

## The PHYSICAL HEALTH/ILLNESS Metaphor in the *Financial Times*

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### Abstract

This paper is dedicated to show how metaphors are employed to conceptualise economy in terms of physical health and/or illness in economic newspaper articles collected from the *Financial Times*. The way **conceptual and linguistic** metaphors are mapped from the source domain of PHYSICAL HEALTH/ILLNESS onto the target domain of economy is discussed. One major question this paper is trying to answer is: How are the conceptual and linguistic metaphors used in the economic discourse, and what connotation they imply to portray the economic scene in general and to highlight certain economic events or phenomena such as ‘inflation’ or ‘deflation’ in particular? For this purpose, the conceptual theory of metaphor (CTM) will be applied. In addition, a rationalization of the meaning of specific examples and of the function of metaphor in those examples is involved in the examination process. This paper is based on an extended study that identified twenty three conceptual source domains in a number of economic newspaper articles compiled from the *Financial Times*, mainly the columns ‘opinion’ and ‘comment’ between the years 2007 and early 2011.

**Keywords:** Health/Illness Metaphor, Economic Discourse, Conceptual theory of metaphor (CTM), Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP)

## 1. Introduction

Metaphor is traditionally defined as a figure of speech in which one subject-matter in a certain field is used to denote another in a different field. For instance, *that idea died on the vine* is a metaphorical expression that likens a newly born idea to a dead fruit that is no longer edible. The reference in this metaphor is to the idea being inapplicable or unsuccessful. Metaphors involve an action of implicit comparison without the explicit use of words of comparison (*like*, *as* or *such as*). In other words, the resemblance is lucid in a sentence such as *He is like a pig* where ‘pig’ is a simile, but it is implied in *He is a pig* in which case ‘pig’ is considered a metaphor. In literature, metaphor is observed as a main feature of poetry because it enriches poems with untraditional literary images. Moreover, metaphors are significantly used in science and provide new explanatory mechanisms. In his article, Wu (2003, p. 74) defines metaphor as a figure of speech which brings a notion or an impression into mind in a non-literal way. So, a metaphorical expression is used to communicate the tenor<sup>1</sup> of the metaphor through bringing an idea or an image to mind. As a matter of fact, “metaphor is everywhere in the language we use and there is no escape from it” (Goatly, 1997, p. 2). In the same context, Newmark (2001, p. 125) claims that metaphor is the concrete expression of the ability to see resemblance or differences as well as a sign of ‘innovation’.

In their seminal work, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) differentiate between the traditional and contemporary views of metaphor. In brief, they consider metaphor as part of our daily life and that human conceptual system is mostly metaphorical. They are against the old view of metaphors being just a matter of extraordinary language. The significant role metaphor plays in both linguistic communication and other forms of human/cultural interaction, including translation, has been recognised by theorists from different disciplinary backgrounds and with different research agenda. Johnson (1981: ix) states that “We are in the midst of a metaphormania” as the subsidiary role of metaphor has changed and become a vital problem. Only three decades ago the situation was just the opposite: poets created metaphors, everybody used them, and philosophers (linguists, psycholinguists, etc.) ignored them; but today all acknowledge the pervasiveness of metaphor in everyday language activities (Johnson, 1981, p. ix cited in Yu, 1998, p. 2).

In short, metaphor is considered one of the most essential tools to help audience comprehend (partially) what cannot be comprehended (totally) such as “feelings, aesthetic experiences, moral pictures, and spiritual awareness” (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). Kövecses (2002, p. 3-4) raised the question of why English speakers make extensive use of the concept of journey to reflect on the highly abstract and elusive concept of life. Drawing on cognitive linguistics, his interpretation of this phenomenon is that the concrete concept of journey facilitates the abstract concept of life. The same idea was discussed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) who distinguish between the literal and the metaphorical use of language stating that: “we understand experience metaphorically when we use a gestalt from one domain of experience to structure experience in another domain” (p. 230). In addition, Cooper (1986, p. 140) declares that metaphorical talk creates a sense of ease or ‘intimacy’ between speakers, and between them and their work as well. More importantly, metaphor plays the role of a mediator in our understanding of things. In other words, conceptualising an abstract concept into a concrete one through the use of metaphor helps to communicate what is hard to explain (Knowles & Moon, 2006, p. 5). For example, George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* is an allegory of the socialist Russian revolution and its moral deterioration into the communist dictatorship under Stalin. In this novel, the political and social processes characterizing the entire Soviet nation are metaphorized by reference to animals in a

small farm in England. Each animal is characterised by a certain attribute such as idealism, greediness, ferocity, or gullibility. So, by the different interactions between characters, Orwell was able to develop a good understanding of the complicated issue associated with communism (Ashkenazi, 2006, p. 5). Besides, the implicitness of metaphors can be more effective and more interesting to audience than explicit literal expressions.

