

A CORPUS-BASED APPROACH TO THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE ECONOMY IN BUSINESS ENGLISH PRESS¹

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Abstract

The paper attempts to explore different conceptualisations of ECONOMY in British business English press. Our approach is based on corpus, we incorporated a corpus encompassing business articles retrieved from British quality press ranging from 2013 to 2016. In our investigation, we rely on previous research on the figurative aspects pertaining to business discourse.

The conceptual metaphors were identified with the help of concordancing programs, headwords from different source and target domains were inserted in the concordancing program and the findings were manually processed. In certain cases, linguistic metaphors processed with the help of concordancing programs do not necessarily embody conceptual metaphors, these are mainly revealed through manual processing. The findings draw on the fact that figurative uses and conceptual metaphors easily percolate business English discourse. We are aware of the limitations of this research as the study cannot encompass all the categories conceptualising the economy. To this end categories such as ECONOMY IS WAR, ECONOMY IS AN ANIMAL, ECONOMY IS A CONTAINER, ECONOMY IS A LIQUID will be the subject of future research.

Key words: Business English press; Conceptual metaphors; corpus; Source domain; Target domain.

1 Introduction

Metaphors permeate our everyday life, they pertain to a large array of aspects, contexts, settings, and disciplines: philosophy, applied linguistics, cognitive linguistics, corpus linguistics, pedagogy. This pervasiveness draws on the interdisciplinary character of metaphors, as metaphors are not restricted only to ordinary speech, they are also grounded in specialised discourse. As a result, there

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has been an increase in the number of research studies highlighting the role of metaphors in academic and/or specialised discourse (Charteris-Black, & Ennis 2001; Charteris-Black, & Musolff 2003; Vereza 2008; Koller 2008; Skorczynska 2012). Vereza observed the shift in the evolution of metaphors as a phenomenon which is pervasive in most language uses, from ordinary to scientific discourse (Vereza 2008: 163). Skorczynska introduced the vertical variation of metaphors drawing on the vertical circulation of metaphors from the general level of specialisation to more specialised areas entailing shifts in metaphor collocational patterns (Skorczynska 2012).

We place our investigation within the area of specialised language, more specifically within broad business genre and we will mainly address to business and economic discourse as portrayed by British business quality press, we will not refer to business sub-genres (banking, Stock-Exchange, finances). The second focus is to identify the way *ECONOMY* is conceptualised in a corpus made up of British business newspaper articles.

2 Literature Review

Cognitive linguistic theory embeds metaphors in thought and corpus linguistics relates metaphors to language in use. Applying one of these two theories has raised debate in terms of which one yields more results and which results are more accurate. Cognitive linguists favour the lexical approach, rely on intuition, draw on quality and reveal the metaphors decontextualised or in a context specifically created to prove and strengthen the researcher's hypothesis, while corpus linguists work with examples taken from natural discourse, rely on quantitative analysis and draw on frequency. The objection raised by corpus linguists is that traditional cognitive linguists work with invented material, while concordancing programs show the word in context. Corpus linguists also object that cognitive linguists (Lakoff, Johnson, Gibbs, Kovecses) resort to language in order to explain cognitive theory of metaphor which is supposed to rely on thought. (Deignan 2008b: 151).

Zoltan Kovecses, one of the proponents of CMT, believes that quality not quantity should prime in conceptual metaphor research and he is for exploring the structure of metaphors instead of producing long lists of metaphors. (Kovecses 2011: 33). Kovecses (2011) delves into the methods of analysing the supraindividual and the individual levels of metaphors: the lexical approach and the corpus one and identifies two directions in approaching CMT: bottom-up concerned with the study of metaphorical expressions in corpora and top-down preferred by traditional CMT as it examines the internal structure of metaphorical expressions. Kovecses (2011) claims that corpus approach and the traditional approach must work in conjunction for a complete metaphor analysis, the quantitative perspective must be supplemented by the qualitative perspective: "We should see our different goals and methods in metaphor research as complementary and compatible with each other and not as being superior or inferior to one another". (Kovecses 2011: 24). This belief is also

shared by corpus linguists, Vereza (2008) believes that a combination of the two perspectives in the analysis of conceptual metaphors will yield better results “corpora evidence combined with intuition may enhance theory development”. (Vereza 2008: 174), corpus approach and cognitive approach should complement one another for a better analysis of conceptual metaphors.

