011; Butterworth 2010).

A number of theories had been put forth to account for metaphor, dating back since Aristotle (4th century B.C.) who suggested the comparison theory, based on the principle of analogy (Treckova 2011, 1; Ortony 1979, 3). Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) foundational book *Metaphors We Live By* is considered a huge leap in the treatment of metaphor. The leap resulted from the shift in the treatment of metaphor as part of language only into a matter relevant to cognition. Still, there was some research work prior to the above book that led to this conclusion, starting from scholars like Tarski (1944, 343) who is one of the first modern scholars to refer to the truth-condition of a sentence. According to Tarski, the sentence *snow is white* is true if, and only if, snow is white. This statement seems redundant, but by applying it to metaphor, things become clear. Truth-conditionally, the sentence *Tom is a lion* violates this condition, because Tom is not a lion. Moreover, Grice (1975, 45) refers to this particular condition in his four conversational maxims of cooperation, namely the quality maxim, "Do not say what you believe is false." Grice also refers to the relation maxim: "Be relevant." However, he does not clearly state as to be relevant to what!

### **Relevance Theory**

Relevance theory resolves the above dilemma. According to Holme (2004, 8), "The relevance interpretation of metaphor assumes that we begin by assuming a literal meaning. When the literal interpretation produces something ridiculous, we move on to a figurative one." So, what are the main tenets of relevance theory? According to Sperber and Wilson (1995, 270):

*Presumption of optimal relevance (revised)*

- (a) The ostensive stimulus is relevant enough for it to be worth the addressee's effort to process it.
- (b) The ostensive stimulus is the most relevant one compatible with the communicator's abilities and preferences.

Put differently, Wilson and Sperber (1998, 8-9; 2012, 176) reason that "relevance is defined in terms of cognitive effects and processing effort. Cognitive effects are achieved when newly-presented information interacts with a context of existing assumptions by strengthening an existing assumption, by contradicting and eliminating an existing assumption, or by combining with an existing assumption to yield a contextual implication...The greater the cognitive effects, the greater the relevance will be...Cognitive effects, however, do not come free; they cost some mental effort to derive, and the greater the effort needed to derive them, the lower the relevance will be."

The roots of relevance theory are present in the works of earlier scholars such as Miller and Johnson-Laird (1976; cited in McGlone 2007, 111) who introduce the notion of 'cognitive economy.' According to that notion, the mind borrows the semantic structure of simple concepts to mediate aspects of complex concepts. The relationship between the above theories has been drawn by Attardo (2011, 139) when he convincingly states that, "Sperber and Wilson's (1986) Relevance Theory (RT) has been one of the most

successful post-Gricean approaches to pragmatics." The alloying of conceptual metaphor theory with relevance theory has been critical and timely as it provides a useful analytic and explanatory model in communication research.

### **Frame Semantics**

Frame semantics is a theoretical framework that provides a plausible descriptive adequacy to the notion of contextualization and relevance. Contextualization refers to how a message such as an event, a statement or a saying is put into the right context so that the addressee(s) could understand it with the most possible cognitive effect and the least possible processing effort. The same result could be attained by referring to an earlier text and/or context that could facilitate the comprehension of the message. The message is framed, i.e. put in frame, and the various types of relevant background knowledge are activated and triggered. For example, the term *breakfast* requires the activation of the background reference associated with the *3-meal culture*; likewise, *weekend* is associated with *7-day cycle*, and so on. In other words, a word represents a category of experience, and *meanings are relativized to scenes*, as is phrased by Charles Fillmore (1977, 59), the father of frame semantics. According to Fillmore (2010, 163), the word *buying* invokes, *selling, buyer and seller*; in other words, the whole *transaction process* is triggered, and the word *buying* is but a cell in a matrix or web that consists of various cells.

### **Genre Analysis/News Analysis/Headline Analysis**

The contribution of genre studies is far-reaching and can never be overlooked. Swales' (1990) notion of genre is basically pedagogically oriented, initially intended to assist non-native speakers of English to master academic and professional genres. However, Swales' framework is successfully extended and applied outside applied linguistics, and according to Solin (2011, 125), Swales redefines the discourse communities not as sharing social background but by their common goals. Swales contends that

A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style (Swales 1990, 58).

