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Metaphor in writing

A study on metaphor usage in the online sports sections of two British newspapers

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Abstract

This study seeks to investigate the use of metaphors in the sports section of two British newspapers; a broadsheet, *The Telegraph*, and a tabloid, *The Mirror*, and locate whether there are any differences between them in terms of metaphor usage. To accomplish this, a total number of twenty sports articles written by four different journalists – two from each newspaper – were analyzed for both conventional and novel metaphors. In order to properly locate and identify metaphors, a method known as MIP (Metaphor Identification Procedure) was used in coordination with the Macmillan Online Dictionary as well as the Oxford English Dictionary in order to deduce the conventionality of the investigated metaphors. The yielded results then showed that both newspapers were very similar in their use of both conventional and novel metaphors, with *The Telegraph* journalists being slightly more inclined to use novel metaphorical expressions than their colleagues from *The Mirror*.

Keywords: Conceptual metaphor, conventional metaphor, MIP, novel metaphor, sports, *The Telegraph*, *The Mirror*

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1. Introduction

Everyone uses metaphors. No matter if they are used at work, in conversations with friends and family or in school, we tend to rely on metaphors to express how we feel and think about things. Metaphors are often used as tools of persuasion for their potential to arouse emotions in people (Charteris-Black, 2004:24), for relating new information to familiar information (Hermerén, 1999:145) or to give readers a sense of familiarity when they are faced with something they have little to no earlier experience of (Semino, 2008:41).

In the realm of writing, metaphors can be used to better illustrate the point of the writer's intention or experiences (Beard, 1998:106). But what do they look like in online sports journalism? Are metaphors equally used by all sports journalists, and in what ways do they express themselves creatively in this regard? These are some of the questions that this paper seeks to answer.

1.1 Aim, scope and research questions

The aim of this paper is to investigate the use of linguistic metaphors as they appear in the works of sports journalists working for two British newspapers, *The Telegraph* and *The Mirror*, and how the frequency of metaphors differs between the two as well as if writers from one newspaper are more inclined to use more novel ways of expression than the other. In order to achieve this, the following research questions are addressed:

- How do the writers of *The Telegraph* and *The Mirror* differ, if at all, in terms of conventional metaphor use?
- What are the possible reasons for the differences, if any, in metaphor usage between the two groups of journalists?
- How frequent do *The Telegraph* journalists use novel metaphors compared to their colleagues at *The Mirror*?

This paper also posits a hypothesis based upon the perceived differences between the two newspaper formats. With *The Mirror* being a tabloid newspaper with a penchant for sensational content, it seems likely that it will have not only a larger number of metaphors but also a larger number of novel metaphors as well. More information about the different newspaper formats will be presented in Section 3.1.

The scope of the study was limited to four journalists – two from each newspaper – giving a total number of twenty articles or five per journalist. None of the chosen articles exceeded 2,000 words in length.

2. Theoretical background

Alm-Arvius (1998:58) defines a *metaphor* as an implied comparison between two different things, which leads to a generalisation of meaning in a word or an expression. In other words, Alm-Arvius continues, a metaphor could be defined as being a word or an expression that is used to describe something abstract, even though it carries a different literal meaning.

However, when dealing with metaphorical language, one has to pay attention to the fact that there are while there are many different types of rhetorical expressions, they are often quite similar in appearance. Therefore, more information is required to properly define metaphors within the context of this paper.

Metaphors could be seen as cognitive mechanisms where one projects an experiential domain onto a different experiential domain so that the second one is made more comprehensible in terms of the first one (Barcelona, 2000:3). However, it is important not to confuse metaphors with other phenomenal concepts. Steen (2007:208) describes *metonymy* as being a phenomenon that occurs when “two sub-domains are linked by a mapping that includes identities within the context of an encompassing conceptual domain”. The Macmillan Online Dictionary (2011) describes metonymy as being “expressions that use the name of something else that it is closely related to”. In other words, metonymy refers to expressions that describe one thing using the name of something else that it is associated with. Some examples could better illustrate the point and the difference between metaphor and metonymy:

- (1) He’s a *dark horse* in this competition.
- (2) He must pay tribute to the *throne*.

In example (1), which is a metaphor, the image of a *dark horse* is projected onto another domain, that of “someone with a secret, especially secret ability, skill or achievement, which surprises you when you finally discover it” (macmillandictionary.com, 2011). Comparing this to example (2), which illustrates metonymy, the word *throne* is used to refer to the ruling king or queen of a country, rather than the actual throne itself. The difference between the two, as

stated earlier, is that example (1), the metaphor, projects one domain onto another unrelated domain (a dark horse and competition) whilst example (2), the metonymy, projects one domain onto another domain that it shares a *conceptual domain* with (throne for royalty). Conceptual domains are a vital part of *Conceptual Metaphor Theory*, and are based upon the idea that *conceptual* metaphors are sets of mappings across different concepts, which in turn aids in comprehending one domain in terms of another domain (Semino, 2008:226). Conceptual Metaphor Theory will be elaborated further upon in Section 2.1.

Synecdoche is a third phenomenon that is characterized by “an indirect meaning based in the presence of two domains” (Steen, 2007:209-210). In cases of synecdoche, many occurrences are closely related to metonymy in that both employ part-whole figures. To illustrate the difference between synecdoche and metonymy, Quinion (2000) uses these two examples:

(3) The *West Indies* has lost to *England*.

(4) I am going down to *the turf* to watch my horse.

Example (3) is a synecdoche, Quinion states, as West Indies and England are used as a whole to describe a specific part. In this case, it is applied on the teams of the respective nations. In example (4), which illustrates metonymy, ‘the turf’ is linked to the concept of horse racing without actually being a part of it. Comparing (4) to (2), they both speak about concepts that are symbolized by other words that are not necessarily part of the whole.

Similes are similar to metaphors in that they both are methods for relating to one thing in terms of another (Semino, 2008:16). One difference between the two is that similes usually appear in the form of explicit statements that compare two different things with each other, which are conveyed through expressions such as ‘like’, ‘as’, ‘as if’ and so on. To illustrate this, Semino uses an extract from Zadie Smith’s (2005) novel *On Beauty*:

They were both nodding a lot. Sadness swept over Jerome. They had nothing to say to each other. *A five-year age gap between siblings is like a garden that needs constant attention.* Even three months apart allows the weeds to grow up between you. (Smith, 2006:403 in Semino, 2008:16)

Here, the simile is used to describe why the two siblings are having difficulties speaking by comparing their age difference to a garden that needs to be tended to constantly. This, Semino (2008:16) states, could be seen as the same type of linguistic realization as metaphor. By

using the simile of a garden, the simile invites readers to project material from this source onto the target concept of the five-year age gap.

Idioms are defined by Macmillan (2011) as “an expression whose meaning is different from the meaning of the individual words”. An example of an idiomatic expression would be *to kick the bucket*, which carries the meaning of ‘to die’ – which is completely different from the meaning of the words *kick* and *bucket*. There are many idioms that make use of metaphorical words as part of fixed or semi-fixed expressions (Semino, 2008:21). Some of these expressions are, Semino argues, somewhat transparent in their metaphoricity which results in most people arriving at their point simply based upon general world knowledge such as in ‘alarm bells ring’. Some expressions are more or less opaque, like ‘passing the buck’ (referencing to a poker practice used in nineteenth-century America), as the scenario they are describing are no longer familiar to today’s language users.

Metaphors can appear in many different shapes, but two distinctions are important to notice: conventional and novel metaphors. Conventional metaphors could be described as being phrases and words that are socially acknowledged and that often appear in dictionaries along with a more basic, non-metaphorical meaning (Semino, 2005:227), whereas novel metaphors could be defined as expressions that are used unconventionally outside of the mappings that they are normally associated with (Deignan, 2005:35). These will be described in more detail in Sections 2.1 and 2.2 along with their effect and importance in the realm of writing.

2.1 Conceptual and linguistic metaphors

Conceptual Metaphor Theory is one of the most widely known approaches taken in writing that relates to metaphor (Deignan, 2005:4). It is based upon the work done by Lakoff & Johnson (1980) where they argue that the way we express ourselves metaphorically is based upon underlying metaphors rooted in our conceptual system, and that how we relate to things – such as life, death and love – is connected and understood through our use of metaphors.