The main questions this paper is trying to answer are: How the conceptual and linguistic metaphors related to the physical health and illness of human beings are used in the economic discourse particularly in economic newspaper articles published in the *Financial Times*, and what are the connotations they imply to portray the economic scene? Do such metaphors work as a helpful device to facilitate comprehension of economy or pose a linguistic problem? In order to answer these questions, the conceptual theory of metaphor has been adopted as the theoretical framework.

## 2. The Conceptual Theory of Metaphor (CTM)

Classical metaphor theorists consider metaphor as a mere figure of speech which is only useful for rhetorical purposes. In contrast, contemporary metaphor theorists like Black (1962); Schon (1979); Lakoff and Johnson (1980); Johnson (1981); Lakoff (1987, 1993) and Kittay (1987) agree on the idea that, in essence, all language is metaphoric and all discourse is tailored with metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Schon (1979); Lakoff and Johnson (1980); Lakoff and Turner (1989) and MacCormac (1985) have investigated the influence of metaphor on people's everyday thinking and came to the conclusion that it is pervasive in everyday language and consequently inescapable.

The central argument of the cognitive approach is that metaphors are not just decorative elements of language but rather vital resources for thought processes in human society. The cognitive approach to metaphor was first discussed in Lakoff and Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* (1980). It was later developed by other scholars such as Turner (1987), Gibbs (1994), Charteris-Black (2003, 2004), Kövecses (2002) and Deignan (2005). Moreover, the CTM refutes all the precedent theories that considered metaphor as a literary and rhetoric use of language by approaching metaphor as a process of thought more than language.

Conceptual metaphor is normally defined as a general principle that is neither part of the grammar of English, nor the English lexicon. It is part of the human conceptual system which comprehends the domain of love, for instance, in terms of a journey as suggested by Lakoff & Johnson (1980). Goatly (2007) argues that:

One of the most important insights of conceptual metaphor theory is that these concrete sources for abstract targets do not occur randomly but fall into patterns which we might call Conceptual Metaphor Themes, or Conceptual Metaphors for short. These are conventionally referred to by the capitalised formula X is Y (p.15)

For example, the conceptual metaphor theme LOVE IS A JOURNEY entails such set of lexical items as 'way', 'far', 'turn back' and 'track'. LOVE IS A JOURNEY conceptualises love in terms of a journey in that lovers are travellers attempting to reach a certain destination that is their love life and goals. In this journey, several hindrances may encounter them so they have to take a decision of either stay together or separate from each other. Accordingly, LOVE IS A JOURNEY is the conceptual metaphor that generates linguistic metaphors in sentences such as: "Look how far we've come"; "We'll just have to go our separate ways"; "We can't turn back now"; "This relationship isn't going anywhere"; "We've gotten off the track" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 45). It is argued that the foremost purpose of a conceptual metaphor is to understand one

conceptual domain in terms of another. For example, ECONOMY IS NATURE is a conceptual metaphor where economy is the abstract target domain that is made comprehensible via the source domain of nature that is more physical and approachable. In other words, the metaphorical expressions or linguistic metaphors used to express such conceptual metaphor are the means by which we understand the mapping between the source domain of nature and the target domain of economy. Some of these expressions are ‘landscape’, ‘mountain’ and ‘plateau’. These linguistic expressions “help understand what concepts are implied” (Yasynetska, 2005, p. 50).