Bhatia picks the signal and moves on to tackle very specialized types of genre. He elaborates on the public discourse relevant to the government decision making in Hong Kong (Bhatia 1997a); the genre of the introductions of the academic research work such as prefaces, forewords, and acknowledgements (Bhatia 1997b); and the generic structure of advertisements (Bhatia and Bhatia 2007). Basically, discourse is the combination of text and context, the interaction between speaker and hearer for a social purpose (e.g. communicating ideas) using language. The most elaborate form of discourse analysis is the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which views discourse as a component of the social behavior that encompasses other elements but is shaped by them as well (see Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999 for details). The term 'discourse' has also been tackled in light of other linguistic terms such as communication, power, social interaction, social semiosis, and genre, among other things (Van Dijk 2011, 3-5).

Utilizing discourse analysis, genre analysis, content analysis, event analysis and the like, Van Dijk introduces his analysis of news, coining it *news analysis*. Drawing basically from basic discourse analysis tenets, Van Dijk (1988a, x) introduces news analysis and news as discourse, as his ambition is to "stimulate a new, more explicit and systematic approach to the study of mass media discourses in general and to news reporting in particular." He uses the basic discourse analysis strategies to prove that media news constitutes a particular type of discourse.

The notions of discourse and communication mentioned above underlie Swales' (1990) notion of genre analysis which is very relevant in the case of headlines. To illustrate, let us refer to what Garst and Bernstein (1961, 103) had to say about headlines; "... the headline is a form of expression having fully as many standards to be met and requirements to be filled as, say the sonnet or the triolet." As Smith and Montgomery (1989, 56) convincingly suggest, the mission of the headline writers is to inform and entertain as they combine the playfulness of poets with the precision of the physicists. In many cases, news editors do not provide sufficient information in the headline in order to draw the reader's attention into further reading. Small wonder that the haunting argument that entices scholars is whether to consider headlines as information-carrying devices or as frames that shape the interpretation of the content of the articles (McCluskey 2005, 6; Condit et al. 2001, 380). This is how Hulteng (1976, 124) puts the process of headline writing:

The process of distilling the essence of a half-column story into a six-word headline inevitably brings some distortion. Only a facet, a fleeting glimpse, of the complex substance of the account can be squeezed into the tiny format of a headline.

## **Sample Selection and Analysis**

### **1) Merry, Merry Business**

Newspaper issue: *The Star*, 25 December 2012; page: 22 (Metro Central).

#### **Briefing**

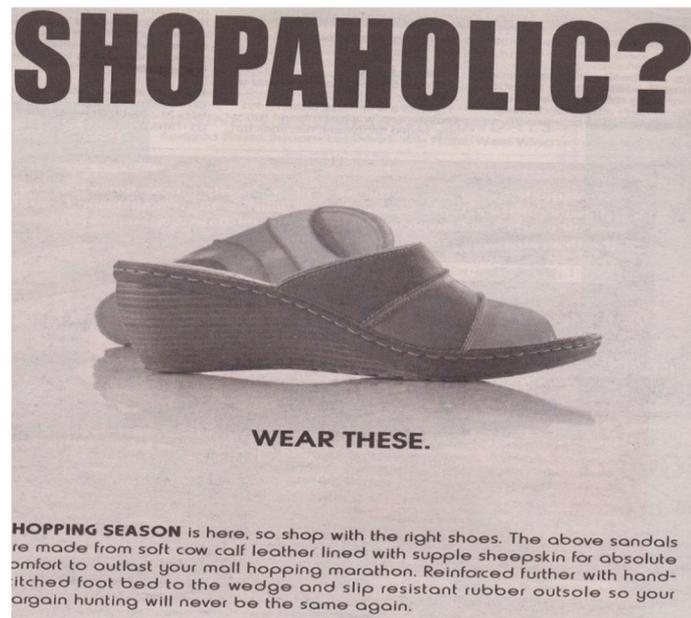
The article discusses the economic side of Christmas; it alludes to how the Christmas season, which is supposedly associated with religious sentiments, is considered a season for business.

#### **Analysis**

*Merry, Merry Business* is drawn from the common expression *Merry, Merry Christmas*. The latter expression is the source domain from which the former expression, the target domain, is drawn, yielding the conceptual metaphor CHRISTMAS IS BUSINESS. This theorization is built on a variety of assumptions pertaining to the readers' awareness and shared knowledge about business and Christmas. The news editors placing *Merry, Merry Business* as a headline in a Malaysian newspaper assume, or presuppose, the readers' familiarity with the source domain *Merry, Merry Christmas* (for a perceptive analysis of the relation between metaphor and presupposition, see Stern 2000, 121-123).

## 2) **Headline: Shopaholic? Wear These.**

Issue: *The Star*; 11 January 2013; Star-special (Chinese New Year Joy); page: 24.



### **Briefing:**

This is a shoe advertisement with the headline *Shopaholic?* followed by the image of the product (the shoes) then the comment *wear these*. The comment is followed by the *rationale* behind wearing these shoes. It is the coming of the Chinese New Year, which is a traditional annual festival.

