

# Phraseology in Multilingual Society

Edited by

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Edited by Elena Arsenteva

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## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### INSTANTIAL STYLISTIC USE: A COGNITIVE VIEW OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN DISCOURSE

ANITA NACISCIONE<sup>1</sup>

#### 1. Introduction

Creation of new forms and meanings is a natural discourse process by which new stylistic instantiations emerge. Instantial stylistic use is a broad linguistic category. In cognitive linguistic terms, it is a mode of conceptualisation. By instantial stylistic use<sup>2</sup> I understand a particular instance of a unique stylistic application of a language unit (a word, a phraseological unit<sup>3</sup> (PU), a morpheme, or a grammatical element) in discourse,<sup>4</sup> resulting in significant changes in form and meaning that are determined by thought and context.<sup>5</sup> These are cases of creative language

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<sup>2</sup> For a detailed analysis of the phenomenon of instantial stylistic use, see Naciscione, 2010, 39 – 248.

<sup>3</sup> In my opinion, Kunin offers the best definition of the PU in terms of precision, clarity and brevity out of all definitions of PUs that I have studied: the phraseological unit is characterised by two qualifying features: stability, and full or partial figurative meaning (1970, 210). I believe that the phraseological unit has a third categorical feature: that of cohesion that is manifest in all forms of its existence; hence I would reword the definition as follows: the phraseological unit is a stable, cohesive combination of words with a fully or partially figurative meaning.

<sup>4</sup> By discourse I understand language in use that goes across sentence boundaries and also includes broader social aspects and non-verbal representation (see Schifffrin, Tannen, and Hamilton 2001, 1).

<sup>5</sup> For a cognitive understanding of the relationship between figurative thought and language use, see Lakoff and Turner, (1989): 2; Gibbs, [1994] 1999: 11 – 17, 2008; Lakoff, 2008, 35.

realisation that may appear at any of the language levels – lexical, phraseological, morphological, or syntactical. By way of illustration of the concept of instantial stylistic use, I would like to turn to the stylistic use of the diminutive suffix *-let* in Lewis Carroll's poem *The Little Man that Had a Little Gun*<sup>6</sup> that creates an imaginary world of nonsense by disregarding conventions of common sense. The Little Man tells his Wifelet that he will hurry to the runlet to shoot a ducklet that is chased by the doglet. The poem produces a striking cumulative effect of instantial diminutivisation that catches the attention of both eye and ear or, more precisely, strikes our mind. Lewis Carroll coins instantial, unheard-of lexical forms that add to the general tonality of the poem. In revenge for the shooting, shrill voices of birds rise in strife, protesting and wailing for woe:

'Avengement,' they cry, 'on our Foelet!  
Let the Manikin weep for our wrongs!'

Lewis Carroll also resorts to instantial stylistic use of the diminutive in PUs, creating a novel stylistic effect. As the birds cry out for revenge by the runlet, they voice a threat of revenge on their Foelet:

Let us drench him, from top<sup>let</sup> to toe<sup>let</sup>,<sup>7</sup>  
With Nursery-Songs!

The base form<sup>8</sup> of this PU is from top to toe. The instantial form from top<sup>let</sup> to toe<sup>let</sup> keeps the reader in the world of nonsense. If we compare it with the base form, we see that the instantial form has acquired two diminutive suffixes, resulting in internal rhyme within the PU, thus focusing attention on its unique discourse form.

The poem contains several cases of instantial stylistic use of PUs. For instance, we read how the Little Man's Wifelet sees him off to the runlet:

<sup>6</sup> From Lewis Carroll's book *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded*, 1893.

<sup>7</sup> In this article, stylistic instantiation has been highlighted for emphasis: **base forms** are marked bold and underlined; instantial elements are spaced and underlined; replaced elements are underlined double and spaced. Highlighting helps in the identification process, especially in complicated cases. It is also a methodological tool in teaching: use of non-highlighted text in home assignments and highlighted text in discussion for consolidation purposes.

<sup>8</sup> The base form is the form of the PU outside discourse. In practice it is the dictionary form and meaning, recorded as the headphrase. It is generic to all manifestations of a particular PU in discourse.



She has reached him his minikin gun<sup>let</sup>:  
 She has hurled the old shoe<sup>let</sup> for luck:  
 She is busily baking a bun<sup>let</sup>,  
 To welcome him home with his Duck.

