

Carmel Heah & Sujata S. Kathpalia

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Conventional and culture-specific metaphor in Singapore financial discourse

Interest in the use of metaphor in business and economics has been growing both in the field of business communication and as a methodological component of Language for Special Purposes (LSP) teaching. Nevertheless, interest in metaphors in LSP is still too marginal to reverse Cameron & Low's (1999: 91) statement that "the whole area of metaphor in use in ESP situations remains under-researched". The present paper attempts to further advance this research by looking at metaphor in the language of economics, in particular the way changes and movements in the financial markets are presented in the Singapore press and local forum discussions. It will be demonstrated that metaphors form a significant part of these discourses and that this has implications for understanding economics discourse. In addition to conventional metaphors, an attempt is also made to identify and discuss culture-specific metaphors in the local press and forums. The paper argues in favour of enhancing students' metaphoric awareness by drawing their attention to the figurative expressions they come across in their reading of economics and business texts as well as through classroom activities that promote their metaphorical competence. Understanding the significance of metaphor would not only enrich ESL/EFL students' understanding of economics discourse but also improve their ability to read critically through a deeper understanding of how metaphors can be used to shape perceptions of financial trends.