

Ostapchuk I.I.

Communicative and manipulative function of metaphor in English mass media discourse

Ostapchuk Iryna Igorivna, post graduate student

English Department, The Faculty of Foreign Languages, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Lviv, Ukraine

Abstract. The article discusses the metaphor and its use in English media sphere. The analysis of three main functions of the trope is outlined: nominative, cognitive and pragmatic. Pragmatic function of the metaphor is expressed within communicative and manipulative aspect as the media is a powerful pillar to influence the readers. Strategic maneuvering with the help of the metaphor involves the formation of desired conclusions of the audience by creating contextual situations of prevention, prohibition, request, seeking for confidence and trust, compassion, disapproval, agreement, promise, recommendation and others.

Keywords: massive communication, metaphor, naming, framing, strategic maneuvering, contextual situation

Nowadays journalists and people who are always in the public eye try to attract attention to their speeches and deeds in order to remain influential and shape people's outlooks. Thus, philologists claim about transformation of classic publicist style into the style of massive communication and emergence of media world view (as the result of media influence on the readers' lifestyle and opinions) [10, p. 46]. One of the linguistic means such as the tropes help it to succeed. The basis of the tropes and expressive figurative speech is the metaphor. "A **metaphor** is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase denotes one kind of object or idea instead of another to suggest likeness or analogy between them" [merriam-webster.com] cleared by the stylistics dictionary "...to make an implicit, implied or hidden comparison between two objects that are poles apart from each other or contradictory but have some characteristics common between them..." [literarydevices.net].

The metaphor has become a topical issue under research for many scholars such as G. Lakoff, M. Johnson, O. Majer, P. McFedries, A. Sahlane, N. Arutiunova, S. Ter-Minasova, D. Shmeliov, O. Rykova, A. Ignatieva, N. Bessarabova and others. G. Lakoff and his followers contributed a lot to cognitive aspect of our mind and metaphors as the mechanisms of thinking. N. Arutiunova compiled and edited a set of essays concerning the interdependence of language, culture and mind and the use of metaphors as the embodiment of these relations. Though, the topic needs a systematic approach to be used and new linguistic tendencies to be taken into consideration.

The **aim** of the article is the analysis of metaphors that are used in media environment and their influence on readers expressed by communicative and manipulative function. Our corpus (300 samples) is retrieved from prominent broadsheet English newspapers, mainstream blogs or materials of important international conferences from 2013 to 2015. As follows, the target is to interpret the manipulative use of metaphor within contextual situations with the help of P. MacFedries' "The Word Lover's Guide to New Words" and the classification of metaphor-text manipulative functions outlined by O. Rykova.

The metaphor is claimed to have the power to construct and reconstruct the way we perceive the world around us. According to the **cognitive linguistics** metaphorical representation involves the evocation of already experienced schematic frames and their further imposition on new situations, rising the implications and connotative shades that might have no empirical basis (personal associations, elements of cultural traditions, social behavior, trendy phenomena, etc.). According to G. Lakoff "they can (even)

enter our brains and provide models that we not merely live by, but that define who we are' [3].

On the **linguistic level** metaphor has "a "generative" quality of a carrier of meaning across conceptual realms by analogical extension" [4]. This process of imagistic-schematic and cross-domain projective mappings is enacted in a 'metamorphic' and 'transformative' way of enriching the language and personal speech acts giving the possibility to understand both the source and the target domains' interaction ("the tenor", "the vehicle" and shared common feature – "the ground") [7].

On the level of **pragmatics** the use of metaphors in certain context changes the perception of the information due to the imposition of new names on familiar or brandy objects usually followed by emotional component and associations (personal or social). Thus, the audience decode the data as "true and pure" in the same way shaping readers' opinions as it is needed for journalist or speakers. Therefore, the metaphor has **three main functions**: linguistic (naming), conceptual (framing), and communicative (perspective changing) [1]. To express it differently, "individual agents set cognitive targets for themselves opportunistically" in that "reasoning serves as an aid to belief-change and decision" [2].

Thus, **metaphor in media context** has the greatest power to transform complex current realities under attention (political or social) into more readable graspable concepts that need to be believed [1]. As mass media is an active or passive communication so sharing knowledge and opinions and their interdependent impact on both communicants is obvious. Manipulations are either explicit in direct requests, threats, appeals of the speakers/journalists or implicit. Implication is the presence of verbally non-expressed senses of communication; in the context they can be easily guessed and extracted [6, p. 48].

