



Research Article

The empirical review of conceptual metaphor of Vietnamese press release discourse

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ABSTRACT

In the context of increasingly highly competitive market, the issuance of press releases with attraction-grabbing content has posed numerous challenges to both enterprises and individuals. This study aims at synthesizing and categorizing conceptual metaphor models in terms of their frequency and purposes. These metaphor models feature the human target domain, including “HUMAN BEINGS ARE COSTUMES” and “HUMAN BEINGS ARE SYMBOLS”. The research findings reveal the application of these conceptual metaphor domains in Vietnamese Press Discourses as well as their impact on the media. The author, in an attempt to achieve her goals, has applied the mixed method in research – by first analysing the relevant discourse: 228 Vietnamese press releases, then conducting the qualitative research: in-depth interviews with PR experts and journalists regarding these contents. Therefore, the research does not limit itself in analyzing the effectiveness of the conceptual metaphor models, but can benefit those interested in transferring messages from the press releases.

Keywords: *Conceptual Metaphor; Source Domain; Target Domain; Vietnamese Press Release Discourse*

1. INTRODUCTION

The press release is a printed news announcement with a focused message, disseminated (through email, mail, messenger, fax, and the like) simultaneously to all or some news editorial departments and/or journalists dealing with the specific subject area (Limor, 1997).

The Vietnamese press release discourse has high social interaction, showing the overall experience and social relationships of the creators and their recipients in the discourse communities. However, at present, the study of Vietnamese press release discourse has received little attention from the Vietnamese community. Most of the studies, which are revolved around the study of conceptual metaphors, based on corpus of literature and the press, none of them used Vietnamese press release corpus. This article aims at filling this research gap.

Many journalists and public relations researchers (Wilcox & Nolte, 1995; Walters & Walters, 1992; Morton, 1996) have shown that the press release emanating from a PR agency or a spokesperson is the most common form of information document arriving at the journalist’s desk. They also have considered the importance of the press releases to the perception of the journalists (Conarroe & Conarroe, 1991).



Therefore, the priority of those in PR industry is to activate the perception of the mass media upon their acceptance of the Press Releases published by either individuals or enterprises. Then, the messages will be announced to the public – including their target and potential customers.

As there is a huge number of press releases to be handled every day, only those of most essential quality can be converted into news and publicized on media. Statistics show that 96% of press releases in consumer goods industry are published in one form or another, 98% in politics, 92% opinion pieces and 72% in fashion (Walker, 1991). On the other hand, it is estimated that 90% of all published health news items, 75% of entertainment and 60% of lifestyle originated from PR activities. Among these investigated documents, press releases in entertainment have received the least attention as it ranks the lowest in essence order and the highest in number. For this reason, the writer challenges herself in choosing the “HUMAN” as the target domain in this field to investigate the conceptual metaphor models. By analyzing the conceptual metaphor model with the HUMAN target domain, the author look forward to supporting the enterprises and individuals in PR industry to reach their goals.

Vietnamese language is famous for its expressive richness in connotation. The use of conceptual metaphor has facilitated the message transmission between the companies and PR agencies. This enables the remake of press release into news article to grab the press and the public attention.

Therefore, the research of conceptual metaphor in press releases plays an important roles brand communication and positioning

To analyze the characteristics of Vietnamese press releases, the author applied the theory of the conceptual metaphor developed by Lakoff and Johnson (2003/1980) and the mapping schemas between the factors of the sources domain and the target domain by (Kövecses, 2010). According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003/1980), conceptual metaphor is the idea of turning a spiritual domain through another spiritual domain, mapping system from one domain to another to create a model. Recognition helps to comprehend the destination domain more effectively”. In the process of awareness, the thinking space cannot be directly observed, through metaphors, humans can establish a simpler thinking space or with thinking spaces that can be observed specifically (for example, human emotions can be compared to fire).