A *conceptual* metaphor could be defined as sets of mappings across different concepts, where one can understand conceptual domains in terms of other domains (Semino, 2008:226). To better illustrate this, Semino uses the conceptual metaphor HAPPY IS UP, which was originally presented by Lakoff and Johnson (1980:15) and later used also by Deignan (2005:14). In this example, the domain of direction (UP) is used to illustrate the domain of emotion (HAPPY). The domain that is being described metaphorically here, the domain of

emotion, is what is known as the *target domain*. The other domain that provides the metaphors – in this case direction – is typically the more concrete domain and is known as the *source domain*. In the example of HAPPY IS UP, the understanding and traits of the source domain are mapped onto the target domain. Through expressions like “I’m feeling *up*”, “That *boosted* my confidence” and “Feeling *on top* of things”, the conceptual metaphor is realized (Deignan, 2005:14).

When discussing conceptual metaphors, it is important to realize that they very rarely appear in speech or writing (Deignan, 2005:14). As such, conceptual metaphors could be seen as existing only at a level of thought, requiring metaphorical *expressions – linguistic metaphors* – to become realized. The term linguistic metaphor refers to the realization of conceptual mappings, and their meanings are often described in two terms: *topic* and *vehicle* (Deignan, 2005:14). The vehicle is a symbol for the literal meaning of a word, whereas the topic represents the word in its metaphorical meaning. Once again using HAPPY IS UP as an example, UP represents the vehicle with its meaning of “direction away from the ground”, and it also carries the metaphorical meaning of HAPPY.

2.2 Conventional and novel metaphors

Charteris-Black (2004:17) describes metaphors as being “a communicative resource by which language users may enhance the expressiveness of their message through the most economical means available to them”. By doing so, one can choose between using either widely known metaphors or resort to coining entirely new ones. Depending on the choice, the metaphor will be more or less *conventional*. Conventional metaphors could be described as phrases that originally were used metaphorically, but over the course of time have turned literal. To illustrate a conventional metaphor, Semino (2005:227) uses the noun ‘crossroads’. Conventionally, the word is used as a metaphor for situations where a decision has to be made, e.g. “I’m at a crossroads: should I get married or not?” This also ties in with the definition found in the Macmillan Dictionary Online, where being at a crossroads is defined as “to be at a stage in your life when you have to make a very important decision” (macmillandictionary.com, 2010). This highlights another aspect of a conventional linguistic metaphor, i.e. its meaning is normally included in dictionaries alongside with the non-metaphorical meaning – in this case, a place where two roads cross. In short, a conventional metaphor is a socially recognized word or phrase that may carry one or several metaphorical meanings (Semino, 2005:227).

However, as history has shown, conventional metaphors may also adopt more novel forms (Steen, 2007:6). The word *floods* is a common conventional metaphor in the English language that carries the meaning of a great quantity, but after the tsunami incident in Asia in 2004, *floods* became replaced by *tsunami* as a more vivid form of expression that led to a revitalization of the conventional metaphor and the motivation behind it. This, in turn, led to the word *tsunami* becoming conventionalized enough to be used by both a Dutch newspaper reporting on a film festival, “a tsunami of documentaries”, as well as by a Dutch right-wing politician referring to the influx of Muslims (Steen, 2007:6). Novel linguistic metaphors could therefore be seen as expressions that are used both unconventionally outside of the conceptual mappings they are normally associated with (Deignan, 2005:35) as well as in relation to other, more conventional conceptual metaphors (Semino, 2005:229). Aitchison (2007:180-181) posits that novel metaphors do not automatically become set in place once uttered or written. In order for novel metaphors to gain foothold and become accepted, they need to resonate enough on a level that captures the feeling of the current cultural climate. If not, creative metaphors run the risk of being too clichéd and repetitive for people to even bother about them.

2.3 Identification of metaphors

In order to properly identify metaphors in written discourse and text, a method known as the *Metaphor Identification Procedure* (henceforth MIP) or the *Pragglejaz procedure* (Semino, 2008:11; Steen, 2007:88) can be employed. MIP is specifically devised to be used for the identification of metaphorical expressions. This procedure focuses on the analysis of metaphorical expressions – linguistic metaphors – which are distinctively different from conceptual metaphors in that the former are seen as realizations of the latter.

An interpretation done using MIP does not imply that the writer, speaker or reader will consciously recognize the words as metaphorical (Semino, 2008:13). What the procedure shows is that the particular use of a word can be analysed as being metaphorical when compared to its other relevant uses, and that it therefore has the *potential* to be recognized as being metaphorical.

The term 'lexical units' needs to be discussed, as different researchers may define lexical units differently (Semino, 2008:12). In the use of MIP, there are no unproblematic units of analysis when investigating metaphoricity. Semino uses the example of the expression *a mountain has been climbed* to illustrate this, where it could be argued that the whole clause

should be treated as a single linguistic metaphor as it provides a single metaphorical description of something that has been achieved. On the other hand, the expression can also be analysed word for word: 'mountain' could refer to problems that have to be solved, whereas 'climbed' could mean the process of dealing with those problems.

In line with Semino (2008:12), this study will follow that decisions on the degree of metaphoricity can be made on individual words as well as in multi-word expressions. This encompasses both individual words, which refer to strings of characters with spaces on either side, as well as multi-word expressions that can be treated as single lexical units when the meaning cannot be retrieved from the words that compose them. Examples of this would be *of course* and *all right*.

2.4 Writing and metaphor

In journalism, the writer rarely has control over the values and beliefs that a reader could deduce from the use of language in a text (Fowler, 1991:47). What a writer can do, however, is to use his or her skills to emphasize stylistic diversity, vitality and individuality in the written text. Newspapers, Fowler continues, have to be lively and lend themselves to being entertaining to their readers.

The work of a journalist revolves around making places or events tangible to its readers and make them feel like they are eyewitnesses to the story themselves (Larsson, 2001:90). One way of doing this is to employ language play to catch the reader's attention (Crystal, 1998:104-105). Playful language, Crystal claims, is the result of writers appealing to readers by simply 'being clever' by showing off their ingenuity with language. The purpose of this is that unexpected language attracts the attention of a reader and offers an extra dimension of enjoyment.

One of the most common domains for metaphors deals with conflict (Charteris-Black, 2004:113). Words normally associated with war like *attack*, *defense*, *victory* and *defeat* have all become conventionalized metaphors in press reporting, ranging from sports to finance. This, Charteris-Black claims, creates a language which is competitive and also reinforces social systems by placing a high value on many different forms of competitiveness. As a result, metaphors referring to war have become conventionalized in sports and the other way around.

Aitchison (2007:116) speaks of journalists using words that carry a certain amount of 'weight' to describe a tragedy such as the September 11th attacks. Depending on the gravity of the incident, more and more weight can noticeably be added to the reporting in order to convey different degrees of added drama. Overall, Aitchison contends, some happenings do not need to be fully dramatized, as they carry a sense of drama and intrigue on their own.

Sports metaphors have the potential to create a sense of familiarity with the general public due to their public appeal and popularity (Semino, 2008:99). They provide familiar examples of scenarios that generate enthusiasm and emotional investment in the reader as well as often simple, visual representations of situations that belong to other source domains than just sports. Metaphor has traditionally been considered a highly creative phenomenon (Semino, 2008:42) which has led to an abundance of analyses throughout the years, dealing with demonstrating the value of artistry and significance in using different kinds of metaphor. Within this tradition, writers have been considered the foremost creators of metaphors that gradually lose their metaphorical value until they become adopted into conventional language use. The sentiment of writers being primary creators of metaphor is echoed by Andrews (2005:82) who lists three golden rules for writing: i) grab their attention, ii) keep their attention and iii) leave them satisfied. However, metaphors are nowadays so common that it is very rare that their figurativeness is noticed (Aitchison, 2007:167). Still, they are obvious tools for grabbing the reader's attention and for livening up otherwise dull sections of a newspaper.

Stylistically, metaphors in writing can be used to excite readers and show off the writer's reach of imagination with varying degrees of intensity (Williams, 1990:163-164). As such, it can be used to give life to all forms of written works depending on which end should be met. They could also invite trouble, Williams warns, if the writer is not sensitive to what the literal meaning of a metaphor can impose upon its readers.

