

## Metaphors in English, German and Hungarian Business Discourse: A Contrastive Analysis

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### 1 Introduction

The word 'metaphor' usually makes us think of a device commonly used by poets for aesthetic and rhetorical purposes. As a commonly used figure of speech in literature, it is described by Fowler (1987: 144) as follows: "In general, a metaphor ascribes to some thing or action X a property Y which it could not literally possess in that context".

The American poet, Robert Frost (1874-1963) is notably a poet of metaphors, more than anything else. To Frost, metaphor is really what poetry is all about. In his essay entitled *Education by Poetry* (1931), Frost says the following:

Poetry begins in trivial metaphors, pretty metaphors, 'grace metaphors,' and goes on to the profoundest thinking that we have. Poetry provides the one permissible way of saying one thing and meaning another. People say, 'Why don't you say what you mean?' We never do that, do we, being all of us too much poets. We like to talk in parables and in hints and in indirections - whether from diffidence or from some other instinct.

(<http://www.en.utexas.edu/amlit/amlitprivate/scans/edbypo.html>)

Later on Frost goes on to argue that "all thinking, except mathematical thinking, is metaphorical, or all thinking, except scientific thinking". This observation of Frost's seems to be reflected in the cognitive theory of metaphors, and it will also be of great importance in my analysis as it justifies the central points I will make in my study.

No doubt metaphors play a central role in Frost's poetry. For example, his poem titled *Mending Wall* (1914) is built around one metaphor: *Good fences make good neighbours*.

**He is all pine and I am apple orchard.  
My apple trees will never get across  
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him**

He only says, ‘**Good fences make good neighbours.**  
**Spring is the mischief in me** and I wonder...

(*The Norton Anthology of American Literature 1989: 1719*)

In one gem of Heinrich Heine’s cyclic poems, *Die Heimkehr* (1823-24) the following metaphors appear:

**Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht,  
 Das Leben ist der schwüle Tag.**  
 Es dunkelt schon, mir schläfert,  
 Der Tag hat mich müd’ gemacht.

(*Buch der Lieder 1973: 144*)

Petőfi Sándor, our great Hungarian poet associates sorrow with a big ocean and joy with a little pearl of the ocean in his poem (1846) titled *A bánat? Egy nagy óceán:*

**A bánat egy nagy óceán.  
 S az öröm?**  
**Az óceán kis gyöngye.** Talán  
 Mire fölhozom, össze is töröm.

(*Petőfi Sándor összes költeményei I. 1966: 402*)

In spite of the novelty of the above metaphorical expressions in these poems, the metaphors used in them are conventional and commonplace, therefore we understand them easily. Metaphors are, however, used not only by poets, but by people in their everyday lives as well. In fact, without metaphors we would not be able to understand such basic concepts as *life, argument, love, thought, society* and *economics*, etc.

This is what was recognised in the 80s by cognitive linguists, such as Lakoff-Johnson (1980) and later Kövecses (2005), who claimed that our conceptual system is metaphorically structured and defined. Thus, the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is often a matter of metaphor. They assume that we structure concepts (e.g. *love, happiness, anger, fear, wealth, desire, thoughts, society, politics, economics, communication, time, life, death* and *events*, etc.) on concrete, physical bases (e.g. *human body, health, illnesses, buildings, machines, animals, plants, sports, games, cooking and dishes, forces, movements* and *directions*, etc.). In other words, conceptual metaphors always combine two domains: a concrete, well bounded ‘source domain’ and an abstract, ‘target domain’.

It has been pointed out in several cognitive analyses of metaphors, such as Kövecses (2005: 167-185) that certain conceptual metaphors are ‘near’ universal. Examining the linguistic expressions of the metaphors HAPPINESS, ANGER and EVENT STRUCTURE in different languages (Hungarian, English, Japanese, Polish, Chinese and Zulu, etc.), the author reaches the conclusion that these metaphors are ‘near’ universal and their general conceptual structures are

the same. To justify this, let us take some linguistic expressions of the metaphor HAPPINESS in Hungarian, English and German:

HAPPINESS IS UP

*Emelkedett hangulatban voltak. They were in high spirits. Sie waren in gehobener Stimmung.*

HAPPINESS IS HEAVEN

*A hetedik mennyországban jár a boldogságtól. He is in seventh heaven. Er ist im siebenten Himmel.*

HAPPINESS IS LIGHT

*Sugárzik az örömtől. She radiates joy. Sie strahlt vor Freude.*

HAPPINESS IS DRUNKENNESS

*Megrészegült a boldogságtól. He was drunk with happiness. Er war vor Freude betrunken.*

HAPPINESS IS FLUID IN A CONTAINER

*A látvány örömmel töltötte el. The sight filled him with joy. Der Anblick erfüllte ihn mit Freude.*