The instantial discourse form hurl the old shoe<sup>let</sup> is all the more striking against the base form of the PU to cast/flip an old shoe after someone. This PU is reiterated in the poem in the same instantial form that imparts the quality of an incantation. The diminutive suffix *-let* is a recurrent element which repeats itself at close intervals. The presence of the diminutive builds cumulatively with each verse:

On he speeds, never wasting a word<sup>let</sup>,  
 Though thought<sup>lets</sup> cling, closely as wax,  
 To the spot where the beautiful bird<sup>let</sup>  
 So quietly quacks.

The PU to waste words gains a diminutive meaning, as the Little Man speeds without *wasting a word<sup>let</sup>*. The diminutivised constituent of the PU becomes part of the rhyme pattern, which creates the effect of epiphoric assonance. Another striking feature is the gentle irony of the Little Man's thought<sup>lets</sup>.

In this brief case study I have tried to illustrate instantial use of a morphological element – the diminutive suffix *-let* – both in words and PUs. Further on I will focus on instantial stylistic use of phraseological units in discourse.

With regard to cognitive aspects, this article aims to highlight a number of issues that are essential for cognitive stylistics, such as the role of stylistic pattern in figurative meaning construction, figurative networks and sustainability of figurative thought in discourse. It will also address the importance of a diachronic insight and a discourse-based approach to interaction of stylistic patterns in stylistic use that leads to theoretical conclusions.

## 2. Stylistic Pattern as Structure of Thought

Any attempt at classification or categorisation of instantial stylistic use of PUs will inevitably involve a search for similarity in the vast diversity of their stylistic instantiations in discourse. The infinite variety of discursive forms of PUs may turn out to be confusing and bewildering. They may lead to a belief that instantial use is disordered and chaotic. However, actual use displays remarkably regular patterns of realisation of

PUs in discourse. A closer study of the great diversity of stylistic use allows us to discern regularities; it reveals that cases of instantial use are based on certain stylistic patterns that repeat themselves. They are reproducible<sup>9</sup> in future instantiations, the same as PUs themselves. The reason is the inherent stability of both PUs and stylistic patterns of their use.

In cognitive psychology, pattern perception and recognition<sup>10</sup> has been qualified as a cognitive skill. The process of identification calls for creative processing and the ability to recognise recurring patterns. Only knowledge of both the base form of the PU and the particular instantial pattern allows readers or listeners to perceive, comprehend and interpret. In stylistic analysis it is important to bear in mind that both the PU and the pattern belong to the system of language. As stable language elements, they have the quality of relative permanency.

The pattern of extended metaphor is the most frequently used pattern of instantial stylistic use of PUs. It is present in every case of use when the image of a metaphorical PU is sustained in discourse, creating metaphorical sub-images that are tied to the base metaphor by associations of contiguity, e.g.:

### to call a spade a spade

And he threw an angry look at the bearded dairyman, who was a Methodist and therefore calling a spade a spade, especially when the spade was somebody else's sin.  
 John Fowles, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*

This is an illustration of metaphorical extension of one of the constituents of the PU, which is the simplest type of extended metaphor.

Extension of the base metaphor lends itself easily to the needs of dialogical discourse: it goes across turn boundaries as thought develops, creating an associative element to sustain the base image of the PU, e.g.:

### to get into deep waters

'I thought at first, you must be the lover of Barbara. But when I see you together, I know you are not lovers, I mean bed-lovers.'  
 'We are getting into deep waters,' Freddy said, reclining among the chintees.

<sup>9</sup> For stylistic patterns as reproducible elements generating innumerable particular manifestations in discourse, see Naciscione 1982, 2010: 65 – 73, 2013. In traditional linguistics, the term "a stylistic device" is most commonly used.

<sup>10</sup> For more on pattern recognition in psycholinguistics, see Field 2003: 18.



'I can swim,' she said.  
Muriel Spark, *The Mandelbaum Gate*

Extension of several notional base constituents provides several lines of metaphorical and metonymic<sup>11</sup> thinking, creating a ramified semantic structure, which at the same time remains part of the image of the PU and its instantiation in the given context. This type of extended metaphor produces a cohesive network of associative metaphorical and metonymic ties. In discourse, it represents a flow of figurative thought and reasoning. For instance, President Barack Obama addresses Republicans at a meeting of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, New York, and resorts to stylistic use of the PU *to drive into a/the ditch* to underscore the idea that the American economy has been forced into a state of crisis thanks to the Republicans:

**to drive into a/the ditch**

After they drove the car into the ditch, made it as difficult as possible for us to pull it back, now they want the keys back. No! You can't drive. We don't want to have to go back into the ditch. We just got the car out. We just got the car out!