Charteris-Black and Ennis (2001) compare conceptual metaphors and linguistic metaphors in a corpus of English-Spanish financial reporting published in newspapers during the stock market crash in October 1997. In this study, Charteris-Black and Ennis distinguish between linguistic metaphors such as ‘storm’ and ‘hurricane’ and their main conceptual category BAD MARKET CONDITIONS ARE BAD WEATHER. In another work, Charteris-Black (2003) compares metaphors in two political corpora: the inaugural speeches of American presidents and party political manifestos of two British political parties during 1973-1997. Here, the researcher categorises metaphors according to their source domains creating conceptual subgroups like ‘conflict’, ‘journey’, ‘building’, etc. and then he relates the conceptual subgroups into appropriate conceptual metaphors. The deficiency of this study is that the conceptual metaphors SOCIAL PURIFICATION IS HEAT and SOCIAL CONDITION IS A WEATHER CONDITION are only found in the American corpus. Commenting on this, Yasynetska (2005, p. 32) argues that all conceptual metaphors in the two studies mentioned above were ‘identified intuitively’ and that the second study by Charteris-Black (2003) “does not explain what types and tokens exactly stand for the identified concepts” (Yasynetska, 2005, p. 32). Besides, Yasynetska criticizes both studies as not showing “how metaphors are preferably expressed-whether there is any difference in the frequency of nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, or set-expressions” (ibid). In her own study, Yasynetska (2005) makes use of the theory of conceptual systems and prospects for comparative analysis of concepts across languages within the conceptual framework. She also argues that failing to observe “specific features of expressions within conceptual mapping can result in an assumption that any expressions of any discourse of any language are identical as long as they can be mapped onto the same concept” (Yasynetska, 2005, p. 33).

According to the advocates of the conceptual theory of metaphor, it is thought and not language that is the main concern of this theory where metaphor is regarded as an important phenomenon lying behind the surface manifestation of language. Moreover, supporters of this theory believe that few or even no abstract notions can be expressed without metaphor in the sense that there is no direct way of comprehending them unless they are interpreted in terms of concrete notions. For example, the conceptual metaphor A PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY (Lakoff, 1993) is perceived linguistically through sentences like: “He’s without direction in life”, “I’m where I want to be in life”, “He got a head start in life” (Lakoff, 1993, p. 223). Deignan (2005) believes that it is difficult to find linguistic expressions about the development of an individual’s life which are not also used to talk about literal journeys. Likewise, it is hard to find expressions that are not metaphorical in some way to talk about a certain subject. The close examination of the expressions employed in the discussion of the different topics might be of much importance in investigating people’s mental processes during the construction of these abstract domains. Besides, the formation of conceptual metaphors

depends mostly on our experiences and knowledge of our bodies and our physical interaction with the world (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Lakoff and Johnson's theory assists in observing "systematic semantic patterns, rather than random expressions" (cited in Yasynetska, 2005, p. 36). Furthermore, the theory of conceptual mapping facilitates conceptually more specific qualitative and quantitative comparative studies of metaphors in different languages and corpora (Charteris-Black and Ennis 2001; Charteris-Black 2003). In fact, this is a correlative relation as metaphorical expressions are tied to metaphorical concepts in a systematic way so that "we can use metaphorical linguistic expressions to study the nature of metaphorical concepts and to gain an understanding of the metaphorical nature of our activities" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 7).

On the other hand, some other scholars believe that this theory has got a problem given that "simultaneously used metaphors can be believed to incorporate different concepts in a single statement" (Yasynetska, 2005, p. 30). In this case, the conceptual mapping does not explain, in Yasynetska's (2005) words, which conceptual mapping is more emphasized or intended in a particular context. For example, *Medicine for Europe's Sinking South* is the headline of one of the economic articles under investigation where two concepts, HEALTH represented by 'medicine' and SEA represented by 'sinking' are incorporated in the same sentence (Nader, 2013).

The above overview of the conceptual theory of metaphor is just an introduction to the main framework of metaphor categorisation adopted in this paper where specific linguistic metaphors are primarily grouped together provided that they belong to the same conceptual mapping.