Therefore, the choice of the conceptual metaphor structure of the target domain HUMANS will help PR specialists to promote their creativity to optimize the effectiveness of the content of the message shown in the press release to achieve the purpose of the brand communication. This can help avoid misunderstanding the media message of the press. When the misunderstanding of communication information from the press release reported by the press, readers/ public readers will lose trust in individuals and businesses, which does harm to the brand reputation and brand image. In addition, the objectivity of the news genre from the press release is also affected by some the press relase’s recipients as journalists. That is the reason and urgency of the conceptual metaphor analysis of the target domain HUMANS in Vietnamese press release.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

At the pre-cognitive stage, metaphor which/that is a characteristic of literature, purely linguistic, relies on one to say another. Through the work "Metaphor we live by" by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), reprinted in 2013, the two authors created a revolution for Cognitive Linguistics when considering metaphors not purely about language but attached to human intellectual activity, appearing in all fields of human life.

According to cognitive linguistics, language does not directly reflect the world but must be through the interaction between people and reality, based on the experience of the perceiver himself, through the Human reconstruction includes: dominance, attention and embodiment (physiological, natural, and social), through experiential interpretation. According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003/1980), there are a number of keywords in Vietnamese that can decipher the worldview and human outlook in a discourse community.

Conceptual metaphors "are expressed in many forms depending on the national cultural-language characteristics and practical experience of people", according to Lakoff and Johnson (2003/1980), there are 3 types of metaphors: Basic concepts include: structural metaphors, positioning metaphors, and ontological metaphors. In this type of structural metaphor, there are structural features in two spaces: the source domain and the target domain. The source domain is a place to provide knowledge to the target domain by means of a mapping method. In addition, the positioning metaphor and ontological metaphor can also be attributed to the Source-Destination relationship. Conceptual metaphor has become a prominent trend and is an effective tool to learn the linguistic and thinking features associated with the community's socio-cultural context, in which specifically emphasizes the overall experience in the mind of the language user. Thus, conceptual metaphors are formed based on the interrelationship of human experience with the world, in which one domain (usually a concrete domain) is used to understand another (usually an abstract domain). The first domain is called the source domain, the second is called the target domain, through mapping schemes between the elements of the two source - destination domains to explain why specific attributes used to understand the target domain (Kövecses & Zoltan, 2010).

Conceptual metaphors are characterized by systematicity expressed in mapping and inference relationships. According to Evans and Green (2006), conceptual metaphors to the mapping relationship are understood in the sense of unidirectionality, the image from the source domain is projected onto the target domain, but the opposite direction does not exist; and inferred relation is understood as the consequence of obtaining a new knowledge from a known knowledge.

To better understand the role of conceptual metaphors in cognitive linguistics, grasping the concepts of source and target domains is the key to understanding conceptual metaphor models. In cognitive linguistics, the target domain is said to have abstract meaning and relate to certain specific human experiences. In contrast, source domains are often related to sensory and real experience. According to Langacker (1991), language structure is not completely arbitrary but more or less related, directly or indirectly to

(2019). The objective of this paper is to analyze the use of euphemisms in discourses of the National Institute of Migration (INM) regarding its policy on migration in irregular transit through Mexican territory. To achieve this, a qualitative analysis of euphemisms is performed as conceptual metaphors in press releases of the INM and its purposes. The author found out that use of euphemisms in the discourses of the INM implies the concealment and the misrepresentation of reality that constitutes its migratory control actions to the detriment of migrants in transit.

The second article directly related to our topic is "Metaphorical modeling in the case of cosmetic companies' image development" (Ivantsiv, 2018). The research data includes an electronic corpus of 185 releases press issued by five international cosmetic companies. The study in the single major metaphorical clusters within the corporate discourse of image-making-BUSINESS IS A HUMAN BEING and BUSINESS IS ART, essentially contributed to creating a relatively holistic image of a cosmetic company as a perfect organism that produces masterpieces to meet the needs and expectations of the target audience.