### **Analysis**

Imagine this advertisement written in the following plain manner

*If you are addicted to shopping, you need to use these shoes because they last long and are comfortable*

The same proposition is introduced to the readers but in a pictorial manner that aims at attracting their attention. To achieve this goal, a number of frames and types of background knowledge are induced and triggered. As Forceville (2005) suggests, spatial and temporal circumstances, as well as generic conventions, are set to trigger cognitive schemata (cf. Fillmore's frames, 2006) but at the same time steer and constrain possible interpretations. Beginning with spatio-temporal circumstances, this ad appears in the newspaper on the eve of the Chinese New Year (January), a celebration that is often characterized by a shopping spree, among other things. The ad also utilizes the tabloid style of relying more on the visual image than on analysis and rational description (Bird 2000: 215). Language and image interaction are among the factors that are at play in the analysis of such advertisements (Tsakona 2009, 1171). The ad invokes two frames, addiction to shopping and addiction to alcohol. The resulting conceptual metaphor is SHOPPING IS ALCOHOL

(ADDICTION TO SHOPPING IS ADDICTION TO ALCOHOL).

The ad utilizes the shopping spree on the eve of the Chinese New Year when the good quality shoes are needed to "outlast your mall hopping marathon." This last expression brings together the disparate

visual frames, the headline *Shopaholic?* and the image of the shoes, and provides the rationale, and rather the persuading force, of the ad. This argument is held based on the realization of the headline as a frame-invoking tool, a metaphorical cross-domain mapping, a relevance maximization strategy and a visual reality (compared to the verbal nature of the headline; see McClusky 2005: 4). Not only is the state of being shopaholic compared to the image of the shoes, but a whole bunch of images are invoked as attributes and properties that are often ascribed to, and associated with, shopping seasons. This ad adduces the metonymic image of the shoes as one attribute of the shopping season. As such, the shopping season is an *object* that entails a variety of *attributes* (borrowing from Object-Oriented programming terminology; see Page-Jones 2000, 28 Liang 2013, 408). In other words, water minerals and juice products could also be utilized as part and parcel (i.e. attributes) of the shopping activities. Consequently, framing shopaholic against the image of piles of water and juice could also be a plausible ad that chains an object to its attribute(s).

### 3) **Headline: 7-Up; Second to None**

Sub-Headline: Nicole proves she's still the queen of squash.

Newspaper issue: *The Star on Sunday*; 23 December 2012; pages: 64/62

#### **Briefing**

This is an article about the Malaysian squash player Nicole David who won 7 world titles, the latest of which was in the Cayman Islands. Nicole defeated the English player Laura Massaro. Nicole is described in the article as *the Duracell Bunny* because she repelled almost every ball that her opponent threw at her. The Duracell Bunny is an iconic advertisement that represents the ever-lasting strength and energy of the Duracell battery, as if Nicole is a battery with incredible energy and strength that never fades. Moreover, Nicole will be *hungrier* for more titles and victories if the International Olympic Council includes squash in the Olympics. The hungry people are those who have a good appetite for food, and Nicole is in a very good mood for more eating and harvesting more squash titles.

#### **Analysis**

To emphasize the significance and importance of Nicole's achievement, the headline that is used is *7-Up, second to none* and the subheading *the queen of squash*. *7-Up* is a metaphorical use, imitating the famous soft drink *7-Up*. The reason for using number 7 is the fact that Nicole's victory was the seventh in her career as world champion of the squash game. The expression *second to none* is also metaphorical and is used idiomatically to mean *the best*. The source of this idiom was Shakespeare who was among the first to use this expression in *The Comedy of Errors* (5:1), when Angelo speaks warmly of Antipholus of Syracuse: "Of credit infinite, highly beloved, second to none that lives here". The term *up* reflects the ascending nature of Nicole's career, from one victory to another. No wonder the article uses five phrasal verbs with *up*: *wrap up*; *come up*; *line up*; *step up* (*twice*). The conceptual metaphors and the abstractions drawn from the usages of the word *up*, especially in phrasal verbs, can further be illustrated in the work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980b, 195-196; see also Lakoff and Johnson 1981, 296-302) which they describe as

orientational metaphors; *up is positive* and *up is more*. The use of the term *queen* in *the queen of squash* reflects the analogous nature of metaphor. The queens are generally found in kingdoms. Consequently, the squash (or sports in general) is a kingdom where Nicole has been crowned as the queen. This metaphorical usage invokes linguistic as well as semantic properties and mental representations of the two fields being compared, i.e. the kingdoms (the source domain) and sports (the target domain), rendering the conceptual metaphors:

SQUASH IS A KINGDOM

NICLOE IS A QUEEN

#### 4) **Headline: A War of Words over Awards**

Sub-headline: Karpal slams party strongmen Ngeh and Tang for receiving titles.

