

Metaphor in Human Trafficking Media Discourse

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Metaphor is a means media use for shaping public opinion nowadays, as figuratively framed (Ch. Burgers, E. A. Konijn, G Steen 2016) ideas are interpretable almost instantly. Among the hottest issues is human trafficking (HT), which has been a concern of interdisciplinary studies (Wisniewski 2010, and others), whereas linguistic analysis can provide new data on the use of metaphor in anti-trafficking campaigns.

The investigation of HT in media is aimed at identifying the basic metaphors and at verifying the degree of emotiveness of the language units activating specific metaphors in media texts. The Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Johnson 2003) and empirical research methods (Peer 1986) have been applied to establish a correlation between the use of metaphors in texts and readers' emotional response.

The use of the language actualizing metaphors may help impose certain feelings on the target audience. If this inference is viable, then the results can be embraced for anti-trafficking programs. This will help us answer the question "How can we raise the awareness of HT risks among Ukrainian youth?" The procedure includes identifying the prevailing metaphors and underlying image-schemas; evaluating the emotive degree of language means; processing the data, and explaining expected-vs-obtained results.

Such analysis showed the metaphors are predominantly based on such image-schemas as in-out; path; up + manyness. The image-schemas facilitate conveyance of fear and danger, mainly through metaphors: HT – DISEASE, HT – JOURNEY, HT – TRAP. We predict that the degree of reaction will be higher after reading the text rich in connotative meanings rendered through metaphors as pre-constructed messages compared to the less emotive text.

The case study includes two types of texts with less/more frequent the use of metaphors in a fragment of media text. 76 humanities undergraduates, aged 20-21, from Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University and Military Institute of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, took part in the survey in 2020. They were asked whether they imagined themselves being in the same situation, whether they felt sympathy with victims, and whether they were emotionally affected, before and after reading the texts.

We may observe the respondents' frequent commenting in the feedback section of the questionnaire after reading the emotive text. The SPSS-processed data will shed light on the degree of the readers' emotional involvement in the media content and the use of metaphors. The results are valuable for developing of the strategies of metaphorical framing for HT prevention programs.

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