Corpus-based approach emerged as an alternative to traditional approach, it complements conceptual metaphors studies bringing new insights as metaphors can be explored in larger data sets (Deignan 2008b). Corpora are useful in identifying the frequency of potential metaphors, they yield better results in examining gender and cultural differences, reveal findings about language use that might otherwise remain hidden (Deignan 2008a: 280). New conceptual categories can be identified with the help of corpora. Small corpora allow an in-depth analysis of metaphors (Deignan 2008a), while large corpora draw on the frequency and use of linguistic metaphors (Deignan 1999: 177). Corpus linguists believe that investigating metaphors in corpora offers a better insight into metaphor as well as into the discourse elements metaphors relate with. (Vereza 2008: 164).

Proponents of the corpus approach reveal the advantages corpora offer in the study of conceptual metaphors and they also refer to the limitations in exploring conceptual metaphors, they cannot identify ‘innovative metaphors’. (Vereza 2008:167, Deignan 1999: 196), inserting a headword in a concordancing program does not yield its metaphorical realisations, the researcher must rely on intuition to identify its metaphorical realisations. (Deignan 1999). In many cases in order to identify conceptual metaphors, researchers rely on intuition more than on concordancing programs.

Corpus linguistics draws conceptual metaphors close to language in use and specialised discourse analysing them from multiple perspectives: pragmatics and ESP (Charteris-Black, & Ennis 2001; Charteris-Black, & Musolff 2003, Skorzynska, & Ahrens 2015), applied linguistics (Zanotto et al. 2008). Zanotto et al. 2008 consider that embedding metaphors in discourse offers a multi-faceted phenomenon and offers the advantage that metaphors can be studied in real world contexts. (Zanotto et al. 2008: 2).

Charteris Black and Ennis 2001 draw on the pervasiveness of metaphors in academic discourse, the authors outline the fact that economics texts are metaphorical and refer to metaphors as “stylistic resources on which reporters of financial affairs depend” (Charteris-Black, & Ennis 2001: 3). Charteris-Black and Musolff (2003) refer to the pragmatic aspect of metaphors as rhetorical devices which influence opinions: “Language users shape language and consequently metaphors”. (Charteris-Black, & Musolff 2003: 3).

Conceptual metaphors in business discourse can be captured by browsing through scientific and academic sources and/or through business quality press. Previous research on metaphors in business genre explored an array of aspects pertaining to conceptual metaphors in specialised discourse: genre specific conceptual metaphors (Koller 2008), metaphor probability in corpora (Sardinha 2012), metaphor variation within specialised discourse (Skorzynska 2012),

hyperbole in economics discourse (Crawford Camiciottoli 2012). We will briefly refer to corpus-based approach to conceptual metaphors in business discourse. In all the cases corpora proved valuable tools in undertaking both quantitative and qualitative analyses.

Koller 2008 conducts a quantitative analysis to detect frequency of war and relationship metaphorical expressions and analysed the way in which cognitive models underlying the discourse are reflected in marketing and advertising. Her approach is corpus-based, Koller compiles two corpora containing texts retrieved from business magazines and newspapers and examines conceptual metaphors in primary discourse: advertising and in secondary discourse, business newspapers and magazines.

Research on metaphors in the broad economic genre includes Belinda Crawford Camiciottoli (2012) who conducts a corpus-based investigation on the use of hyperbole in business and economics lectures. The methodology applied includes qualitative analysis, the findings draw on the fact that business and economics lectures use hyperbole rhetorically on the one hand in order to persuade listeners and on the other hand in order to stimulate students to think critically. The author believes that understanding the role of the hyperbole can provide additional disciplinary insights and reveal new trends in the teaching of these subjects.

