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A note on the
career of metaphorical domains:
On the role of the XYZ constructions
in metaphorical transfer reversal[*]

One of most dominant conceptual metaphors used to talk about the COVID-19 across languages and cultures is the WAR metaphor, but many other metaphors have been attested, exploiting a wide range of source domains. It appears, however, that there is a sort of evolutionary movement concerning the frequency with which particular source domains are used, progressing first towards more aggressive, war-like concepts, then after a sort of culmination in the spring of 2020, towards other related concepts, as the epidemic turned into a pandemic, and as new waves of infections emerged. However, we can now observe the beginnings of a new cycle: the domain that has so far been conceptualized metaphorically in terms of other source domains is now beginning to emancipate itself, becoming itself a source domain. Metaphorically speaking, when we study this switch, we study not the career of a metaphor, but the career of a domain (which in our opinion is even more exciting than the for-

Mario Brdar – Rita Brdar-Szabó – Tanja Gradečak:
A note on the career of metaphorical domains: On the role of the XYZ
constructions in metaphorical transfer reversal

mer enterprise). The aim of this article is to shed some light on this incipient trend by taking a look at the constellation of two (among many possible) factors that may have facilitated this mutation: the phenomenon of domain homogenization (towards a negative paragon) as a semantic catalyst and the family of XY(Z) constructions as the formal catalyst.

Key words: metaphor; domain, metaphorical transfer; unidirectionality; bidirectionality; XYZ construction; discourse construction; metonymy; COVID-19.

1. Introduction

As a truly global phenomenon, COVID-19, has had a deep impact on all aspects of human life since the beginning of 2020. The linguistic effects of the pandemic are also easy to notice. The pandemic has brought with it a host of novel expressions associated with the new normal. Some of these expressions are relatively or genuinely novel, e.g. *covidiot* (a lexical blend from *COVID* and *idiot* as inputs), *covexit* (a lexical blend from *COVID* and *exit*), *locktail* (a lexical blend from *lockdown* and *cocktail*), *zoombombing* (a compound of *Zoom* and *bombing*), *Blursday* (compound of *blur* and *day*), *rona* (a fore-clipping from *corona*), *sanny* (clipping from *sanitizer*, followed by hypocoristic suffix). Some of the COVID-19-related expressions we think to be novel, e.g. *social distancing*, *self-isolate*, or *WFH-ing* (*working from home*), are actually examples of old words being re-hashed, i.e. cases of recycling results of previous recycling. Similarly, *superspreader* and *superspreading event* (abbreviated as *SSEV*) are not really novel, they were coined by Lloyd-Smith et al. in 2005.[1]

COVID-19 has been conceptualized in figurative terms by means of both metonymy and metaphor, which are often massed and mixed, in a single modality (linguistic or visual) or across modalities. The most basic type of metonymy that is hardly noticed is *coronavirus*. This label is used to refer to a type of germ, but it is currently used to refer to a particular type, the "novel" coronavirus (GENERIC FOR SPECIFIC), and then the disease caused by it (officially called COVID-19) or even to the pandemic (CAUSE OF A HEALTH CONDITION FOR THE HEALTH CONDITION). We also note metonymic shortenings, as both *virus* and *corona* can be used to refer to the (novel) coronavirus, the disease, the pandemic etc. The COVID-19 frame can

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also be metonymically activated by means of various aspects associated with the illness and the pandemic, one of them that is really outstanding is the face mask.

One of most dominant conceptual metaphors used to talk about the coronavirus across languages and cultures is the war metaphor, but many other metaphors have been attested, exploiting a wide range of source domains. It appears, however, that there is a sort of evolutionary movement concerning the frequency with which particular source domains are used, progressing first towards more aggressive, warlike concepts, then after a culmination towards other related concepts, as the epidemic turned into a pandemic with several waves following each other. Eventually, we can now observe the beginnings of a new cycle, the domain that has so far been conceptualized metaphorically in terms of other source domains is now beginning to emancipate itself, becoming itself a source domain. We can visualize this as follows:
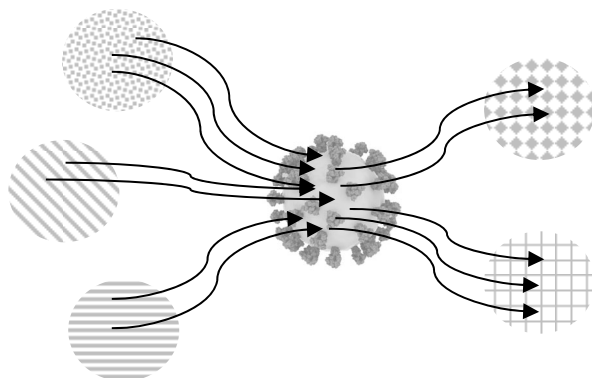

Figure 1.   Schematic presentation of the change in the function of the coronavirus domain from the target domain to the source domain in metaphorical construals.

The aim of this article is not only to document this incipient trend, but also to analyse the phenomenon in structural and pragmatic terms, and compare it to similar constructions. Metaphorically speaking, we study not the career of a metaphor, but the career of a domain (which in our opinion is even more exciting than the former enterprise).

The article is organized as follows: in Section 2, we introduce some metaphors and metonymies used to talk about the pandemic and then demonstrate how some (sub--)metaphors stepped in, some other receding into the background (COLD WAR, DANCE). In Part 3, we introduce some examples of figurative expressions of the

Mario Brdar – Rita Brdar-Szabó – Tanja Gradečak:
A note on the career of metaphorical domains: On the role of the XYZ
constructions in metaphorical transfer reversal

type X *is the coronavirus/COVID(-19) of* Z, apparently instances of the figurative XYZ construction. We describe the XYZ family of constructions in 3.1, singling out two variants that are relevant for us. Section 3.2 is concerned with metaphor bidirectionality in general, and then with the domain reversal in the case of COVID-19 domain, its causes, the circumstances making it possible, and consequences. In Section 4, we sum up our findings and present some conclusions.

2. Conceptualizing COVID-19 figuratively

Because of its complexity and impact on human life COVID-19 has been conceptualized by means of several (more or less related) metaphors, an enemy/opponent in a fight/war, as an opponent in a game, as a puzzle, a natural disaster, etc., as can be seen from the following pictorial examples.

In the first example, which is of course multimodal, the visual part of the meme by Sadhbh Mowlds is based on a relief on the Great Ludovisi Battle Sarcophagus (ca. 250-260 AD, kept in Palazzo Altemps in Rome) depicting a scene in a battle between Romans and barbarians. The author of the meme added Donald Trump's head in orange colour to the figure of a Roman military commander, with the inscription, whose irony is achieved by construing the management of the coronavirus crisis by means of the domain of war.