2.5 Journalism online

Online sports coverage differs from newspapers and broadcast media in that it is a quicker method of delivery as well as being presented differently (Andrews, 2005:152). It is also possible to report live either through live commentary or through visual coverage. In terms of style, Andrews (2005:153) claims, sports news written for web pages should refrain from using too florid writing and instead rely on being simple and factual in order to make it easier for the reader to absorb the content of the written work.

Readers value their possibilities to respond to information as much as reception (Hall, 2001:14). As the Internet could be seen as arguably the most resilient form of two-way communications technology there is, the reader gains the possibility to respond through different means in order to intervene or extend a discourse. This, Hall (2005:15) claims, has not always been a welcome change in the information society.

Comparing the traditional media of printing and broadcasting, media conglomerates have to contend with an almost unlimited amount of bandwidth and content that the monopoly they once had is rendered moot (Hall, 2005:16). At the time of Hall's publishing of his work, Internet volume traffic was doubling every 100 days. Roughly estimated, this means that between 10 and 14 million news computers join the network on an annual basis. This could, Hall states, mean that more people will receive their news from an online source rather than the traditional newspaper.

3. Material and method

3.1 Material

The material gathered for this thesis came from the sports pages of two British newspapers: *The Mirror*, and *The Telegraph*. *The Mirror* is a tabloid newspaper, which according to the definition found in the Macmillan Online Dictionary (2011) means “a newspaper with fairly small pages mostly containing stories about famous people and not much serious news.” Hall (2001:138) contends that tabloid magazines such as *The Mirror* tailor their content, both newsworthy and informative, to be entertaining. Stories are, Hall continues, “presented in narrative forms which gratify their audiences with recognisable conventions and the catharsis of closure” (Hall, 2001:138). *The Telegraph* is a broadsheet-style newspaper, which Macmillan (2011) defines as being “a newspaper printed on large sheets of paper. Broadsheets are generally believed to contain more serious news than tabloid newspapers, which are smaller, although many broadsheets are now printed in compact size”. Aitchison (2007:74) mentions that they are normally seen as serious newspapers with a high number of words that contrasts with the entertainment-driven tabloid newspapers. In order to ensure a sufficient amount of material with wide enough coverage, a total number of twenty articles, five per journalist, were investigated for metaphor use and taken from the written online columns of four different football writers from both newspapers – JC and DL from *The Daily Mirror*, along with JW and DW from *The Telegraph*. The number of words in the gathered material

consisted of 7,952 words for *The Telegraph* and 6,922 words for *The Daily Mirror*, giving 14,874 words in total for both.

In general, media organisations have *style books*, which are intended to provide a set of guidelines on matters such as preferred spellings, punctuation, grammar and descriptions (Andrews, 2005:12). Style books may also provide aid in how to deal with issues such as disabled people or racism. *The Telegraph* provides an elaborate style book on their website, giving guidance in terms of word choices, grammar and syntax, banned words and basic principles to follow. With regards to this study, the style book of *The Telegraph* is adamant in that wordplay such as puns and other means of vividness are not of interest in the online edition of their newspaper. Furthermore, a list of banned words is provided to give examples of redundant words and phrases that their journalists should avoid in order to maintain their professionalism. As a self-styled professional, educated newspaper, they uphold the rule of being quality media that is accurate without the need for sensationalism.

Alas, no concrete style book could be found at the website of *The Mirror*. They do, however, subscribe to the Code of Practice, a voluntary code for the newspaper industry that is being administered by the Press Complaints Commission. *The Mirror* also lists where to send complaints in case of them having “fallen below their usual high standards”.

3.2 Method

All of the data analyzed in the study went through the aforementioned method of identifying metaphors known as MIP. MIP holds the advantage that it is not only a useful tool for experimental researchers who need to validate their experimental materials (Steen, 2007:88), but it also forces analysts using the method to be explicit, precise and consistent and not rely on intuition to deal with cases that might be problematic (Semino, 2008:13).

Once the level of metaphoricity was investigated, I made use of both the Macmillan Online Dictionary as well as the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary in order to clarify whether the investigated lexical unit had been integrated into conventional language, or if it was being used in a more novel and unfamiliar way. The steps of how to employ MIP follows below, along with an example of the method in practice:

1. Read the entire text-discourse to establish a general understanding of the meaning.
2. Determine the lexical units in the text-discourse.

3a. For each lexical unit in the text, establish its meaning in context, that is, how it applies to an entity, relation or attribute in the situation evoked by the text (contextual meaning). Take into account what comes before and after the lexical unit.

3b. For each lexical unit, determine if it has a more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts than the one in the given context. For our purposes, basic meanings tend to be

- More concrete (what they evoke is easier to imagine, see, hear, feel, smell and taste);
- Related to bodily action;
- More precise (as opposed to vague);
- Historically older.

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

3c. If the lexical unit has a more basic current/contemporary meaning in other contexts than the given context, decide whether the contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning but can be understood in comparison with it.

4. If yes, mark the lexical unit as metaphorical.

(Steen, 2007:88-89)

In order to more concretely show the workings of MIP, an invented example will be used to demonstrate the procedure.

Step 1: Read the entire text to establish a general understanding of the meaning. To illustrate this, we will use the invented example that follows:

(5) The crowd applauded Joe's performance in the ring. The chants of "Joe! Joe! Joe!" echoed in the fully seated arena as a replay of Joe hitting his opponent with a big *shot* to the head was broadcasted on the giant TV screen.

In this example, the general meaning of the text concerns a pugilistic competition of sorts like a boxing or mixed martial arts match.

Step 2: Determine the lexical unit in the text. Here, we will investigate the degree of metaphoricity in the word *shot*.

Step 3a: contextual meaning. In this context, we can deduce that the noun *shot* is used to refer to some kind of impactful strike like a punch, as it is used to describe the way Joe hits his opponent in the match.

Step 3b: basic meaning. The basic meaning of the lexical unit *shot* according to Macmillan is “a bullet that is fired from a gun” (macmillandictionary.com, 2011). We can then confirm that a more basic, contemporary meaning of the word exists, as the definition found in Macmillan is more concrete and precise description than a strike.

Step 3c: Contextual meaning vs. Basic meaning. The word *shot* has another more basic meaning than the one found in the context of the example, and they contrast with each other (a bullet fired from a gun is contrasted when compared to striking another person, as shooting someone is different from hitting someone). But, the contextual meaning of the strike can be understood in terms of hitting someone so hard that it feels like being shot.

Step 4: Metaphor or not? Since the contextual meaning of *shot* differs from the basic meaning, but still can be understood when compared with the basic meaning, we can conclude that the word *shot* is being used metaphorically here.

In accordance with the aforementioned characteristics of metaphor in Section 2.2, metaphors were considered conventional in their use if a lexicalized entry for the metaphors existed in either the Macmillan Online Dictionary or the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary. If a lexical unit was deemed as being metaphorical through the use of MIP, but was found lacking a lexicalized entry as well as making use of unconventional mappings across domains, it would be considered novel in its use.

3.3 Problems and limitations

One limitation of this study might arise from the fact that only two dictionaries were used in order to deduce whether a lexical unit has become conventional enough to be lexicalized. While both the Macmillan Online Dictionary as well as the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary employs the use of corpora in order to present a wide array of words that also hold metaphorical meanings – both in the past as well as the present – it is possible that the study might have been more unified if paired alongside even more dictionaries in order to encompass as wide an area as possible. Also, there might be a slight issue regarding the use of MIP mentioned by Steen (2007:89). Although the method has been tested over a number of years, it produces reliable results “fairly well” between analysts who display “fairly high”

levels of agreement between their analyzed data. This might be a somewhat risky means of investigating metaphor use, but as stated by Steen (2007:88), MIP is a procedure that might be applied by researchers wanting to confirm that their experimental material is viable. Semino (2008:12) also points out that researchers might define lexical units differently depending on their goals and theoretical knowledge. This might be an issue in the light of how other researchers view this study. Another limitation is that the gathered data only concerns four writers from two different newspapers. For a more representative result of how metaphor is used, more newspapers as well as more writers' articles must be investigated. Another issue might stem from the fact that only *The Telegraph* provides a solid style sheet that their journalists must adhere to. With the lack of a distinct style sheet from *The Mirror*, it is difficult to deduce what repercussion this might have on the study as a whole.

