

CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR ‘FOOTBALLERS ARE COMMODITIES’ IN VIETNAMESE SPORTS NEWS

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Abstract

This study aims to identify linguistic expressions carrying the conceptual metaphor ‘FOOTBALLERS ARE COMMODITIES’ in Vietnamese sports news and discuss how the source domain COMMODITIES helps to comprehend the target domain FOOTBALLERS and therefore clarify native speakers’ ways of thinking. Based on the experiential correlations and knowledge mapped from source domain to target domain, the study explains the conceptual construction in the news. It has been found that the aspects of COMMODITIES selected for mapping come from the news writers’ common knowledge about commodities. By decoding the mechanism of the construction and mapping scheme of the COMMODITIES metaphor, we can see that the news sources are quite consistent when the writers all code “footballers” as commodities with the features associated with commodities, viz. “commodities’ value; means of purchase of commodities; risks to commodities; purchase and sale of commodities; target/potential customers of commodities; trading environment; intermediary activities related to the exchange, purchase and sales of commodities”. The mapping helps readers to understand more about footballers from a very interesting perspective. Their talent and skills are valuable and can be assessed; in other words, they are considered “a special commodity” for exchange. Therefore, star footballers sometimes move from one club to another club via transfers, and the personnel exchange between institutions is carried out via similar steps of buying and selling COMMODITIES, negotiation and signing of work contract.

Keywords: Conceptual metaphor; sports news; commodities; footballers; mapping

Introduction

In the traditional theory, metaphor is regarded as merely a rhetorical device, part of the bells and whistles of language. Later, the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which was put forward by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and has received great attention in the world, holds that metaphor is not only a kind of rhetorical device but also a general thinking mode by which abstract concepts are comprehended through concrete concepts. Since then there has been a boom in the study of conceptual metaphors in many countries and in many fields. Studies of media discourse, particularly sports news, have figured prominently in this proliferation of research (Kellett, 2002; Chapanga, 2004; Cibulskiene, 2014; Wiliński, 2014; PirsI and Randjelovic, 2015), etc. Most of the studies on sports media discourse investigate how the kinds of sports are conceptualized through other concepts, and the data revealed that the WAR metaphor (SPORT IS WAR) is the most prominent metaphor. However, in our research, Vietnamese sports news was examined in terms of occurrences of conceptual metaphors related to the target domain FOOTBALLERS, and among the recurring metaphors recognized, the conceptual metaphor FOOTBALLERS ARE COMMODITIES appeared to be extremely prominent, besides the WAR metaphor. This paper focuses on this conceptual metaphor only. It aims to identify linguistic expressions carrying the conceptual metaphor FOOTBALLERS ARE COMMODITIES in sports news, and to discuss how the source domain COMMODITIES helps to comprehend the target domain FOOTBALLERS and therefore clarify native speakers' ways of thinking.

Conceptual Metaphors and Mapping

This study adopts the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory to analyse conceptual metaphors. According to this theory, the conceptual metaphor refers to the understanding of one idea or concept in terms of another. It is the systematic mapping from source domain to target domain to form a cognitive model. Kövecses (2017) wrote "*A conceptual metaphor is a*

systematic set of correspondences, or mapping, between two domains of experience". This is a more technical way to define conceptual metaphors compared with what Lakoff and Johnson (1980) states "*understanding one domain in terms of another*". This type of metaphors is often the result of conceptualisation via association, which helps us understand the target domain A (normally more abstract) based on the elements and the relations between the elements of the source domain B (normally more concrete). The source domain provides a variety of knowledge and experience to the target domain. This process of association happens via the mapping of the corresponding elements (or aspects) of A and B. A fixed set of correspondences between the elements making up the target and source domains creates mapping of the structure of conceptual metaphors. When such association is activated, the aspects of the source domain are projected to the target domain according to the rule of partial and unidirectional mapping. Therefore, only some elements (or aspects) of the source domain are mapped on to the target domain.

Conceptual Metaphors in Sports Discourse

A review of related literature revealed that there have been a number of studies of metaphors in sports news including spoken news and written news, much of which consists of football news or commentaries.