Figure 2.   A meme by Sadhbh Mowlds. (http://www.montallen.com/sarcophagus-memes-all.html)
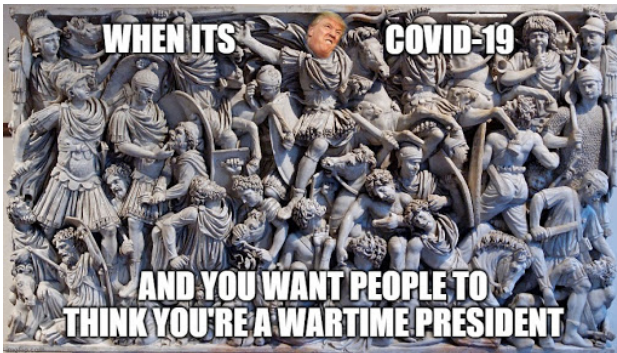
In Figure 3, which is a detail from the poster for an international online blitz chess tournament organized by Chess Association Kerala on May 2, 2020, we have another multimodal metaphor framing COVID-19 as an opponent in a game of chess that can be checkmated:

Figure 3.   The poster for a chess tournament organized by the Chess Association Kerala

Because scientists knew very little about the coronavirus at the beginning of the pandemic it has also been visualized as a jigsaw puzzle, as in the illustration of an article by Shefali Luthra on the Kaiser Health News website.
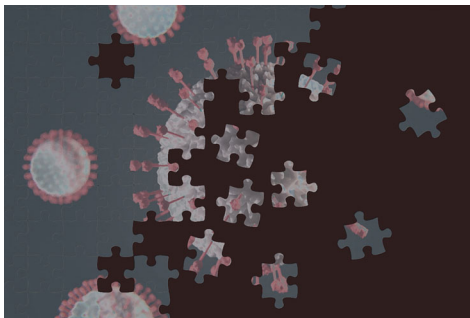
Figure 4.   The coronavirus as a jigsaw puzzle. (https://khn.org/news/whats-missing-in-the-coronavirus-response/). Freely reusable under the Creative Commons Licence.

Some more submetaphors or mappings are discussed in Lozano-Palacio et al. (fc). In Figure 5, a cartoon by Aristide Hernandez (Ares), the measuring tape is used as if it were a gun, the human figure holding it says *2m*. This short utterance metonymically evokes social distancing used as a metaphorical weapon in the battle against the coronavirus.

Figure 5.   Social distance conceptualized as a weapon in a cartoon by Aristide Hernandez (Ares). Reproduced with the kind permission of the author.

In the cartoon by Darko Drljević (Figure 6), the rear sight of the gun the soldier holds is actually a microscope, which metonymically activates the SCI-ENCE/RESEARCH domain. We also note the Rod of Asclepius, nowadays used as a universal symbol for medicine and health care (and also used as the central element of the WHO flag), on the soldier's upper arm sleeve, used as a military insignia). Finally, the soldier wears a medical protective suit. All these elements contribute towards the activation of the conceptual metaphor MEDICAL RESEARCH IS WARFARE.

Figure 6.   The conceptual metaphor MEDICAL RESEARCH IS WARFARE in a cartoon by Darko Drljević. Reproduced with the kind permission of the author.

According to Semino et al. (2017) the two most common clusters of conceptual metaphors in the immediate discourse of physicians and patients are Violence (War) and Journey metaphors. As we pointed out in the introduction, there is an evolutionary movement from more aggressive, war-like concepts related to COVID-19 in the early stages of the pandemic in the spring of 2020, then, after a culmination in May 2020, towards other related concepts as the influx of knowledge about the virus grew and shaped the global and local strategies of approaching the treatment of the disease and its prevention.

Wallis & Nerlich (2005) mention the unusual absence of WAR metaphors during the 2003 SARS outbreak in the U.K., KILLER being the prevalent source domain (also present in the COVID-19 treatment, as mentioned before) as well as a NATURAL DISASTER (Chiang & Duann 2007). The prevalent imagery has been connected to the unexpected force and speed of spreading of the disease, so that the major source domains were that of a 'tsunami', '(forest) fire' explosion or even the Sun:

(1) *They talk about wave after wave after wave of patients– the word that's often used to me is a continuous tsunami.*

(2) *The first is the explosion of demand they are seeing in seriously ill patients.*

(3) *Think of COVID-19 as a fire burning in a forest. All of us are trees. The R0 is the wind speed. The higher it is, the faster the fire tears through the forest. But just like a forest fire, COVID-19 needs fuel to keep going. We're the fuel.*

This shift in the conceptualisation of COVID-19 reflects the position and the role of CONTROL as CM which emerged as the most relevant in view of the scope of the pandemic and the relationship of the physical restraining strategies many nations had to impose (from social distancing, to quarantine, to closing borders) and the mental equilibrium of individuals which has been seriously disrupted by the situation.

The sense of which type of an active role individuals and nations had in approaching the COVID-19 crisis has been depicted by 'a viral metaphor' by Thomas Pueyo:

Figure 7.   A still from the Youtube video *The Hammer and The Dance* (Corona Strategies) - Tomas Pueyo Article Overview[2]

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[2] Captured from: https://www.youtube. com/watch?v=G72IHjp6cMM. Accessed on 11 November 2020

Mario Brdar – Rita Brdar-Szabó – Tanja Gradečak:
A note on the career of metaphorical domains: On the role of the XYZ
constructions in metaphorical transfer reversal

The issue of implementing the 'hammer' approach of actively combating the virus with various aggressive measures was faced with the act of balancing the strain such an approach had on national economies and everyday life in general. This balancing act was compared to dancing by Pueyo, comparing the gradual easing of some of the measures interrupted by localised more aggressive measures to waltzing, with one step forward, two steps back.

Facing the unexpected length of the pandemic, another metaphor, that of running a marathon appeared, introducing the SPORTS metaphor and the issue of endurance. The well-known cliché, *This is a marathon, not a sprint*, was used in the pandemic context as early as February 3, 2020, by Matt Hancock, the UK Secretary of State for Health and Social Care:

(4)   *The number of cases is currently doubling around every five days, and it is clear that the virus will be with us for at least some months to come;* **this is a marathon, not a sprint**. *On existing evidence, most cases are mild and most people recover*.[3]

It is also used in the following illustration accompanying an article on mental and physical health during the pandemic at Tend Academy's blog:

Figure 8. The marathon metaphor used in a multimodal context.[4]

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[3] Retrieved from: https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2020-02-03/debates/DEE27C01-EF7F-4376-BB81-7F1E747482C4/WuhanCoronavirus?highlight=coronavirus. Accessed on 11 November 2020.

[4] Retrieved from: https://www.tendacademy.ca/marathon-not-sprint-covid19-part-two. Accessed on 11 November 2020.

This metaphor may be also characterized as an instantiation of the JOURNEY metaphor (Semino et al. 2017) particularly as it is used with its therapeutical goals in mind.

3. Enter figurative expressions of the type X *is the coronavirus/ COVID(-19) of* Z

As pointed out earlier, we can now observe the beginnings of a new cycle in the sense the domain of the coronavirus that has so far been conceptualized metaphorically in terms of other source domains is now beginning to emancipate itself, turning into a very specific source domain (within the larger domain of DISEASE). That this domain is about to start a new career in its life is clearly shown by the following set of examples:

(5)   *Mealybugs are the Coronavirus of my succulents.*

(6)   *#Cybercrime is the #Coronavirus of the #tech world*

(7)   *Astros are the coronavirus of baseball, they need to be placed into quarantine, treated with old school punishment.*

(8)   *Donald Trump is the Coronavirus of American Politics*

(9)   *Wise Up Wednesday: Insolvency – The Coronavirus of Construction*

(10)   *"TTV Dinakaran does not even have a symbol for his party. He is the Coronavirus of TN politics"*, he slammed.