It is, however, important to emphasize their being 'near' universal. There are certainly differences even within these three languages, which might be due to their cultural peculiarities. Some other metaphors of HAPPINESS occur in one of these languages while others do not or there are different linguistic expressions for them. Consider the following examples:

HAPPINESS IS INSANITY

*Magánkívül volt az örömtől. Er war vor Freude ausser sich.*

A HAPPY PERSON IS A HAPPY ANIMAL

*Örült, mint majom a farkának. He was happy as a lark.*

Metaphors seem to pervade our thinking and use of language. The language of journals introducing and analysing the latest events and developments of business, economics and society are also awash with metaphoric expressions which are based on some conceptual metaphors.

The primary aim of my paper is to highlight what metaphors help us to conceptualize some characteristic metaphoric expressions of the discourse of marketing and sales. Furthermore, I will also address the issue of to what extent they can be regarded as universal, and what special discourse functions they have.

The sources for my analysis are the relevant sections of the following Hungarian, German and English journals, which were published in 2006: *FIGYELŐ Üzlet, Gazdaság, Társadalom, The Economist* and *Focus Money Das Moderne Wirtschaftsmagazin*. The reason why I have chosen these periodicals is that they basically deal with current political, economic and business matters for an audience of both experts and lay readers, like I am.

As outlined above, the first question I will address is what kind of metaphors are involved in our understanding of concepts used in business discourse.

## 2 Metaphors underlying the metaphorical expressions of business discourse

### 2.1 BUSINESS IS WAR

Browsing the above mentioned journals, I have found that the metaphor BUSINESS IS WAR is what underlies the majority of metaphoric expressions. Let us see how we can elaborate the correspondences between the source domain WAR and the target domain BUSINESS. Thinking of war, the following aspects of war come usually into our mind: battles, fights, soldiers, weapons, military strategies, and the outcome of war, i.e. victory or defeat. The language of military strategy is full of military expressions, such as headquarters, military forces, troops, battle order, frontline, attack, counter-attack and defence, etc.

In business discourse the battles of war refer to competition in the market, i.e. between the representatives of companies and banks. The enemies are bankers, businesspeople and the scenes of battles are the market and business meetings. Business people also encounter their enemies, i.e. their competitors and try to oust them from the market. While doing so, they use different methods and strategies. In order to achieve success, they have to defeat their enemies. The mappings between the above mentioned source domain and target domain could be schematised as follows:

#### 2.1.1 A BUSINESS MEETING/THE MARKET IS A BATTLE ON A BATTLEFIELD

A BVA és a beruházó Pro-Hill Kft. közel egy éve tartó *csatározását* követően ...

The main *battlefield* at present is retail trade.

Any difficulties for an overloaded Airbus today could spill over into efforts to take on Boeing on the new *battlefront*.

Mannesman und Vodafone liefern sich eine erbitterte *Übernahmeschlacht*. *Der Kampf an allen Fronten* hat begonnen.

#### 2.1.2 BUSINESS PARTNERS/BANKERS ARE SOLDIERS IN AN ARMY

Az Optus *félelmetes ellenfélnek* ígérkezett.

Mint egy *előretörő hadsereg*, a megjósolhatatlan jövőbe haladó vállalat, követhet valamilyen irányvonalat, *csatarendbe állhat és lecsaphat*.

That would raise returns for China's *army* of small savers.

Google, having made many *enemies*, must now *fight many battles*.

Für den gebürtigen Leipziger und *seine Truppe* wäre das ein schwerer Schlag.

Als Assistent in Hutschenreuther-Management, hatte er gelernt, wie große Werke und Mitarbeiterheere funktionieren.

### 2.1.3 BUSINESS STRATEGIES ARE WAR STRATEGIES

Új marketingstratégiával tompította egy potenciálisan erőteljes, új versenytárs támadását.

A menedzser gerillavezérre hasonlít, aki összehívja az ország minden táján szétszóródott csapatait, hogy összevonják erőiket egy bizonyos csatátérre.

Szállításvezetőket, termelésprogramozókat kellett hadrendbe állítani.

A védekező pozíciójú vállalatok előtt felmerülő marketingkihívások...

It is true that the foundation's *strategy* is not to monopolise the field.

Morgan Stanley, an investment bank, *launched* an unusual *attack* on the New York Times Company.

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority fiercely *defended* the peg against massive speculative *attacks*.

Wir bringen unsere DVD-Recorder mit einer klaren *Strategie* auf den Markt.

Die Chancen stehen gut, dass der *Frontalangriff* von Adidas auf Nike gelingt.

Während die Deutschen Nike im Basketball herausfordern, *attackieren* die Amerikaner Adidas auf dem Fußballmarkt.