Realization of pragmatic intentions of the information in media articles is done on the level of a word, sentence and text [11]. So, besides the informative and framing functions the metaphor may use certain symbols, myths, associations that are employed to serve political agendas, social issues, current cultural trends (e.g. arouse people's emotions, give prominence/neglect or rationalize particular phenomena in social reality or ridicule one's political opponents or policy statements). "In this sense, "strategic **maneuvering**" is achieved when the (culturally) established institutional conventions and the (more or less fixed) procedural format of a "communicative activity type" are violated" [5 p. 148]. In case of media interpretation, manipulation is the impact on the addressees in the way they think these are their own thoughts, conclusions and decisions [9, p. 60]. A journalist

or a speaker arranges the text of the article in the way of adequate informing leaving for themselves the right to express their own targets (or wished on) and intentions according to the type of the newspaper. It is a conscious transformation in order to manage and regulate the ideas of the audience [10, p. 37]. Advertisements and announcements are the brightest examples of implicit “manipulation”. Metaphors, on the one hand, help to hide direct obstruction and, on the other hand, they help to create the effect of “the new and unexpected” that without any suspicion attracts readers’ attention [8, p. 181].

Manipulation can contain different aspects and have various colorings: to warn, to indict, to share with one’s thoughts and ask about opinion, to promise, to invite or urge the reader to believe or do certain act, to accept the objects as good/bad, to tell about one’s own troubles and seek for compassion and trust, to appeal to do something in certain algorithm and consecution, to advertise a new brand, to ask about a favor, to engage to try, to ban something, etc. The following examples of contextual situations reveal the nuances of metaphor “maneuvering” on readers.

“I can’t tell you how many times I saw what I call a slow-motion nightmare on the highway”, said House Minority Leader Lawrence F. Cafero, who first spearheaded the effort to ground “ice missiles” in 2001. “You can’t do anything. You’re surrounded by traffic. You’re just watching it happen” – Connecticut Mirror, January 3, 2014. In the discussion of common winter problems the vivid **warning** to the readers with the help of “ice missile” arises: (n), a metaphor on the association with a rocket or whiz bang (missile) meaning a chunk of ice that flies off the roof of a moving vehicle.

“To make matters worse, many industrial control system vendors are not committed to fixing the security holes that exist in their deployed products, especially legacy products, resulting in... “forever-day bugs”” – International Conference on Security and Management, February 21, 2013. A speaker **warns** companies that want to secure their systems from long lasting small defaults in a program code; “a security hole” that is usually fixed in the next generation/version of the software, is not. *Forever-day* (adj) is a period of time that is strictly arranged but it lasts somehow longer than should do – a metaphor to emphasize pejorative prolongation of time.

“Anyway, be on the lookout for “parcel mullets” as you peruse our Delray/Boynton neighborhoods and please share any findings” – Delray Beach Real Estate, August 12, 2013. Apparently, a *parcel mullet* is a house with a mowed, manicured front lawn but a wild, unkempt yard in the back; (n), metaphor reminiscent of the unlamented “mullet” hairstyle, which is short at the front and sides of the head, and long at the back. As well, the term “parcel” is real estate jargon for a piece of land [wordspy.com]. A less formal alternative is *lawn mullet*. This new phenomenon rises **disapproval** in the neighborhood and shows that people keep their front territory arranged only for the public eye.

“It’s a **Glowface** world. That’s ... people who always have their faces buried in a computer screen... Suddenly, from one corner of the world to the other, glowfacing emerged. What first seemed like a harmless phenomenon is now changing the way we interact” – Dot Complicated, May 22, 2013. *Glowface* (n) is a face lit up by a device

screen or computer monitor; a person whose face is lit in this way. The cited contextual situation containing metaphor aims to tell readers about their own thoughts and conclusions in order for the audience to **agree/support** that sitting in front of computer is harmful for the health and social skills/interaction.

“Nano technology is about making everything even smaller, while Nana technology is about making small technology bigger and giving seniors the tools to keep them safe and be more mentally alert” – Star Tribune, January 31, 2012. “**Nana technology**” (n) is both a pun on the common nickname for grandmothers and on “nanotechnology”, which represents technological devices smaller than a poppy seed. So, nana technology is certain computer stuff convenient for easy use of grandmas and grandpas, many of whom are the clients and patients of today’s power driven industry. In this way the author of the media article **promises** senior people that it will be easy for them to use all innovations of modern life and not feel old and ignorant.