Newspaper issue: *The Star*, 24 December 2012; page: 6.

##### **Briefing**

Karpal, the chairman of DAP (The Democratic Action Party), criticized two Penang party members, Ngeh and Teng, for accepting the Datuk, a traditional Malaysian honorary title, while still active in politics. The reason Karpal gave is the long-standing party principle of not receiving awards while serving as elected representatives, so as to ensure that party leaders practice transparency and not gain by getting titles. On the other hand, Teng responded by questioning the existence of such a rule. He challenged him to show the rules that stated so. The above briefing is the major outline of the argument over receiving Datuk titles, but the significance lies in the later reaction to the action, then the reaction to the reaction and so on. Upon analyzing the content of the article and the statements of the two parties, further facts appear. For example, Teng's response concerning the non-existence of the rule that disallows receiving titles such as the Datuk raises doubts concerning the objectivity and authenticity of Karpal's statements. One of them tells the truth and the other does not. Or maybe both tell the truth but there are other political and electoral motivations for the timing of their statements. To illustrate, a former DAP vice-chairman who is called Tunku Ibrahim claimed the party insulted the Rulers by rejecting the conferment. Karpal responded by condemning Tunku's statement, claiming that Tunku's purpose is to put Karpal in a bad light in the eyes of the Malays. Karpal described Tunku's statement as a half-truth account, and it is not a reckless statement but a carefully crafted, intentional one.

##### **Analysis**

Originally, the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR is drawn from the firmly established metaphorical expression *war of words* (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 4). This metaphor evolves and is reused and recontextualized in the headline as *War of Words over Awards*. This metaphorical use entails the more refined, more elaborate conceptual metaphor PARLIAMENTARY ARGUMENT IS WAR. This is a typical illustration of the flexibility and development of metaphorical expressions as they are reused to convey new meanings and serve new functions. The same conceptual metaphor is being *revisited* (see Grady 1997b, 267; Grady 1998, 205).

### **5) Headline: Did we miss the apocalypse?**

Newspaper issue: *The Star*, 24 December 2012; page: 25.

#### **Briefing**

The writer (Martin Khor) says that people in the world are happy that the world did not end on the 21th of December 2012 as was expected by the Mayan prophecy. However, there are two philosophical and logical interpretations of what happened. The first is that the date marks a new era; the second assumes that the world actually came to an end for some unfortunate people who suffered from different catastrophes such as the family of the Malaysian child who was dragged ten miles or the families of the 26 American kids and adults who were killed in Newton, Connecticut. The same may also apply to the Palestinian families in Gaza who lost members of their families as a result of the Israeli incursions. The floods in the Philippines and the US mark the end of the world for those who lost members of their families.

#### **Analysis**

The ability to deduce philosophical and logical aspects from ordinary news is the craft of the perceptive intellectuals. According to the Mayan prophecy, the end of the world was supposed to be on the 21<sup>st</sup> of Dec. 2012. That the world did not come to an end meant there might be other themes the Mayans, and the analysts such as the writer of the article, want us to pay attention to. The end of one era and the beginning of a new one is a possible logical and philosophical interpretation. Conducting an intellectual analysis, identifying ethics, and making value judgments are among the objectives of the writer in his analysis of the Mayan prophecy.

The other possible interpretation, according to the writer, is that the world actually came to an end for those who suffered and lost some of their family members in floods, wars and car accidents. The objective of the writer is to underpin the effect of these factors on humanity in general. Apocalyptic predictions are anti-climactic in nature, and, therefore, analysts who seek to address such topics need to trigger relevance by alluding to current matters. What gives this headline its appeal is that it sets a frame of 'missing the apocalypse' in an unconventional manner in order to refer to events that took place that week.

### **6) Headline: Get smart with your phone**

Newspaper issue: *The Star*, 25 December 2012; page: 14

#### **Briefing**

The headline and the content of the article hinge on one theme: 'be smart when using your smart phone!' The thread that connects the elements of the article is the notion of *smartness*, derived from the name of the latest fashion mobile phones such as iPhone and Samsung Galaxy Series. The writer wants the smartphone users to be careful and vigilant because of the rising number of thieves who snatch smartphones. This new trend is a natural outcome of the rising number of smartphone users in Malaysia

and the world. The second theme is to be smart with the content inside your smartphone. According to the writer, the last thing you have to worry about when your phone is stolen is the device itself. The personal data such as banking details and personal pictures are far more important.