President Obama's Speech, New York, May 13, 2013

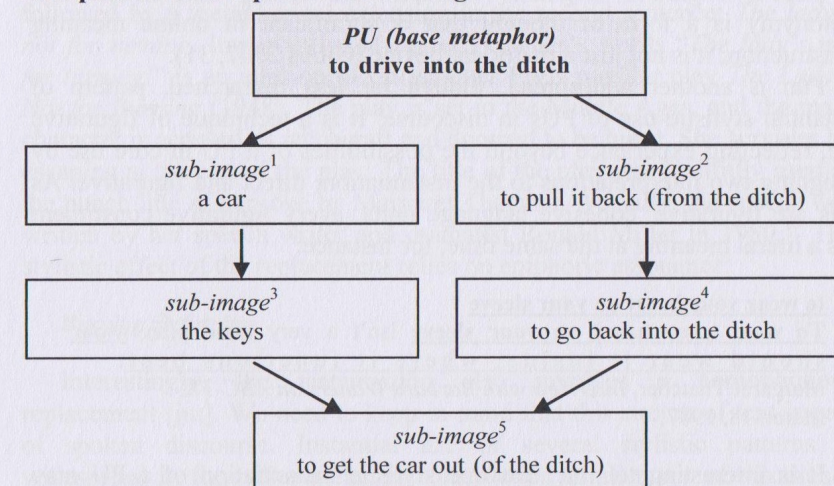
I would argue for the presence of metonymy in the shape of associations of contiguity in every case of extended metaphor. In this instantiation, both the notional constituents of the base form of PU *drive* and *ditch* have been extended, going across sentence boundaries. The metaphorical sub-images are linked metonymically, creating a figurative network in the stretch of text (Table 15-1).

The associative links provide cohesion between sentences, and each part of instantial use relies on its relation with the previous sub-image or directly with a constituent of the PU. The spread of phraseological image forms a string or strings of sub-images, covering an entire area of experience, linking things which occur together in space and time. Extension of phraseological image represents a continued flow of human thought and experience. It is a search for a novel and more accurate representation. The figure may differ with each instantiation but the principle remains the same: in the case of an extended figurative network, the base image is sustained by one or several metaphorical sub-images that

<sup>11</sup> For interaction of metaphor and metonymy in conceptual metaphors and conceptual metonymies, see Lakoff and Turner, 1989: 104 – 106. See also Barcelona, [2000] 2003: 1 – 28, 2007: 51 – 76.

metonymically relate to the base metaphor of the PU or another sub-image. Thus, metonymy is present in every case of extended metaphor.

**Table 15-1. Extended metaphor: metonymic links between the base metaphor and metaphorical sub-images**



In cognitive linguistics,<sup>12</sup> serial metonymic mappings have traditionally been called chained mappings, e.g., *belly* → *pregnancy* → *offspring* (Hilpert 2007, 89). In analysis, these chained metonymies are decontextualised, that is, they are presented in out-of-context examples, which, as a rule, remain at the level of the system of language and hence appear in their direct meanings, as in the above example. However, a closer look at the use of serial metonymies in discourse has brought me to the conclusion that actual stylistic use of metaphorical words or PUs reveals involvement of metonymy in reflection of figurative thought and its development. Only in discourse can the image of one figurative item (a word or a PU) be extended, revealing the full range of metaphorical extension and all the metonymic links.

I would argue that extension of a metaphorical word or phraseological unit is based on the stylistic pattern of extended metaphor which implies extension of the lexical metaphor or the base metaphor of the PU, consisting in a string or strings of metaphorical sub-images: each sub-image is metaphorical in itself as it is not used in its direct meaning.

<sup>12</sup> For a detailed view of metonymic mappings, see Reddy 1979, 309; Lakoff and Johnson [1980] 2003; Hilpert 2007.



However, the sub-images are linked metonymically, i.e., by associations of contiguity. Thus, I see metonymy<sup>13</sup> as an intrinsic part of extended metaphor; the metonymically linked sub-images form an extension of figurative thought enclosed in the PU.

Recent cognitive linguistic research has firmly established that metonymy is a form of thought that is significant in online meaning construction; it is not just a rhetorical device (Gibbs 2007, 31).

