

National And Kapodistrian University Of Athens
Faculty Of English Language And Literature
Post-graduate Studies Specialization: Applied Linguistics
4th Postgraduate Student Conference
Language and Linguistics Colloquium
Assessing Language and Analyzing Discourse

**A CORPUS-BASED STUDY OF FINANCIAL
DISCOURSE METAPHORS IN ENGLISH AND
GREEK: RAISING STUDENTS'
METAPHORICAL AWARENESS IN THE
TREATMENT OF IDIOMATICITY**

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26/06/2014

Aims of the study

- **Theoretical aims**
- The **Conceptual Metaphor Theory** (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, Glucksberg, 2001; Kovecses, 2002; Langlotz, 2006) is employed to explore the metaphorical makeup and structure of the target domains of
- ECONOMIC RECESSION,
- ECONOMIC GROWTH and
- ECONOMY in general
- **Pedagogical aims**
- Demonstrate that students can improve their **collocational competence** through strengthening of their **metaphorical competence**.
- Demonstrate the usefulness and applicability of corpus derived examples in the development of pedagogical material.

Research Questions

- To what extent are conceptual metaphors, within the target domains of ECONOMIC RECESSION, ECONOMIC GROWTH and ECONOMY, pervasive and conventional in financial journalistic discourse, and
- How can the conceptual metaphors be utilized in a pedagogical context in order to reduce the presumed arbitrariness of multi-word units and promote students' collocational awareness?

Methodology (1)

- **Corpus**
- The corpus consists of two separate sub-corpora of journalistic discourse.
- **English:** it includes news reports and articles on the online versions of the main news-agencies (BBC, REUTERS and THE WALL STREET JOURNAL).
- **Greek:** it consists of news reports and articles of Greek news reports found in the online versions of newspapers and online press agencies (KATHIMERINI, TOBHMA and IN.GR).
- **Main Topic:** economic recession in the euro zone and the way the EU countries have tried to deal with the problem.

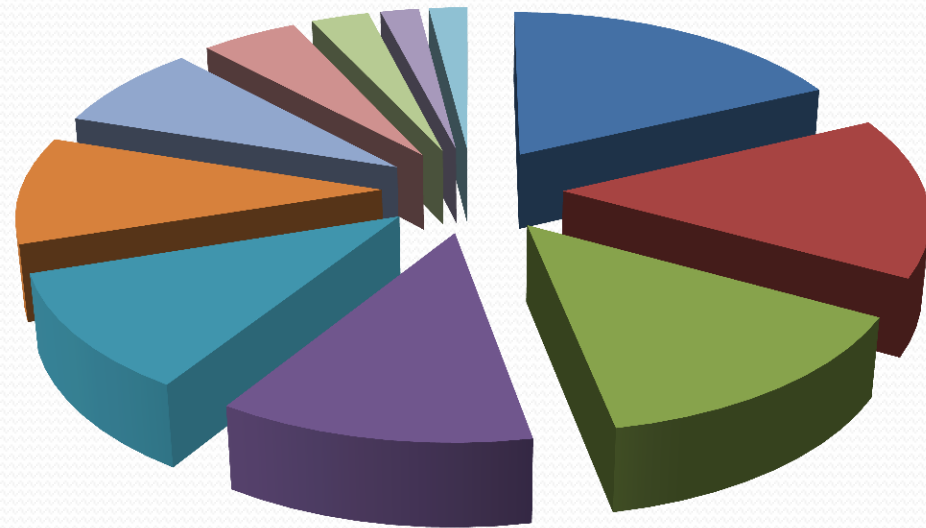
Methodology (2)

- Extraction of all expressions referring to ECONOMIC RECESSION/GROWTH.
- Manual - Sample analysis of the concordances found in both corpora – English and Greek.
- Extracting collocations referring to the target domain of ECONOMIC RECESSION/GROWTH, which seem to be metaphorically motivated.