### 2.1.4 KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS USED IN BUSINESS ARE WEAPONS USED IN WAR

A jegybank ezzel a *fegyverrel* próbálná megerősíteni a forintot.

We have to bite *the bullet* and talk to North Korea and Iran.

### 2.1.5 THE OUTCOME OF BUSINESS IS THE OUTCOME OF WAR: VICTORY OR DEFEAT

Időnként, a *legyőzöttek* ellenállnak a megszületett eredménynek.

A méretgazdaságosság miatt, *döntő csapást tudtak mérni* a kis, helyi gyárakra.

A válság *békés megoldáshoz* vezetett.

The *battle* may have already been *won*.

Why did none of the *besieged* companies bother?

Over the past few years the two men seemed to have agreed on a *truce* in the luxury-goods business.

Als *Gewinner* oder *Verlierer* stehen schon jetzt zwei deutsche Werbeagenturen fest.

Doch weder Bälle und Trikots noch Computerspiele entscheiden über *Sieg* oder *Niederlage*.

## 2.2 BUSINESS IS A GAME OR SPORT

Games and sports are also often used for metaphorical conceptualisation, thus there are a great number of metaphorical expressions the source domains of which are games and different kinds of sports. Interestingly enough, the SPORT and GAME metaphors often occur with the WAR metaphors together. It is due to the fact that the field of sports shows a number of similarities with that of war and the domain of games is related to sports. Just like war, sports and games also involve competition. Games and sports also have rules, the players and sportsmen are competitors competing with each other individually or in a team, the purpose of a competition is also to defeat the enemy. Players and sportsmen also use tactics and strategies and the a game or sport event is also ends in victory or defeat. Sometimes they obtain a good placing, or even break records, but it can also happen that they don't succeed.

Business life also has its rules, businesspeople are also rivals and contenders using certain strategies, in the hope of a successful business. Business also has its stakes and risks and the outcome of a business negotiation can also be success or failure. To justify these, let us look at the following metaphorical expressions and the conceptual metaphors underlying them:

### 2.2.1 BUSINESS IS A GAME

A gazdaság *játékszabályai* háttérbe szorultak.

... másodrendű fontosságúnak minősítve azokat a hatalmi *játszmák* következményeihez képest.

So what do the winners do right to succeed in this *tough game*?

French firms interested in further investments in Argentina need clear *rules of the game* in the economic field.

Toyota has shown that it can *play the game*.

Das Netz verändert momentan alle *Spielregeln*.

Wir zählen zu den wichtigsten *Spielern* auf dem Markt.

### 2.2.2 BUSINESS IS GAMBLING/CHESS/DOMINO

Hihetetlenül magasak voltak a *tétek*.

Ez a lehetőség már rég *benne van a pakliban*.

... hogy vannak-e még lehetőségek, vagy már teljesen *leosztották a lapokat*.

Több száz céget dönthet *a dominó*.

The *stakes* are high for Sony.

But not everyone is *betting on* a simple rise in prices.

There are always punters willing to *gamble on* very risky stocks in the hope of *hitting the jackpot*.

Channel *lays the cards on the table*.

Many observers predict a '*domino-effect*' of further huge mergers.

Für das Weihnadergeschäft hat H&M noch einen attraktiven *Trump* im Ärmel.

### 2.2.3 BUSINESS IS A SPORT

A cégek egyre gyilkosabb *versenyt vívnek* az ügyfelekért.  
Az új fókusz a Geon számára lehetővé tette, hogy *versenyelőnyre tegyen szert*.  
Hazánk az átalakuló közép-európai régió *élmezőnyébe* tartozik.  
Mindkét szegmensben *dobogós* az Allianz.  
A márkák nemzetközi kiterjesztését illetően, csak *a nagyon szerény, 54. helyet értük el*.

A retooled NASDAQ could *compete* hard against the NYE.  
That would benefit the economy through increased *competition*.  
In industry, as in services India has produced *world-beaters*.

Fachleute erwarten, dass der harte *Wettbewerb* nicht ohne Folgen bleibt.  
Mag sein, dass da missgünstige *Wettbewerber* ihr Spielchen treiben.  
Die SWX, die unter den europäischen Börsen *den fünften Platz einnimmt*.

### 2.2.4 BUSINESS IS A TEAMSPORT

9 csapat építő tipp. Így néz ki az ideális *csapat*.  
Nyugodtan bízhatunk a *team* bölcsességében.

Dazu soll im Hauptquartier in San Francisco die *Vertriebsmannschaft* von derzeit 20 Mitarbeitern aufgestockt werden.

In many cases certain branches of sport serve as a source domain. As evidence, let us just mention the commonest ones: ATHLETICS (RUNNING, JUMPING), FENCING, HUNTING, SHOOTING, HORSE-RIDING, BOXING, FISHING, FOOTBALL, FLYING and CAR RACING.