### **Analysis**

Based on the cohesive nature of the social interaction, discourse analysis tackles text and context within their actual social perspective (Halliday and Hasan 1976); it emphasizes text cohesion owing to the fact that meaning is created by the social system. The writer builds on his understanding of the society and the effect of the new technologies on the changes that have taken place in society. The thieves have developed their own ways for robbery, and therefore the owners of the new technologies such as smartphones should also be careful. From the style of writing and the accompanying photos in the newspaper, one can deduce that the writer directs his advice mainly to the youth. Moreover, the article emphasizes the notion of smartness to encourage the youth to be careful because this is the kind of thinking that suits the young generation's way of thinking. Basically, smartness is a human property/attribute. It is deployed to machines, computers and mobile phones/smart phones. The resulting conceptual metaphor is PHONES ARE HUMANS. Historically, Artificial Intelligence is a discipline that celebrates such conceptual metaphors to the full. Then, this property is being retrieved from humans to mobile phones, and the resulting conceptual metaphor is HUMANS ARE PHONES! That is, humans should be as smart as the phones they use, although smartness is a property that is borrowed from humans in the first place.

### **General Discussion**

Kovesces (2015, 2) alludes to the role of framing within metaphors by referring to the deeply ingrained source-target domains (which together constitute the conceptual metaphor approach) as source frame and target frame! Whether domains or frames, metaphor comprehension relies on a clear cognitive distinction between and across genres, which in turn paves the way for the violation of genre expectations.

As the argument in headline 6 above suggests, news editors draw on their awareness of the social system and the background knowledge of their readers. The writer's understanding of the society and his ability to relate some concepts that are appealing to society are key factors in discourse. Upon the full awareness of the social system, the writer manages to introduce notions and concepts that are appealing and convincing, emphasizing text cohesion. Cohesion in the above argument is synonymous to relevance! However, the role of the audience in discourse is better represented in relevance theory than in text cohesion (see Bell 1984 for the notion *audience design*). Moreover, with the notion of smartness seen as a human property in essence (source domain), this property is first transferred into the mobile phones (target domain). Then, this property is depicted as a property of the mobile phones (source domain) and the humans (target domain) are asked, according to the writer, to acquire this property. This approach alludes to the recontextualizing potential of metaphor (Linell 2009; Semino, Deignan, and Littlemore 2013). Metaphoricity is recontextualisation in essence. Put differently, two parallel strands can be

described in the metaphorical usage. At one level, the currency of metaphors in society and media endows them with the status of 'common sense' or shared knowledge (cf. Suleiman 2013, 3). At the other level, metaphorical meaning is created *de novo*. Taking into consideration the common sense and the shared knowledge in society, news editors capitalize on the ability of the target audience to establish mappings between the *given* source domain and the *new* target domain. In headline 1 above, *Merry, Merry Christmas* is the *given*, compared to the *Merry, Merry Business*, which is the *new*. New avenues are always open for metaphorical mappings. Consequently, it is necessary for the genre boundaries to be set up in the minds of the readers in order for metaphor use to achieve its maximum cognitive effect. The explanation for this notion is that metaphor is, by definition, a cross-domain mapping; in other words, it is a trans-genre device that invokes two disparate and competing fields, domains and frames. On the other hand, the headline is the gateway and the textual broker that mediates the content of the article to the readers. When the story is prepared to be put in the newspaper in its final shape, the most salient and most relevant point is being singled out and amplified in the headline. Headline 2 above invokes and projects the metonymic image of the good quality shoes against the image of shopping spree (addiction to shopping), rendering *Shopaholic*. The two images are disparate, unpredictable frames.

Likewise, headline 5 (*Did we miss the apocalypse?*) sets a frame of 'missing the apocalypse' in an unconventional manner. We were lucky that the Mayan apocalypse missed us, the writer assumes. The conventional argument might be something like, 'Well, we were lucky that the prophecy did not come true, and we were spared; the apocalypse missed us!' The consequent conventional argument would be, 'Did the apocalypse miss us?' In this frame, an analogy is being established between the apocalypse and a bus/train or an important date which you feel sorry when you miss. However, the creativity of the writer is manifested in breaking the frame expectations by reminding the readers that the Mayan prophecy is intended to help us feel and share the suffering of humanity. Consequently, the resulting conceptual metaphors are