“The next interesting step I think is the **binge-able** documentary, where stories are watched in multi-part episodes adding up to five or six hours instead of as a single two-hour film”, said Andrew Jarecki, the Oscar-nominated director of the well-regarded nonfiction feature *Capturing the Friedmans*” – Los Angeles Times, November 5, 2013. The director in this way **recommends** watching this film probably because it is very interesting and that is the reason of broadcasting it in 4-hour-episodes-time instead of the format of classic film. So something that is *bingeable* (adj) is compulsively and excessively watchable or consumable, particularly a TV show or food. The speakers make an advert for the film with the help of association of a booze and extensive drinking and partying that drag on late.

“I wrote a few paragraphs of this column between school drop-off and an appointment. I sent a bunch of emails between making dinner and taekwondo. Bedtime reading with the kids, then more writing at 1 a.m., after a few hours of sleep. Then back up at 4 a.m. to write and sign up for summer camp. There’s a name for this... “**time confetti**”” – The Sydney Morning Herald, March 17, 2014. The narrator who is probably a woman **shares** her day schedule complaining about having no time to do business in a calm pace. This text is of typical style for the editor’s column or the correspondence that **seek for** certain **credit and understanding** from other people in the same situation. *Time confetti* (n) is a metaphor that helps to realize these brief scraps of leisure time scattered throughout a person’s day.

“The film adaptation of Rex Pickett’s book “*Sideways*” bumped the sales of pinot noir by 16 percent, according to ACNielsen research. It had a similar effect – in the opposite direction – on merlot, which Pickett’s character Miles disparages in the film. Those statistical changes are... “**Sideways effect**”” – Yakima Herald, April 11, 2013. The term-metaphor (n) as we can see from the citation is connected with the novel where two friends have a week holidays to remember their young years and drive away to have fun and drink wine. The actions of the heroes have influenced social tastes. Together with characters common people started preferring pinot sort of wine

and refusing to drink merlot. The metaphor reveals **the instruction** or the way of formation of certain opinions of common people and how this system of judgments can affect the rates of wine industry just because there are a lot of unconscious followers of *The Sideways* readers.

“Yet, examples of tech’s pinkification persist. In February, at a Harvard event designed to get women interested in computer science, sponsor Goldman Sachs handed out cosmetic mirrors and nail files” – The San Francisco Chronicle (California), July 6, 2014. A **vocative** statement that is to engage women into serious business and to form their clear awareness of hard but necessary job by using pink color associated and attracted by female. Yet, *pinkification* (n) is some kind of attempt to make something that is traditionally masculine more interesting or appealing to women by associating it with stereotypically feminine traits or ideas.

“Legalities and market demand aside, the app is plain ol’ mean-spirited, as a privatization of a public service. The hashtag for this sort of thing is #JerkTech” – Boston.com, July 16, 2014. *Jerktech* (n) is the very apt metaphor for the class of “disruptive” startups that sell things that do not belong to them, like parking spots and restaurant reservations, simply raising the prices of them and making access to public resources a factor of your disposable income [wordspy.com]. Antisocial behavior of “smart” people causes a wave of indignation and forces media to **interrogate** upon the provocative question or situation whether it is good to resell the booking of something or it is a swindling.

“There were smaller statements of support of the French people in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo shootings, too, most notably the “JeSuisCharlie” button Amal Clooney pinned to her satin Dior clutch” – Los Angeles Times, January 12, 2015. Or *“A trendy London hotel has been accused of using the Paris killings to promote its business after using the ‘JesusCharlie’...to unveil plans for a branch in the French capital”* – London Evening Standard, January 12, 2015. *“JeSuisCharlie”* is a metaphoric expression (identifying oneself with the victims of the tragedy or with the nation that grieves for the dead) of support for freedom of speech, freedom of press, and freedom from any terror, particularly as a reaction to the January 7, 2015 attack on the French publisher Charlie Hebdo for its caricature. Another collocation was immediately coined by analogy – *“JeSuisVolnovakha”* to support Ukrainians that suffer from terrorist attacks on the East of the country and “to say sorry” for the death of civilians after the shelling of the bus in Volnovakha on January 13, 2015. It is a call for **support and compassion** and the conviction of any illegal inhumane deeds.