4. Results and discussion

In this section, the metaphors of the analyzed texts from *The Telegraph* and *The Daily Mirror* are presented. The results are divided into two sections: 4.1 for *The Telegraph* and 4.2 for *The Daily Mirror*, followed by a comparative analysis and discussion in Sections 4.3.

4.1 Metaphors in *The Telegraph*

From the investigated material of 10 articles from *The Telegraph*, a total number of 84 metaphors of either the conventional or the novel variety were found. They are presented below in Figure 1.

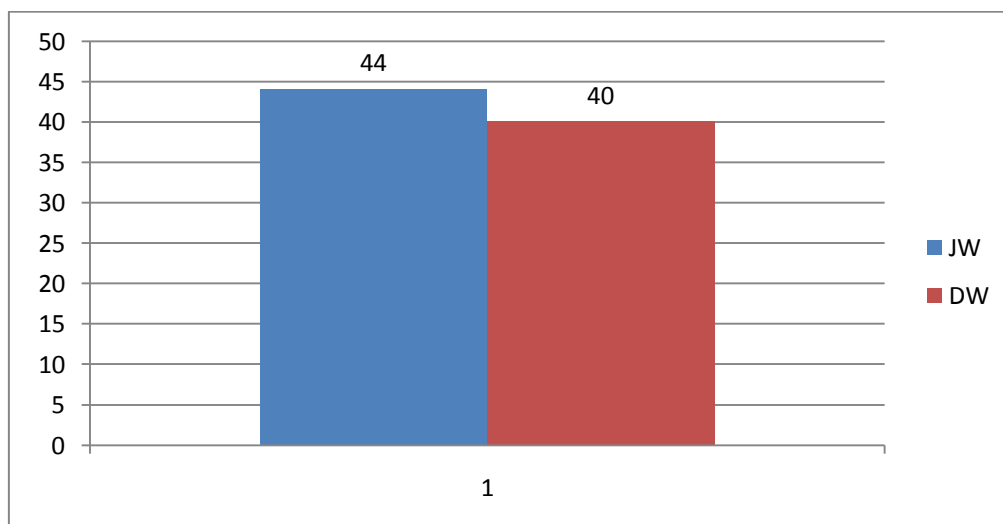


Figure 1 Total number of metaphors appearing in *The Telegraph* texts

As evident from Figure 1, JW was the writer using more metaphors of the two with 44, whereas DW used a total of 40.

The number of conventional metaphors in *The Telegraph* texts constituted 77 lexical units. Their distribution is presented in Figure 2 below.

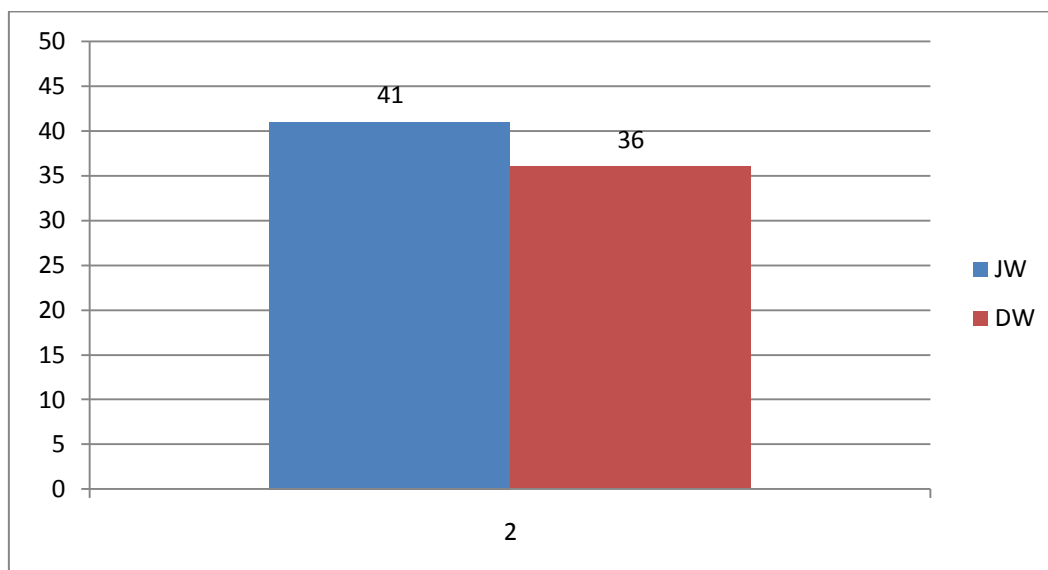


Figure 2 Total number of conventional metaphors in *The Telegraph* texts

As Figure 2 shows, JW is the most frequent user of conventional metaphors with 41 over DW's 36. Examples (6) and (7) below present one conventional metaphor from each writer:

(6) To the outsider, since this is a team game, ridding the operation every few months of the man who *nurtures* team spirit seems entirely counterproductive. (JW, *The Telegraph* 14.04.2011)

(7) It is November 29 that is the greatest *stain* on Mourinho's career so far: the 5-0 humbling by Barcelona in the Clasico. (DW, *The Telegraph* 14.04.2011)

In example (6), the word *nurtures* is deemed as being metaphorical as it is a word that, according to Macmillan, refers to "to provide care and attention necessary for a young child, animal or plant to grow and develop" (2011) whereas Oxford refers to the word as meaning "to care for and protect somebody/something while they are growing and developing" (2011). In this context, the meaning of team spirit contrasts with animals, plants and young children, but can still be understood in terms of the more conventional definitions found in both of the dictionaries. Hence, the word *nurtures* is considered metaphorical. Example (7) gives the word *stain*, which in this context refers to a 5-0 loss for Mourinho's team Real Madrid against their worst rivals, FC Barcelona. Here, it could be seen as the domain of failure (DEFEAT) being projected onto the domain of blemishes (STAIN) resulting in the conceptual metaphor of UNCLEANLINESS IS BAD.

The number of novel metaphors in texts from *The Telegraph* constituted 8 lexical units or 9% of the total quantity. Their distribution is presented in Figure 3 below.

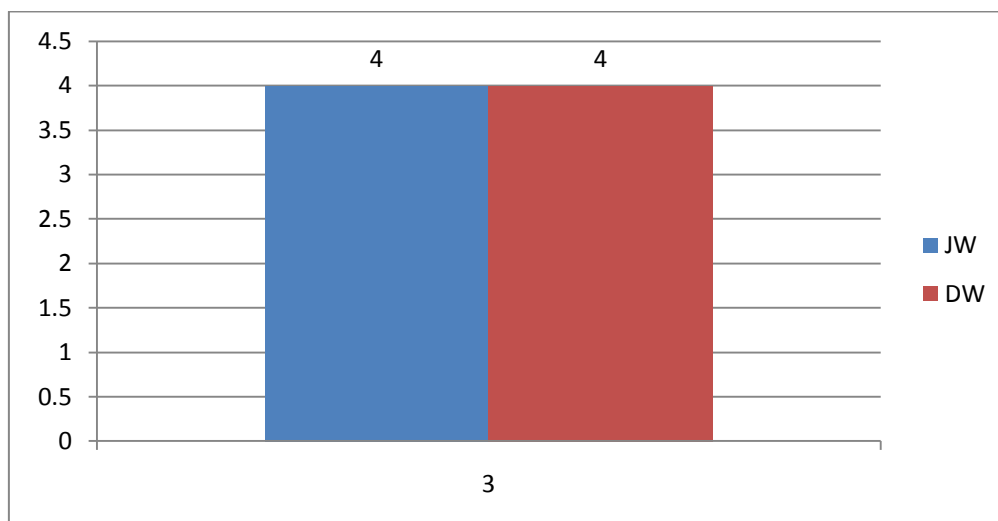


Figure 3 Total number of novel metaphors appearing in *The Telegraph* texts

Both JW and DW use the same amount of novel metaphors with 4 instances each. In example (8), one instance of novel metaphor use from JW will be presented, and example (9) will present one from DW:

- (8) With the *electric-heeled* Javier Hernandez told to harry Terry on every turn, the home captain did not have the chance to fire those passes to the wings he so likes. (JW, *The Telegraph* 12.04.2011)
- (9) He has fostered co-operation in a dressing room dripping with medals despite his own modest achievements, while also keeping the *supernova* ego of Zlatan Ibrahimovic in check. (DW, *The Telegraph* 09.03.2011)

Following MIP, we can deduce that *electric-heeled* refers to the speed of Javier Hernandez in this context. Using both Oxford as well as Macmillan as our points of reference, a more conventional or basic meaning in other contexts was not found when looking for *electric-heeled*. As one trademark of a novel metaphor is that it is not lexicalized in dictionaries, example (8) is considered to be novel in its use. In example (9), Macmillan (2011) gives the definition of supernova as meaning “an exploding star that produces an extremely bright light”, whereas Oxford describes supernova as “a star that suddenly becomes much brighter because it is exploding”. Adding the fact that this definition appears alongside the word *ego*, it is arguably evident that *supernova* is here used to describe the size of Zlatan Ibrahimovic’s ego. Considering the fact that *supernova* is not lexicalized in dictionaries as being used in this

manner, along with the fact that the word is understandable in this context when compared to the more basic meaning, we can consider the word to be a novel metaphor.