### 2.2.5 BUSINESS IS ATHLETICS (RUNNING, JUMPING)

*Célegyenesbe fordultak* a tárgyalások.  
A gyengén teljesítőket nem cipeljük a hátunkon a *célvonalig*.  
A szegmensben ismét nagy *ugrás* várható.  
... arra sarkallja a menedzsereket, hogy túl *magasra tegyék a léceket*.

Sberbank has enjoyed *a long run* as the only listed Russian bank stock with any liquidity.  
Other foreign banks were in *the race*, *chasing* a dwindling number of profits.  
Even for non-core workers, however, there are regulatory *hurdles*.  
They cannot give a *headstart* to favoured investors.

Zwischen ihnen und den jungen Gründerfirmen ist *ein Wettrennen* in Gang gekommen.

*Die Hürden für den Zuzug ausländischer hochqualifizierter Selbstständiger seien zu hoch.*

### 2.2.6 BUSINESS IS FENCING

A tökéletes megoldás inkább az egymással versenyben álló ötletek, nem pedig a *párbajpozíciók* erőpróbájából származhat.

China's largest bank is to raise \$ 19.1 bn in an unprecedented *dual*.  
Operating leverage can be a bit of a double edged *sword*.

### 2.2.7 BUSINESS IS HUNTING

Állást keresve felhívta az a *fejvadászt*, aki korábban megkereste őt, hogy elcsábítsa egy másik pozícióba – akkor sikertelenül.

Although both are adding stores and making money, it is still easy to tell the *hunter* from the *hunted*.

Auf der *Jagd* nach dem schnellen Geld haben die Banken in den Jahren der Börsen-Hysterie ihre Kunden verprellt.

### 2.2.8 BUSINESS IS SHOOTING

Marketing *fegyver*: A Blog és Internetes gerilla marketing visszafelé is *elsülhet*.

További jó *célpontnak* számítanak a vegyipari cégek.

When they *hit one target*, they immediately *set* another.

A room full of bankers *pulled the trigger*, having watched Macy's *miss one target* after another.

### 2.2.9 BUSINESS IS HORSE-RIDING

Pedig az indulás nem volt *sétagalopp*.

A menedzserek és az alkalmazottak is *lazítanak a gyeplőn*.

Some institutions were getting close to that level and had to *rein* in new lending.

*Saddled* with some of the highest labour and tax costs in Europe, German companies compete at the top end of the market.

*Spitzenreiter* sei in diesen Tagen allerdings Puma.

### 2.2.10 BUSINESS IS BOXING

... hogy a hálózatok miként *szállnak ringbe* egymás ellen.

A piacra hagyja a konszolidálást, ami pedig *mélyütés* lesz.

All this is a *blow* for freer global trade.

The IMF will hold the *ring* for the process.



### 2.2.11 BUSINESS IS ANGLING

A menedzmentnek *két nagyobb halat kell kifognia*: a bizonytalanságot, és a kétséget.

*Der größte Fisch am Haken* heißt bislang Electrolux.

### 2.2.12 BUSINESS IS FOOTBALL, RUGBY, ETC.

E két utóbbi termék esetében, egy újabb *nagypályás játékos* jelentkezett.

Yet Japanese banks are standing on *the sidelines*.

FSA, Japan's financial regulator imposed an unprecedented *penalty* on Chomo.

Damit hat die Bundesregierung womöglich den einzigen *Fehlpass* in der Steueroffensive gespielt.

Das Kurs-Gewinn-Verhältnis lässt weiteren *Spielraum* noch oben.

### 2.2.13 BUSINESS IS FLYING

Indian business will once more *land* on the ground *with a thump*.

Why is it proving so difficult to engineer the *soft-landing* that the government has been trying for?

China's economy will face a *hard landing* in the future.

The IMF offers rapid access to cash if strong economies are *hit by* financial *turbulence*.

Auslöser für *Turbulenzen* waren aber nicht Bedenken über die Stabilität der Emerging Markets.

Gibt es *eine weiche oder harte Landung*? Kommt gar die Rezession?

### 2.2.14 BUSINESS IS CAR RACING

Three years after the *rally* started, they face an array of new investment opportunities.

Wir haben schon viele Korrekturen gesehen im Laufe des jahrelangen *Rallye* an den Emerging Markets.