Figurative expressions of the type X *is the coronavirus / COVID(-19) of* Z are apparently instances of the figurative XYZ (X is the Y of Z) construction, though not of the usual type.[5]

3.1 *On the XYZ family of constructions and some related constructions*

We assume here the notion of grammatical constructions as defined by Goldberg (1995: 4): "a form-meaning pair $<F_i, S_i>$ such that some aspect of F_i or some aspect

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[5] Grammatical constructions were always an important topic in the work by Dubravko Kučanda, even before the advent of construction grammars. He dealt with double object constructions, dative constructions, reflexive consructions, passive constructions, to name just a few (cf. Kučanda 1985a, b, 1987, 1992, 1996, 2000, or 2002). This research interest appears to have been instilled in many of his students.

Mario Brdar – Rita Brdar-Szabó – Tanja Gradečak:
A note on the career of metaphorical domains: On the role of the XYZ
constructions in metaphorical transfer reversal

of S. is not strictly predictable from C's component parts or from other previously established constructions." This is echoed in Croft (2001: 18), for whom constructions are "pairings of form and meaning that are at least partially arbitrary."

The construction type we are concerned with here is just one in a family of related constructions. A number of researchers have observed that constructions may form a family of related constructions, e.g. the resultative construction can be seen as an intricate network of more specific constructions (cf. Goldberg & Jackendoff 2004; Peña Cervel 2016, 2017). XYZ constructions are also a family of related more specific constructions, similar to various types of resultative constructions, some of which are more literal, while some are figurative. Subconstructions and superconstructions are said to be related to each other by means of inheritance links.

While general affinities within families and their core members at the macro- and the meso-constructional level (Traugott 2008a) are relatively well outlined, we know much less about the nitty-gritty details of individual micro-constructions that populate "the bottom of the mental constructicon" (Hoffman 2013: 315). We use the term micro-construction in the sense of Traugott (2008a and b), Trousdale (2008), Traugott & Trousdale (2010), i.e. as deeply entrenched, substantive constructions populating the bottom of the mental constructicon. In order to shed more light on the relationships between individual micro-constructions in the XYZ family, on the core and peripheral members of the micro-family, and on how this family extends, we first examine some features shared by the construction as a whole, as well as those that can be invoked so as to distinguish between members of the family (cf. Brdar 2017; Brdar-Szabó & Brdar 2020).

XYZ constructions have received a lot of attention in cognitive linguistics, from their first mention in works by Turner (1991, 1998) and Fauconnier & Turner (2002). Typical realizations of the construction family exhibit the following constructional schema:

(11) <u>*The Instant Pot*</u>   *is*   ***the Brad Pitt*   *of   food appliances***

          X   COP   Y   Z

where Z can be realized as a possessive expression in the genitive (*of Zs*) or as a prepositional phrase introduced by some other preposition (e.g. *among*). In addition to these three elements, Turner & Fauconnier (1999: 413) point out that there is also an element W that is normally not mentioned explicitly but which relates to Y in the same way that Z relates to X:

(12) **BMW is the Angelina Jolie of the car industry**: *It gets away with doing whatever it wants, regardless of how crazy it may seem at the time, because on the whole, no other mainstream carmaker has a more lust-inducing lineup. The company's attitude is aggressively simple: It knows how to build fast, beautiful cars. So you can take them or leave them.*[6]

    X (BMW)   Z (car industry)

    Y (Angelina Jolie)   W (film industry)

Most of the time the element W can easily be inferred, even if it is not explicitly mentioned in the context. In the following example it is explicitly mentioned:

(13) <u>Humboldt</u> is **the Shakespeare of travelers** – *as much superior in genius to other travellers as Shakespeare to other <u>poets</u>*.

There are several subtypes. Turner & Fauconnier (1999) include here also some subtypes that are more or less perfectly literal:

(14) **Elizabeth II** *is* **the queen of England**

While it is obvious that it structurally follows the pattern, it is also more than obvious that such examples are non-figurative and are therefore of no interest for us here. In addition to the figuratively used construction illustrated in (5–12), there is also a biclausal variant, X *is to* Z *what* Y *is to* W:

(15) *Also good is Shirley McLaine as the sisters' grandmother. She has played quite a few stern, disapproving women before (she's to chick flicks what Bruce Willis is to movies for guys who like movies), but here she very nicely downplays her usual volatility.*[7]

    Shirley McLaine *is* **to chick films** *what* **Bruce Willis** *is* **to movies for guys**

         X   is to   Z   what   Y   is to   W

Actually, the chaining may continue, so that we can have more than two pairs of times brought into correlation:

(16) *Vin Diesel is to Riddick what Sylvester Stallone is to Rambo and what Bruce Willis is to John McClain. Each of these actors identify with their iconic action characters, and while Rambo is over-the-top destructive and*

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[6] Retrieved from: https://www.esquire.com/lifestyle/cars/a3318/bmwz40907. Accessed on 4 November 4 2021.

[7] Retrieved from: https://www.swapadvd.com/Shoes/dvd/86592. Accessed on 15 November 2021.

Mario Brdar – Rita Brdar-Szabó – Tanja Gradečak:
A note on the career of metaphorical domains: On the role of the XYZ
constructions in metaphorical transfer reversal

> *McClain is fantastically sassy, Riddick is admirably gritty in his actions and words.*[8]

The figurative cases of the prototypical XYZ constructions are often pointed out as being metaphorical (cf. Sullivan 2007, 2013; or Veale 2014). However, metonymies also play an important role here, as argued for in Brdar & Brdar-Szabó (2007), Brdar (2017), and Brdar-Szabó & Brdar (2020).

Another variant of this construction, clearly metonymic in nature, is discussed in Brdar-Szabó & Brdar (2020) in which Z denotes a time period:

(17) *He is one of the players that I would pay any amount of money to watch but he is not **the Zidane of 1998.***

This variant of the construction, so far not brought into connection with the XYZ construction in the literature, may be dubbed XYZ$_{TP}$ construction, where the index TP indicates a time period.

Finally, let us introduce another biclausal construction that is in our opinion important as a constructional template in the process of domain reversal discussed in 3.2 below. This construction is illustrated in the examples that follow:

(18) ***Lewis is Mercedes and Mercedes is Lewis**, together as one.*[9]

(19) *Football is Messi and Messi is football.*[10]

(20) *I am very upset, for me **Barca is Messi and Messi is Barca**.*[11]

The constructional template can be described as A is B and B is A. It can be seen as an antimetabole, a special type of chiasmus, both well-known classical rhetorical devices. What they have in common is the structure – the repetition of its elements in reverse order, as shown in the following figure (note that the label chiasmus comes from the Greek word χιάζω, *chiázō*, 'to shape like the letter X'):

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[8] Retrieved from: https://theionian.org/5825/arts-and-entertainment/riddick-returns-with-more-action. Accessed on 11 November 2021.

[9] Retrieved from: https://ar-ar.facebook.com/MercedesAMGF1/posts/caption-this-silly-answers-only-/10156947774327411/. Accessed on 10 November 2021.

[10] Retrieved from: https://www.quora.com/Is-Messi-really-a-gifted-footballer. Accessed on 9 November 2020.

[11] Retrieved from: https://www.reuters.com/article/soccer-spain-fcb-messi-reax-idINKBN25M13D. Accessed on 10 November 2020.