Very few studies looked at the use of metaphors in spoken discourse. For example, Chapanga (2004) explored the use of the WAR metaphor in football commentaries of the matches of the 2004 edition of the Premier Soccer League in Zimbabwe. The data indicated that the commentators described the actions in terms of war. Another study by Cibulskiene (2014) used a corpus-driven approach to explore basketball commentators' metaphors in the 2011 European Basketball Championship, and found that BASKETBALL is mainly conceptualized in terms of CONFLICT and WAR, and secondarily through other concepts such as JOURNEY, MONEY TRANSACTION, and ILLNESS.

Regarding written sports news, the metaphorical expressions are investigated in various languages.

Caballero (2012) explored the use of metaphors in commentaries on tennis matches in English media reports and forums that follow the matches. The study showed that tennis was linked to the concepts of MOTION, VIOLENCE, and AUTHORITY.

Krisnawati (2014) conducted a qualitative study on the use of metaphors in Indonesian football news and found that scoring goals in games was conceptualized as packing gold and reaping crops while the activities during games were viewed as acts of “hunting”.

Wiliński (2014) investigated the kinds of metaphors used in the German football news. The findings revealed that PHYSICAL FIGHT, MILITARY CONFLICT, ANIMAL AND HUMAN BEHAVIOUR, MEETINGS, and JOURNEYS were particularly prominent source domains for conceptualising the target domain FOOTBALL.

In their research, Pirsl and Randjelovic (2015) focused on the MILITARY metaphors in sports media discourse. The results showed that metaphorical expressions are mainly nouns and that there is a great overlap between military and sports terminologies.

Research Methodology

The main methods used are discourse analysis, statistical analysis and categorisation. The corpus consists of 284 pieces of 250-300 word Vietnamese sport news written by different authors in the “Transfer Corner” column in the International Sports Section of the online newspaper *Tinethao.com.vn*. during four months from 1 January to 30 April 2019. *Tinethao.com.vn* is one of the leading Vietnamese online newspapers, which provides updates and credible news on sports. Each piece of news on “Transfer Corner” delivers the news and stories about football transfers. We focus on the first four months of the year because this is the winter transfer window (one of two periods during the year

in which football clubs transfer their footballers) in many countries including England, France, Spain, and Italy (top markets in the world).

Having collected the data, we manually analyse the linguistic expressions, identifying, categorising, and labeling the metaphors used. After that, we determine the foci of the aspects of both source domain and target domain, and then define the correspondences activated in the cognitive frame; create the mapping process and explain the mechanism of the mapping of the aspects of the “source” and “target” domains via the metaphorical expressions; and finally, define the rule of mapping and learn about the writers’ typical ways of thinking and patterns of cognition. The research helps prove the close relationship of the trio language - culture - thinking underlying the metaphorical expressions.

Regarding metaphor identification, we use the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) developed by Pragglejaz group.

The MIP can be summarized as follows:

1. Read the entire text–discourse to establish a general understanding of the meaning.

2. Determine the lexical units in the text–discourse.

3. (a) For each lexical unit in the text, establish its meaning in context, that is, how it applies to an entity, relation, or attribute in the situation evoked by the text (contextual meaning). Take into account what comes before and after the lexical unit.

- (b) For each lexical unit, determine if it has a more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts than the one in the given context. For our purposes, basic meanings tend to be

- More concrete; what they evoke is easier to imagine, see, hear, feel, smell, and taste.

- Related to bodily action.

- More precise (as opposed to vague)

- Historically older.

Basic meanings are not necessarily the most frequent meanings of the lexical unit.

(c) If the lexical unit has a more basic current-contemporary meaning in other contexts than the given context, decide whether the contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning but can be understood in comparison with it.

4. If yes, mark the lexical unit as metaphorical.

Metaphor Identification Procedure by Pragglejaz Group (2007).

Findings and Discussion

The conceptual metaphor FOOTBALLERS ARE COMMODITIES is composed of two domains, namely “source” and “target”, in which the aspects of source domain COMMODITIES are selected and mapped on the target domain according to the rule of partial mapping. Based on this mechanism, the target domain FOOTBALLERS now has some elements (or aspects) of the source domain COMMODITIES.