### 3. Methodology

A number of methods and procedures have been pursued in order to identify and explain conceptual and linguistic metaphors from the source domain of PHYSICAL HEALTH/ILLNESS. The analysis involves methods for metaphor identification following the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) by the Pragglejaz Group (2007)<sup>2</sup>, categorisation into conceptual source domains in the light of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Charteris-Black (2004) and Kövecses (2002) and the use of bilingual dictionaries. Taking the MIP into account, a manual search for linguistic metaphors within context has been conducted as follows (Pragglejaz, 2007, p. 3):

1. Read the entire text—discourse to establish a general understanding of the meaning.
2. Determine the lexical units in the text—discourse
3. (a) For each lexical unit in the text, establish its meaning in context, that is, how it applies to an entity, relation, or attribute in the situation evoked by the text (contextual meaning). Take into account what comes before and after the lexical unit.
- (b) For each lexical unit, determine if it has a more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts than the one in the given context. For our purposes, basic meanings tend to be
  - More concrete [what they evoke is easier to imagine, see, hear, feel, smell, and taste];
  - Related to bodily action;
  - More precise (as opposed to vague);
  - Historically older;

Basic meanings are not necessarily the most frequent meanings of the lexical unit.

- (c) If the lexical unit has a more basic current—contemporary meaning in other contexts than the given context, decide whether the contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning but can be understood in comparison with it.

Another method of investigating the health/illness-related metaphors in economic texts is to conduct a frequency count of the conceptual and linguistic metaphors involved, and later classify them into their appropriate mappings. In the following section, an overview of the frequency of the source domain in the fifty texts chosen for the study is presented in addition to discussing the usability of this particular conceptual metaphor in economic discourse.

#### 4. Discussion: The PHYSICAL HEALTH/ILLNESS Metaphor

As far as frequency is concerned, the PHYSICAL HEALTH/ILLNESS metaphor is a quite common source domain in the language of economic newspaper reporting. It occurs in thirty articles out of fifty under investigation with a total of thirty seven (37) expressions that focus mainly on the state of health of economy. The metaphorical sense here lies in mapping the health domain of a living being onto the condition and function of economic institutions such as banks, or onto the economic situation in general using terms that refer to physical health or illness. Table 1 below shows the four most common conceptual metaphors with examples of the linguistic metaphors they involve. Some metaphors in this table are called ‘unclassifiable’ because it was not possible to classify them into a certain conceptual mapping due to the generality of the metaphorical expression. This comes in line with Shuttleworth’s (2011, p. 308) belief that “finding the right verbalization for a mapping is not always easy” and it “inevitably involves an element of subjectivity”, in addition to the fact that finding a precise mapping depends on the contextual motivation:

**Table 1:** *The conceptual and linguistic PHYSICAL HEALTH/ILLNESS metaphor*

Source domain	Conceptual metaphor	Linguistic metaphor
	ECONOMY IS A DISEASE	‘blindness’, ‘fever’
	ECONOMY IS A PATIENT	‘pain’, ‘injection’
	ECONOMIC ISSUES ARE ILLNESSES AND/OR DISEASES	‘contagion’, ‘malign’, ‘benign’, ‘toxic’, ‘noxious’
	ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN IS A STATE OF PHYSICAL HEALTH	‘Paralysis’, ‘cripple’, ‘disabling’, ‘emasculate’
<b>Unclassifiable metaphors</b>		‘symptom’, ‘disorder’, ‘addict’, ‘throes’, ‘collapse’, ‘remedy’

Some expressions such as ‘recovery’, ‘healthy’, ‘contagion’, ‘operation’ and others which already belong to the medical field have been realised to be part and parcel of the economic terminology. In addition, PHYSICAL HEALTH metaphors are rather functional when it comes to expressing the process of restoring the health of the economic system. Strictly speaking, terms from the domain of medicine have enriched economic discourse. Metaphors in this category either belong to general health condition, a specific health issue, and medicine or medical practice, such as ‘contagion’, ‘anaesthetic’, ‘injection’ and others.

In medical terms, diseases usually attack living beings such as humans and animals. Likewise in economy, inflation or deflation can infect the economic system and cause malfunction. These diseases can be viral given that they proliferate rapidly and accordingly distress the performance

of the system (the living being body and/or the economic system). There are levels in the concept of health so metaphors can be positioned anywhere on the scale of good and bad health according to the strength of the deliberate evaluation; for instance, ‘bout’ and ‘recovery’ are metaphors utilized to convey mild forms of evaluation (Charteris-Black, 2005, p. 100-101). While metaphors such as ‘wounds’ and ‘healthy’ express strong forms of evaluation, ‘robust’ and ‘paralysis’ communicate stronger evaluations (ibid 101). It is argued that “since most of us have experienced loss of health at some point in our lives this is an easily accessible conceptual frame” (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 150).