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    A              B
      \          /
       \        /
        \      /
         \    /
          \  /
           \/
           /\
          /  \
         /    \
        /      \
       /        \
      /          \
    B              A
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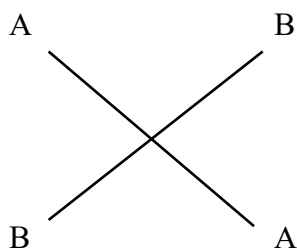
Figure 9. Chiastic reversal of constituents

The difference between chiasmus and antimetabole is that in the former it is not the exact words that are repeated but some parallel words or phrases, e.g. synonyms, as in Shakespeare's *Othello* (3.3), *Who dotes, yet doubts; suspects, yet strongly loves*. In antimetabole, on the other hand, the exact words are repeated in reversed order. Cf. the well-known example from Byron's *Don Juan*, *Pleasure's a sin, and sometimes sin's a pleasure*, or Oscar Wilde's *All crime is vulgar, just as all vulgarity is crime*, from *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

The biclausal construction illustrated in (18–20) above may be for ease of reference called chiastic or antimetabolic construction. In the rest of this article we refer to it as chiastic because of the mnemonic nature of the term.

Although Fauconnier & Turner (2002) and Veale (2014) argue that XYZ constructions are blends, our analysis indicates that small incremental changes we witness here may be the result of exploiting, i.e. combining and recombining, simpler constructions into what we may refer to as ad hoc discourse constructions, and their potential subsequent reduction or simplification, and/or their entrenchment or conventionalization. By discourse constructions we do not mean Östman's (1999, 2005) conventionalized association of a particular text type, or its particular specimen, with a particular genre, or somewhat more specific notion of discourse constructions in Iza Erviti (2021), e.g. complementary alternation, complementary contrastive and contrast constructions. What we have in mind are (still) loose types of constructions or construction-like assemblies, or interactional discourse patterns (Lindström & Londen 2014) giving rise to constructions, as also demonstrated in Traugott (2008b).

This clearly goes a step beyond the implicit idea in the classical construction grammar that constructions are conventionalized units. The position we adopt here is the one argued for by Brône & Zima (2014). They demonstrate "that the type of structural mapping relations between juxtaposed utterances as described in dialogic syntax, can acquire the status of *ad hoc constructions* or locally entrenched form-meaning pairings within the boundaries of an ongoing interaction" (Brône & Zima

Mario Brdar – Rita Brdar-Szabó – Tanja Gradečak:
A note on the career of metaphorical domains: On the role of the XYZ
constructions in metaphorical transfer reversal

2014: 458). They rely on Du Bois's notion of resonance activation. The concept of resonance or dialogic resonance is the key element of the dialogic syntax model as developed by Du Bois. It is defined by Du Bois (2014: 360) "as the catalytic activation of affinities across utterances." Affinities are material or structural similarities and differences that link utterances, the original one and its echo or reproduction. Resonance is thus "not intrinsic to any element alone, but is always a property of the relation between two or more elements in discourse" (Du Bois & Giora 2014: 352). It can obtain "across pairs of signs, morphemes, words, phrases, clauses, constructions, or speech acts, and indeed across all of these levels at once within a single utterance" (2014: 353).[12] Note that our examples (18–20) above stem from interactive online platforms with lots of dialogic exchange, or from comments on some news. Example (36) below is a report of what seems to have been a genuine or a virtual dialogic exchange.

We will return later to this broad structural template, i.e. to the family of constructions that seem to have served as a formal catalyst bringing about the switch in the function of the COVID domain, after we have outlined the semantic mutation path of the domain in which the phenomenon of domain homogenization seems to be the semantic catalyst for the switch. Putting the two together, we will try to link the semantic mutation path of the domain with a series of constructional inheritance links.

3.2 *Metaphorical bidirectionality, its causes and consequences*

The phenomenon we are interested in here has to do with metaphor variation or change unfolding over time. One of the most influential models of how metaphors develop over time is the so-called career of metaphor theory by Gentner and her collaborators (cf. Gentner & Wolff 1997; Bowdle & Gentner 2005; and Wolff & Gentner 2011). This theory assumes that metaphorical meanings are at the beginning understood via structural alignment of the components of the literal meaning, i.e. in the course of a comparisons process, but that in the course of repeated usage, i.e. as the consequence of their conventionalization, metaphorical meanings are understood via categorization processes, and are stored in the lexicon (yielding dead metaphors). One of the entailments of this model is that metaphors age and that some may eventually even die.

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[12] This broad movement between cognitive linguistics and functional linguistics, or their blend, and mutual enrichment, was something that always characterized Dubrvko Kučanda, in practically everything he did. Needless to say, this was one of the basic lessons that he tried to teach his students and later collaborators or just colleagues.

It should be noted here that the issue of metaphor death is ambiguous. There are some metaphors that are considered dead because they are so well entrenched and completely conventionalized that speakers of a language do not recognize them as such. Lakoff & Johnson (1980: 55) do not rely on conventionalization, but consider dead metaphors to be those that "play no particularly interesting role in our conceptual system, and hence are not metaphors we live by." However, the example they provide there, *the foot of a mountain*, is conventionalized and, as they admit, still exhibits "a spark of life." Lakoff (1987) reapproaches the issue by stating that metaphors are dead if no literal meaning, i.e. the source meaning, is currently available for them. In any case, they are the end-results of the process, equally ambiguously, referred to as metaphor death or metaphor dying (cf. Trim 2007). It is, however, also possible for a metaphor to become dead for a very simple reason not mentioned above – because they become disused, for whatever reason. What is more, it also possible for a metaphor to have more than one career. It is possible for it to become dead, or nearly dead, and then get re-born in the same or in a different area of application, as shown in Brdar (2019), where the term metaphor life-cycle is suggested (cf. also Allan's (2009) terms life of a metaphor, or the life-span of a metaphor).

Kövecses (2005: 88ff) identifies a number of factors leading to metaphor variation and discusses chief dimensions along which the phenomenon can be observed. First of all, this variation can be cross-cultural (and therefore in the majority of cases also cross-linguistic) or of the within-culture type. In the case of the within-culture variation we can distinguish further, finer dimensions along which it can occur. These are the social, subcultural, ethnic, regional, stylistic, individual, developmental and diachronic dimension. It is suggested in Brdar (2019) that we should move beyond focussing on the variation of a single conceptual metaphor and adopt an even broader view looking, if not at the whole hierarchically organized figurative system of a language, then at least at its relevant portion where it interacts with other, more or less closely related conceptual metaphors that do a similar job. This seems to be necessary if we want to understand variation along almost any of the above dimensions, but in particular the one unfolding over time. But at the same time, the perspective should be broadened in the other direction. We should follow what happens to a domain or a set of related domains or ICMs in the course of metaphorical use. This is what we have referred to above as the career of a domain. We also said that studying the career of a domain is even more exciting than studying the career of a metaphor. The remaining part of this article is intended to prove this on the example of the coronavirus/COVID domain. Before we can concentrate on this, a couple of more general, theoretical issues concerning the conceptual metaphor theory should be mentioned.