“What is zero-tasking? It means being, not doing. It means taking those 60 minutes and just doing nothing. Simply rest, relax, de-stress and de-load (the opposite of overload). It means just breathing – in and out, over and over—and marveling at the fact that you can breathe, that you are alive, that you are here” – Make a Change Blog, November 3, 2013. I will use P. MacFedries’ accurate notes on this metaphor *“Zero-Tasking Day* is when we’re supposed to use an extra hour not to perform more chores or check more feeds or see more people instead of relaxing and simply doing nothing. Of course, in the recent experi-

ment where some people got to choose between sitting and doing nothing and giving themselves electric shocks, two-thirds of men and a quarter of women chose the electric shocks. According to the study, “even older people did not show any particular fondness for being alone thinking”. And these were people being asked to do nothing for between six and 15 minutes. Who knows what they’d do to themselves if you asked them to be alone with their thoughts for a whole hour! Maybe all this just proves that now we need *Zero-Tasking Day* more than ever” [wordspy.com]. It is a kind of **request and invitation** to *zero task* for people who are deep in their chores and workload and cannot afford or imagine themselves doing nothing: in this formulation they should do a task – to do nothing; think about people or relations instead of problems.

There is also one more similar metaphor coined – *“digital detox”* (n). *“I’ve chosen this somewhat humourless way of celebrating to road-test the latest travel fad: the digital detox. In this age of information overload, holidaymakers increasingly prefer a break from the treadmill of technological lives filled with 24/7 notifications and spam”* – The Guardian (London), January 18, 2015. Or *“If you are looking for a resort that respects your need for digital detox there are many that specifically request that should you bring your mobile phones and laptops that you do not use them in public places”* – The Sydney Morning Herald, March 11, 2013. In this communicative situation the need for detoxication means the time spent away from computers and other digital devices. Comparing with pragmatic use of the previous metaphor this one also means **an ask** to repose and free oneself from computer work for some period.

“Nose-to-tail is the basis of traditional European cuisine and the cooking styles of most indigenous populations on Earth. If you’re going to bother to hunt and slaughter an animal for food, then every single edible piece of the animal, from its nose to its tail, gets used somehow, some way” – Prince George Citizen (British Columbia), June 17, 2014. This expression uses metaphor that somehow **bans** (puts an interdiction) an idea that animals can be killed just for fur or liver and points the justification of this case in the only way of using meat and other parts efficiently and completely.

Contextual situations above also testify that the most active target domains that use metaphoric naming are computer technology, everyday lifestyle, films and their influence, women, terror, human consume of products and time spending.

In conclusion, we can confirm that metaphor is a trope that introduces complicated or new concepts in terms of more familiar notions by transferring a known name on the brandy complex phenomena on the basis of associations or certain common features. Such situations of comparison may be different to various groups of people or even personalities causing the emergence of extra meanings or connotative senses. As the sphere of mass media is the first source of information and sharing opinions it is ideal for manipulating beliefs of the audience. The use of metaphors in media context rises the pragmatic potential to influence people. Thus, the metaphor has three main functions in context: to name notions, to shape them into familiar cognitive frames and to change the way people perceive the world.

Transformation of the media material in order to manage and regulate the ideas of the audience has many shades depending on the aims of the journalist (their personal or wished on). The manipulative use of metaphors in contextual media situations may obtain a form of prevention, warning, prohibition, request, finding confidence, com-

passion, disapproval, agreement, promise, recommendations, call for understanding, appeal, etc.

The question of metaphor is extremely broad and covers many other aspects of interpreting information, which leads to the relevance of further study of metaphor use in mass media.

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OTHER RESOURCES

1. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/metaphor>
2. <http://literarydevices.net/metaphor/>
3. <http://wordspy.com/index.php?page=about>

Остапчук И.И. Коммуникативно-манипулятивная функция метафоры в английском медиа дискурсе

Аннотация. В статье рассматривается вопрос метафоры и ее употребление в английской медиа среде. Представлен анализ трех основных функций языковой фигуры: номинативная, когнитивная и прагматическая. Прагматическая функция метафоры выражается в коммуникативно-манипулятивном аспекте, поскольку средства массовой информации являются мощной средой воздействия на читателей. Стратегическое маневрирование предусматривает формирование желаемых выводов аудитории путем создания контекстных ситуаций предупреждения, запрета, просьбы, поиска доверия, сочувствия, неодобрения, согласия, обещания, рекомендации, призыва, дискуссии и др. с помощью метафоры.

Ключевые слова: массовая коммуникация, метафора, называние, фрейминг, стратегическое маневрирование, контекстная ситуация