The PHYSICAL HEALTH metaphors in the data examined cover the different stages of illness, symptoms of illness and treatment, including prescribing proper medicine and semi or full health recovery. The PHYSICAL HEALTH metaphors ‘contagion’, ‘diagnosing’, ‘eliminate’ and ‘recovery’ are some of many used to explain this gradation on the way of recovery. The conceptual metaphors ECONOMY IS A DISEASE (Charteris-black, 2005, p. 102) and ECONOMY IS A PATIENT (Charteris-Black, 2000, p. 156) are both identified in this study along with the conceptual metaphor ECONOMIC ISSUES ARE ILLNESSES AND/OR DISEASES which is accentuated through different examples. Some health conditions are conceptualised and represented by words like ‘headache’ which is used in the data to describe the implications of producing consolidated accounts, ‘blindness’ in reference to casual ignorance of economic issues and ‘fever’ to depict the persistent efforts and challenges between France and Britain on the economic level. In theory, a disease is caused by the spreading of a virus which is called in medical terminology ‘contagion’. This expression is the second most frequent metaphor after ‘healthy’ and ‘recovery’, as it occurs seven times in four different articles as a noun and only once in the adjectival form ‘contagious’.

Charteris-Black (2004, p. 151) suggests that “as illness can spread exponentially and at a very alarming speed” so can the Great Depression in the field of economics. Although the Euro zone has avoided another Great Depression, some European countries are still struggling hard with indebtedness. This problem is metaphorically portrayed as a ‘contagious disease’ that approaches one European country after another:

- 1) Credit is tight and *contagion* is spreading to all highly leveraged points in the global economy.
- 2) The story of the other Eurozone stragglers is different in degree but not principle. All are highly leveraged - the fundamental source of financial *contagion*.
- 3) The *contagion* throughout the Eurozone was severe. But globally, the incident was notable chiefly for the lack of *contagion* to other regions and markets.

As some diseases can be fatal by nature like cancer, also some economic crises can be extremely severe. To express this notion, two metaphors have been used in the source texts, i.e., ‘malign’ and ‘benign’ which both conceptualise deflation as having a dangerous or less dangerous characteristic of a disease in example 4 below, and ‘pernicious’ which conceptualises private ownership, implicit public backing and inadequate regulation as a harmful combination in example 5:

- 4) A US economist, David Beckworth, has helpfully summarized the debate in the autumn 2008 issue of the Cato Journal. He distinguishes between *malign* deflation associated with a fall in overall demand and the *benign* kind associated with a productivity acceleration, the benefits of which are taken partly in the form of falling prices rather than entirely in rising wages.
- 5) There is no need to look back far to observe how *pernicious* a combination of private ownership, implicit public backing and inadequate regulation can be.

In addition, terms such as ‘toxic’ and ‘noxious’ which come from the source domain of medicine are utilized in some examples and they are regarded metaphorical, because their use in the context of economics is unusual:

6) The banking system still needs to be fixed. As Dominique Strauss-Kahn, managing director of the International Monetary Fund, has warned, many banks are still hiding *toxic* assets.

7) The resulting *noxious* mix of large current account and budget deficits led to rising foreign debt.

Some metaphors like ‘dislocation’, which is defined in *Oxford English Dictionary* as “the displacement of a bone from its natural position in the joint”, refer to physical injuries that are less dangerous than a contagious disease. It is metaphorically used in the following example to refer to economic imbalances:

8) We have analysed data on numerous severe economic *dislocations* over the past three-quarters of a century; a record of misfortune including 15 severe post-second world war crises, the Great Depression and the 1973-74 oil shock.

As mentioned earlier in this section, the concept of health has levels and metaphors of PHYSICAL HEALTH vary according to the degree of good or bad health on an evaluation scale. Therefore, ‘paralysis’ is a metaphor that symbolizes a strong evaluation (Charteris-Black, 2005, p. 101). The metaphor ‘paralysis’ in the examples below is an accentuation of the conceptual metaphor ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN IS A STATE OF PHYSICAL HEALTH where bad or slow economy is conceptualised as an ill body which cannot move (paralysed).