Pun is another widespread, though far less researched, pattern of instantial stylistic use of PUs in discourse. It is a technique of figurative use, reflecting experience beyond the possibilities of a PU in core use by assigning two interpretations to the instantiation: direct and figurative. As PUs are figurative, cohesive language units, every figurative constituent has a literal meaning at the same time, for instance:

**to wear your heart on your sleeve**

**To wear your heart on your sleeve** isn't a very good plan; **you should wear it inside, where it functions best.**

Margaret Thatcher, *Interview with Barbara Walters on ABC-TV*, March 18, 1987.

It is interesting to note that one stylistic instantiation of a PU may incorporate several stylistic patterns. The PU *to wear your heart on your sleeve* is metaphorical in its base form; it has been turned into an extended metaphor in actual use; the metaphorical constituent *wear* has been reiterated, remaining metaphorical in the extension; the last part *where it functions best* is used in its literal meaning, producing a pun; *heart* → *functions* forms a metonymic link in our mind. Thus, the example is a typical case of interaction of several stylistic patterns in one instantiation.

As pun is usually a play on two meanings of a polysemous word, its literal meaning is invariably present in the instantiation. Concurrent use of another or several other stylistic patterns enhances the novel stylistic effect. Another example:

**to make a U-turn**<sup>14</sup>

To those waiting with bated breath for that favourite media catchphrase, **the U-turn**, I have only one thing to say: **You turn if you want to. The lady's not for turning!**

<sup>13</sup> For more sophisticated cases of use of metonymy in stylistic instantiations, see Naciscione 2010, 153, 157 – 158, 2013.

<sup>14</sup> The figurative meaning of *to make a U-turn* denotes a complete reversal in opinion, actions, or policy (*Encarta World English Dictionary* 1999).

Margaret Thatcher, *Speech at Conservative Party Conference*, 10 October, 1980.

Margaret Thatcher is punning on both the direct and the figurative meanings of the phraseological constituent *turn*, which emerge in this text, followed by a metaphorical extension in the second sentence: *The lady's not for turning*. Importantly, Margaret Thatcher's words "*The lady's not for turning!*" is an allusion to Christopher Fry's popular play *The Lady's Not for Burning* (1948). The play is set in the Middle Ages, and the main character is accused of witchcraft and doomed to be burnt. She survives by escaping at the end of the play. The title of the play was skillfully used as the punch line of her joke by Margaret Thatcher. Actually, the speech was written by her speech writer and dramatist Ronald Miller in 1980.<sup>15</sup> The stylistic effect of the replacement relies on epiphoric assonance:

*Burning* → *turning*.

Interestingly, the instantiation also involves a homophonous replacement [ju:]. We need to keep in mind that this stretch of text is part of spoken discourse. Instantial use of several stylistic patterns is widespread in figurative meaning construction in all types of discourses and genres.

Of all individual stylistic patterns of instantial use, allusion is the most complex and the least researched pattern. It is a subtle, mental reference to the image of the PU that the instantiation is based on. It may be an implicit verbal and/or visual reference that is usually represented in discourse by one or several explicit image-bearing constituents, and their instantial ties, hinting at the phraseological image, e.g.:

**to keep one's powder dry**

His uncle often took him to task on the matter; but as Charles was quick to point out, he **was using damp powder**. The old man would grumble.

'I never found the right woman.'

'Nonsense. You never looked for her.'

'Indeed I did. When I was your age ...'

John Fowles, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*.

Only one of the base constituents, *powder*, is explicitly used in the text, serving as a recall cue and performing a metonymic function in discourse,

<sup>15</sup> For more on Margaret Thatcher's activities, the actual state of affairs in the UK at the time and the significance of this speech, see Claire Berlinski's book *There Is No Alternative: Why Margaret Thatcher Matters* (2008).



alluding to the PU, aided by antonymic replacement of the base constituent *dry* by *damp* that creates antithesis. The presence of the image-bearing constituent *powder* and its instantial epithet *damp* provides associative ties to the PU in the face of absence of the full base form.

It is not infrequent to encounter cases of creative instantiation of phraseological allusion that are more demanding in identification and interpretation. Let me have a look at another example of phraseological allusion:

**to run neck and neck**<sup>16</sup>

The horse had done it by a nostril.

BBC World Radio, 15 April, 2012.