## 2.3 ECONOMY IS A HUMAN BODY, ITS OPERATION IS THE OPERATION OF A HUMAN BODY

As mentioned in the introduction, the human body, health and illnesses are also regarded to be common source domains in conceptual metaphors. It is noteworthy that drawing a parallel between economy and the human body is not new in economics. Francois Quesnay (1694-1774), an 18<sup>th</sup> century French physician and economist was the first who studied economy as a system. He compared the circulation of capital to the circulation of blood in the human body between the organs, i.e. the heart, the lungs and the stomach, which represent the different sectors of the economy. In his view, the agricultural labourers represent

the stomach that produces the blood and sends it to the heart. The industrial workers are the lungs that supply the body with oxygen and keep metabolism going. The landowners are the heart that sends out the blood, i.e. the capital to the whole organism (cf. Mátyás, 1992: 36-37). All this can be justified by the following examples:

A Watere's Holding ZRT. központi *agyként* irányítja a cégcsoport vállalatait, kezeli üzletrészeit, általában a vagyonát.

A gazdaság 2007-ben a januárra tervezett 3%-os áfaemelés negatív hatásait is gond nélkül képes lesz *megemészteni*.

Dabei sind die Banken *das Herz* der Wirtschaft. Sie sind es, die das Geld in den ökonomischen *Kreislauf* pumpen.

Doch haftet der Stadt am Potomac den Ruf an, kluge volkswirtschaftliche *Köpfe* anzuziehen.

Metaphorically, the parts or aspects of economy are understood as organs of the body, which can also individually become ill, and then may affect the whole body. As long as the organs work well, the economy works well, thus the general well-being of an economy is understood in economic terms as its economic health. However, sometimes disorders or problems may arise both in the function of a human body and the economy. In the former case, medical aid is necessary to cure the illness of the human body. Similarly, there are also some threats to the economic health. An economy can also suffer injuries or fall ill, and then an economy can also undergo medical treatment, i.e. economic measures are taken to save it from collapsing. If the treatment is effective, the economy, just like a patient will recover, if it is not, the economy will collapse.

Now let us see what elements and aspects of the human body can serve as source domains in the cognitive analysis of abstract expressions used in the language of business, finance and economics. These are as follows: the healthy condition of a human body, illnesses, physical, psychological and psychosomatic conditions and concomitant effects, i.e. the symptoms of illnesses (e.g. *pain*, *headaches* and *spasms*, etc.), the treatments of illnesses (e.g. *pills*, *medicine*, *injection* and *operation*, etc.), and the recovery or the death of patients.

As far as the target domains are concerned, we can talk about the appropriate and inappropriate state of an economy, the signs of difficulties and problems of an economy, measures taken to solve economic difficulties, and recovery or collapse of an economy.

These mappings between the two domains are illustrated by the following examples:

### 2.3.1 AN APPROPRIATE CONDITION OF AN ECONOMY IS A HEALTHY CONDITION OF THE HUMAN BODY

Ahol az *egészség*, ott a nyereség.

A szervezet *stabilabbá*, és *robosztusabbá* válik.

America *is doing well*, with relatively *healthy* growth in jobs.

India now boasts *robust* economic growth.

Wir haben heute eine *gesunde* Finanzstruktur.

*Die Gesundheit* des Emerging Markets hat sich in den vergangenen Jahren erheblich *verbessert*.

### 2.3.2 AN INAPPROPRIATE CONDITION OF AN ECONOMY (DIFFICULTIES, PROBLEMS) IS AN ILLNESS

Az egyesült államokbeli teherautó-flottát hasonló *kór sújtja*.

A megoldandó problémák jelentős része, társadalmunk *akut betegsége*.

Az államigazgatás *neuralgikus* területe az un. országok hatáskörű szervek.

The *malady's* origins lie in a 1992 decision.

It is not clear whether this *sclerosis* is increasing: the evidence is mixed.

One result of this *paralysis* is an oil-export bottleneck.

### 2.3.3 SIGNS OF DIFFICULTIES AND PROBLEMS OF AN ECONOMY ARE SYMPTOMS OF DISEASES

*Gyengélkedik* manapság az amerikai blue chip cégek árfolyama.

Mindez természetesen, nemcsak a vezérigazgatóknak *okoz fejfájást*.

Az *ezer sebből vérző* oktatás problémáinak orvoslására

Így vagy úgy, de a számítógép *megebénította* az IBM-et.

The economy remains strong despite the *symptoms* of “*Dutch disease*”.

Without easy credit, dear oil will cause more *pain*.

The German company bought the *ailing* British car producer in 1994.

This is the biggest *headache* of all for the Indian industry as a whole.

The danger is that Wall Street's *sneeze* will bring a *case of flu* with it.

Auch die Union ist *nicht frei von Bauchschmerzen*.

Wenn die USA *niest*, bekommt Asien *eine Grippe*.

### 2.3.4 ECONOMIC MEASURES ARE MEDICAL TREATMENTS

Szükség van a *korai diagnózisra*.

A tudakozódási folyamat résztvevői *alaposan megvizsgálják* a javaslatokat.