9) The EU has a habit of getting there in the end, of making the right decision at one minute to midnight. You can see this trajectory during the past six months or so. *Paralysis* has given way to muddling through.

10) It has always been part of the recent history of Europe that integrationist leaps have been interspersed with periods of *paralysis* and of messy improvisation.

Other physical health related metaphors detected in the economic discourse with the same meaning of paralysis are: ‘cripple’ and ‘disabling’.

In the process of metaphor identification, we have encountered some lexical items that belong to more than one source domain such as ‘emasculate’ which means the depriving of virility. This term can stand for two types of metaphors; PERSONIFICATION in conceptualising hedge funds as people and PHYSICAL HEALTH in reference to the dysfunctionality of the hedge funds:

11) So too, incidentally, does the determination to shut down tax havens and *emasculate* hedge funds.

Furthermore, symptoms of illnesses and diseases are represented in the English economic articles by such metaphors as: ‘symptom’, ‘disorder’, ‘addict’, ‘pain’, ‘throes’, ‘collapse’, ‘coronary’, ‘weak’, ‘ill’ and ‘distortions’. In the following example, the emphasis is on the notion that the financial crisis hitting countries of Europe is no more than a symptom of a bigger disorder in balance-sheet. The lexical item ‘disorder’ itself is not a metaphor but the existence of ‘symptom’ in the same sentence accentuates this health metaphorical sense:

12) Above all, the financial crisis is itself *a symptom* of a balance-sheet *disorder*.

Feeling painful might be the first symptom of a disease or illness so it is normal to speak of pain in a medical discourse but it sounds novel in economic contexts. In the next example, slow economic growth is depicted as a source of pain where the conceptual metaphor ECONOMY IS A PATIENT is underlined:

13) In warning of a “choppy recovery”, however, Mervyn King, the Bank’s governor, signalled that Britain could be in for a *painfully* extended period of sluggish growth.

In addition, the process of restructuring the economy after the crisis, and the way to economic recovery are metaphorically conceptualised as an agonising progression in the next example:

14) It is at the early stages of a long and *painful* deleveraging and restructuring.

Also, some economic crises such as destroying short-sellers and the European Central Bank's extension of its purchases of debt are portrayed as painful alarms for the European economies. Moreover, there are some expressions that emphasise the state of pain particularly prolonged pain such as 'cry of pain', 'generation of pain' and 'throes'. In the next example, the metaphor 'throes' expresses the pains caused by economic and geopolitical disturbances:

15) Yet historians will record the summit as the moment when a world in the *throes* of economic and geopolitical upheaval took a first, hard look in the mirror.

By definition, 'throe' in the singular form, means "A violent spasm or pang, such as convulses in the body, limbs, or face" (*OED*). The word is also used to refer to the throes of childbirth or the throes of dying. By the same token, economy has to go through throes of economic and geopolitical upheaval in order to be relieved afterwards and recover. Weakness is another symptom of an illness or a disease for if someone feels weak; it might be a symptom of an approaching illness or disease. This idea is accentuated in some of the articles investigated by the use of expressions like 'weak' and 'weakness' in reference to the flaws of economy.

Another syndrome of physical health deterioration is 'collapsing'. Different authors of the articles collected have made use of the metaphor 'collapse' to conceptualise the collapse of economic growth, of the Euro and of the world trade which are all but symptoms of an approaching economic illness:

16) In particular, a *collapse* in financial intermediation can reduce the availability of loans.

17) Those who have predicted the *collapse* of the Euro are the same who 15 years ago, like Milton Friedman, predicted the Euro would never see the light of day: wrong.

18) The Fund is warning, too, of a potential financial crisis in eastern and central Europe. The *collapse* in world trade is a measure of how quickly bad news ricochets around the global system.

Etymologically, 'collapse' is a term of physiology and medicine; however, Charteris-Black (2004, p. 151-152) is inclined to treat it as a metaphor of DISASTER which highlights the conceptual metaphor ECONOMIC PROBLEMS ARE NATURAL DISASTERS. His argument is that words such as 'collapse' refer to "inanimate natural disasters rather than to animate processes such as war and illness" (ibid 152). Nonetheless, the textual and contextual functions of 'collapse' in the data examined suggest that this word can be categorised as a PHYSICAL HEALTH metaphor.