Results -ENGLISH CORPUS (1)

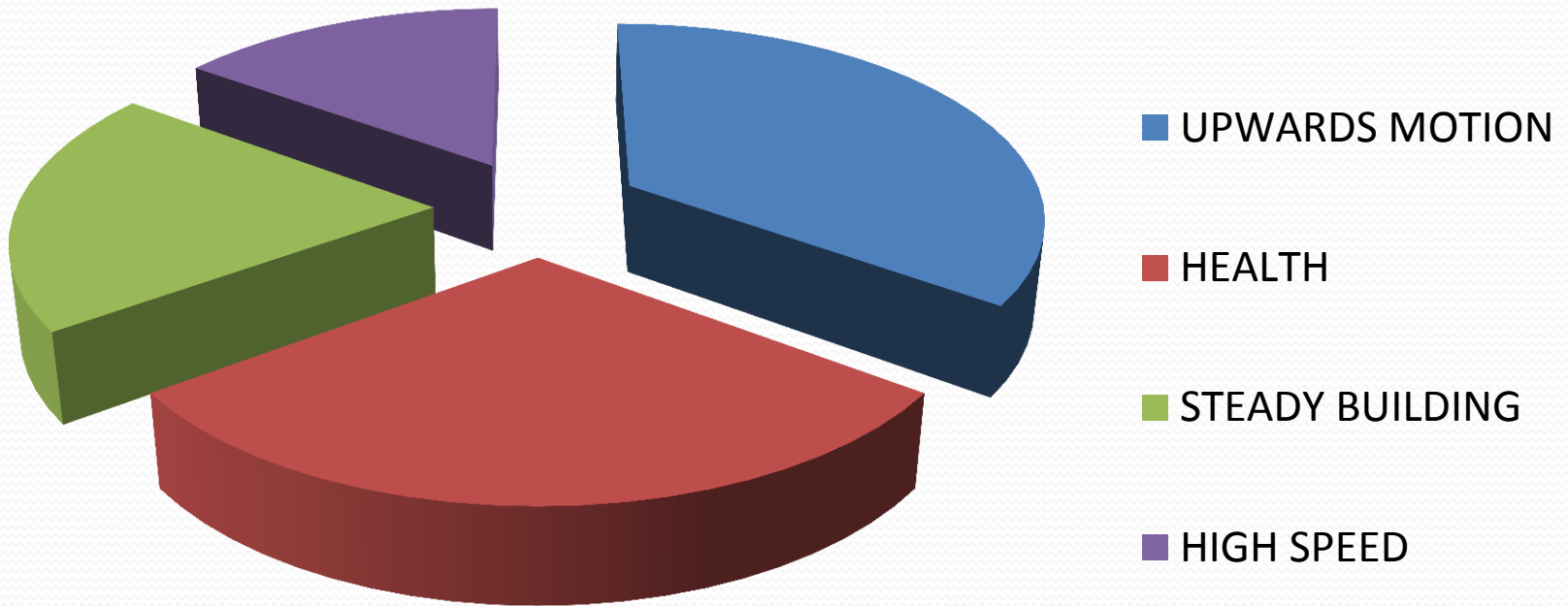
ECONOMIC RECESSION IS...

- THINGS/COUNTRIES EFFECTED BY RECESSION ARE SICK PEOPLE
- DOWNWARDS MOTION
- THE DANGEROUS ENEMY IN A WAR/BATTLE
- CONTAINER
- MACHINE
- COLLAPSED/UNSTEADY BUILDING
- DISEASE
- LOW SPEED
- A PERSON WITH NEGATIVE FEELINGS
- VIOLENT/UNCONTROLLED MOTION
- WILD ANIMAL



ENGLISH CORPUS (2)

ECONOMIC GROWTH IS...

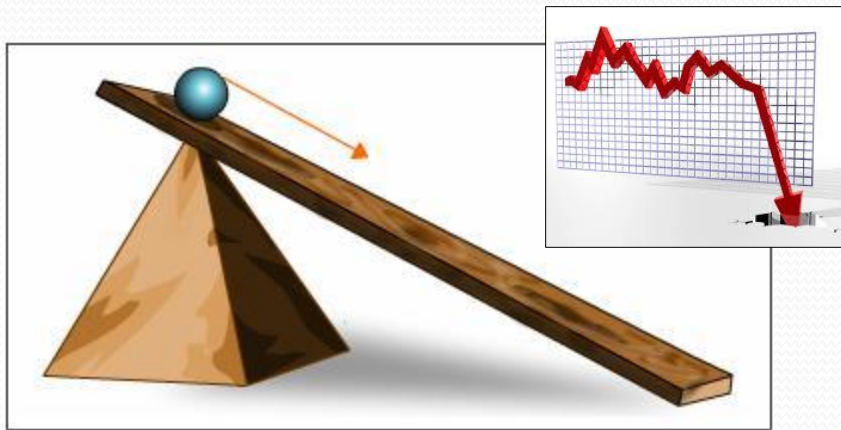


English Corpus –Bipolar Metaphors

ECONOMIC RECESSION	ECONOMIC GROWTH
DOWNWARDS MOTION	UPWARDS MOTION
DISEASE	HEALTH
UNSTEADY/COLLAPSED BUILDING	STEADY BUILDING
LOW SPEED	HIGH SPEED