16-18 százalékos alapú hitelekkel *tartják életben* magukat.

Az *orvoslás* minden körülmények között bonyolult és kimerítő lesz.

Jobbnak látták, ha beszállnak a *mentőakcióba*.

They are not ready to *swallow* the nasty *medicine* of change.

Whether a *triple dose* of carmakers is the right *remedy* is less obvious.

Equally unclear is how much money the *donors* actually want to give.

Countries, including Austria, Britain, France and Germany were now trying their own ways *to stop the bleeding*.

One of Europe's finest conglomerates needs more radical *surgery*.

The banks say there is not much point in a *bypass* mechanism.

Two insurers *injected* €450m of capital into the *wounded* bank.

Die Bankgesellschaft Berlin konnte nur mit einer staatlichen Finanzspritze von vier Milliarden Mark *künstlich am Leben gehalten werden*.  
*Operation: misslungen. Der Patient bebt. Das Geschäft ist tot.*

### 2.3.5 RECOVERY OF AN ECONOMY IS RECOVERY OF A PATIENT

Ez legalább olyan fontos, mint a gazdaság *lábra állása*.  
 Az együttműködés éveit során elkezdődhetne a társadalom *mentális gyógyulása*.

The capital markets need time and money to *get on their feet*.  
 Zambia's industry *is coming back to life*.  
 Latin America's growth figures are boosted by *recoveries* from earlier collapses in Argentina.  
 Low volatility is a reflection of a long period of *healing* in corporate America.  
 Chrysler is good at *coming back from the dead*.

Den drei verbliebenen Großen, – Deutsche, Commerz, sowie Hypo Vereinsbank *geht es kaum besser*.  
 Der Index zeigt sich zwar angeschlagen, könnte *sich* aber wieder *erholen*.

### 2.3.6 COLLAPSE OF AN ECONOMY IS DEATH OF A PATIENT

A *hirtelen halál* veszélye ritka, és általában olyan környezeti változások következménye, amelyek az egyes vállalatok hatókörén kívül esnek.

It doesn't mean that the big guys are going to *die* overnight.  
 It is too soon to *write an obituary* for traditional software.

Die amerikanischen Investitionsbanken? Schwer angeschlagen. Die Geldhäuser Japans? In *Agonie*?

Besides the metaphors of WAR, GAME, SPORT and the HUMAN BODY and its DISEASES, I found some other metaphors which seem to be less dominant than the previous ones, such as BUSINESS IS MARRIAGE, THE SYSTEM OF ECONOMY IS A FAMILY, ECONOMY IS A MACHINERY and BUSINESS IS ACTING IN A THEATRE/CINEMA. Consider the following examples:

### 2.4 BUSINESS IS MARRIAGE

Így a *partnerkeresés*, vagy éppen egy jelentős tőkebevonás az első pillanatra nem tűnik indokoltnak.  
 A sorozatos *kiházasítási kísérletek* dacára, a *pártában maradt* vállalat menedzsmentje munkavállalói rész tulajdonosi programban gondolkodott.

Freescall *gets engaged*, but continues to *flirt* with other *suitors*. It will be less a *love match* than a *marriage of convenience* if the *knot is* eventually *tied* between Freescall and a consortium of private –equity firms.

The *marriage made in heaven* soon turned into the hitch-up from hell.

France's Arcelor, the world's second biggest steelmaker would *jump into a hasty marriage* with Severstal.

Very clearly this is a *marriage of reason*. I hope it will become a *marriage of the heart*.

Scandal scarred Lola is heading for victory, but his *honeymoon* could be short.

A newly created independent regulator, the Financial Services Agency set out to *break* the cosy *ties* between banks and the finance ministry.

Die Ernüchterung an der Börse spiegelt die Ernüchterung innerhalb des Konzerns über die *Hochzeit im Himmel* wieder.

Die defizitäre Konzerntochter wird nicht einfach *einen Bräutigam finden*.

## 2.5 THE SYSTEM OF ECONOMY IS A FAMILY

A britek érdekeltsége a szerény profit ellenére is egyre inkább aggasztotta az *anyacég* vezetőit.

A terjeszkedés újraindulhat, – elsősorban a szovjet *utódállamokban*.

Az OTP Bank 120-200 millió eurót költ oroszországi, romániai és horvátországi *leánycégei* újratökésítésére.

Each unit including the *parent company* has its own local management.

The IMF and its *sister organisation*, the World Bank...

Das Ergebnis der deutschen *Tochter* Rover hat sich 1999 nicht spürbar verbessert.

... weil er keinen schwerfällig-ängstlichen *Mutterkonzern* im Nacken hatte, der ihm den Mund verbot.

Das größte *Sorgenkind* ist die IT-Sparte SBS.