In particular, there is a study directly related to the analysis of conceptual metaphors through the relationship between the source and target domains. The article "The Conceptual Metaphors in the discourse of the Uttarakhand tragedy in India: Cognitive Linguistics Analysis" from the Author P.M. Girish. This paper intends to examine the conceptual metaphors used in the 'letters to the editor', as a discourse on the natural calamity happened in 2013, in Uttarakhand, published in the three leading Indian national dailies in English specifically The Hindu, The New Indian Express and The Times of India, from a cognitive linguistic perceptive. It mentions some Metaphor such as: Anger Metaphor, Nature is Man, Novel Metaphor: Tsunami and Body/Man Metaphor.

In addition, there are 88 studies related to conceptual metaphors that refer to "source-target domains", but not related to media and press releases, but related to law, education, and health care. For example, the article mentions "Face photo-sketch style transfer aims to convert a representation of a face from the photo (or sketch) domain to the sketch (respectively, photo) domain while preserving the character of the subject". Silaški & Durović (2010) with the article "Catching inflation by the tail - animal metaphoric imagery in the conceptualisation of Inflation in English" and Isani (2011) with the article "English for legal purposes and domain-specific cultural awareness the 'continental paradox', definition, causes and evolution"

In Vietnam, there are many studies on conceptual metaphors about literature, time, women, and most recently, the analytical thesis "Conceptual metaphors in American press discourse (Compare to Vietnamese press discourse) by Tran Thi Thanh Truc (2021). And there is an article that studies the conceptual metaphor "People are clothes" expressed in Vietnamese folk songs, proverbs and idioms. Up to now, there has not been a work analyzing conceptual metaphors in Vietnamese press releases. That's the gap research for us to explore this issue.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN:

The article applies qualitative research methods with two parallel forms:

3.1.1. Activity 1:

The author relies on the corpus of 228 Vietnamese press releases, divided into 5 fields: education (40), technology (57), economic (34), entertainment (47) and medical (50). (Link Drive press release statistics: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1VOAAXS3yJXlcxNYdmUpyZG7q-oanRbc8?usp=sharing>).

The texts we selected according to the criteria: new, and the less studied fields are education, technology, real estate, entertainment and health compared to politics have been covered by many works.

3.1.2. Activity 2:

Interviewing more opinions of 10 PR experts and 10 entertainment journalists about the purpose and frequency of using conceptual models in press releases, according to an approved interview protocol (questionnaire). Linguist's judgment on issues related to "Conceptual metaphor" in the media.

3.1.3. Data collection:

Each interview session was recorded and transcribed verbatim, and then the interview transcripts were emailed to each respective participant for verification.

3.1.4. Data analysis:

Theme development technique employed in this study.

The author collects information, compares and statistically applies the conceptual metaphor of the target domain HUMANS in the fields, and analyzes the data. Use N-vivo software for data management and analysis. From there, the author gives some initial survey results, about the concepts that public relations practitioners express through press releases according to each main topic and sub-topic to serve the research.

4. FINDINGS

In terms of the metaphorical model of many different source conceptual domains used to understand a single target conceptual domain, the article analyzes the source domain Costumes, Symbols mapped over the HUMAN target domain.

Based on the corpus analysis method, the conceptual metaphor of the target domain HUMAN is shown through the schema of the two source domains as follows:

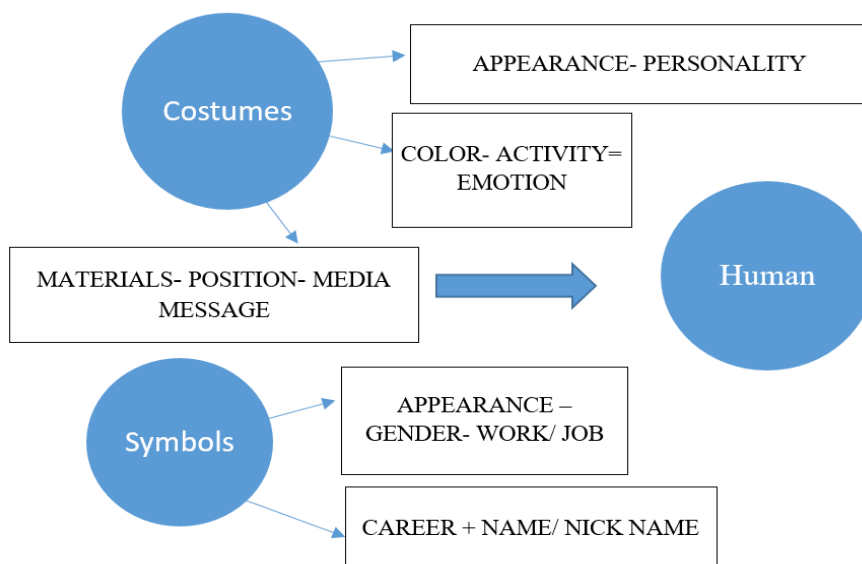


Fig. 2. The conceptual metaphor of the target domain HUMAN

Firstly, the author surveyed 228 press release in Vietnamese for 5 years from 2018-2022, in 5 fields as below:

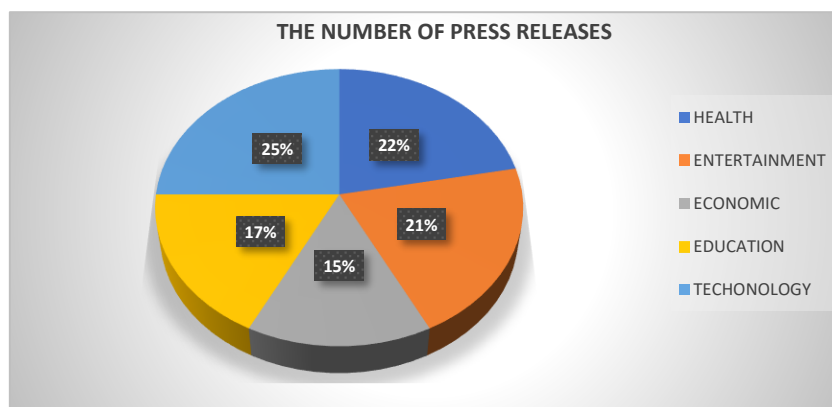


Fig. 3. The rate of press releases by each classier

With the target domain being human, there are 2 source domains with specific and tangible concepts for conceptual mapping to help press release recipients more easily visualize and observe, namely costumes and symbols.

Clothing is an essential part of life. Through studying *the costumes*, we can see a part of the cultural characteristics and thinking of a particular ethnic group or group of people. Through nearly 250 Vietnamese press release documents that the author surveyed, the article initially found some typical examples for the concept of "clothes" to metaphorize appearance, activities, and status about people; from there, conveying a message to the public, mainly expressed through entertainment and education press release.

Out of the number of press release we have access to, there is only one press release in the field of education that mentions the structure "People are clothes" because of the mention of Miss Thuy Tien and 20 entertainment press release using this metaphor. press release in other areas do not show.

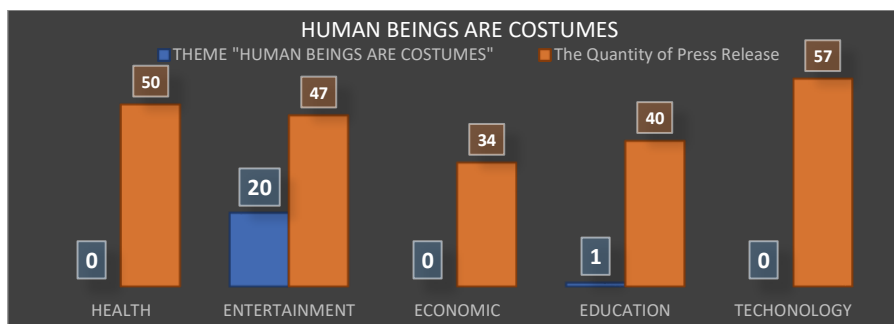


Fig. 4. Graph showing press release with source domain HUMAN BEINGS ARE COSTUMES

Table 2. Mapping from source domain “Costumes” to destination domain “Human”