Hanna Skorczynska (2012) explores metaphors in project management discourse. The idea that underlies is that metaphors used in general business genre permeate more specialised levels of business genre shaping different metaphorical constructs. The author starts from the assumption that certain metaphors from the general level of a particular field are re-exploited at a more specialised level providing distinct cognitive constructs and different metaphorical expressions. The approach is corpus-based, the author amassed two corpora one of general business and another one of project management discourses. The findings point out that there are differences in metaphorical uses in a general and more specialised samples of discourse within the same domain of knowledge.

Contrastive studies capturing the differences and/or similarities in conceptualising different aspects of economic discourse are conducted by Charteris-Black and Ennis (2001), Charteris-Black and Musolff (2003), Popescu (2017). These contrastive studies which involve the comparison between two/more languages represent valuable tools and instruments in teaching foreign language to students.

Popescu (2017) conducts an analysis of the conceptualisation of economy in Romanian and British press. Her tenet is that metaphors are metaphors are cultural categories manifested in the language spoken by the community that shares a common set of characteristics within a given cultural matrix (Popescu 2017). Her research draws on cultural linguistics and on corpus linguistics.

The sources on which these corpora are based range from business press (Skorczynska 2012; Holmgreen 2012; Koller 2008), research papers, business university lectures (Crawford Camiciottoli 2012), websites (Holmgreen 2012).

3 Methods

Many researchers draw on the benefits of corpus linguistics to the study of metaphors, as corpora shed new light on CMT. We share the tenet that corpora open new vistas in conceptual metaphor studies, and we believe they represent instruments capturing genre-based metaphors, gender variation, cross-linguistic comparisons of the way different aspects are conceptualised, as well as cultural variation. The advantages of corpus-based approach are widely recognised, advocated and adopted in the study of conceptual metaphors. We will briefly refer to the methods of processing and exploring corpora as advocated by the researchers who favour corpus-based approach in the study of conceptual metaphors. The corpus approach based on identifying headwords is not an easy task and it is also time-consuming when all the sub-genres of the broad business genre are targeted, we believe it is more efficient when a specific sub-genre is analysed. On the other hand, the processing of the broad business genre enables us to capture the vertical variation of business metaphors (Skorczynska 2012).

An important representative of corpus-based approach, Anatol Stefanowitsch (2006) proposes several methods of annotating a corpus by making an inventory of the array of methods used for extracting linguistic expressions manifesting conceptual mappings from non-annotated corpora: searching for source domain vocabulary, searching for target domain vocabulary, searching for sentences containing lexical items from both source domain and the target domain, searching for metaphors based on ‘markers of metaphors’, extraction from a corpus annotated for semantic fields/domains, extraction from a corpus annotated for conceptual mappings. (Stefanowitsch 2006: 2-4).

A novel method which brings conceptual metaphors closer to the pragmatic strategies of the participants was proposed by Skorczynska, & Ahrens (2015). The theory advanced by the authors relies on corpora, is tackled from a genre perspective and it is supported by previous research in metaphor signal: Goatly (1997), Cameron, & Deignan (2003). The authors resort to metaphor signal to point out the existence of conceptual metaphors within a text/ discourse. They propose a list of metaphor signals and then they explore those signals in three different corpora belonging to three different genres, the same list of metaphor signals is searched for in each corpus with the help of concordancers. The approach is suitable when the aim of the research is to compare two genres in terms of communicative aims and strategies, the metaphor signals reveal different findings and rank different frequencies.

Charteris-Black and Ennis (2001), Charteris-Black and Musolff (2003) provide valuable instruments in conducting corpus-based contrastive analysis. Both research studies are in favour of linguistic metaphors, conceptual metaphors being captured on the basis of the linguistic metaphors previously identified. The same idea is shared by Deignan who highlights that linguistic metaphors are a major source of evidence for conceptual metaphors. (Deignan 2006: 106).

We start from the premises that linguistic metaphors highlight and trigger the existence of conceptual metaphors in a given discourse. For our analysis we

amassed a corpus consisting of business newspaper articles retrieved from British quality press: The Economist, The Financial Times, The Guardian, The Telegraph. The corpus encompasses over 600,000 words and the articles range from 2012 to 2016. We conducted a quantitative analysis and applied a corpus approach in the visions proposed by Charteris-Black and Ennis (2001), Charteris-Black and Musolff (2003), Anatol Stefanowitsch (2006) and Veronika Koller (2006, 2008): select a word belonging to the target domain and/or source domain, run it through the concordancing program and interpret the results. The headwords analysed are clustered around economy, our special focus being the way economy is conceptualised. All the headwords included in the table at the end of the paper yield many results in the text, yet we selected and made reference to them only in relation to economy. In some cases, the results related to markets and finances both outnumber and have deeper figurative implications than those related to economy and economic systems.