Moreover, in the case of a disease, there is a need to diagnose the problem in order to prescribe proper medicine and ensure a healthy recovery. This theme is metaphorically employed in the following example by using 'diagnosis' in addition to two more physical health related metaphors, i.e., 'remedy' and 'ills':

19) The final communiqué was replete with the linguistic fudges that speak to a difference of *diagnosis* and *remedy* for the world's economic *ills*.

As doctors have different interpretations or diagnosis of a certain disease and consequently different treatments; likewise, the 20 world leaders gathering in the London summit have different opinions about the current financial crisis storming the world in general and Europe in particular, and also each one of them is suggesting a different way to rescue the economy.

The next stage after diagnosing the disease or illness is the treatment and this is again conceptualised by using the metaphor ‘remedy’ as shown in the following examples:

20) There is no magic formula that *remedies* all these defects. But I have long been in favour of a regime that would be a step improvement.

21) Mr Brown bought this *remedy* from top economists, who, again, exaggerated the efficacy of their ideas.

The remedy in the second example above refers to Mr Brown’s following up the professional opinion in making the Bank of England operationally independent in pursuing an inflation target, a method that might help curing the Bank’s crisis.

One of the ways to recovery is to inject liquefied medicine in the human body. Charteris-Black (2004, p. 165) argues that ‘injection’, which is a single intense action, is a “biological metaphor based on our knowledge of the medical treatment of an ailing body”. Once more the conceptualisation ECONOMY IS A PATIENT is accentuated by using the lexical items ‘inject’ and ‘injection’ to refer to injecting more purchasing power into the economy, injecting liquidity and injecting funds, e.g.

22) The new rules leave authorities with the same terrible choice should a systemically important bank again find itself on the brink of failure: accept financial and economic turmoil, or *inject* taxpayer money to keep it afloat.

Here, taxpayer money is conceptualised as medicine injected to rescue ailing banks which suffer from financial and economic turmoil. In addition to this, ‘medicine’ is evidently used in some examples in reference to treatment of economic illnesses:

23) But it is no cakewalk: Portugal has been deflating to boost competitiveness for a decade. Harsh *medicine* is best ingested quickly.

The harsh medicine in the example above is needed to rescue Portugal before it becomes indebted like Greece. Part of the suggested medicine is to have a credible austerity plan that can restore solidarity with EU countries that are adjusting. Also, “Greece’s adjustment would ideally be backed by a large IMF<sup>3</sup> programme to prevent a run on public debt and banks during the tough times ahead” (Roubini and Das 2010).

In some cases, recovery of a certain disease requires an operation and in economic terms such procedure is called ‘rescue operation’:

24) It is part of an unpleasant strategy that consists of avoiding the political drawbacks of using taxpayers’ money to recapitalise banks, while abusing the central banking system by forcing it to undertake a quasi-fiscal *rescue operation*.

The argument in the above example is about the banking crisis and the help banks need to rebuild their depleted capital through helping them to notch up a few years of large risk-free profits, i.e., implement a rescue operation.

On the other hand, some operations need an anaesthetic to alleviate the pain of the patient. This image is conceptualised in the following example by using the term ‘anaesthetic’ metaphorically:

25) Whoever is advising Mr Obama that the progressive base matters more for his prospects than the aspiring middle class deserves a reset, preferably without *anaesthetic*.

Here, the writer of the article is being critical of whoever advises Mr. Obama to take leftist positions in his policies. The author maintains that these advisors need some kind of surgery or rectification without anaesthetic, i.e. such advisers, according to the journalist, should suffer for their bad advice.

After proper use of medication, the stage of recovery and being healthy follows. This notion is represented by the use of such metaphors as ‘health’ and ‘healthy’ to refer to the health of either the economy, credit ratings, banks or general fiscal health:

26) Governments of wealthy countries have also put their *healthy* credit ratings at the disposal of their misbehaving financial systems in the most far-reaching socialisation of market risk in world history.

27) Should the housing market turn uglier, as it could, the US will get an extra lesson in the need for *healthy* banks.