Source Domain	Target Domain
Costumes	Human
Characteristics	Appearance
Color	Activity/Love
Material, substance	Circumstances/status/message conveyed

For example, in the PRESS RELEASE of Hoa Sen University, there is a paragraph emphasizing that " Designer Tin Thai is an alumnus of Hoa Sen University and the author of the costume "Blue Angel" - the design that helped Thuy Tien shines at the semi-finals of Miss Grand International 2021".

Show "Star Arena" emphasized "... Nam Cuong commended the investment in the performance of captain Lam Vu when he let the dance troupe wear more sparkling and eye -catching costumes than the previous rounds. In response to this compliment, Lam Vu said, "Doing this to compete for projection with the Nam Cuong team".

Statistics of words representing the source domain "clothes" through PRESS RELEASE corpus, the author discovered words and sentences using conceptual metaphors through the following table:

Table 3. The expression form the source domain COSTUMES

Costumes	Word/Sentence Using	Human
Characteristics	"Dress revealingly. Busy clothes lack of cloth" "Your image is like an island of hope" "Your visuals are also very beautiful" Sparkling, eye-catching, projection ...	Appearance
Color/Style	"The costumes are very beautiful, the scenery is poetic and gives viewers a lot of emotions." "For Tien, if you play the role of Hang Nga, the costumes will be very difficult to act." "Truong Quynh Anh was "bewildered" when he had to change clothes in the middle of the station at the escape show".	Work
Material, substance	"Cây hàng hiệu" (haute couture) Ski. soul part Satisfied with the look. "My outfit is more like a soldier than a ox."	Circumstances/ positions Message conveyed

Regarding the metaphorical structure " Human being are symbols", the creators of PRESS RELEASE often use symbols to represent the personality, work and expertise, and dress of the person in question. This metaphor creates a media appeal in press discourse, often appearing in PRESS RELEASE headlines/headlines, to bring attention to the discourse

communities. This metaphor often appears when referring to famous figures in a certain field, creating curiosity and helping the public to easily visualize. For example, the title in PRESS RELEASE teaser episode 1 season 3 in November 2021 has the sentence "Vietnamese spice tycoon" won the first victory in the pitching episode "Whose Chance". "Vietnamese spice tycoon" here symbolizes the business field in the company of Boss Nguyen Trung Dung, Chairman of the Board of Directors & General Director of DH FOODS Joint Stock Company. This "symbol" is seen as a symbol to replace a "mysterious character" that the creator of PRESS RELEASE wants to emphasize, create communication effects, and intrigue readers.

Table 4. Mapping from source domain "SYMBOL" to destination domain "HUMAN"

Target Domain	Source Domain
HUMAN	SYMBOL
Appearance	Expression
Work	
Circumstances/status/message conveyed	
Appearance	Content

Statistics on a number of "symbols" typical for people through 47 PRESS RELEASE Entertainment we specifically surveyed are as follows:

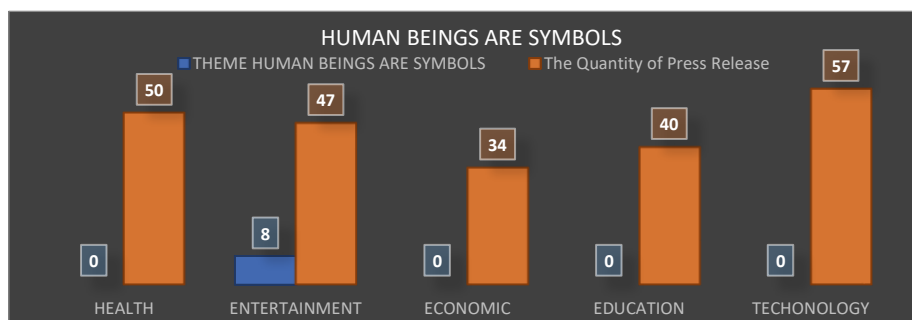


Fig. 5. Graph showing press release with source domain HUMAN BEINGS ARE SYMBOLS

Table 5. The expression form the source domain SYMBOLS

The expression	What is expressed
APPEARANCE/GENDER/SPECIALITY	CAREER + REAL NAME- NICK NAME
"Gentleman Hyperactive"	Dang Duy
"Princess of Nightingale"	Dan Vy
"The Guitar Prince"	Hoang Bao
Source "Mr. Lightning"	MC Tran Anh Huy
Domain: "Jewelry tycoon"	CEO Le Tri Thong of Phu Nhuan Jewelry Joint Stock Company (PNJ)
Symbols "Vietnamese spice tycoon"	Mr. Nguyen Trung Dung, Chairman of the Board of Directors & General Director of DH FOODS. Joint Stock Company
"The King of Vietnamese Music"	Singer Dam Vinh Hung
"Queen of Entertainment"	Singer Ho Ngoc Ha

The impression of form is always the first to appear when perceiving any object in reality. To map the human target domain, there are two source domains, "clothes" and "icons". Through the initial survey, we found that there is only press release in the entertainment industry, with the content referring to celebrities - who pay great attention to appearance, expressed through art performances or fashion shows. Press release in other fields do not exhibit this conceptual metaphor. Thereby, the creator of press release also wanted to

convey a message about the content of the performance as well as the status and circumstances of the person wearing that costume. With the "icon" source domain, the image of a celebrity is compared to a name to attract the public's attention, and to help fans of this character easily remember and visualize about the idol, about more of their bosses.

In-depth interviews 10 PR experts in the field of education and entertainment and 10 entertainment journalists on whether to use conceptual metaphor structure in press release and if so, what is the reason for using it.

As a result, 10 out of 10 PR professionals believe that the conceptual metaphor structure "Human being are costumes" and "Human are being symbols" should be used for the following reasons:

Table 6. The interview results from the PR Specialists

PR Specialists' Ideas	Human Beings Are Costumes	Human Beings Are Symbols
Agree/Total Number of Interviewers	10/10	10/10
Reasons Agree	Draw attention , emphasize the media message, the story related to the character with that costume	Have good content to headline/title Curious for some unknown characters in the entertainment industry, I gave them a nickname so that the public would notice and remember them.

"The use of iconic images to name some famous figures in the business and entertainment community will attract the attention of the media and readers, and assist individuals and businesses in achieving effective communication. higher communication", shared Ms. Duong Truc Uyen - who has many years of experience in PR in the entertainment industry, who is currently in charge of PR for the program "Whose Chance".

Specialist in charge of PR for Thai Son beatbox said that when using some iconic images, the nick names of some characters in showbiz to make headlines will attract the attention of journalists when receiving press release and then conveying information to the public who love the artist they need PR.

And there are 8/10 journalists that should use the conceptual metaphor structure "Man is a costume" and "Human are being symbols" for the following reasons:

Table 7. The interview results from the journalist

Press' Ideas	Human Beings Are Costumes	Human Beings Are Symbols
Agree/Total Number of Interviewers	10/10	8/10
Reasons Agree	attention, Attract curiosity	Have good content to headline/title
Reasons Don't Agree		Depending on the content guidelines of the press unit Just use the normal character's stage name along with the last name after that

There are two journalists who believe that the use of conceptual metaphor structure depends on the principles and style of the media unit, that is, the reporter of Tuoi Tre newspaper and Vnexpress newspaper. Therefore, they do not agree with the use of the structure "Human are being costumes" on the two newspapers they are working for, because the principles are different from many online newspapers with the criteria for viewing. Hoai Phuong stated that "Just use the stage name of the normal character and

the last name after that". In addition, depending on some special cases, this journalist still uses some words that have no meaning to exaggerate about that character.