The amassed results from *The Telegraph* show that the majority of the used metaphorical expressions belong to the conventional category of metaphor. Figure 4 aids in clarifying this.

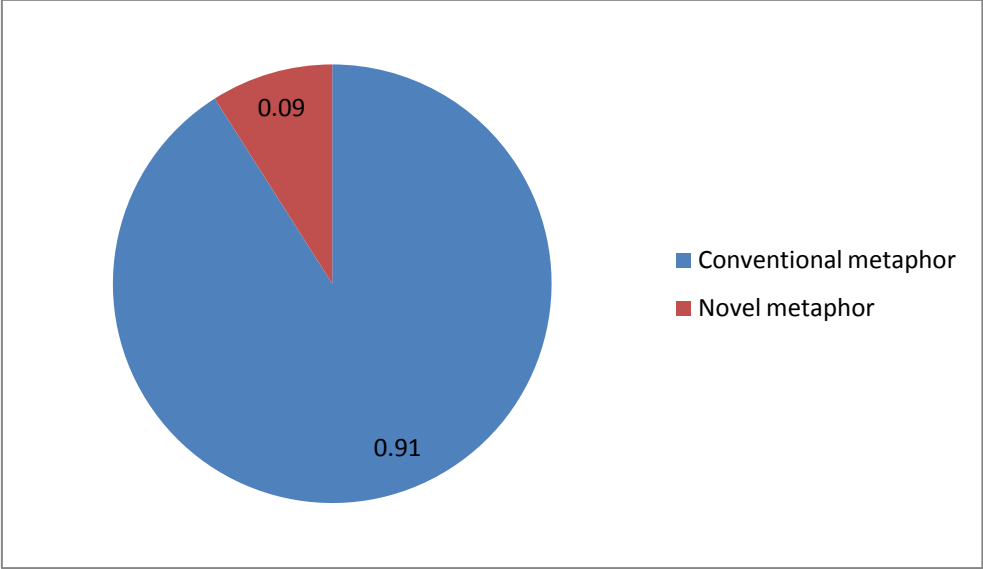


Figure 4 Metaphor allocations in *The Telegraph*

4.2 Metaphors in the Mirror

From the investigated material of 10 articles from *The Mirror*, a total number of 82 metaphors of either the conventional or novel variety were found. They are presented here in Figure 5.

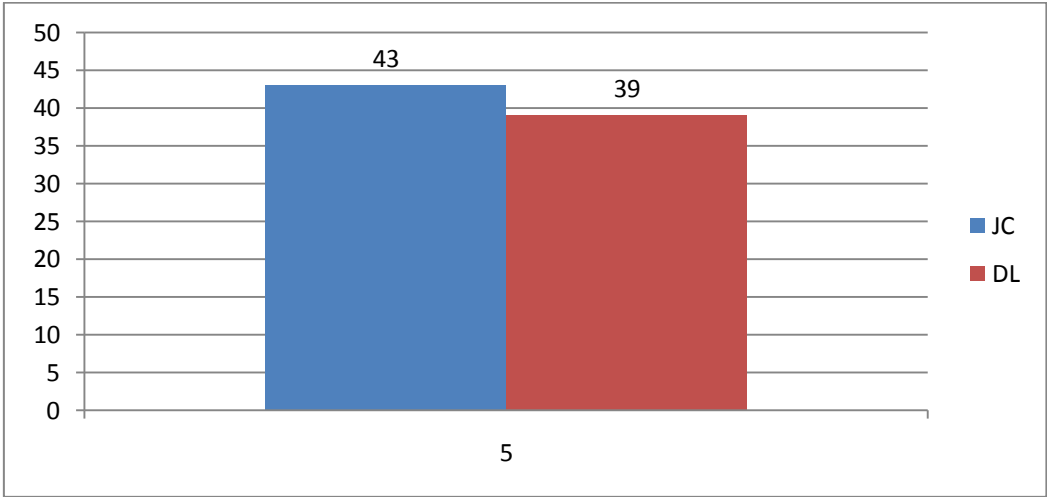


Figure 5 Total number of metaphors appearing in *The Mirror* texts

Of the 82 metaphors found in *The Mirror*, 77 were considered to be conventional in their use which equals 93% of the total data sample. They are located in Figure 6 below.

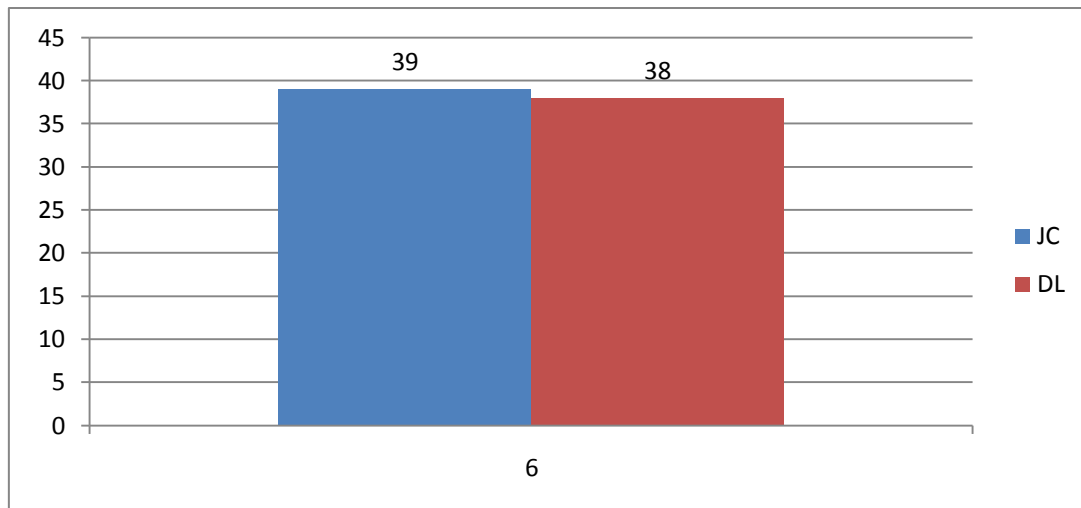


Figure 6 Total number of conventional metaphors appearing in *The Mirror* texts

Examples (10) and (11) below present one conventional metaphor from each writer:

(10) When Arsenal led their late rally, Wilshere was at the *forefront*, driving forward. (John Cross, *The Mirror* 17.02.2011)

(11) Just ask the Port Vale defender Exodus Geohagon, who described last month his horror at being called a ‘n*****’ in a *torrent* of racial abuse by his own fans. (Darren Lewis, *The Mirror* 13.04.2011)

Example (10) lists a conventional metaphor referring to Wilshere being the driving force behind Arsenal’s late rally. From the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2011), ‘being at the forefront of something’ refers to an idiomatic phrase meaning “in or into an important or leading position in a particular group or activity”. Since being in front of something does not necessarily mean to lead a group or activity, it can be deemed as being metaphorical. In example (11), the word *torrent* is investigated. Macmillan (2011) describes the word as meaning “a large amount of something, especially something unpleasant”, meaning that it has been lexicalized as being conventional in the English language. The second definition listed at Macmillan (2011) states “a fast and powerful flow of liquid, especially water”. Oxford defines the word as meaning “a large amount of water moving very quickly” or “a large amount of something that comes suddenly and violently” (2011). Using MIP, the word *torrent* in the context of this example has a more conventional meaning in other contexts, but it is still understandable when comparing the two. As a lexicalized definition exists, we can assume the lexical unit to be a conventional metaphor.