The source domain COMMODITIES possesses such aspects as: *commodities’ value; means of purchase of commodities; risks to commodities; purchase and sale of commodities; target/potential customers of commodities; trading environment; intermediary activities related to the exchange, commodities’ condition, commodities’ preservation, commodities’ production....* When these aspects are activated and projected, some of them are selected and mapped on the target domain FOOTBALLERS through partial mapping. Based on the metaphorical expressions found in 284 pieces of sports news posted on Tinthethao.com.vn, the mapping FOOTBALLERS ARE COMMODITIES is illustrated as shown in Table 1.

There are many metaphorical expressions of FOOTBALLERS ARE COMMODITIES with particular vehicles (lexical items) associated with each aspect of the source domain COMMODITIES which is activated and mapped onto the target domain FOOTBALLERS. The frequency of occurrences of each lexical item is presented in Table 2.

Table 1: The Mapping of the Conceptual Metaphor FOOTBALLERS ARE COMMODITIES in Vietnamese Sports News

The source domain (COMMODITIES)		The target domain (FOOTBALLERS)	Sample metaphorical expressions
Commodities' value	→	The talent and skills of footballers	<i>"một viên ngọc thô sáng giá" [...]</i> [a precious pearl]
Means of purchase of commodities	→	Methods of personnel exchange among institutions	<i>"...được đem cho mượn đến..."</i> [...was lent to...]
Risks to commodities	→	Risks to footballers	<i>"... còn tính "cuỗm" nột ...từ..."</i> [...intend to steal...from...]
Purchase and sale of commodities	→	Personnel exchange among institutions	<i>"... có cơ hội hét giá cao"</i> [...have the chance to charge a lot of money for...]
Commodity trading environment	→	The condition in which the agreement related to personnel exchange takes place	<i>"Trong ngày cuối cùng phiên chợ Đông 2019..."</i> [On the last day of winter 2019 Fair ...]
Target/potential customers of commodities	→	The people who are able to negotiate, coordinate and make personnel exchanges	<i>"...các đại gia châu Âu."</i> [European bigwigs]
Intermediary activities related to the exchange, purchase and sales of commodities	→	Intermediary activities related to personnel exchange	<i>"Siêu cò Italy..."</i> [Italian <i>super-intermediary</i> ...]
Commodity condition	0		
Preservation of commodities	0		

Source: The authors' collection of data

Table 2: The Lexical Items of the Conceptual Metaphor FOOTBALLERS ARE COMMODITIES in Vietnamese Sports News

Aspects of the source domain	Lexical items	Number of occurrences	Aspects of the source domain	Lexical items	Number of occurrences
Value of commodities	Đắt/đắt giá [expensive]/giá cắt cổ [cost an arm and a leg]/giá đắt đỏ [costly];	12	Purchase and sales of commodities	Áp phe [good deal]	1
	Báu vật [treasure]	1		Bạo chi/chi đậm [pay a lot of money]	2
	Giá cao ngất ngưỡng/ Giá cao [high cost]	3		Chốt giá [price fixing]/để giá ưu tiên [(to) offer a competitive price]	3
	Giá 0 đồng [zero]	1		Dốc hầu bao [(to) disburse]/móc hầu bao [pay out]/chi đậm [pay a fortune]/ tung tiền [throw money around]	13
	Mức giá [price]/giá sàn [floor price]	37		Đi chợ [go shopping]	2
	Mức phí [fee]	12		Đấu giá [(to) bid]	1
	Món hàng hot [hot commodity]	1		Gạ bán [(to) offer to sell]/gán [assign]	6
	Miễn phí [free of charge]	1		Hạ giá [price reduction]/giảm giá [discount]	3

Table 2: (Continued)