We see that not a single base constituent of the PU has remained in actual use. With no textual presence of base constituents, the impact of figurative links and associations becomes the key to comprehension. Our experience prompts the metonymic link:

horse → neck → head → nostril.

If taken out of context, this metonymic chain reveals associations of contiguity; however, it has no figurative meaning if seen as part of the system of the language. In discourse this chain may acquire a figurative meaning in instantial use. In this text, the metonymic string of associations of contiguity has two missing links: *neck* and *head* do not appear in the text at all:

horse → nostril.

Comprehension of allusion is effected as the PU is retrieved from long-term memory and thus the base form is identified. I would argue that in this particular case of use, the stylistic pattern is extended metonymy, as the PU is metonymic in its base form. In this way instantial stylistic use of metonymy becomes a mode of conceptualisation.

In phraseology, stylistic use of PUs presents innumerable instances of concurrent stylistic application of two or several PUs, creating a focal point and reinforcing the message, e.g.:

**a man of the world**  
**every man has his price**<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The PU *to run neck and neck* means to be absolutely level or even in a race or competition (*The Collins English Dictionary* 2013).

Mrs. Cheveley: My dear Sir Robert, you are **a man of the world**, and **you have your price**, I suppose. Everybody has nowadays. The drawback is that most people are so dreadfully expensive. I know I am. I hope you will be more reasonable in your terms.

Oscar Wilde, *An Ideal Husband*, Act I.

The first sentence includes two PUs running, followed by metaphorical extensions in successive sentences, specifying the meaning of the proverb: everyone is open to bribery if the inducement offered is large enough,<sup>18</sup> Thus, the extensions *dreadfully expensive* and *more reasonable in your terms* form a direct metonymic link to *price*, meaning taking high bribes. The particular instantiation is outside the experience of the reader or speaker as it has not been encountered before.

Over the last two decades cognitive linguistic and psychological research has proved that figurative language does not represent a cognitive or linguistic deviation, but directly reflects people's figurative conceptualisation of experience (Gibbs [1994] 1999, 2006, 2011; see also Gibbs and Colston 2012, 8).

### 3. A Diachronic Approach to Instantial Stylistic Use

A diachronic approach to stylistic use of PUs offers valuable insights into the development of English phraseology throughout its history. It also discloses what is new and what is old in stylistic performance of PUs in discourse. Diachronic studies provide an understanding of pattern evolution across centuries. They show that instantial use follows principles and guidelines which have long been in existence in the English language tradition. Let me briefly illustrate use of the proverb *there is no smoke without fire* at different periods of the development of English. In Modern English the proverb frequently undergoes changes in form and meaning in new stylistic instantiations. The following example presents the most common type of extended metaphor with a subsequent instantial extension of the image of the proverb. The extended metaphor goes across turn boundaries:

<sup>17</sup> *Every man has his price* is a proverb. I believe that proverbs belong to phraseology as language units: they fully comply with the defining tenets of PUs: they are stable, figurative and cohesive combinations of words in their base form.

<sup>18</sup> *The Oxford English Dictionary* 2013.



**there is no smoke without fire**

'No smoke without fire,' said the detective-constable largely.

'Smoke signals can be misread,' countered Sloan.

Catherine Aird, *Dead Liberty*.

Early Modern English<sup>19</sup> also offers a great diversity of cases of stylistic use, based on various stylistic patterns. For instance, allusion is a common stylistic pattern in Early Modern English texts. In the following example, the form of the proverb has not been preserved: both notional constituents have remained scattered in the text. As a result the changes are of a semantic and stylistic importance:

**there is no smoke without fire**

There is seldom anie smoak, but where there is some fire.

1654 Thomas Gattaker, *Discours Apologetical*

Recorded texts show that instantial stylistic use of PUs has persisted since the Old English period. They reveal that constancy and change are two aspects of functioning of PUs in discourse. Constancy refers to the inherent stability of the form and meaning of PUs, and stylistic patterns as stable elements of the language system, while instantial changes, based on a language pattern, create a new, unique application of the PU with an instantial stylistic effect. This explains long-term stability versus changes in instantial stylistic use.

The Old English and the Middle English period offer more cases and a greater variety of stylistic use than *a priori* might be expected.<sup>20</sup> Successful comprehension and interpretation will depend on identification of the base form that in turn is closely linked to the pattern recognition process which is an essential cognitive skill. Both identification of the base form and the pattern of allusion are of equal importance in the following Middle English example:

**there is no smoke without fire**<sup>21</sup>

And thair may no man fire sa covir,

<sup>19</sup> Early Modern English is also called Early New English. It is a period from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century to the transition to Modern English in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>20</sup> For instance, research reveals that *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* contain 3610 cases of use of PUs, of which 1164 cases (about one third) involve meaningful semantic and stylistic changes based on reproducible patterns that are part of the system of language (Naciscione 1982, 2010).