Mario Brdar – Rita Brdar-Szabó – Tanja Gradečak:
A note on the career of metaphorical domains: On the role of the XYZ
constructions in metaphorical transfer reversal

The first of these concerns is the typical realization of metaphors. While all basic readings on conceptual metaphor theory stress the general schema for conceptual metaphors, A IS B, where A is the target domain, and B is the source domain (e.g. Kövecses 2002: 9; Croft & Cruse 2004: 212; or Evans & Green 2006: 293), this is not to be misunderstood as suggesting that metaphors are linguistically realized in that canonical form. Lakoff & Johnson state that "a metaphor of the form A IS B is a shorthand for a partial mapping of the structure of concept B onto concept A" (1980: 205). Lakoff himself says that this is "a linguistically naïve view of metaphor (2014: 10), while Steen refers to the formula as "the stale format" (1999: 81). Cameron points out that the actual empirical evidence dispels "the myth of the nominal metaphor as the most common or typical" (1999: 15). Nevertheless, there is a priori no reason why conceptual metaphors should not occasionally get lexicalized in this canonical form. In fact, they may do so at certain times, and in certain contexts, even with conspicuously high frequency. This has also been confirmed by our data in the case of coronavirus-related metaphors, as shall transpire somewhat later (but has already been demonstrated in our examples (5–10)).

The second theoretical point to be raised has to do with the direction of metaphorical mappings and the status of the domains involved. It is well-known that metaphors typically employ a more concrete concept or domain as their source in order to structure a more abstract concept or domain as their target. In the majority of cases, elements from the physical world are mapped onto the social and mental world. Metaphorical mappings are thus normally unidirectional, and the source and target are not reversible (cf. Kövecses 2002: 6). This is often referred to as the Unidirectionality Hypothesis. It stipulates that mappings proceed in one direction at a time, and that a conceptually less rich domain is subject to elaboration by contents from the source domain.

There are, of course, some well-known cases in which the source and target can be reversed. There is, for example, a highly general metaphor HUMAN IS ANIMAL, illustrated in the following examples from Kövecses (2002: 125):

(21) a. *He is **a complete pig** to the women in his life.*
      b. *Tell me what you did with the money, you **swine**.*

There is, however, also personification as a metaphorical device, i.e. anthropomorphisation attributing human properties to other entities, animals among them, as in Orwell's *Animal Farm*, or in various fables:

(22) *The stable is cold, drafty, and wet, and the sad donkey is mistreated by the rude, greedy ox.*

Another well-known case of domains that can function as either sources or targets for metaphorical mappings is the interchangeability of domains of WAR, SPORTS and POLITICS, as studied in Brdar et al. (2005).

A different type of situation is discussed in Richardson & Mueller (2019). They study a recurrent pattern within the discourse by Buddhist and Hindu religious teachers on enlightenment that consists of four elements. The first of these is what Richardson & Mueller call source domain reversal, defined as "a speaker making use of a particular source domain to refer to a target, and then later, in the same discourse segment, using a source domain with a seemingly opposite meaning to refer to the same target" (2019: 314), producing a paradox. Its main function can be best appreciated when we consider how Suzuki sums up the essence of Zen:

> Zen literature abounds with this sort of paradox or logical impossibility; it may be better to say that Zen is those paradoxes or that Zen is where they are no more perceived to be so. Handle your spade in your empty hands; ride a horse by walking on foot; see ice in the midst of a blazing fire; hear the bell even before it is rung; behold the north star by turning toward the south; etc., etc. (Suzuki 2014: 102)

Our examples (5–10) also exhibit such a reversal of domains in the sense that the coronavirus/COVID domain is not the target but the source, unlike in (2), and in most of our multimodal examples above. However, it is also very different from the reversal described in Richardson & Mueller (2019), both in terms of its context and function.

The phenomenon of apparent directionality of metaphors, or their occasional bi-directionality, is still an open issue calling for more research. Bidirectionality was demonstrated in a number of experiments dealing with smell (Lee & Schwarz 2012), social exclusion and ambient physical temperature (Szymkow et al. 2013; Zhong & Leonardelli 2008), affect and brightness (Meier et al. 2007), or with the link between concepts of weight and importance (Schneider et al. 2011; Schneider et al. 2015). Tonković et al. (2020) studied the link between weight and difficulty. They hypothesized that participants wearing a heavy backpack would judge a psychomotor task to be more difficult than participants wearing an empty backpack. It was also hypothesized that manipulating the difficulty of the psychomotor task would affect the judgement of backpack heaviness. The experiments demonstrated that concepts of weight and difficulty are connected and that the more concrete sensory experience of heaviness remains part of the abstract representation of difficulty. Specifically, it turned out that the physical experience of weight can activate the concept of difficulty among Croatian participants. An increase in task difficulty

Mario Brdar – Rita Brdar-Szabó – Tanja Gradečak:
A note on the career of metaphorical domains: On the role of the XYZ
constructions in metaphorical transfer reversal

led to an increased estimation of backpack weight in kilograms, thus suggesting bi-directional effects.

Such results have often been interpreted as evidence for the invalidity of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, as far as its assumption of the irreversible source-target directionality of conceptual metaphors. As explained by Lee & Schwarz (2012: 10), "contrary to a common misinterpretation, these bidirectional effects *are compatible* with conceptual metaphor theory." The fact that source and target concepts mutually activate each other does not imply that metaphoric mappings are reversible (Dancygier & Sweetser 2014: 30–31). As Lee & Schwarz (2012) pointed out, concrete domains involve more direct sensorimotor experiences, they are acquired earlier in life, are easier to understand and have greater inferential richness and capacity than abstract domains, which explains why concrete concepts are used to talk about abstract ones and not vice versa.

An interesting position on the directionality of metaphors is the one represented by Gil & Shen (2021). They argue that the unidirectional nature of metaphors is a product of various asymmetries characteristic of grammatical structure, in particular, those related to thematic role assignment. It is considered to be the endpoint of an evolutionary process that started with bidirectionality, bidirectional metaphors evolving before the unidirectional ones. Regardless of whether there is indeed such a global unidirectionality in the sense that unidirectional metaphors evolve at a stage following the appearance of bidirectional ones, we are of the opinion that there are also mini-evolutionary cycles such that a target domain of what seems to be a unidirectional metaphor may "take on a new job," i.e. become a source domain for a new set of what also appear to be unidirectional metaphors.

We are now ready to tackle examples like (5–10) and the question of what made possible such shift in the function of the coronavirus/COVID domain. We begin by checking the proportion of the canonical A is B formula among COVID-related metaphors. Their number is indeed not high in corpora. A sample of 500 examples containing the word *coronavirus* from the Coronavirus Corpus (Davies 2020) retrieved[13] only 4 examples with that noun in the predicative position following the copula verb in the third person singular present (the query was *coronavirus is the*), only one of which was metaphorical (the noun phrase in question being *black swan*).

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[13] The search was performed on February 11, 2021. It should be noted that the corpus in question (https://www.english-corpora.org/corona/) is not a specialized corpus in the sense of containing text dealing with the pandemic, but an ordinary corpus compiled from media text published from the outbreak of the pandemic onwards.