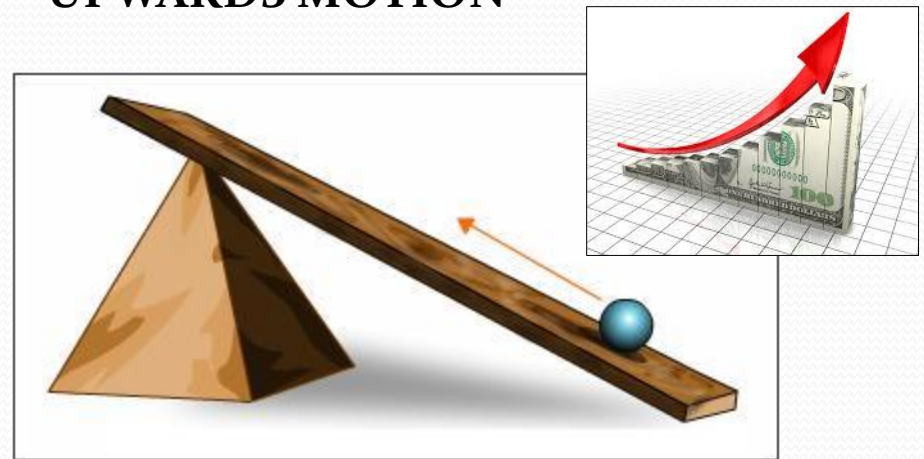
Bipolar Metaphors (1)

ECONOMIC RECESSION IS
DOWNWARDS MOTION



Borrowing sees slight *dip*; the recession's *plunge*

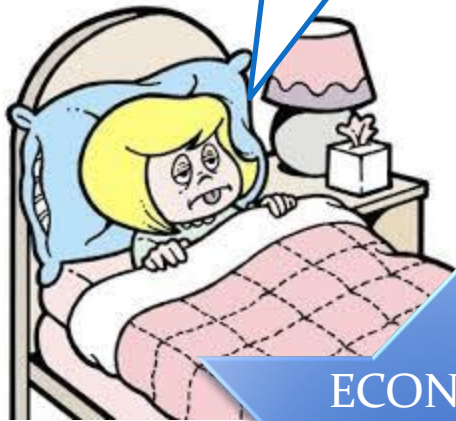
ECONOMIC GROWTH IS
UPWARDS MOTION



A *lift* to the economy; Italian stocks *soared*

Bipolar Metaphors (2)

Ailing economies;
the debt crisis is
spreading to
other countries



ECONOMIC
RECESSION IS
A DISEASE

A *strong* euro; a
robust financial
system



ECONOMIC
GROWTH IS
HEALTH

Bipolar Metaphors (3)

Examples

A financial *collapse*;
financial market
instability



ECONOMIC
RECESSION IS
AN UNSTEADY/
COLLAPSED
BUILDING

Examples

Stable and *steady*
economy; price *stability*



ECONOMIC
GROWTH IS A
STEADY
BUILDING

Bipolar Metaphors (4)