Most journalists in charge of entertainment websites endorse the use of these two structural metaphors. Lifestyle magazine editor-in-chief, Ms. Bao Thuy commented, "*When press release content uses the image of a character to call a character's name, it will intrigue readers and help entertainment reporters easily handle news through snatching article title. As for the costume model, it attracts the attention of fans because the artist world is very important in terms of appearance, which is also something that the public cares about every time they appear. I endorse the use of these two models*". (Bao Thuy, year 2022)

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This finding highlights how to express the conceptual metaphor of target domain "Human" on the Vietnamese Press release and why the PRers use it to write the press release.

Objectives of surveying conceptual metaphors of Vietnamese press release discourse First of all, evaluate and classify the ways of expressing conceptual metaphor models through words, sentences and images used in Vietnamese press releases in the 5 years 2018-2022. From there, the study wishes to contribute to helping the discourse maker in the press release (PR specialist) can reference in promoting their creativity to optimize the effectiveness of the message content shown in the press release to achieve the communication purposes of individuals or businesses. At the same time, it helps the recipients of the press release (Agency and the media) avoid the phenomenon of misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the media message of the creator of the press release.

The results of this study are in the same direction as a number of domestic and foreign studies such as: The article research on media corpus "The Conceptualization of FEAR through Conceptual Metonymy and Metaphor in Jordanian Arabic", with data are collected from two sources: specifically, the comment section on Facebook pages of cinemas in Amman that show horror and thriller movies, and 12 JA native speaker informants. Data analysis of the linguistic metonymical and metaphorical expressions shows that three figurative devices are used to conceptualize FEAR in JA: Conceptual metonymy, conceptual metaphor and conceptual metaphonymy. Or the article related to Human Metaphor "The Conceptual Metaphors in the discourse of the Uttarakhand tragedy in India: Cognitive Linguistics Analysis" from the Author PM Girish.

In Vietnam, our research inherits the idea of author Nguyen Dinh Viet, that the mapping of the source domain "costumes" to the target domain of "human" is closely related to daily experiences, is a product of the experience, knowledge, and culture of a particular discourse community.

Tran Ngoc Them (2011) when researching about *costumes* also affirmed: "Each ethnic group has its own way of dressing and jewelry, so the clothes become a symbol of the national culture." Vu Ngoc Khanh (2018) also emphasizes that: "There are very few things in human life that are as passionately attached and rich in gratitude as a scarf and a Vietnamese shirt. The essence of cultural behavior in Vietnamese costumes is love and meaning."

It is interesting that this study also discovered the model of "human are being costumes" to help PR specialists emphasize the content of the message they want to convey about the characters they need PR in the entertainment industry. That's the gap research for us to explore this issue.

Although there are many opinions on this topic, for example, agreeing on the use of the word "symbol" as a metaphor for a famous figure in the entertainment industry, or people who work in the industry business participating in the gameshow. In the opinion of the author and some experts and journalists, with a culture that is not too individualistic like in the West, the use of the metaphorical structure "human are being symbols" both shows a hidden unique culture when mentioning his name has created a media effect for characters who do not have media attraction, when appearing on the title of the press release. However, some journalists disagree for reasons that do not match the style of their newspaper. However, this metaphorical model has penetrated into Vietnam as a cross-cultural phenomenon and is still well received and supported by the entertainment youth community. However, some experts warn that excessive logo abuse affects both the effectiveness of the communication and the fidelity of the press release.

In short, information from press releases is also one of the necessary sources of information for press agencies to exploit and publish. Entertainment industry press releases are published as news / articles published in newspapers are accounting for less than other sectors, according to some studies. That is the reason the author wants to discuss in this article.

Through the conceptual metaphor model of the human target domain, the author wants to convey two themes that people often encounter in life, which are costumes and names for themselves in business and art activities.

This article is limited to using words, phrases, sentences related to clothes and symbols to talk about "human". This line of research is applicable to other topics and fields and has many implications for those who interested in improving the quality of communication from press releases.

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