In our research the first stage includes the identification of linguistic metaphors with the help of concordancing programs. The number of hits a headword yields is not a marker of figurative meanings; the findings were manually processed to see if they embody conceptual metaphors. The next stage consists of manual processing which comprises identification of the conceptual metaphors based on the linguistic metaphor, clustering metaphors around conceptual categories, analysis of their frequency as well as means of linguistic realisation. When we clustered metaphors around conceptual categories, we resorted to Lakoff's index as well as to Charteris-Black and Ennis (2001), Charteris-Black and Musolff (2003), Sardinha (2012). We will highlight the means through which conceptual metaphors are realised.

4 Findings

Charteris-Black and Ennis (2001) highlight an idea very present in analysing economic metaphors, namely that many business English terms are metaphorical extensions of terms stemming from biology. The idea is also found in Resche (2012) who makes reference to terms originating from the source domain of plant and in Deignan (2006). In this respect, terms originating from this source domain are perceived as having a high metaphorical load in business discourse: *seed-funding*, *root-and-branch reform*, *dormant account*, *sleeping partners*. Littlemore (2008) refers to these words as metaphorical extensions of the basic meaning of the lexical unit.

Metaphors reveal the way in which economy is perceived, it is mainly conceptualised as a living being which functions like a living organism, which is healthy or weak, which undergoes a treatment, moves from one direction to another, is powered by electricity. It is not impervious to physical harm, on the contrary, it is afflicted by outside and/or inside harm, it is able to undergo treatments and recovers after being subject to measures taken by business stakeholders. The organic

perspective of seeing the economy backed up by words used figuratively turn business discourse into a very lively and vivid one.

Our findings also highlight that business press has a strong metaphorical load and it is easily available for metaphorical exploitation. The conceptual categories identified depict different ways of seeing business and economics impacting differently on the readers, the source of our corpus addresses to informed entrepreneurs and stakeholders. British journalists use metaphors both as stylistic devices to convey their opinions on the state, evolution of the economy and as rhetorical devices to persuade readers, to inform and to remind. We captured some stances in which metaphors are used as rhetorical devices:

Small firms are the lifeblood of Europe's economy. (EC, 2014 August 16th)

African sales have slipped, US politicians have quibbled over the introduction of a core curriculum and Brazilian sales **were hurt by a weak economy**. (FT, 2015 December 1st).

Due to the formal, scientific and accurate style of economic publications culture specific aspects were difficult to spot. British journalists resort to conceptual metaphors in order to portray and refer to economy, they also position themselves differently to economy, depending on what economic system they refer to. Economy is strongly associated with the country, in most European countries economies are seen as healthy, improving. Thus, some economies are portrayed as being close to collapse, while others are booming. Factors that influence the state of the economy are currency, financial markets, stock exchange. The way economy is conceptualised differs from one broadsheet to another. Negative portrays of the economy are deeply related to the decision factors in the economic and business arena, the collapse on the financial markets entails the collapse on the economic system. The positive overtones in conceptualising the economy outnumber negative implications, the perspectives in capturing the economy converge toward positive implications.

The data reveal the fact that the main conceptualisation of economy is related to economy as a living being: organism, plant, human being. Economy is also conceptualised in terms of wealth, vehicle, engine, human being, plant.

The most frequent conceptual categories encompassing economy are as follows:

4.1 Metaphors Involving the Source Domain of Human Behaviour, Plants and Biology

1. ECONOMY IS A PLANT

This conceptual category is realised by lexical units such as: growth, branch, root. Most of the hits refer to the branches of companies/ firms as subsidiaries, root and branch reform and restructuring, branch is mainly encountered as a noun in collocations such as: to open/ to close/ to sell/ to buy/ to operate/ to set up a branch. Plant has no figurative meaning in the corpus.