28) Portugal urgently needs structural reform to restore economic dynamism and fiscal *health*. Also, the metaphor ‘recovery’ is extensively used in the data and it occupies the first rank in the frequency of PHYSICAL HEALTH metaphors with a total of eight occurrences in seven different articles. After undertaking several crises, the economy starts to recover. This restoration process is metaphorically represented by such words as ‘recover’, ‘recovery’ and ‘recuperate’:

29) All of these were examples of the challenge for 2010: to maintain the tentative progress towards economic *recovery* in advanced economies while trying to return policy closer to the normality of pre-crisis conditions.

30) The only difference is that lending is suppressed while the banks *recuperate* – keeping the rest of the economy in the recession that the banks made in the first place.

Some other physical health related issue mapped onto the domain of economics is the issue of drugs. The lexical item ‘drugs’ is used to conceptualise the transition from the state of being accustomed to extraordinarily fragile banking structures to raising the equity requirements in terms of the tough task of preventing an addict from taking drugs. Also, the term ‘distortion’ is utilized to explain the idea that financial flows can cause ‘distortions’ in the financial sector if there is no central financial regulation.

## 5- Conclusion

This paper has attempted to show the common elements between economy and physical health and how both fields can be related to each other through conceptual metaphors. Apart from the fact that the PHYSICAL HEALTH/ILLNESS metaphor is primarily used in the economic articles as a rhetorical choice, this source domain and its metaphorical entailments proved they are rather helpful in creating a better understanding of economic news reporting. Moreover, illustrating the process of economic recovery in terms of the cycle of a living being recovery from a certain disease or illness facilitates the comprehension of the real economic condition and sustains taking timely or even prompt actions to find a solution. In brief, the data identify several stages of economic recovery from the case of feeling ill and diagnosing the pain to prescribing appropriate treatment and eventually achieving a full recovery. The analysis above leads to the conclusion that HEALTH metaphors are strongly entrenched cognitively in the English culture due to the extensive use of such metaphors. Also, data analysis reveals the tendency to explain economic discourse in terms of human diseases and ailments.

## Notes

1. Metaphor has two parts: the tenor and the vehicle. The tenor is the subject to which attributes are ascribed whereas the vehicle is the object whose attributes are borrowed (Richards, 1936)
2. Pragglez Group: is a group of researchers whose research focus on the study metaphorical language in everyday language and usage. The name Pragglez derives from the first letter of

the first names of the ten original members of the group: Peter Crisp (HK), Ray Gibbs (Berkeley), Alan Cienki (VU), Graham Low (York), Gerard Steen (VU), Lynne Cameron (Open Univ), Elena Semino (Lancaster), Joe Grady (Berkeley), Alice Deignan (Leeds) and Zoltan Kövecses (Hungary).

3. IMF is an abbreviation of the International Monetary Fund.

### Examples:

Examples 1, 2, 7, 23 and 28 are taken from (*Medicine for Europe's sinking south*)

Example 3 is taken from (*Pleasingly positive signs emerge amid ugly week*)

Example 4 is taken from (*Deflation is the wrong enemy*)

Example 5 is taken from (*Don't set Goldman Sachs free, Mr Geithner*)

Examples 6, 15, 18 and 19 are taken from (*A summit success that reflects a different global landscape*)

Examples 8 and 16 are taken from (*Beware those who think the worst is past*)

Examples 9, 10 and 11 are taken from (*An ever-fearful Europe risks forfeiting the future*)

Examples 12, 14 and 26 are taken from (*Why the 'green shoots' of recovery could yet wither*)

Example 13 is taken from (*Spectre of gloom haunts nervous Britons*)

Example 17 is taken from (*A spluttering Europe has its mojo back*)

Example 20 is taken from (*What comes after inflation targets*)

Example 21 is taken from (*The economic legacy of Mr Brown*)

Example 22 is taken from (*Follow the Swiss lead to avoid another Lehman*)

Example 24 is taken from (*There is no easy way out for central banks*)

Example 25 is taken from (*Lead from the centre, Mr President*)

Examples 27 and 30 are taken from (*We have failed to muffle the banks*)

Example 29 is taken from (*Central banks' steps back to normality*)

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