The number of novel metaphors in texts from *The Mirror* constituted a total of 5 lexical units. Their distribution is presented in Figure 7 below.

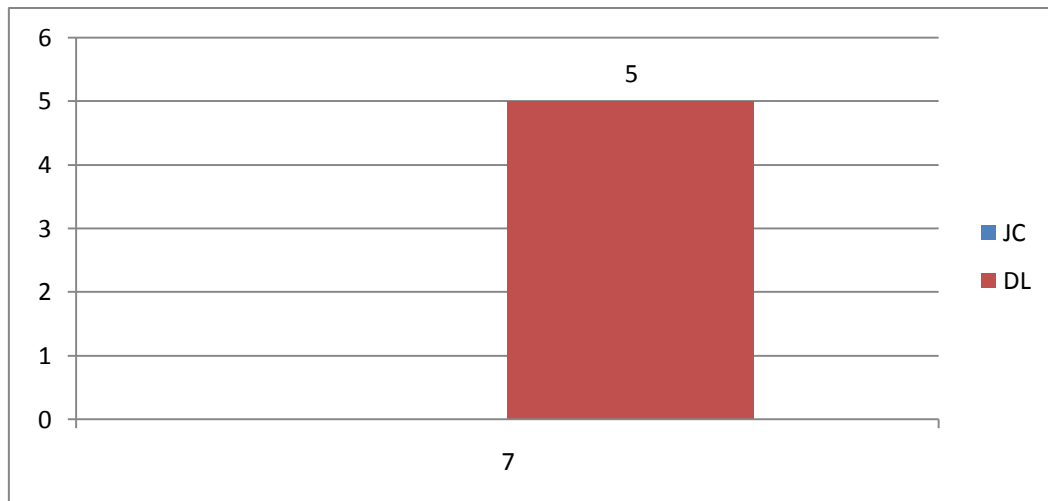


Figure 7 Total number of novel metaphors appearing in *The Mirror* texts

As can be seen from Figure 7, only DL employs the use of novel metaphors with 5 instances. In examples (12) and (13), two instances of novel metaphor use will be presented.

(12) How is it right that David Sullivan, the joint-owner at West Ham, gets *mullered* for not supporting his team at Manchester City, but some Arsenal fans think Fabregas should be spared similar scrutiny? (DL, *The Daily Mirror* 25.05.2011)

(13) Hacks like myself took a ferocious hit from the Liverpool fans whenever we even dared to suggest the striker's future might lie elsewhere. The truth is, however, Torres hoodwinked the Reds' supporters. He wanted out long, long before he was eventually *airlifted* out by Roman Abramovich on deadline day last month. (DL, *The Daily Mirror* 17.02.2011)

In example (12), it can be surmised from the context that the word *mullered* refers to David Sullivan being on the receiving end of something negative, whilst Fabregas evades the same treatment although seemingly doing something that should evoke the same reaction as in Sullivan's case. Neither Macmillan (2011) nor Oxford (2011) lists the word *mullered* or any of its forms in their dictionaries, which could mean that the word is fairly new in its use and therefore has yet to be conventionalized. In example (13), the context refers to striker Fernando Torres having transferred, or *airlifted*, from Liverpool to another club. The Macmillan (2011) definition for *airlifted* says "to take people or things into or away from a place by aircraft, especially in a dangerous situation", and Oxford (2011) describes it as being "to take somebody/something to or from an area by aircraft, especially in an emergency or when roads are closed or dangerous". Through the use of MIP, we can then establish that a more basic meaning exists for the word as someone being rescued via aircraft is different

from someone transferring from one club to another. While the meanings do contrast, we can still understand the word in its context here when compared to the definitions found in the dictionaries, marking the word *airlift* as being metaphorical and non-conventional in its use.

The results from *The Mirror* show that a vast majority of the metaphorical expressions extracted belong to the conventional category of metaphor. Figure 8 aids in clarifying this.

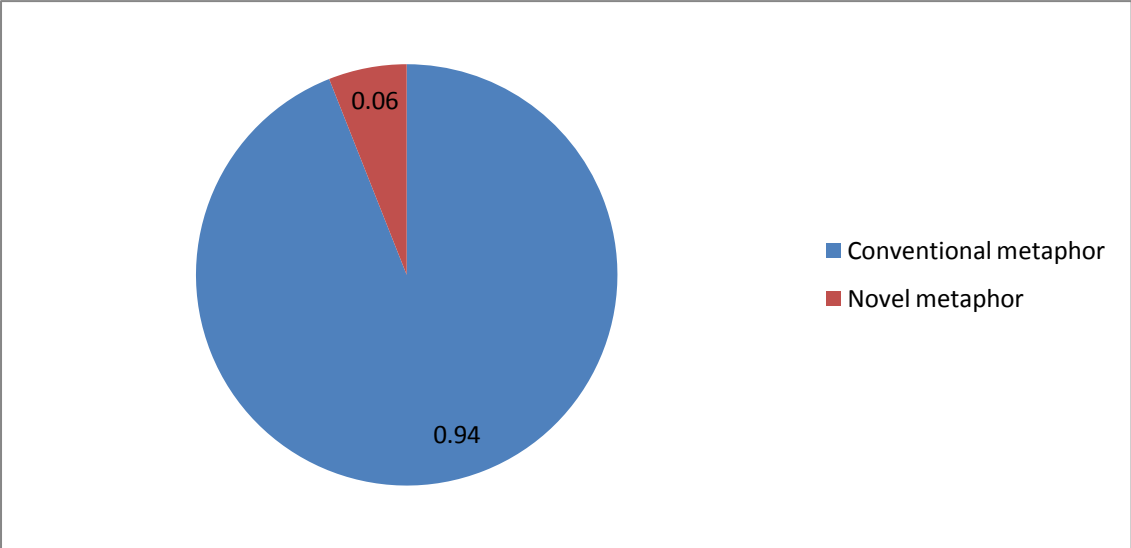


Figure 8 Metaphor allocations in *The Mirror* texts

From the results of both *The Telegraph* and *The Mirror*, the following charts of metaphor frequencies can be established. Figure 9 illustrates the comparison between the two newspapers and their total use of metaphor, whereas Figure 10 shows the comparison between all of the four journalists.

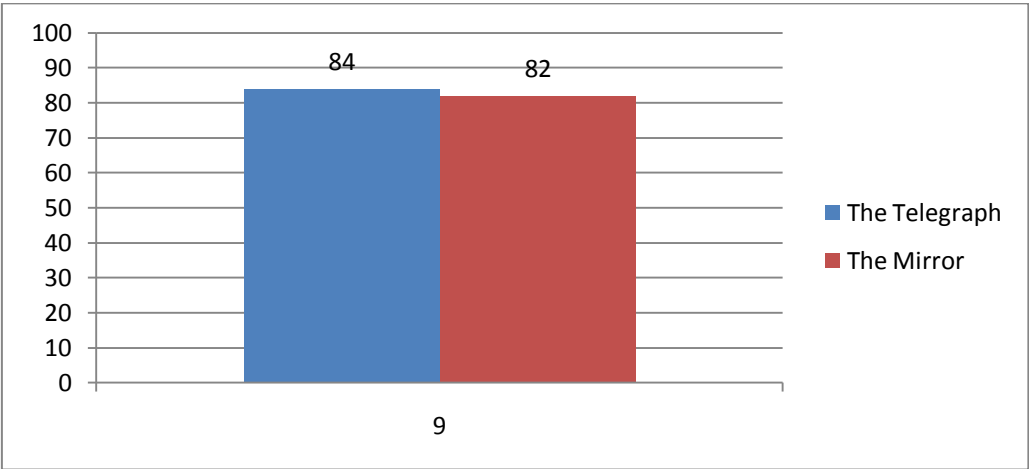


Figure 9 comparative charts of total metaphor appearances in *The Telegraph* and *The Mirror*