## 2.6 ECONOMY IS A MACHINERY

Kína, ha *lassul* is, még mindig *nagy sebességen pörög*.

A térség gazdasága ismét *dübörög*.

That was the year in which China began trying, with limited success, *to put on the brakes*.

A growing shareholder rebellion threatened to put a spoke in the *wheels* of its proposed merger with Severstal.

How much *fuel* is left in the global housing *engine*?

Soll der Staat abwarten, bis die *Wirtschaftsmachine* von selbst wieder auf Touren kommt.

Die Krise am Bau ist vorbei, die Branche ist *der Motor* des Aufschwungs.

Dazu müssen sie rasch wachsen, *der Treibstoff* dafür ist selten der Bankkredit.

Sie wollen ihn zu *einer sanfteren Gangart* bei der Haushaltskonsolidierung bewegen.

Wenn der Staat nun eine *Vollbremsung* unternimmt, ...

Das Geschäft lief. Aber es begann erst richtig zu *brummen*.

## 2.7 BUSINESS IS ACTING IN A THEATRE/CINEMA

Az 1998-as *parkettre* lépéssel arra tettek ígéretet a befektetőknek, ...

Szintén az álláspiac *sztárjainak* számítanak a mérnökök.

Minden sikertörténethez kell egy *főszereplő*. Tomóczer K. versenyképessége vállalkozását.

Italy, like the La Scala opera house, is in crisis *behind the stage*. Last year, it had zero economic growth.

Bidding for Berliner Bank is seen by many as a *dress rehearsal* for the sale of Bankgesellschaft Berlin next year.

The solution is to have a format whereby the big players talk through their global problems and *act in concert*.

The rising costs of money and raw materials took leading roles in that economic *horror movie*.

Dazu kommen die Millionengehälter der mittleren unterbeschäftigten *Stars* der Investitionsbranche.

Daneben gibt es eine aufgabenspezifische *Rollenverteilung*.

Der Chef der Deutschen Bank ist der bekannte Darsteller in diesem *Schauspiel*.

Nun werden die Misstöne im *Orchester* der internationalen Hochfinanz schriller.

Die Finanzreisen sind Schuld. Sie haben beim eigenen *Drama* von Anfang an die *Regie* übernommen.

Trotz *des Theaters* steht der Konzern fundamental glänzend da.

## 3 The 'near' universality of metaphors

As noted in the introduction, certain conceptual metaphors can be regarded to be 'near' universal. In the analysis above I attempted to demonstrate that some of the characteristic metaphors of the language of business and finance occur in all of the three languages examined. In the case of English and German it can be attributed to the fact that they belong to the same language family. Certain metaphors can, however, be found in languages independent of each other, such as in Hungarian.

The question can be raised whether this phenomenon is accidental or whether one language borrowed some of these metaphorical expressions from the other, in this case from English. As pointed out by Boers (2003: 236),

foreign words might be the result of the ongoing economic and cultural globalisation, which involves increased cross-cultural contact, and thus increased opportunities for cross-cultural communication. It is a well-known fact that a great number of metaphorical expressions in Hungarian and German business discourse were borrowed from English. For example, *hard landing* and *soft landing* (in German *harte Landung*, *weiche Landung*) are frequently used economic terms, which refer to the situation in which an economy slows down but does not go into recession. Interestingly enough, there isn't a Hungarian equivalent used for them in Hungarian journals of business and economics (e.g. Melyik verzió jön be: *a hard vagy a soft landing*: Vagyis, hogy az amerikai gazdaság lassulása milyen mértékű lesz).

Another similar example is the term *cash flow*, which refers to the movement of money into and out of a firm or business. It is not only the title of a Hungarian journal of business and economics but it can also be found in German business discourse (*das Cashflow*).

No doubt the majority of economic and business terms both in German and Hungarian have been borrowed from English (e.g. *business*, *broker*, *know-how* and *management*, etc.), which seems to be an unstoppable tendency. Nevertheless, I assume that in the case of some metaphorical expressions the underlying conceptual metaphors have some universal motivation.

Even if the same mapping between a source and target domain might occur in the metaphors of all three languages, there might be some differences in terms of their frequency of occurrence and conventionality. For example, I have found that the metaphor THE SYSTEM OF ECONOMY IS A FAMILY occurs especially frequently in German business discourse (*Tochterfirma*, *Mutterkonzern*, etc.), while in English the metaphor BUSINESS IS MARRIAGE referring to the merging of two firms is particularly common in comparison to the other two languages. Furthermore, the metaphor ECONOMY IS A MACHINERY seems to be used more frequently in English and German business discourse than in Hungarian. These differences might be attributed to the peculiarities of the economy of the relevant countries where these journals on marketing and sales were published.