A package of structural reforms **to boost** long-term **economic growth**, the details of which will be announced soon, would also calm nerves. (EC, 2013, June 1st)

2. ECONOMIC VITALITY IS THE VITALITY OF AN ORGANISM

This category is mainly realised by lifeblood which has 5 occurrences in the corpus, half related to economy and half to finances.

Entrepreneurs have high hopes for the next five years, especially from a party that has repeatedly talked of SMEs being “**the lifeblood of the economy**”. (GUARDIAN, 2015, May 8th)

Its timing was perfect: Brazil’s **economy was booming** and foreign money was pouring into Brazil and other emerging markets. (FT, 2015, February 15th)

Similarly, lack of the vitality of an organism impacts on the vitality of an economy:

Those **surpluses drain demand from healthier economies**, as consumers’ spending is redirected abroad. (EC, 2016, January 2nd)

3. ECONOMY IS A LIVING ORGANISM

Journalists see economy from an organic perspective, economies have the same evolution as the human bodies they are born and give birth, grow, mature, are powered by blood and energy.

The company employs 360,000 people in dozens of countries, and its position **at the heart of** Germany’s industrial economy makes change at home sensitive. (EC, 2014 July 26th)

Indeed, as China’s **economy matures**, and its middle class increases its consumption of luxury items, the country’s demand for gold is expected to increase. (FT, 2013 February 21st)

The convergence of several **key factors birthed the independent economy**: a sluggish job market, a new generation’s appetite for innovation, technological advancements and cultural shifts. (GUARDIAN, 2015 January 7th)

The Bank of Italy is conducting a five-month audit of Italy’s largest 20 banks and had already urged them to increase provisions as bad loans mount from small- and medium-sized businesses that make up **the backbone of the economy**. (FT, 2013 March 14)

4. ECONOMIC HARM IS PHYSICAL INJURY

Decline has a great number of occurrences and it refers to the decline in prices, shares, profits as part of an economy.

The regulator added that the price-fixing had kept prices “artificially high” affecting consumers and “**caused harm to the economy**”. (GUARDIAN, 2014 December 18th).

That is sparking worries that, if rates go too low, they might **harm the economy**. (EC, 2015 November 28th)

His statement was echoed by another former prime minister, Antonis Samaras, who said going back to the drachma would **kill the Greek economy**. (GUARDIAN, 2015 July 2nd)

Economic growth has been hurt by bureaucratic **paralysis**. (EC, 2015 October 24th)

The fund said Greece’s financing needs had risen since it completed its study in late June, with **paralysis in the economy** following the imposition of capital controls last weekend. (GUARDIAN, 2015 July 2nd)

The importance of the UK market for premium bicycle brands has also been enhanced by the **decline in European economies**. (TELEGRAPH, 2014 August 31st).

The supervisors appraised the banks’ assets as of the end of June 2015 to see how many loans had soured owing to the **economy’s travails** under Syriza. (EC, 2015 November 7th)

5. HEALTHY ECONOMY IS A HEALTHY ORGANISM

Strong economies are usually pictured as healthy economies, in the corpus most of the occurrences of strong/ strength/ to strengthen refer to finances. Healthy economies are moving ahead, while collapsing economies are moving backwards.

Yes, sales of outdoor furniture and plants at Homebase and B&Q have soared thanks to the heatwave but the chief executives on the high street still hold grave concerns about the **health of Britain’s economy**. (TELEGRAPH, 2013 September 12th)

Yet a **stronger American economy** is also good for Mexico because it sucks in more exports. (EC, 2014 December 13th)

Ben Bernanke, the Fed chairman, heralded the end of an era of easy money when he said that if America’s **economic health improves** as expected, the Fed’s asset purchases would be scaled back later this year and end completely next summer. (TELEGRAPH, 2013 June 21st)

Portugal’s former creditors, including the International Monetary Fund, have urged any new government to stick to the path of austerity and structural reforms in order **to return the economy back to health**. (TELEGRAPH, 2015 October 16th)

While a **healthy consumer sector is vital for the economy's wellbeing**, much greater efforts are needed to increase the contributions of exports and capital investment," said Kern (GUARDIAN, 2015 April 9)

6. ECONOMY IS A PATIENT

This category is mostly realised by recovery and the to recover. There are different degrees of recovery in the state of the economy: slow, quick, vigorous, (in)complete, making progress, stopping/halting, depending on the measures taken by stakeholders to improve the state of the economy. Weak/ to weaken is mainly used with reference to the banking system within a country's economy, namely to the evolution and recovery of the currency. Sick/sickness are mainly used in relation to the banking system, we may infer that a sick banking system entails a sick economy.