However, a number of such examples can be found on the web, performing a Google search for exact strings or n-grams containing the words enclosed by quotation marks (e.g. "*coronavirus is the*" and "*COVID is the*"). A slightly higher number of such examples may be due to the fact that the Coronavirus Corpus does not contain text types other than news (no Facebook post, no tweets, etc.). Among these we also find lexicalizations of metaphors in the canonical A is B form, such as:

(23) *The coronavirus is "the worst enemy you can ever imagine"...*[14]

(24) *Why #Coronavirus is the catalyst for shaping the way we work.*[15]

(25) *Coronavirus is the pin that burst U.S. economy's bubble, says analyst who predicted 2008 crash*[16]

(26) *"COVID is the devil. COVID took my will, it took my strength, it took everything from me."*[17]

(27) *Covid is the new religion. It has converted us all, yet no one noticed. Without any conscious effort, or formal instruction, we have all become members of this newest and most widespread faith of all.*
As in all religions, Covidism has its different strains.[18]

(28) *The rapidly worsening coronavirus outbreak is President Trump's Chernobyl. By putting dangerous myths above objective facts, Trump has turned the crucial early phases of government response into a disaster. Some public health experts in government have undoubtedly kept quiet, having seen repeatedly what happens to those who publicly contradict this president. And Trump himself, along with those who surround him, has tried to construct a reality that simply does not exist.*[19]

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[14] Retrieved from: https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-is-the-worst-enemy-you-can-imagine-leading-doctors-warn-11931982. Accessed on 11 November 2020.

[15] Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/redwigwam/status/1250042147656609794. Accessed on 11 November 2021.

[16] Retrieved from: https://finance.yahoo.com/news/coronavirus-pin-burst-u-economys-181436812.html. Accessed on 13 November 2021.

[17] Retrieved from: https://www.facebook.com/wbaltv11/videos/covid-is-the-devil-covid-took-my-will-it-took-my-strength-it-took-everything-fro/360018371760771/. Accessed on 19 October 2020.

[18] Retrieved from: https://www.pulsetoday.co.uk/views/coronavirus/covid-is-the-new-religion-and-that-is-the-gospel-truth/. Accessed on 11 November 2021.

[19] Retrieved from: https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/03/09/coronavirus-is-trumps-chernobyl/+&cd=2&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=hr. Accessed on 11 November 2021.

As can be seen from this variety of creative metaphor examples, it is no wonder that speakers use this pattern with the nouns *coronavirus* or *COVID* as subjects, because it serves as a way of finding a metaphorical handle on the phenomenon, i.e. it helps speakers to:

a. define and/or identify the new phenomenon

b. refer to its emergent properties/collateral effects

c. formulate their personal experience

d. assess it against the background their accumulated past experience

e. pass their judgment

As the time goes on, and we get to know more and more, the first of these becomes less central, but the rest gradually takes over, one by one. Examples (24) and (25) are thus concerned with some unexpected effects that the pandemic may have on the economy. When such emergent properties or personal experiences are topicalized, speakers often feel the need to explain what they mean following their creative metaphorical expression, as happens in (26–28).

These explications that very often accompany creative figurative expressions (cf. Brdar 2017 and Brdar-Szabó & Brdar 2020) look like ordinary metaphorical mappings that happen to be spelled out. Talking about mappings, Kövecses (2002: 12) says:

> To know a conceptual metaphor is to know the set of mappings that applies to a given source-target pairing. It is these mappings that provide much of the meaning of the metaphorical linguistic expressions (or linguistic metaphors) that make a particular conceptual metaphor manifest.

But not all mappings are equally important. Kövecses (2000: 83) talks about central mappings as those that relate to the main meaning focus:

> Let us call mappings like these *central mappings*. Mappings are central if they map what we have called the main meaning focus of the source (i.e. central knowledge) onto the target.

Some of such explications do not exactly qualify as central or as elements of central knowledge about the source, but may nevertheless be important in the case of a very creative metaphorical use because otherwise the utterance may remain obscure, too personal. If such additional comments about a given source domain in the context of specifying the target domain keep accumulating in the usage, we may have a gradual reconstruction of the source domain, e.g. it may become a

widely accepted paragon (as discussed in Lakoff 1987; Barcelona 2003 and 2004; Brdar & Brdar-Szabó 2007), or a more local one.

It is also interesting that in examples (28) and the following examples:

(29) *Coronavirus isn't Trump's Katrina, it's his Vietnam.*[20]

(30) *COVID-19 Is Trump's 9/11. Like Bush, He Was Warned and Didn't Act.* (https://truthout.org/articles/covid-19-is-trumps-9-11-like-bush-he-was-warned-and-didnt-act/)

(31) *COVID is the Grinch who stole Christmas*[21]

in which speakers are more concerned with functions d. and e. above, the source concepts, lexicalized as *Chernobyl*, *Katrina*, *Vietnam*, and *Grinch*, respectively, seem to be paragons. Paragons are, according to Lakoff (1987), a type of metonymic models denoting the best or the worst of a category, but they very often end up being used as metaphors, i.e. the end result is a metaphtonymy of a sort due to the interaction between these two basic cognitive operations, if not the classical type of metaphtonymy where the expressions in question cannot be used just metonymically or just metaphorically (cf. Goossens 1990; Geeraerts 2002; Brdar & Brdar-Szabó 2007; Ruiz de Mendoza & Galera-Masegosa 2011; Pérez-Sobrino 2016; Colston 2017). As we see from examples (27–31), COVID-19 comes to be equated to a catalogue of very negative things, such as global technological, natural, military catastrophes, terrorist attacks or as a mean-tempered and misanthropic figure pathologically hating holidays.

One of the entailments of paragon models is that there is at least some quality difference between the paragon and the item to which it is applied, although the level of the quality in question is generally quite high. In some cases, when the difference is bigger, the rationale for using the paragon is to boost the evaluation of the item it is "compared with." This is clear in an example like:

(32) *Sacha Kljestan is the Zidane of the MLS. That's a bit of an exaggeration of course, but give me a chance to explain this a bit. And heck, there's no doubt that Sacha is on the up and up and will leave the MLS soon. Kljestan is the one soccer player who's from this country who plays with some flair, not an exact impersonation of the legendary Zidane but with a*

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[20] Retrieved from: https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2020-03-26/coronavirus-isn-t-trump-s-katrina-it-s-his-vietnam. Accessed on 21 November 2021.

[21] Retrieved from: https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query =Id%3A%22 media%2Fpressclp%2F7487535%22;src1=sm1. Accessed on 11 November 2021.

Mario Brdar – Rita Brdar-Szabó – Tanja Gradečak:
A note on the career of metaphorical domains: On the role of the XYZ
constructions in metaphorical transfer reversal

bit of his style let's say. He's smooth on the ball like Zidane and tries to make that killer pass.[22]

We also realize that situations are dynamic and that the differential may change over time and become smaller. The following example was produced in 2013, when Raphaël Varane just started his career in Real Madrid:

(33) *Thus far, with the coolness and composure with which Raphaël Varane has handled and adapted to anything and everything both on and of the pitch, one could, in a way, say that he is the "Zidane of Defence".*[23]

The differential may be due to a potential lack of world knowledge, i.e. the cultural background, e.g. general audience outside Great Britain and the Commonwealth need not know very much about cricket, let alone about cricket in South Africa or India, and the names of local cricket stars may not therefore mean much to them:

(34) *Virat Kohli reckons AB is the Messi of cricket*
Much like Cristiano Ronaldo and Leonel Messi in football, cricket megastars Virat Kohli and AB de Villiers have set the benchmark in the sport, and comparisons between the two pairs are often made.[24]

In some cases, however, A and B may enjoy the same or almost the same status:

(35) *Porto scout Gil Rui Barros says, 'I have never known a manager prepare his training sessions so thoroughly. Like Zidane with a ball at his feet, Mourinho has this think that cannot be taught. He is the Zidane of managers.'*[25]

This is also true of examples (28–31) above. A and B can, apparently, be switched in such cases, yielding B is A, where the original source domain becomes the target domain. In (36) Manu Ginobilli, an Argentinian basketball icon, appears both as A and B, even though, objectively speaking, he is not on par with Messi, globally speaking. Note that the two figurative complexes, A is B and B is A, co-occur in

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[22] Retrieved from: https://soccer-training-info.com/sacha_kljestan_is_zidane/. Accessed on 11 November 2021.