Examples

A *slowing* economy;
economy grew at its
slowest pace



Examples

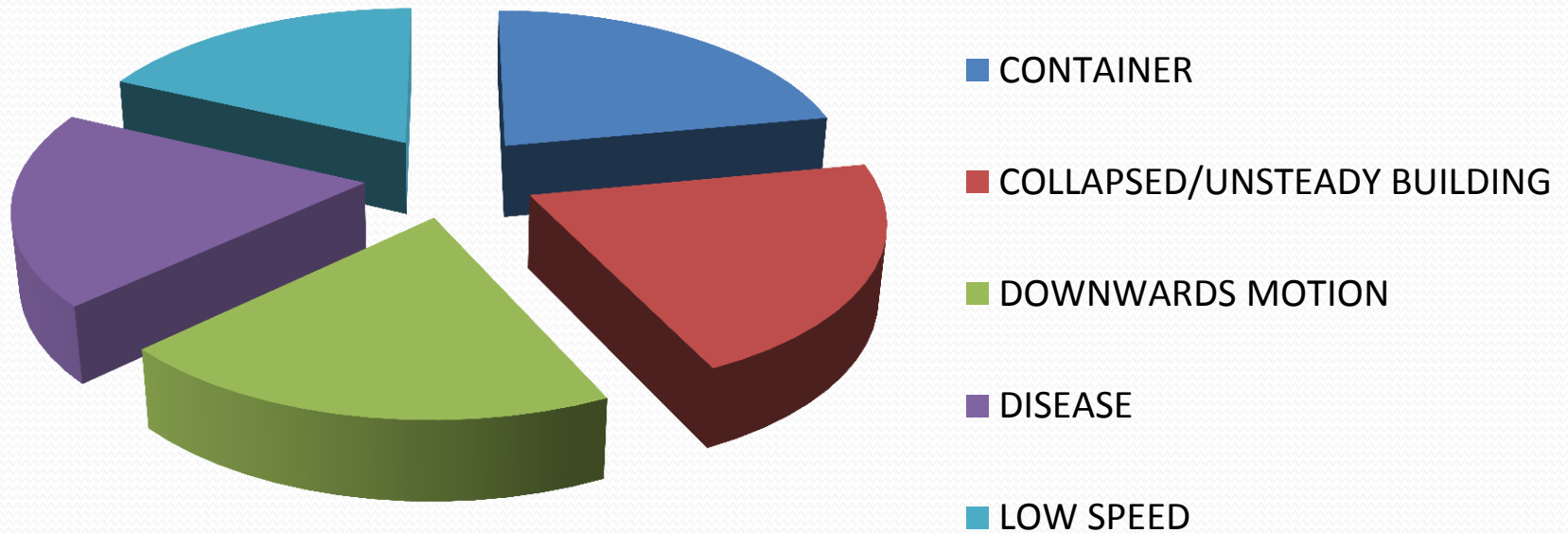
The economy was
picking up; growth
accelerated

Economic
Recession is
Slow Speed

Economic
Growth is
High Speed

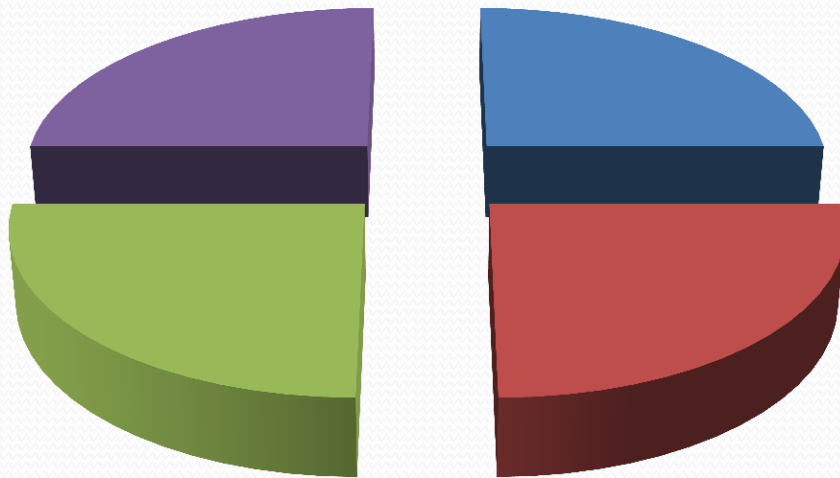
Greek Corpus (1)

ECONOMIC RECESSION IS...



Greek Corpus (2)

ECONOMIC GROWTH IS...



- EXITING RECESSION IS RETURNING TO HEALTH
- EXITING RECESSION IS SEEING THE LIGHT
- HIGH SPEED
- STEADY BUILDING

Greek Corpus - Bipolar Metaphors

ECONOMIC RECESSION	ECONOMIC GROWTH
<p>CONTAINER π.χ. Η έξοδος της χώρας από τη μεγάλη κρίση; Η ελληνική οικονομία έχει βγει από τα χειρότερα</p>	<p>EXITING RECESSION IS SEEING THE LIGHT Η χώρα θα προχωρήσει ταχύτερα στο πολύπόθητο ξέφωτο; οι άνθρωποι βλέπουν φως στην άκρη του τούνελ</p>
<p>DISEASE Οι πολιτικές λιτότητας παραλύουν την οικονομία και την κοινωνία</p>	<p>EXITING RECESSION IS RETURNING TO HEALTH Η δύσκολη προσπάθεια για βιώσιμη οικονομία; μια προσπάθεια που κράτησε τη χώρα ζωντανή</p>
<p>UNSTEADY/COLLAPSED BUILDING Πλήρης οικονομική κατάρρευση; βόμβα στα θεμέλια της κυπριακής οικονομίας</p>	<p>STEADY BUILDING Στηρίγματα στην αγορά προσφέρουν οι μετοχές; σταθεροποιείται το οικονομικό σύστημα</p>
<p>LOW SPEED Ο κίνδυνος στασιμότητας των οικονομικών συνθηκών</p>	<p>HIGH SPEED Για να επιταχύνει η οικονομία; η χώρα θα προχωρήσει ταχύτερα</p>

