Metaphorical opposition between HEALTH and DISEASE: a corpus illustrated study

The meaning of *health* has been debated among professional from a wide variety of disciplines for over two millennia (Loudon, 1997). Numerous studies (e.g., Woynarowska, 2007) point out that although hundreds of various health definitions have been proposed in medicine and psychology of health, a common interpretation has not been agreed so far. The concept of health is multidimensional, relative, and prone to alterations not only from individual but also historical, cultural, and socio-economic perspectives. Its meaning remains as elusive as it is fundamental to our existence (Korwin-Szymanowska, 2014).

Employing the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Jonson, 1980, 1999), this paper discusses the opposition between health and disease as a conceptual metaphor. It focuses in particular on the theory of *force dynamics* in language and cognition (Talmy, 1988) viewing that relationship as a case of *gradable antonymy* (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, 2010), which springs from the metaphors of conflict or war (Kövecses, 2010). Data found in national reference corpora for British English (BNC) and Polish (NKJP) indicate that the concept of health is as complex as it is universal across languages and cultures (Kövecses, 2005).

References