APOCALYPSE IS A BUS

APOCALYPSE IS AN IMPORTANT DATE

Equally important is the treatment of headline as a dialogue, either between a speaker-news editor and addressee-reader or between an earlier and later self. An example on the latter is the apocalyptic argument in headline 5 above, which could at certain levels be seen as a monologue that utilizes framing and metaphor as strategies to turn the monologue into a dialogue (hence dialogism and multi-voicedness; see Bakhtin 1981, 279). What gives relevance theory its appeal is that it chimes in with notions like frame semantics and the Bakhtian dialogism. In headline 2, and by adopting a more abstract form of dialogue, the underlying dialogue could go as follows between news editors and the readers:

A. Based on what you know about addiction to alcohol, are you addicted to shopping (i.e. are you SHOPAHOLIC?).

B. Yes

A. Then you need to wear these shoes.

B. Why?

A. Because they last long.

Framing takes effect in this example as it brings to the fore a whole scene of addictions, including addiction to alcohol and addiction to shopping. The resulting conceptual metaphor is SHOPAHOLIC IS ALCOHOLIC; SHOPPING IS ADDICTION. In this sense, the metaphor is seen as a circle that consists of two symmetrical hemispheres that are bound up with a web of features or attributes that are equidistant from the center. Against the attribute *addiction* in the 'shopping hemisphere' stands the attribute *addiction* in the 'alcohol hemisphere'. Part of this rationale is drawn from the argument that metaphor is analogy. The allure of this argument is that it dates back as early as Aristotle, but still entices scholars as modern as Wolff and Gentner (2011). Not until the attribute in the source domain of the right hemisphere is calibrated and aligned with the corresponding attribute in the target domain of the left hemisphere could it be claimed that the metaphorical usage has accomplished its maximum cognitive effect. The ideal calibration is also functional in accomplishing the minimum cognitive effort, as relevance theory suggests. In the sentence *Tom is a lion*, the feature in the lion that is supposed to be triggered and compared to Tom is *the bravery* feature, not *the four-legged* feature!

## الإمكانات الدلالية القصوى للمجازات (الاستعارات) بوصفها أدوات رابطة في عناوين الصحف

أحمد أبو دلو

قسم اللغة العربية وآدابها، جامعة اليرموك، إربد، الأردن

عماد عوض

مركز اللغات، جامعة اليرموك، إربد، الأردن

### الملخص

يسعى هذا البحث إلى دراسة الاستعارات في عناوين الصحف، وفقاً لنظرية الربط أو الصلة (سبيربر و ويلسون 1995). وقد اعتمد البحث على بيانات عينة الدراسة التي استمدت من صحيفة: "النجمة" الشعبية، الصادرة في ماليزيا باللغة الإنجليزية.

وستحاول الدراسة استعراض أهم الاستعارات المفاهيمية السائدة في عناوين الصحف، للوقوف على دور البناء المجازي (الاستعاري) في تشكيل هذه العناوين بوصفها جنساً أدبياً. وكونها أكثر تحديداً، فإن الدراسة تبتغي إثبات أن الاستعارات تستخدم في عناوين الصحف أداة دلالية ذات إمكانات فائقة للمبالغة أو التعظيم لإظهار أهمية محتوى المقال الصحفي للقراء أو الجمهور.

ويؤمل أن تشكل هذه الدراسة لبنة تُبنى على الأساس الذي وضعه موليك-كوزاكوسكا (2014) في معالجة دور المجاز (أو الاستعارة) في عناوين الأخبار. وستعتمد على معطيات الإطار الدلالي (فيلمر 2006؛ 2010) كونها وسيلة لتفسير آلية عمل القوة القصوى للمبالغة باستعمال أدوات الربط الدلالي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: أسلوب عناوين الصحف؛ تحليل العنوان؛ تحليل الجنس الأدبي؛ نظرية الصلة؛ الإطار الدلالي؛ المجاز/ الاستعارة؛ تحليل الخطاب.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> The major theme in this article was first presented to the 2013 Stockholm Metaphor Festival, Sweden.

See pages 92-93 on

[http://www.english.su.se/polopoly\\_fs/1.142305.1377024309!/menu/standard/file/MF%202013%20Abstracts%20Version%202%201.pdf](http://www.english.su.se/polopoly_fs/1.142305.1377024309!/menu/standard/file/MF%202013%20Abstracts%20Version%202%201.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> The Malaysian Newspaper/Tabloid *The Star*, 11 January 2013, Sports Section, page 57.