Pedagogical Material

- **Ten activities** were designed based on the CMT and aim to raising students' metaphorical awareness (Kovecses & Szabo, 1996; Deignan, 2005; Skoufaki, 2008)
- **Target Group:** Advanced students of English as a foreign language.
- From the easiest to the most difficult.
- **Purpose:** introduce students to the figurative way of thinking and familiarize them with the idea that metaphor does not belong only to the poetic or non-conventional expression.
- **Overall goal:** make students aware of the conventional aspect of metaphors and provide a potential outlet to difficulties in learning collocations.

Task 5 –

Collocational & Metaphorical awareness

- It aims to familiarize advanced students of English with the notion of conceptual metaphor and the SOURCE and TARGET domains and raise their collocational awareness through metaphorical awareness.
- Students are given collocations highlighting the metaphorically-used word as well as the target domain of the metaphor (RECESSION) and they are asked to fill the gaps with the appropriate collocation.
- Being given some guidance to the students by the activity itself (*see Tip*) and the teacher, the student needs to reach the conclusion that the desired source domain is A PERSON WITH NEGATIVE FEELINGS/TRAITS.

Task 5 –

Collocational & Metaphorical awareness

- There are many collocations which speakers use to refer to the bad economic situation of a country/state.
- **stubborn** economic growth cycle, **nervous** financial markets, **nasty** recessions, **depressed** market prices, **sluggish** economy, **troubled** economy
-
- Fill the gaps with the above collocations. Use a dictionary in case you have any unknown words.
- *Establishing a pan-European banking union is a "critically important next step" to stabilizing that region's _____.*
- *Monthly snapshots capture a moment in time. When those moments are evaluated together, we see progress away from a global recession and through a _____.*
- *Germany's _____ appears to be starting to have a negative impact on the labour market.*
- *This will be done by cutting the interest rate on existing rescue loans, returning profits earned by the European Central Bank on Greek debts it owns, and helping Greece buy back its private-sector debts at their currently _____.*
- *Greece has now been granted the extra time, but major problems remain and the _____ are still _____.*
- *Spain and Italy are now facing _____, because no-one wants to spend. Companies and mortgage borrowers are too busy repaying their debts to spend more. Exports are uncompetitive.*
-
- Do the collocations above have anything in common? If yes, which is the common metaphor? Justify your opinion.
- **ECONOMIC RECESSION IS _____**
-

• **Tip:** Use only the adjectives from the above collocations (troubled, worried, etc) and think where they are mainly

Task 5 –

Collocational & Metaphorical awareness

- Then, another set of examples is presented to the students with the previous metaphorically-used words.
- All examples are taken from the **BNC** and they are slightly modified for the needs of the activity.
- This time, the same words are not used in a figurative way but they are used to describe a person with negative feelings/traits.
- So students have an overall picture of both the literal and metaphoric use of the expressions.

Task 5 –

Collocational & Metaphorical awareness

- Take a close look in the following examples where the previous adjectives are used. Are they used in the same way? Is there any metaphorical motivation in these examples? Justify your opinion.
- *The two older boys, aged 5 and 7, were competent in both languages. Balbinder seemed slower to talk and his mother was **worried** about his reluctance to speak English.*
- *The man persuaded the **troubled** teenager to seek out her mother.*
- *For **depressed** patients there appears to be an increased risk of suicide immediately after discharge from hospital. .*
- *Whenever she felt **nervous** she had a tendency to chatter.*
- *If they turn **nasty**, well, we can turn nasty too.*
- *You were so **stubborn** about it, you just kept saying everything was all right, and it wasn't, it was getting worse all the time, and I couldn't understand why you couldn't see it.*

Conclusions

- The pervasiveness and systematicity of the relevant expressions in the discourse of recession and growth renders them an integral part of the conventional idiomaticity of financial discourse.
- Conceptual motivation in the form of metaphorical mappings can be exploited in the development of pedagogical material specifically geared to the learning of collocations.
- This highlights the importance of cognitive generalizations in treating otherwise conventional and arbitrary lexis in L2.

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for
your attention!

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