They hope the weaker rand will boost margins on dollar-denominated mineral exports and **revive** a flagging **economy**. (FT, 2013 June 14th).

The defaults upon defaults have restricted Argentina's access to international credit markets and hampered efforts **to resuscitate its ailing economy** (EC, 2016 February 6th)

The **economy would suffer**, because the economic model underlying the eurozone was predicated on power relationships that disadvantaged workers. (GUARDIAN, 2015 June 29th).

THIS week's figures for the euro-zone economy were dispiriting by any measure. An already **feeble and faltering recovery** has stumbled. (EC, 2014 August 16th)

But the idea that there is some great flood of pent-up corporate investment about to come sweeping in **to revitalise Europe's drought-afflicted economy** is almost certainly misplaced. (TELEGRAPH, 2013 February 25th)

Signs that **the economy is recovering**, cheap energy from shale gas and a resurgent motor industry are all bringing good cheer to steel firms (EC, 2013 July 6th)

Lagarde said the financial sector hid too much activity in murky and dark corners, and put its own short-term gain ahead of **supporting the real economy**. (GUARDIAN, 2013 January 23rd)

The chief executive of Cr dit Agricole has launched a broadside against the economic policies of France's socialist government, as two of the country's leading banks reported earnings weighed on by the **weak national economy**. (EC, 2014 November 29th)

But the euro could also exacerbate one of the Lithuanian **economy's weaknesses**. (EC, 2014 December 6th).

The Argentine **economy is like a sickness**. (EC, 2014 November 29th)

Meanwhile, the Chinese government, among others, has urged America not to let its partisan **paralysis infect the world economy**. (EC, 2013 October 12th)

4.2 Metaphors Involving the Source Domain of Vehicle

1. ECONOMY IS AN ENGINE / MACHINE

Economic growth has traditionally been fuelled by two things: higher productivity and more workers. (EC, 2014 September 6th)

Even so, there is enough monetary **fuel in the global economy** to pack a punch into 2013. (TELEGRAPH, 2013 January 1st)

It made policy decisions easy: if the ECB thought the **economy was overheating**, it could raise its rates, confident that the rates firms would pay would rise by the same amount. (EC, 2013 May 4th)

The wheels to power the country's economic rebound were looking pretty **well oiled**. (FT, 2015 June 22nd)

That **gears the Irish economy** to global growth so that it suffers when world trade falters, says Simon Hayes of Barclays. (EC, 2013 January 5th)

Ukraine's reserves are dwindling and the **economy is contracting**. (EC, 2014 November 29th) as investors feared that China's **economy was fast running out of steam**. (GUARDIAN, 2015 December 27)

The City stockbroker is by no means the only business to have suffered headwinds from the fear that the world's second-largest **economy might no longer be travelling at full steam**. (GUARDIAN, 2015 December 27)

Stocks were looking wildly overvalued at a time when the **Chinese economy was losing steam**. (GUARDIAN, 2015 July 8th).

The lexical unit produce does not entail any figurative use in the corpus as all uses are connected with the meaning of to manufacture.

2. ECONOMY IS A VEHICLE

The main reason for the slowdown is a slump in fixed asset investment, the biggest **driver of** the Chinese **economy**. (FT, 2014 April 16th)

Done properly, and with IMF support, Greece's exit from the euro needn't be the chaotic disaster Mr Tsipras's election threatens, but a new beginning for **an economy driven** to the edge by Europe's folie de grandeur. (TELEGRAPH, 2014 December 16th).

In what is becoming a **relationship driven economy**, if customers are not happy they will vote with their feet and move to the competition.” (TELEGRAPH, 2015 October 19th).