## References

- Attardo, Salvatore. 2011. Humor. In *Discursive Pragmatics* vol. XV, ed. Jan Zienkowski, Jan-Ola Ostman and Jef Verschueren, 135-155. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Awad, Emad. 2012. What's in a nickname? Nicknames and Identity in the 2010 Football World Cup in South Africa. *Cross-Cultural Communication* 8 (3): 72-75.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail Mikhailovich. 1981. *The dialogic imagination: Four essays*, ed. Michael Holquist. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, trans. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Bell, Allan. 1984. Language style as audience design. *Language in Society* 13(2): 145-204.
- Bergh, Gunnar. 2011. Football is war: A case study of minute-by-minute football commentary. *Veredas – Revista de Estudos Linguísticos* 15 (2): 83-93.
- Bhatia, Vijay K. 1997a. Democratizing government decision-making: A study of public discourse in Hong Kong. *Journal of Pragmatics* 28 (4): 515-532.
- Bhatia, Vijay K. 1997b. Genre-mixing in academic introductions. *English for Specific Purposes* 16 (3): 181-195.
- Bhatia Vijay and Aditi Bhatia. 2007. Global genres in local contexts. In *Intercultural Aspects of Specialized Communication*, eds. Christopher Candlin and Maurizio Gotti, 263-282. Bern: Peter Lang AG, International Academic Publishers.
- Bird, S. Elizabeth. 2000. Audience demands in a murderous market. In *Tabloid Tales*, eds. Collin Sparks and John Tulloch, 213-228. Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
- Butterworth, Michael. 2010. Do you believe in nationalism? In *Examining Identity in Sports Media*, eds. Heather Hundley and Andrew Billings, 133-152. California: Sage Publications.
- Chen, Lan. 2009. The Metaphorical Use of Boxing Terms in Everyday Language. The School of Teacher Education. Kristianstad University (<http://hkr.diva-portal.org>).
- Chouliaraki, Lilie and Norman Fairclough. 1999. *Discourse in Late Modernity*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Condit, Celeste et al. 2001. An exploratory study of the impact of news headlines on genetic determinism. *Science Communication* 22: 379-395.
- Deppermann, Arnulf. 2005. Conversational interpretation of lexical items and conversational contrasting. In *Syntax and Lexis in Conversation*, eds. Auli Hakulinen, and Margret Selting, 289-317. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

- Dor, Daniel. 2003. On newspaper headlines as relevance optimizers. *Journal of Pragmatics* 35: 695-721.
- Fillmore, Charles. 1977. The case for case reopened. *Syntax and Semantics* Vol. 8: 59-81.
- Fillmore, Charles. 2006. Frame Semantics. In *Cognitive Linguistics: Basic Readings* ed. Dirk Geeraerts, 373-400. Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter
- Fillmore, Charles. 2010. Discussing frame semantics: The state of the art: An interview with Charles J. Fillmore by József Andor. *Review of Cognitive Linguistics* 8 (1): 157-176.
- Fineman, Benjamin. 2004. Computers as people: human interaction metaphors in human-computer interaction. Unpublished Masters' thesis. Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- Forceville, Charles. 2005. Addressing an audience: time, place, and genre in Peter Van Straaten's calendar cartoons. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research* 18: 247-278.
- Garst, Robert and Theodore Bernstein. 1961. *Headlines and Deadlines* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Grady, Joe. 1997b. THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS revisited. *Cognitive Linguistics* 8: 267-290.
- Grady, Joe. 1998. The conduit metaphor revisited: A reassessment of metaphors for communication. In *Discourse and Cognition: Bridging the Gap*, ed. J. Koenig, 205-218. Stanford, CA: Center for the Study of Language and Information Publications.
- Grice, Herbert Paul. 1975. Logic and Conversation. In *Syntax and Semantics* vol. 3, eds. Peter Cole and Jerry Morgan, 41-58. New York: Academic Press.
- Halliday, Michael and Ruqaya Hasan. 1976. *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.
- Heywood, John and Elena Semino. 2007. Metaphor for Speaking and Writing in the British Press. In *Language in the Media*, eds. Sally Hohnson, and Astrid Ensslin, 25-47. New York: Continuum.
- Holme, Randal. 2004. *Mind, Metaphor and Language Teaching*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hulteng, John. 1976. *The Messenger's Motives: Ethical Problems of the News Media*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Ifantidou, Elly. 2009. Newspaper headlines and relevance: Ad hoc concepts in ad hoc contexts. *Journal of Pragmatics* 41: 699-720.
- Jinhong, Bai. 2010. A Study of The Journey Metaphor in Economic Report Headlines. The School of Teacher Education. Kristianstad University (<http://hkr.diva-portal.org>).
- Kovecses, Zoltan. 2015. *Where Metaphors Come from: Reconsidering Context in Metaphor*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Krennmayr, Tina. 2011. Metaphor in newspapers. Vrije Universiteit. Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation.
- Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. 1980a. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. 1980b. The metaphorical structure of the human conceptual system. *Cognitive Science* 4 (2): 195-208.
- Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. 1981. Conceptual Metaphor in Everyday Language. In *Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor*, ed. Mark Johnson, 286-328. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press,