[23] Retrieved from: https://www.sportskeeda.com/football/raphael-varane-the-zidane-of-defence. Accessed on 11 November 2021.

[24] Retrieved from: https://www.thesouthafrican.com/sport/cricket/virat-kohli-reckons-ab-is-the-messi-of-cricket-video/. Accessed on 11 November 2021.

[25] Retrieved from: https://books.google.en/books/about/Jose_Farewell_to_the_King.html?id= Xzmt DwAAQBAJ&redir_ esc=y. Accessed on 11 November 2021.

the same environment. Formally, this is more of a chiasmus than an antimetabole, but the point is that there is a reversal, the material catalyst for which is the chiastic construction:

(36) *Lionel Messi praises Manu Ginobili's illustrious NBA career, says he wants to be known as 'the Manu of football.'*
This comes after someone apparently deemed the Spurs star the 'Messi of basketball.'[26]

An important aspect of such reversals can be observed in the following examples. Note that (38) comes complete with an explanation.

(37) *For many, Messi is the Pele of his generation, perhaps better, depending upon who you ask. Regardless, it is unanimous that he is a special player exuding brilliance at the height of his game.*[27]

(38) *That's a one in a generation kind of player. His is the Pele of his time (for the young kids, Pele was the Messi of his time :p*[28]

The two versions of the figurative constructions, A is B and B is A, relate to each other like pairs of relational opposites known in lexical semantics as converse antonyms. Cruse defines them as "pairs which express a relationship between two entities by specifying the direction of one relative to the other along some axis" (1986: 231). In addition to spatial and temporal converses like *above - below* and *before – after*, respectively, there are many such pairs of nouns like *ancestor - descendant* and verbs like *sell – buy*. In example (36), Messi being the Pele of his time and Pele being the Messi of his time are two mirror descriptions of more or less the same constellation, assuming that both Pele and Messi are used as paragons: an outstanding football player is related to the paragon. Notice also the formal adaptations that may be necessary, like the use of the present or the past tense of the copula, the use of time adverbials like *his time*, *his generation*, etc. Note also that (37) and (38) are instances of the XYZ_{TP} construction, like (17), where the index $_{TP}$ indicates a time period. This subconstruction also seems to have an important catalytic role in facilitating the domain switch, just like in (39–46) below.

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[26] Retrieved from: https://www.cbssports.com/soccer/news/lionel-messi-praises-manu-ginobilis-illustrious-nba-career-says-he-wants-to-be-known-as-the-manu-of-football/. Accessed on 11 November 2020.

[27] Retrieved from: https://www.concrete-online.co.uk/lionel-messi-a-natural-talent/. Accessed on 11 November 2020.

[28] Retrieved from: https://www.xtratime.org/threads/pele-x-messi.388346/page-3. Accessed on 11 November 2021.

Mario Brdar – Rita Brdar-Szabó – Tanja Gradečak:
A note on the career of metaphorical domains: On the role of the XYZ
constructions in metaphorical transfer reversal

These examples are of course similar to what is discussed in Richardson & Mueller (2019) because we have the reversal of the source and the target domain. Our examples are, however, different in three important respects. First, reversing the domains and putting the two figurative constructions next to each other does not produce a paradox. Secondly, the two versions, A and B and B is A, do not always appear together in the same context. Finally, our examples have a different function – they mix functions d. and e. above. They relate one concept to another well-entrenched concept that makes it possible to compress complex past experience into a compact expression, which is often accompanied by a value judgment inherent in the paragon, i.e. its axiological dimension (cf. Brdar & Brdar-Szabó 2007). We might say that what these instances of juxtaposing two items that seem to be on equal footing do is correlate (or even equate) domains A and B. We might even be tempted to call such pairs as correlation(al) metaphors were it not for the fact that the label had already been used by Grady (1997a & b, 1999) for a very different type of phenomenon. In lieu of a better term we will refer to them here as converse metaphors.

The same sort of reversal of domains and their converseness can also be observed in the case of *coronavirus* and COVID as domains. In addition to the negative paragons exemplified in (28-31) above we also find cases of a closer match, i.e. cases of COVID-19/coronavirus being matched with another health crisis of catastrophic dimensions (HIV/AIDS, polio and tuberculosis), in both A IS B and B IS A version of the XYZ_{TP} type. Note that in (43–45) *coronavirus/COVID-19* is now used in the role of the source domain:

(39) *COVID-19 is the AIDS of this human generation.*[29]

(40) *Boris clearly thinks coronavirus is the AIDS crisis of his time with this Princess Diana "I shook their hands!" line except, dangerously, you can't transmit HIV/AIDS by shaking hands but you CAN transmit coronavirus!*[30]

(41) *As he notes, COVID is the AIDS crisis of our day. We're all in this together.*[31]

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[29] Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/hashtag/lockdownaustralia?lang=ga. Accessed on 19 November 2021.

[30] Retrieved from: https://nitter.nixnet.services/i/status/1234829646245613569. Accessed on 15 November 2021.

[31] Retrieved from: https://player.fm/series/geripal/covid-in-new-york-2-podcast-with-craig-blinderman-shunichi-nakagawa-and-ana-berlin. Accessed on 15 November 2021.

(42) *If coronavirus is the polio of our generations, we could look to the approach taken by Pacific governments.*[32]

(43) *I am old enough to remember how scientists, politicians and the corporate media scared the living daylights out of everyone. Aids was the coronavirus of the time. Who remembers the 1985 LIFE magazine cover: "HOW NO ONE IS SAFE FROM AIDS" (they did use capitals!).*[33]

(44) *I didn't know AIDS was the COVID-19 of the 1980s-90s*[34]

(45) *Polio was the coronavirus of the mid-20th century. Potentially fatal and disabling, this viral infection was transmitted person to person around and driven by asymptomatic carriers.*[35]

Next to COVID IS GRINCH, exemplified in (30–31) above, we also find the converse figurative constructions. An exact Google query retrieved 6 hits, but there are also multimodal examples in addition to this:

(46) *For some reason, it popped into my mind that perhaps I need to take on the attitude of the residents of Whoville as I move into the holiday season. The Grinch is COVID, and it's temporarily stolen many of my traditions and limited family gatherings, but the spirit of my Thanksgiving and Christmas celebration is not in these traditions. It is in my heart.*[36]

(47) *NO CROWDS please the GRINCH is COVID this year but we can still watch from our vehicles 'safely' and take photographs to remember 2020 with a SMILE!*[37]

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[32] Retrieved from: https://www.fr24news.com/a/2020/06/is-the-worst-of-the-pandemic-behind-us-heres-what-scientists-know-so-far-devi-sridhar-opinion.html. Accessed on 15 November 2021.