Yet other **export-driven economies** in Asia such as South Korea and Singapore are not suffering as much. (EC, 2015 November 14th)

If Europe’s **economy ever picks up speed**, more SMEs will generate their own resources. (EC, 2014 August 16th)

That is partly because low prices may reduce the appetite for investing in Mexico’s oil industry, whose opening next year is expected to be a powerful **driver of economic growth** after 2016. (EC, 2014 December 13th).

4.3 Metaphors Involving the Source Domain of Motion

1. LACK OF PURPOSE IS LACK OF DIRECTION

The movement of different types of market (stock market, credit market, demand on the market) is pictured as buoyant, banks are afloat, money, capital and investments are seen as having a flowing journey. In the entire corpus there is no reference to the economy as plunging, plunging movements are mainly associated to currencies, markets, shares.

Water counts 103 hits in the corpus with only one metaphorical use eye-watering prices.

It’s near total dependence on crude exports for hard currency has seen the government of president Nicolás Maduro **struggling to try keep the economy afloat**. (GUARDIAN, 2015 December 30th).

But the lower the price of oil goes, the deeper Venezuela’s **economy sinks**. (GUARDIAN, 2015 December 30th).

2. SLOW PROGRESS IS SLOW MOTION

Awkwardly, though, Taiwan’s economy **is in a slump**. (EC, 2015 November 14th)

Five years after the collapse of Lehman Brothers almost tipped the global economy into the abyss, the recovery **has been slow and halting**. (GUARDIAN, 2013 December 25th)

The euro zone has not broken up and politicians in Washington, DC **have not brought the entire economy to a halt** over tax-and-spending policies. Hurdles remain (such as raising the debt ceiling) but investors assume a deal will be done. (EC, 2013 March 9th)

There is significant disagreement, however, on why **economies become stuck** in this quagmire for long periods. (EC, 2016 January 2nd)

Expectations of higher future inflation therefore provide **the stuck economy** with the sub-zero interest rates needed to escape the rut. (EC, 2016 January 2nd)

No wonder the euro zone's **economy is stagnant**. (EC, 2014 August 16th)

3. PROGRESS IS MOTION FORWARD

We need a concerted effort to get more young people studying the science and engineering degrees that will **drive our economy forward** and more of them taking up well paid opportunities. (GUARDIAN, 2013 July 14th)

America's can-do spirit **keeps its economy moving forward**, but over-optimism can be harmful, especially if it leads people to make promises they cannot meet. (EC, 2015 November 21st)

The motion of the economy is differently pictured in accordance with the country it refers to: linear and ahead on the one hand, backward on the other hand. The motion of the economy is in accordance with the actors on the economic and business stage.

4.4 Metaphors conceptualising economy as wealth

1. WELL-BEING IS WEALTH

Economies with the biggest **piles of savings** relative to investment—such as China and the euro area—export their excess capital abroad, and as a consequence run large current-account surpluses. (EC, 2016 January 2nd)

4.5 Metaphors Conceptualising ECONOMY as a Building

1. ECONOMY IS A BUILDING

Economy is not seen as a very strong and solid foundation it is pictured as collapsing or cracking. Depending on the country it refers to this conceptual category can entail negative or positive implications.

For a country that is supposed to be **on the brink of economic collapse** Italy has surprisingly busy capital markets. (EC, 2014 January 4th)

“This was a black swan, this implied **the collapse of the Italian economy** and even in that extreme hypothesis only two banks had capital shortfalls that were not even below Basel requirements,” said Giovanni Sabatini, director-general of the Italian Banking Association. (FT, 2014 October 27th)

Coupled with the turn in the housing market, the news that personal borrowing is increasing more rapidly will fuel the debate about whether **the economic recovery is being built on solid foundations**. (GUARDIAN, 2013 August 30th)

The fear is that a golden era of growth, fuelled by China's ravenous appetite for commodities, has come to a close, exposing deep **cracks in their economic foundations**. (EC, 2015 December 12th)

5 Conclusion

All points of view regarding the identification of conceptual metaphors in large texts converge towards the use of concordancing programs backed up by manual annotation. After having conducted this research we can conclude that corpora enable a refined view of the entailments establishing between a source domain and a target domain, as well as an extension in the number of entailments, both aspects reinforce and account for the validity of a corpus-based research.