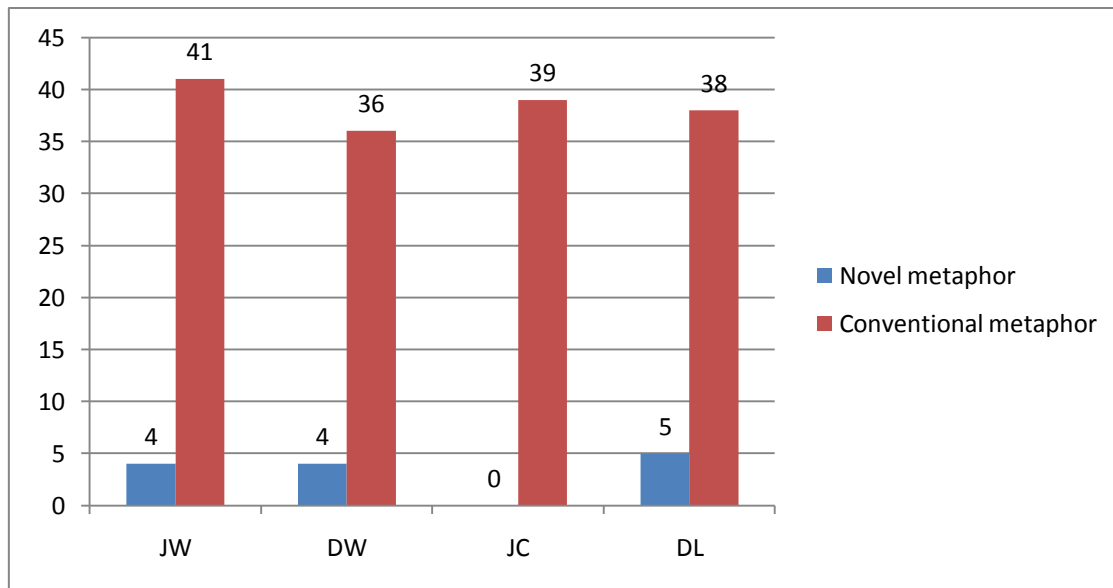


Figure 10 comparative charts of metaphor use between *The Telegraph* (JW and DW) and *The Mirror* (JC and DL)

As can be deduced from Figure 9, the total use of metaphor is just slightly more frequent in the broadsheet newspaper, *The Telegraph*, than in the tabloid, *The Mirror*. The sports sections of the two newspapers are equal in terms of conventional metaphor use with 77 each, with the discernable factor between the two being the difference in novel metaphor use where *The Telegraph* holds a marginal majority with 8 over *The Mirror's* 5. As Figure 10 shows, JW of *The Telegraph* uses the largest amount of metaphors with a total number of 45 followed by DL of *The Mirror* with 43. DL was also the writer that used the most novel metaphorical expressions with 5.

4.3 Discussion

From the results of this study, it is clear that there are few discernable differences between the two newspapers in terms of how they use metaphor in writing. The fact that conventional metaphor use is equal in both newspapers could be seen as being in line with the words of Charteris-Black (2004:17) in Section 2:2 that some conventional metaphors might have been considered widely metaphorical once, but over time they have lost that value and become literal. This is supported by Aitchison (2007:167, 180) who states that metaphor has become such a common occurrence that they are hardly noticed for their figurative meaning anymore. Metaphors are, Aitchison (2007:167) continues, an obvious and attention-grabbing tool that livens up often dull reports such as sports reporting. Considering this, it stands within reason to argue that within such a focused genre of writing as sports - and more specifically, football - the number of people reading are in ample abundance. Therefore, it is reasonable to think

that the high use of conventional metaphors in both *The Telegraph* as well as *The Mirror* is a conscious choice in order to entice their readers to start or to continue reading.

The fact that the data for this study was gathered from the online editions is an interesting facet, as online-based sports reporting differ from broadcast media and newspapers in that it is a quicker method both in terms of delivery as well as presentation (Andrews, 2005:152-153.) While it holds the advantage that it lends itself well to fast coverage of news and the possibility of live reporting, it differs from the traditional newspaper in terms of writing in that it is more difficult to understand due to the online format. In terms of style, Andrews continues, online texts should be simple and factual as online-based features do not offer much in terms of scope for ornate language. This is a bit of a clash between the results from the data gathered in this study, as there was plenty of room for conventional metaphors and also, although not investigated in-depth, similes and idioms. One reason for this is possibly explained by Hall (2001:16) who posits that the Internet has led to an increased possibility for readers to interactively participate in the discussion through comments. As readers have been given these tools, it might be more feasible to maintain simplicity in an online-based text as use of florid language could entice the readers to engage themselves into the news and express their own opinions.

With the aforementioned increase in computer usage among people (Hall, 2001:16), one could easily spot how the advancement of technology has influenced online journalism. Considering all the newspapers that provide online services all over the world, along with the fact that newspapers have to constantly and quickly report what is happening in the present times, it is understandable why language use has to be diminished in favour of faster produced content. Re-addressing Andrews' earlier statement about the simplicity and properness of online sports reporting, it is easy to see in light of Hall's work why online sports features must be wary of their florid use of language. Still, it could be argued that with such an even number of metaphors for the articles used in this study, novel metaphors are perhaps best when used scarcely in an online environment while conventional metaphors might be more viable to employ in sports writing as long as they do not alienate any potential readers.

As both Semino (2008:42) and Andrews (2005:82) maintain that writers are the foremost creators of metaphors, it could be argued that the three rules set by Andrews are tightly interwoven with the use of metaphor, as it is a proven means of expression to display style and wit in written works. But, if so, how come the numbers of novel metaphors were so

distinctively low in comparison to the conventional ones? And how come *The Telegraph*, a traditional broadsheet, had more novel metaphors than the entertainment-driven tabloid in *The Mirror*? With the aforementioned three golden rules in mind, it might be easy to think that novel metaphors should be rampant, as new and peculiar language use distinctively singles out one writer and separates him/her from the rest of the pack. However, with Aitchison's (2007:180) words in mind, novel metaphors have to be in accordance with the current climate. If they do not, they run the risk of feeling weak and nonsensical, thus alienating the readers. There is the possibility that both JW and DW of *The Telegraph* made use of some metaphors that were novel in the sense that they have yet to be conventionalized, but are still understandable enough by the general public. If that is the case, then it could be considered feasible to use such metaphors even though *The Telegraph* maintains a high requirement of professionalism and quality in its journalists. This, in combination with the results from *The Mirror*, could be an underlying reason for the discrepancy in novel metaphors as well as why the journalists in *The Mirror* differed as they did.

The issue with using MIP to identify metaphors turned out to be a very small issue in the end – on the contrary, the method turned out to be an excellent tool for identifying metaphors in both newspapers. Naturally, the earlier voiced notion that the results might be interpreted differently by different analysts remains, but the procedure is still a viable enough method for anyone interested in studying the use of metaphor. The other limitation is arguably the weakest point of this study. While it yielded some interesting results, it still stands to reason whether the total number of metaphor is representative for their respective newspapers, or if a larger amount of data is required to give a more representative overview. In any case, the data gathered for this study might have been sufficient, but it is evident that a study focusing on more newspapers and more writers would require a vastly larger amount of data in order to yield representative numbers. Also, it might be necessary to consult even further dictionaries to establish conventionalized metaphors, as evident by example (10).

In examples (8) and (9), we saw two different novel metaphors at work. The words *electric-heeled* and *supernova* were used unconventionally to form creative metaphors that had yet to be lexicalized in accordance with the Macmillan Online Dictionary. But are there any other reasons as to why a sports writer should use novel metaphors other than to show how witty s/he can be? Aitchison (2007:116) mentioned the 'weight' of words to illustrate tragic events. In some cases, more weight could be added to enhance the drama in the written text, but in other cases situations carried a sense of drama and intrigue by themselves without the need of

added weight. In case of both of the examples in this study, it is feasible to say that both were signs of flavourful additions to an otherwise dull, standardized feature. Of course, one can get by through using ‘quick’ instead of *electric-heeled* or ‘massive’ instead of *supernova* in terms of describing an ego, but as a journalist you have the opportunity to add life and imagination to your text, as per what was earlier said in Section 2.4 by Williams (1990:163-164). Of course, if not in accordance with the style book of the newspaper or if the topic that is being written about does not lend itself to heavy metaphor use, it might be for the better to maintain a simpler and more comprehensive style of writing that does not heavily rely on metaphors.