Finally, let us turn to the discourse functions of metaphors.

#### 4 The discourse functions of metaphors

As pointed out by Hanna Skorczynska (2006: 87), writers' choices of linguistic metaphors are importantly influenced by 2 factors: the text's intended readership and its purpose. As the periodicals used in my analysis are meant for an audience of experts and lay readers and they seek to inform, entertain more generally and persuade its readers, they represent popular business discourse rather than scientific one.

Analysing the uses of metaphors in economic texts, Henderson (1985: 110-11) refers to three types:

- those that serve as a textual decoration or illustration
- metaphors that occur in all language as a central organising device
- metaphor that is a device for exploring specific economic problems and a basis for extending the domain of economic ideas

Skorczynska (2006: 95-99) narrows Henderson's types into two categories:

- generic metaphors that can be found in general dictionaries
- genre-specific metaphors that have primarily decorative or illustrative purpose or are used to explore and extend economic thought

The author's corpus analysis shows that in popular periodicals a high number of genre-specific metaphors (90%) are innovative ones, i.e. they fill terminological gaps with only 10 % having an illustrating role.

It is common knowledge that a piece of writing is more impressive, vivid and expressive if there are metaphors in it. As borne out by Skorczynska's analysis (2006), metaphors often fill a terminological gap in business discourse. Such terms are defined in specialist dictionaries but no synonyms are offered for them, i.e. there is no other conventional way of expressing them in regular use. Let us just think of metaphors, such as 'headhunter' (*fejvadász*, *Kopffäger*), 'floatation' (*árfolyamlebegtetés*, *Floaten*) and 'galloping inflation' (*vágtató infláció*, *galloppierende Inflation*), etc.

As far as the occurrence and the discourse functions of metaphors are concerned, I have made the following observations: The first thing to be noticed is that the dominant metaphors, for example WAR and HEALTH metaphors seem to be organised in chains and provide cohesion to the text. Besides this textual function, they also have an interpersonal function in organising relations between the text producer and the recipients, i.e. the readers. By using particular metaphors, writers can define a topic, argue for it and persuade readers. I have found that the metaphors which appear at the beginning of the text help to set the agenda the author has in mind. The ones in the mid-text, on the other hand, reflect the argumentative nature of journalistic texts. The metaphors which cluster towards the end of the text seem to have a persuasive function.

As pointed out by Koller (2004: 66-69) and as is evident from my results as well, the WAR metaphors are most common of all in business discourse. Although they are persuasive throughout the text, they can especially be found at the beginning and at the end of the articles, thus serving a defining and a persuasive function. The SPORT and GAME metaphors are often used together with the WAR metaphors, supporting their argumentative role and often serving to reduce and weaken their strength. Thus, the WAR-SPORTS-GAMES metaphors are very closely-knit.

The metaphors of HUMAN BODY, its HEALTH and ILLNESS have a role not only in defining the topic but they seem to have an elaborating and extending function and help the author to drive the point home to the reader.

Other metaphors, such as MARRIAGE, FAMILY, MACHINERY, THEATRE/CINEMA are too scarce to account for any systematic clusters or



chains and show sketchy patterns. They tend to tie in with the dominant metaphors conceptually, thus supporting them. They very often occur at the beginning of the text, thus denoting the article's topic and serving to raise readers' interest.

## 5 Conclusion

In my paper I have made an attempt to highlight that metaphors pervade our thinking and conceptualisation, and do not only serve as a poetic and rhetorical device. Metaphors are ubiquitous and as the examples above show, business discourse is awash with them.

In conclusion, it can be stated that we conceptualise many metaphoric terms and expressions used in business discourse via metaphors, the majority of which seem to be 'near' universal in English, German and Hungarian and have similar discourse functions as well. The metaphoric expressions examined in journals of business, finance and economics seem to have shown the following mappings between a target domain and a source domain: BUSINESS IS WAR, BUSINESS IS A SPORT/GAME, ECONOMY IS A HUMAN BODY, THE SYSTEM OF ECONOMY IS A FAMILY, ECONOMY IS A MACHINERY, BUSINESS IS MARRIAGE and BUSINESS IS ACTING IN A THEATRE/CINEMA.

As is justified by the above examples, one target domain (*business/economy*) has several source domains (*war, sport, game, human body, health, illness, family, machinery and theatre/cinema*), and the main target domains also have variations. It is due to the fact that our terms and concepts have several aspects, and we need several source domains so that we can conceptualise the various features of a target term.

The strength of the cognitive theory of metaphors used in the analysis above, undoubtedly, lies in the fact that it provides a tool to understand our world better, and to explore our cognitive system through conceptual metaphors. I hope I have been able to give an insight into how the cognitive approach to metaphors can contribute to a better understanding of the language of business, finance and economics as well.

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