<sup>21</sup> MiE low or reyk – MoE smoke or flame; MiE to discover – MoE to reveal (*The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs* [1982] 1992, 232).

[Bot]low or reyk sall it discover.

c. 1375 John Barbour, *The Bruce*, bk. iv. l. 123

Records in dictionaries assert that the proverb *there is no smoke without fire* can be traced back to Latin: *flamma fumo est proxima* (flame is very close to smoke<sup>22</sup>) (Plautus, *Curculio*, I. i. 53). However, a closer study of the respective stretch of discourse in Act I of Plautus' play *Curculio*<sup>23</sup> leads me to think that this is not a case of core use. Here we are dealing with extended metaphor: the base constituent *flamma* has acquired a metaphorical sub-image *comburi* (< *comburare* – to burn).

Palinurus: Semper tu scito, flamma fumo est proxima;

fumo comburi nil potest, flamma potest.<sup>24</sup>

Titus Maccius Plautus, *Curculio*, Act I. i. 53-54

Moreover, absence of evidence of the use of this proverb either in the works of Plautus and his contemporaries or predecessors raises doubt about the correctness of the recorded base form in Latin: *flamma fumo est proxima* (Latin Dictionary 2008). This assertion calls for further diachronic research.

Instantial stylistic use of this proverb suggests that extended metaphor must have been in current use as an abstract pattern of figurative thought in the Old Latin period, and most probably before it. Unfortunately, too few of the ancient texts have reached us to ascertain this thought. Moreover, to my knowledge, instantial stylistic use in Latin has not been researched.<sup>25</sup> Diachronic aspects of stylistic use of PUs remain a new area of exploration in the history of language.

To sum up, a diachronic look at functioning of PUs in discourse provides an insight into long-term stability versus changes in instantial stylistic use of both PUs and stylistic patterns. Instantial stylistic use is a mode of conceptualisation that has existed across centuries to convey a novel figurative thought and develop it in discourse.

<sup>22</sup> Translated by A.N.

<sup>23</sup> *Curculio* was written by Titus Maccius Plautus (c. 254 – 184 BC), a Roman playwright of the Old Latin period. His comedies are the earliest surviving intact works in Latin literature.

<sup>24</sup> Translation of these lines into Modern English: You always know, flame is very close to smoke; nothing can be burned by smoke, but can by flame.

<sup>25</sup> Interestingly, Christian Grandl has written a mind-catching article on ancient Egyptian proverbs that have so far scarcely received any attention at all, drawing attention to their significance for comparative paremiology and paying attention to their origin, semantic structure and dissemination (Grandl 2009, 200 – 213).



#### 4. Phraseological Units in Multimodal Discourse A Case Study

A figurative thought might be expressed in a number of semiotic modes, not only in verbal representation. Multimodal use involves several stylistic techniques in discourse where verbal functions together with non-verbal forms in creation of new meaning in instantial metaphorical and metonymic conceptualisations. In multimodal discourse, the central mode is visual representation,<sup>26</sup> which is a non-verbal mode of expression to be perceived by sight. Its comprehension relies on the tie between the visual and the verbal.

Let me do a case study of multimodal representation, published in the print media:



Figure 15-1. Anti-Thatcher graffiti in West Belfast, Northern Ireland  
*The Independent*, 10 April, 2013

This graffiti appeared in *The Independent* on 10 April, that is, straight after Margaret Thatcher's death on 8 April, 2013 as part of an article on

<sup>26</sup> For more on representation of figurative thought in visual discourse, see Naciscione, 2005, 71 – 83.

preparations for her funeral and serious concerns about possible civil disorder and anti-Thatcher demonstrations during the ceremonial funeral, euphemistically expressed in its headline: **Disunited in mourning: police fear Thatcher funeral may turn into security nightmare.**

The article includes a photograph of the graffiti, featuring stylistic use of two PUs. The first PU **the Iron Lady**<sup>27</sup> is followed by a question mark which is a graphic stylistic means, questioning her greatness and contribution to the UK while the other PU appears in an instantial stylistic form: **Rust in Peace**. This is instantial alliterative replacement, effected in the PU **Rest in Peace**, commonly appearing as an epitaph on headstones to pay tribute to the deceased.