The two different formats of *The Telegraph* and *The Mirror* did not hold much relevance in terms of importance in this study. This stands in stark contrast to the definitions presented earlier by Macmillan. While Aitchison (2007:74) makes mention of broadsheet newspapers having more words than entertainment-driven tabloids, it could be argued that it is an incorrect statement in the light of this study. While *The Telegraph* employs a higher number of words than *The Mirror*, they still maintain a similar level of both conventional and novel metaphors. With this in mind, it is a possibility that sports is one section where it is rarely the sensational occurrences that constitute the bulk of news content, no matter if the newspaper is a broadsheet or a tabloid. It would be interesting to see what further research into this would yield, not only for the sake of change in general content, but also if the level of metaphors employed has any foothold in the fact that the lines between the two different formats are being homogenized.

It was interesting to see that only *The Telegraph* provided a clear style book for how the journalists work and what guidelines they should follow, whereas *The Mirror* only made reference to their “usually high standards” and where to send potential complaints regarding errors or quality shifts. In the light of how intricately the guidelines were set by *The Telegraph*, the number of metaphors used has to be seen as remarkable, especially as they were so close to *The Mirror*. Why then, could that be? One reason could stem from the fact that while there exists basic principles regarding the quality of writing, as well as a list of words to avoid, *The Telegraph* journalists might have leeway in the sense that they *can* make use of metaphorical language, as long as it does not turn their readers oblivious as to what is actually being stated in their written texts. As long as that level of understanding is preserved, perhaps the writers have a certain degree of creative freedom in how they choose to convey newsworthy material. In the case of *The Mirror*, however, it is more difficult to say what is or what is not the reason for their use of metaphor. One could posit the thought that due to the

tabloid's tendency towards sensationalism, the journalists of *The Mirror* are not as strictly enforced by rules as their contemporaries in *The Telegraph*. DL using the most novel metaphors out of the four journalists could be a sign of this. Also, the fact that no style book could be found in *The Mirror*, in combination with the only reference to any kind of quality issues being in regards to where one should send in complaints, adds to the argument. However, as no major discrepancy could be located in terms of metaphor use between the two newspapers, this in combination with the fact that the other journalist from *The Mirror* – JC – did not use any novel metaphors at all takes away from the argument that *The Mirror* journalists are less restricted in how they may use language. More information would be necessary in order to support that notion.

5. Conclusion

This thesis sought to investigate and discuss the differences in frequency of both conventional and novel metaphors as they appear in the sports sections of two British newspapers: *The Telegraph* and *the Mirror*; an aim that has been fulfilled. A total of twenty articles containing 14,784 words were analyzed using the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) in order to identify metaphors, but the results did not yield any major discernable differences between the articles of either *The Telegraph* or *the Mirror*: In terms of conventional metaphor use, both newspapers yielded an identical number in the results, and only a slight variation in terms of novel uses of metaphor.

It was further reasoned that this might be a result of metaphors having to conform with its times, and as a result of this journalists prefer to use more or less conventional metaphors as to not dissuade any old or potential readers from their work. Similarly, the system of online features in sports reporting is of such format that it rarely lends itself well to more novel metaphorical expressions due to the high activity on an online news site that requires text to be simple, fast and precise. Still, it was argued that the heavy use of conventional metaphors in this study might be a matter of preference in the writers' style rather than directives from the newspapers themselves, as conventionalized metaphors do not necessarily indicate sloppy or unprofessional use of language.

As a whole, the yielded results were considered to be somewhat surprising. Based upon the definitions of broadsheet and tabloid newspaper, it seemed as if a more profound distinction in terms of language use would appear during the analysis of the data. As only *The Telegraph*

provided a style book, it was difficult to surmise what kind of requirements the journalists at *The Mirror* were working after. Meanwhile, it was discussed that the blurring of the edges between the two due to broadsheets slowly adopting the tabloid format might be a factor in why the use of conventional metaphorical expressions were so similar between the two newspapers. Reasons as to why novel metaphors were not as frequent were also discussed, both in terms of conscious choice by the writers as well as the cultural climate dictating the terms.

Contrary to the potential issues with using MIP, the method proved itself to be an excellent procedure that helped out this study immensely. The fact that it is fairly basic in its instructions, along with the proper knowledge, made it the perfect tool for an investigation of this kind. The other issue concerned the authenticity of a study made with this amount of data and whether it could be used as representative numbers for the newspapers as a whole. It was discussed and reasoned that while it was sufficient in providing some interesting results, a much larger quantity of data both in regards to newspapers and writers would be required to give a proper representation of metaphor use.

In conclusion, the discrepancy between *The Telegraph* and *The Mirror* in terms of metaphor use consisted of only a minor figure in terms of novel metaphorical expressions, while they both shared the exact same amount of conventional metaphors. Possible reasons for this have been discussed, and it is evident that more research could most likely render different, more representative results. There is also the possibility that it is simply a matter of style in writing that is the deciding factor.

Further studies into the subject of metaphor use in sports journalism could possibly extend to interviews with the journalists themselves in order to get a first-hand perspective on writing, as well as their own opinions on how metaphors influence their styles. It could be interesting to investigate whether their use of metaphors would increase had they not been governed by style sheets, meaning that perhaps their use of language would be much more metaphorical without having to adhere to a strict set of rules. Furthermore, a comparative study between sports reporting and other types of news reporting could be done to illustrate potential differences and idiosyncrasies in how journalists make use of language.

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Appendix 1: The novel metaphors found in this study

The Telegraph (8)

With the *electric-heeled* Javier Hernandez told to harry Terry on every turn, the home captain did not have the chance to fire those passes to the wings he so likes. (JW, *The Telegraph* 12.04.2011)

Never mind this is a stadium which represents one of the several landmarks of ignominy with which his career is *pockmarked*, this was a tackle which exemplified the extraordinary commitment to the Manchester United cause he displayed all night. (JW, *The Telegraph* 27.04.2011)

In a team performance as good as this particular *vintage* has given, a performance of craft, style and intelligence that swept away opponents who had routed the holders in the previous round, he was the red exemplar. (JW, *The Telegraph* 27.04.2011)

In Bloemfontein Christoph Metzelder had barely noticed Rooney was on the pitch. Nine months later, if ever invited on to the television show Room 101 poor Metzelder, apparently hiding his shame behind a Zorro mask, would consign this whole evening to the bin, *wiping his own mental cinema clear* of a match in which Rooney left him looking as if in possession of two wooden legs. (JW, *The Telegraph* 27.04.2011)

He has fostered co-operation in a dressing room dripping with medals despite his own modest achievements, while also keeping the *supernova* ego of Zlatan Ibrahimovic in check. (DW, *The Telegraph* 09.03.2011)

Afterwards, in the sub-zero temperatures of the car park, Perumal had a ferocious *row* with Christopher Musonda, one of RoPs' Zambian players. (DW, *The Telegraph* 07.05.2011)

“We had tough *eggs* in our defence, they'd kick anything. And then Nat up front, ooh he was strong, tough. We were a physical side. (DW, *The Telegraph* 16.04.2011)

There is no question he has applied himself. Intense gym work has developed his upper-body strength to help him with Premier League *combat* and Ferguson has judged his elevation from impact substitute to first team player astutely. (DW, *The Telegraph* 29.04.2011)

The Daily Mirror (5)

How is it right that David Sullivan, the joint-owner at West Ham, gets *mullered* for not supporting his team at Manchester City, but some Arsenal fans think Fabregas should be spared similar scrutiny? (DL, *The Daily Mirror* 25.05.2011)

Hacks like myself took a ferocious hit from the Liverpool fans whenever we even dared to suggest the striker's future might lie elsewhere. The truth is, however, Torres hoodwinked the Reds' supporters. He wanted out long, long before he was eventually *airlifted* out by Roman Abramovich on deadline day last month. (DL, *The Daily Mirror* 17.02.2011)

The automatically promoted teams had a head start in the race to recruit players last summer, which was another reason why Blackpool were probably the shortest *price* ever to go straight back down. (DL, *The Daily Mirror* 02.03.2011)

But if there is to be some summer *surgery* then I'd keep Wojcech Szczesny as the no.1 keeper. He has shown himself to be very talented indeed and is unlucky to be out with injury. (DL, *The Daily Mirror* 13.04.2011)

I love the way that Harry Redknapp has turned the sleeping giant that is Spurs into a Premier League *superpower*. (DL, *The Daily Mirror* 29.12.2010)