In business discourse the evolution of the economy/economic systems are closely related with the evolution of financial systems, if the financial system goes well, the economy will function accordingly. Business genre resorts to metaphors both as stylistic devices drawing on the aesthetic function of metaphors, that of embellishing the language and as rhetoric devices to convince the readers that measures have to be taken to improve the state of the economy. The different conceptual categories analysed are very rich in means of lexical realisations and contribute to shaping different images of the economy.

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ANNEX**Conceptual categories clustered around ECONOMY**

I. Metaphors involving the source domain of human behaviour, plants and biology:

METAPHOR	LEXICAL REALISATIONS	OCCURRENCES
ECONOMY IS A PLANT	growth	3
	to grow	5
	branch	5
	root	4
ECONOMIC VITALITY IS THE VITALITY OF AN ORGANISM	lifeblood	5
	(economic) vitality	1
	to boost	2
	to boom	2
ECONOMY IS A LIVING ORGANISM	heart	2
	to mature	2
	to birth	1
	backbone	1
ECONOMIC HARM IS PHYSICAL INJURY	decline	6
	to (cause) harm	3
	to hurt/ be hurt by	3
	to kill	1
	paralysis	2
	travails	1
	to be hit by	1
HEALTHY ECONOMY IS A HEALTHY ORGANISM	strong / stronger	3
	health(y)/healthier	8
	to strengthen	4
	strength	3
	support economic growth	2
	to improve health	3
	to return back to health	2
	stable	1
	prosperous	2
	wellbeing	1
ECONOMY IS A PATIENT	to revive	3
	to resuscitate	1
	weak(ness)	2
	to recover/ recovery	20
	to revitalise	1
	to suffer	8
	sick(ness)	2
	ailing	3
	infect	1
	fragile	2
	to do better	1

II. Metaphors involving the source domain of vehicle

METAPHOR	LEXICAL REALISATIONS	OCCURRENCES
ECONOMY IS AN ENGINE/ MACHINE	(to) fuel	3
	(over)heating	3
	to oil the wheels of the economy	1
	to run out of steam	1
	to travel at full steam	1
	to lose steam	2
	(to) gear	1
	to contract	4
ECONOMY IS A VEHICLE	to drive(r)	5
	pick up speed	1

III. Metaphors involving the source domain of motion

METAPHOR	LEXICAL REALISATIONS	OCCURRENCES
LACK OF PURPOSE IS LACK OF DIRECTION	(to) sink	1
	afloat	2
SLOW PROGRESS IS SLOW MOTION	slow (down)	2
	(to) (bring to a) halt	3
	(be in a) slump	1
	(become) stuck	2
	trap	2
	stagnant	1
PROGRESS IS MOTION FORWARD	move forward	2
	to move ahead smoothly	4
	(to drive) forward	2

IV. Metaphors conceptualising economy as wealth

METAPHOR	LEXICAL REALISATIONS	OCCURRENCES
WELL-BEING IS WEALTH	wealth	8
	rich	11
	enrich	3
	richest	4
	poor	6

V. ECONOMY IS A BUILDING

METAPHOR	LEXICAL REALISATIONS	OCCURRENCES
ECONOMY IS A BUILDING	(to) collapse	3
	to be built on foundations	2
	cracks in the economic foundations	1

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Giacomo Ferrari, born in Pisa (Italy) on July 13, 1945, attended school and high school in Livorno where he lived till 1972 and graduated in historical linguistics in 1968 at the University of Pisa. He has served in the same university as analyst and programmer, then as teacher of Sanskrit, while carrying research activity in the field of computational linguistics at the National Council of Researches. He also taught Iranian philology, Applied Linguistics, and Computational Linguistics in the University of Milan, and General Linguistics in the University of Parma. He finally moved to the University of East Piedmont at Vercelli, where he taught General Linguistics, Historical Linguistics, Computational Linguistics, and Technologies for Communication. He also was Dean of the Faculty of Art for six years. He carried researches in different field of historical linguistics, general linguistics, and computational linguistics. Now he is retired.

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