The instantial form of the traditional epitaph reflects disrespect and scathing criticism. It sounds callous but then, we need to bear in mind that West Belfast has historically been the most nationalist part of Belfast. The area is largely working class and it has always had strong labour movement sympathies. Margaret Thatcher was hated for her policies in Northern Ireland, a hate which was intensified following her well-known statement in 1999, "You can't trust the Irish, they are all liars". This attitude is still in living memory in Northern Ireland. The use of this graffiti expresses the underlying social and political message.

*The Iron Lady* and *Rust in Peace* are linked metonymically by associations of contiguity in our mind: iron rusts. It is common knowledge that this is the result of a chemical reaction: iron rusts when exposed to water and oxygen. The PU *The Iron Lady* is metonymic in its base form: it stands for Margaret Thatcher,<sup>28</sup> while the combination of *iron* and *rust* constitutes extended metonymy. In the PU, the constituent *iron* conveys her character traits: determined, tough and unyielding but the metonymic link between *iron* and *rust* denotes the direct meaning, creating a pun in our mind.

The stylistic effect of rust is enhanced by the background that has been painted the colour of rust. The use of colour is a semiotic mode of expression; colour conveys meaning, and it is a resource to accent figurative thought. *Rust in Peace* is used in its figurative meaning while

<sup>27</sup> *The Iron Lady* was coined by the Soviet newspaper *The Red Star* in 1976 and applied to Margaret Thatcher for her staunch opposition to the Soviet Union and socialism.

<sup>28</sup> In classical rhetoric, this case would be classified as antonomasia, denoting replacement of an epithet for a proper name. I agree with linguists who believe that antonomasia is a particular form of metonymy, based on the formula: A STANDS FOR A<sup>1</sup>. In case of metonymy, both A and A<sup>1</sup> belong to the same conceptual domain.



the colour of rust has a direct meaning, forming a visual pun. The semiotic element becomes part of the multimodal presentation.

Paradoxically, the idea of “rust” may in a way have been prompted by Margaret Thatcher herself in a witty response to the unveiling of her bronze statue in the House of Commons in 2007 and alluding to her nickname *The Iron Lady* which she, by the way, liked very much. At the unveiling she said, “I might have preferred iron – but bronze will do”. And she added, “It won’t rust.” This is a perfect illustration of sustainability of figurative thought<sup>29</sup> and its capacity to spread over longer stretches of time.

Thus, the interaction of several modes of expression creates a figurative network in multimodal discourse. Concurrent use of several stylistic patterns in one representation is a natural phenomenon in multimodal discourse. Cases of multimodal use call for both imagination and a creative approach in their instantiation, and for more advanced cognitive skills in inference and interpretation.

## 5. Conclusions

A cognitive approach to stylistic use of English phraseological units and their diachronic development allows me to make some observations about the instantial character of the discourse form which is created by language means: the phraseological stock of language and stylistic patterns. Both are characterised by diachronic stability in the system of language. Instantial stylistic use reveals the creative potential of the human mind in the ongoing process of reflection of thought and conceptualisation of experience.

A cognitive approach reveals the following general characteristics of instantial stylistic use.

- Extension and development of the figurative meaning of PUs represent a flow of figurative thought in discourse with metonymic links as an integral part of meaning extension in instantial stylistic use;
- Diachronic stability of PUs in the system of language throughout the period of their use is grounded in figurative meaning, and semantic and stylistic cohesion;

<sup>29</sup> For sustainability of figurative thought as one of the key concepts of instantial stylistic use in discourse, see Naciscione 2006, 43 – 56, 2010, 73 – 77.

- Stylistic stability of PUs is manifest in the preservation of the same image and type of figurativeness in their base form and use in discourse;
- Stylistic patterns of instantial use function as a mental framework of figuration, preserving their stability across centuries; they form a pattern of both thought and language;
- The PU is retained in the long-term memory of language users and handed down from generation to generation, testifying to diachronic sustainability of figurative thought;
- Both the PU and the pattern are reproducible elements in new figurative instantiations in verbal and multimodal discourse: multimodality is extended language in use.

Thus, a cognitive insight into instantial stylistic use of PUs yields essential conclusions that help to sum up and comprehend the inherent qualities of functioning of PUs over time.

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