- Lazenby, Peter. 2015. Firefighters Fume over Cameron Claims. *Morning Star*, 2 May 2015. <https://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/a-c090-Firefighters-fume-over-Cameron-claims> (accessed 10 May 2015).
- Liang, Y. Daniel. 2013. *Introduction to Java Programming* (9<sup>th</sup> edition). Boston: Pearson.
- Linell, Per. 2009. *Rethinking Language, Mind and World Dialogically: Interactional and Contextual Theories of Human Sense-Making*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Mangan, J. A., ed. 2003. *Militarism, Sport, Europe: War without Weapons*. London: Frank Cass Publishers.
- McCluskey, Maureen E. 2005. A Content Analysis of 2004 Presidential Election Headlines of *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Washington Times*. Unpublished Master's Thesis. Florida: University of Central Florida.
- McGlone, Matthew S. 2007. What is the explanatory value of a conceptual metaphor? *Language and Communication* 27 : 109-126.
- Molek-Kozakowska, Katarzyna. 2014. Coercive metaphors in news headlines: A cognitive pragmatic approach. *Brno Studies in English* 40 (1): 149-173.
- Ortony, Andrew. 1979. Metaphor: A multidimensional problem. In *Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Andrew Ortony, 1–16. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Page-Jones, Meiler. 2000. *Fundamentals of Object-Oriented Design in UML*. New York: Dorset House.
- Pedersen, Hagle Chr. 2011. Sport, Ethno-Politics and Sami identity in Northern Norway. *Scandinavian Sport Studies Forum* 2: 45-73.
- Rajandran, Kumaran. 2013. Metaphors for Malaysia's Economic Transformation Programme. *Kajian Malaysia* 31 (2): 19–35.
- Semino, Elena, Alice Deignan, and Jeannette Littlemore. 2013. Metaphor, Genre, and Recontextualization. *Metaphor and Symbol* 28 (1) : 41-59.
- Shie, Jian-Shiung. 2011. Allusions in New York Times and Times Supplement News Headlines. *Discourse and Communication* 5 (1): 41-63.
- Smith, Michael and Michael Montgomery. 1989. The semantics of winning and losing. *Language in Society* 18 (1): 31-57.
- Solin, Anna. 2011. Genre. In *Discursive Pragmatics* vol. XV, eds. Jan Zienkowski, Jan-Ola Ostman, and Jef Verschueren, 119-134. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Sperber, Dan and Deirdre Wilson. 1995. *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*. (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Stern, Josef. 2000. *Metaphor in Context*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Suleiman, Yasir. 2013b. *Arabic in the Fray*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Swales, John. 1990. *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tarski, Alfred. 1944. The Semantic Conception of Truth and the Foundations of Semantics. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 4: 341–376.

- Taylor, Insup. 1990. *Psycholinguistics*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Thompson, Seth. 1996. Politics without Metaphors is Like a Fish without Water. In *Metaphor: Implications and Applications*, eds. Jeffrey Scott Mio and Albert N. Katz, 185-201. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Trčková, Dita. 2011. Multi-Functionality of Metaphor in Newspaper Discourse. *Brno Studies in English* 37 (1): 139-151.
- Tsakona, Villy. 2009. Language and image interaction in cartoons: Towards a multimodal theory of humor. *Journal of Pragmatics* 41: 1171-1188.
- Van Dijk, Teun. 1988a. *News Analysis: Case studies of international and national news in the press*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Van Dijk, Teun, ed. 2011. *Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). London: Sage.
- Wilson, Deirdre and Dan Sperber. 1998. Pragmatics and time. In *Relevance Theory: Applications and Implications*, eds. Robyn Carston, and Seiji Uchida, 1-22. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co.
- Wilson, Deirdre and Dan Sperber. 2012. *Meaning and Relevance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wolff, Phillip and Dedre Gentner. 2011. Structure-mapping in metaphor comprehension. *Cognitive Science* 35(8): 1456-1488.
- Yasynetska, Olena. 2005. Conceptual, Linguistic and Translational Aspects of Headline Metaphors Used to Refer to the American and Ukrainian Presidential Campaigns of 2004. Unpublished Master's Thesis. Ohio: University of Ohio.
- Zwaan, Rolf. 1994. Effect of genre expectations on text comprehension. *Journal of Experimental Psychology - Learning Memory and Cognition* 20: 920-933.