[33] Retrieved from: https://www.undervalued-shares.com/weekly-dispatches/post-corona-a-golden-age-of-informed-risk-management/. Accessed on 15 November 2021.

[34] Retrieved from: https://www.reddit.com/r/short/comments/kj544c/eazy_e_leader_of_nwa_and_ruthless_records_stood/. Accessed on 16 November 2021.

[35] Retrieved from: https://eu.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2020/10/09/covid-19-and-polio-vaccines-what-1950-could-teach-us-today-column/3586538001/. Accessed on 16 November 2021.

[36] Retrieved from: https://debracaffey.tumblr.com/. Accessed on 1 November 2021.

[37] Retrieved from: http://www.findglocal.com/US/Chelsea/1775047222708986/Chelsea-Grange-Hall. Accessed on 15 November 2021.

Mario Brdar – Rita Brdar-Szabó – Tanja Gradečak:
A note on the career of metaphorical domains: On the role of the XYZ
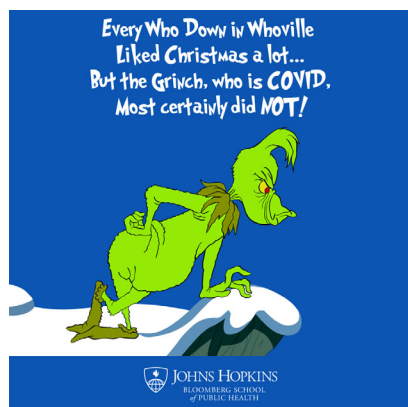**constructions in metaphorical transfer reversal**

Figure 10. A Grinch picture used in a social media campaign on Facebook by The Johns Hopkins School of Public highlighting COVID-19 safety precautions for the Christmas season.[38]

The significance of these examples is that we witness domain homogenization here, as some human paragons with negative axiology are found in converse metaphors as target domains, too. However, this homogenization, also produces a converse switch, from target to source domains. The *COVID/coronavirus* domain whose meaning has been generalized to refer to something that is bad, negative and detrimental or has bad/negative consequences can now be used as the source domain to refer to people, animals, inanimates and abstract entities in general.

The COVID pandemic has triggered new cases of complex figurative language usage, aimed at a variety of purposes, such as establishing social rapport, creating empathy, but also satirizing political personalities, joking about certain newly acquired habits, or criticizing certain behaviours. In other words, in addition to what Ruiz de Mendoza (2020: 33) refers to as denotational uses, i.e. those expressing reconstrual and perspective, figurative expressions, within a single modality or across modalities, can be also be used attitudinally, i.e. to convey parameterizable dissociation, ii. to maximize emotional impact, or iii. to minimize emotional impact. The examples of the domain switch illustrate possibility i., i.e. conveying parametrizable dissociation, as they are based on axiologically negative paragons.

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[38]   Retrieved   from: https://www.facebook.com/JohnsHopkinsSPH/posts/101576343 00271245?_tn__=-R. Accessed on 15 November 2021.

4. Conclusions

The new normal of the COVID-19 time has unleashed a tremendous amount of playfulness and creativity, making it easier to cope with the pandemic. Not surprisingly, they manifest themselves linguistically, too. In addition to a number of vocabulary items that are or seem to be neologisms, the pandemic also activated a network of usual but also some unexpected conceptual metaphors and metonymies.

Two main conclusions emerge from our investigation that focussed on COVID metaphors. The first has to do with cyclic changes in the function of certain domains involved in the figurative shift. Specifically, we have shown that there are certain tendencies concerning the popularity/frequency of certain source domains over time, and that domains can change their role, as a popular metaphorical target domain may in due time become a source domain for new, creative, and deliberate, metaphors. The aim of this article was not only to document this incipient trend, but also to analyse the phenomenon in structural and pragmatic terms, and compare it to similar constructions.

Secondly, the family of constructions studied here gets extended in small incremental steps. Subconstructions are added that are not necessarily only metaphorical extensions of a dominating construction, and/or related to it by inheritance links, but are in addition to these, or in the absence of these, usage-based (item-based) extensions due to two kinds of changes. First, there are changes in the syntactic environment. Although Fauconnier & Turner (2002) and Veale (2014) argue that XYZ constructions are blends, our analysis has shown that small incremental changes we witness here are the result of combining and recombining simpler constructions into what we may refer to as ad hoc discourse constructions, and their potential subsequent reduction or simplification. As argued by Brône & Zima (2014), ad hoc constructions or locally entrenched form-meaning pairings may arise within the boundaries of an ongoing interaction. The concept of resonance or dialogic resonance by Du Bois is key to making this possible. The second type of change concerns the conceptual domains associated with particular lexemes, which may serve as source or target domains. They seem to be constantly reshaped in the course of usage, and may become polysemous as they develop towards encompassing more complex concepts, i.e. they may acquire more abstract senses, or generalize towards paragons, etc., which may be accompanied by changes in their axiology.

Mario Brdar – Rita Brdar-Szabó – Tanja Gradečak:
A note on the career of metaphorical domains: On the role of the XYZ
constructions in metaphorical transfer reversal

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A note on the career of metaphorical domains: On the role of the XYZ
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Mario Brdar – Rita Brdar-Szabó – Tanja Gradečak:
A note on the career of metaphorical domains: On the role of the XYZ
constructions in metaphorical transfer reversal

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Mario Brdar – Rita Brdar-Szabó – Tanja Gradečak:
A note on the career of metaphorical domains: On the role of the XYZ
constructions in metaphorical transfer reversal

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BILJEŠKA O KARIJERI METAFORIČKIH DOMENA: O ULOZI KONSTRUKCIJA TIPA XYZ U PREOKRETANJU METAFORIČKOG PRIJENOSA

Jedna od najdominantnijih konceptualnih metafora pomoću kojih se govori o koronavirusu u nizu jezika i kultura je metafora RATA, no zabilježene su i mnoge druge metafore koje su rabile cijeli niz izvornih domena. Po svemu sudeći na djelu je evolucija metafora kada se promatra čestoća s kojom se pojavljuju pojedine domene, s pomakom prvo prema agresivnijim konceptima vezanima uz rat pa nakon kulminacije u proljeće 2020. prema drugim konceptima kako se pandemija pretvarala u endemiju i kako su dolazili novi valovi zaraza. Može se, međutim, uočiti i početak novog ciklusa: domena koja se konceptualizirala metaforički pomoću drugih domena se počinje emancipirati te i sama počinje funkcionirati kao izvorna domena. Metaforičkim rječnikom, kada proučavamo tu zamjenu domena ne bavimo se karijerom metafore već karijeru domene (što je prema našem viđenju zanimljivije nego ono prvo). Cilj je ovog članka rasvijetliti ovaj trend u nastanku tako što se koncentriramo na konstelaciju dva (od više mogućih) čimbenika koji potpomažu ovu mutaciju: semantičku homogenizaciju domena (u ovom slučaju prema negativnom paragonu) te porodicu konstrukcija tipa XYZ kao formalnog katalizatora.

Ključne riječi: metafora; domena; metaforički prijenos; jednosmjernost; dvosmjernost; konstrukcije tipa XYZ; diskursna konstrukcija; metonimija; COVID-19.