Aspects of the source domain	Lexical items	Number of occurrences	Aspects of the source domain	Lexical items	Number of occurrences
	Rẻ [cheap]/giá rẻ [low priced]	7		Hét giá [(to) charge a lot of money]/đòi giá [(to) charge]/chào giá [(to) offer (a price)]/định giá [(to) price]	16
	Viên ngọc (quý/thô/sáng giá) [(precious/unpolished/ bright) pearl]	9		Nâng giá [(to) increase the price]	2
				Rao bán [put (something) up for sale]	2
				Săn hàng [commodity hunt]	3
				Thương thảo/thương lượng [negotiate]	3
Means of purchase and sale of commodities	Thanh lý [liquidate]	6	Target customer of commodities	Đại gia [bigwig]	4
	Mua [buy]/mua sắm [(to) shop]/mua đứt [buy off]/mua lại [buy back]/mua thêm [buy more]	68		Gã khổng lồ [giant]	5
	Bán [sell]/Bán đứt [sell off]/Bán lại [sell]	41		Nhà cái [banker]	1
	Chuyển nhượng /nhượng lại [transfer]	42		Nhà giàu [the rich]	3
	Cho mượn [lend]	46		Ông lớn [tycoon]	19
	Ép giá [extort price]	2		Thiếu gia [rich kid]	1

Table 2: (Continued)

Aspects of the source domain	Lexical items	Number of occurrences	Aspects of the source domain	Lexical items	Number of occurrences
	Tặng [give (a gift)]	1			
	Hợp đồng [contract]	22			
	Thương vụ [transaction]	37		Tỷ phú [billionaire]	3
	Tậu [buy]	1			
Risks to commodities	Cướp [rob]	7	Places where commodities are exchanged	Chợ [open market]/phiên chợ [fair]/phiên mua sắm [transaction]	24
	Cuốn /đánh cắp [steal]	6	Intermediary activities	Thị trường [market]	23
	Giật [snatch]	5		Cò [intermediary]/siêu cò [super-intermediary]	7
	Nặng tay trên/hót tay trên [to scoop]	5			

The conceptual metaphor FOOTBALLERS ARE COMMODITIES in Vietnamese sports news is expressed through the linguistic expressions with aspects of the source domain COMMODITIES partially mapped. Table 1 shows that almost all aspects of the source domain COMMODITIES were selected, and then activated and mapped onto the target domain FOOTBALLERS. However, other aspects of the source domain such as “the condition of the commodity” (*tồn kho [inventory]*, *cũ nát [worn-out]*, *quá dated [out of date]*, *ôi thiu [stale]*, *gãy vỡ [broken]*, *ẩm mốc [moldy]*, *cong vênh [bent]...*), and “methods of commodity preservation” (*đóng gói [packing]*, *niêm phong [sealing]*, *xếp dỡ [loading]*, *phơi khô [drying]*, *chống ẩm [water-proof]*, *son [painting]...*) are not taken into account or projected on the domain FOOTBALLERS. For the aspects selected to activate, only some attributes of the source domain were used to be projected onto the target domain. For example, of the aspect “the place where a business transaction takes place”, such attributes as *quầy hàng [stall]*, *cửa hàng [store]*, *shop*, *sàn giao dịch [exchange]*, *siêu thị [supermarket]*, *website...* are not selected as metaphorical expressions. Therefore, the conceptualisation FOOTBALLERS ARE COMMODITIES is only partially reflected in the metaphorical expressions, under the partial mapping of conceptual metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980).

Regarding the aspect “value of commodities”, the most frequently used linguistic expressions are: *mức giá [price]*, *giá sàn [floor price]* (37 occurrences), *mức phí chuyển nhượng [transfer fee]* (12 occurrences), *đắt [expensive]*, *giá cắt cổ [cost an arm and a leg]* (11 occurrences), *rẻ [cheap]*, *giá rẻ [low price]* (7 occurrences)... Comparing the aspects of the two domains, the writers associated the value of footballers (particularly professional football players) with that of COMMODITIES, which creates the correspondences between the two domains. When a football player is described as a valuable commodity (*a treasure, precious pearl*), the readers understand that he is a talented and skillful player, whose stable performance contributes to his team’s good performance and position in big tournaments. In the transfer market, he is very *expensive* and always *assessed* at a high price; he even *costs an arm and a leg*, which means another club would spend a big sum of money to get him from the present club. When a player is “*sold, assigned*” or transferred with a “*low price*” or sometimes becomes a “*free gift*”, readers understand that his

performance is degrading due to a wound or aging or he is not playing at his best. For example:

- (1) Joao Felix là một trong những tài năng xuất sắc nhất thế hệ 1999 và có mọi thứ cần thiết để trở thành cầu thủ có giá trị chuyển nhượng **đắt giá nhất** của làng bóng đá Bồ Đào Nha. [1]
[Joao Felix is one of the greatest talents of the 1999 generation and had everything needed to become a player with **the highest** transfer fee of Portuguese football industry.]
- (2) Fernandes sẽ không rời câu lạc bộ với **giá rẻ**. [2]
[Fernandes will not leave the club with **a low price**.]
- (3) Liverpool duyệt chi 120 triệu euro **thâu tóm 2 'báu vật' tuyển Đức**. [3]
[Liverpool has approved the amount of 120m euros on **acquiring 2 treasures** from German teams.]
- (4) Tottenham sẽ không muốn **đổ mất Eriksen dưới dạng miễn phí** vào mùa hè năm sau và họ đã sớm tìm người thay thế. [4]
[Tottenham will not want **to lose Eriksen for free** next summer, and they have quickly found a substitute.]
- (5) Những ngày qua truyền thông châu Âu đưa tin đại diện Bồ Đào Nha đã công bố **mức "giá sàn"** lên tới 120 triệu euro, dẫn vậy rất nhiều tờ báo đều đưa tin cả hai đại diện của xứ sở bò tót đều sẵn sàng **chi đậm** để đón "Ronaldo 2.0". [5]
[In the past few days, European media have been posting the news that the Portuguese representative has announced **"the floor price"** of up to 120 million Euros; however, many papers say that both teams of "the country of bulls" are ready to **pay a fortune** to welcome "Ronaldo 2.0".]

Regarding the aspect "means of transaction", the most frequently used metaphorical expressions are: *chuyển nhượng/nhượng lại* [transfer] (42 occurrences), *cho mượn* [lend] (46 occurrences), *mua* [buy]/*mua sắm* [shop] (68 occurrences), *bán* [sell] (41 times), *thương vụ* [transaction] (28 times), *hợp đồng* [contract] (22 occurrences)... These expressions are used by the news writers to conceptualise footballers as special commodities that can be bought and sold among managers via transactions and contracts with agreed terms.

These transactions are done via business contracts protected by financial law. Before each transfer window, a football club manager reviews his team to see what positions need to be replaced or added. He then considers the best footballers of other clubs and chooses those suitable for his team, which is similar to someone making a *shopping list* before going to the market. Those footballers are viewed as items to buy (see example 8), borrow (see example 6) or give as present (see example 11).

For example:

- (6) Tiền vệ Barcelona gia nhập Emirates theo bản **hợp đồng cho mượn** đến hết mùa kèm điều khoản **mua đứt**. [6]
[Barcelona's midfielder joined Emirates under the **loan contract** until the end of the season together with a condition for **buying off**.]
- (7) Nếu nhận được lời đề nghị hợp lý, Man United sẽ **bán đứt** Sanchez trong kỳ chuyển nhượng mùa hè. [7]
[If there is a reasonable offer, Man United will **sell off** Sanchez in the summer transfer window.]
- (8) Jadon Sancho đã nổi lên như một trong những tài năng sáng giá nhất của bóng đá thế giới và anh đang nằm trong **danh sách mua sắm** của Man Utd (theo Metro). [8]
[Jadon Sancho stands out as one of the greatest talents of the world's football industry, and he is on the **shopping list** of Man Utd (according to Metro).]
- (9) Đội chủ sân Old Trafford sẽ tiến hành **thanh lý** 3 cầu thủ ở khu vực hàng phòng ngự sau khi mùa giải năm nay kết thúc, theo Manchester Evening News. [9]
[According to Manchester Evening News, the owner of Old Trafford will **liquidate** three players at the back at the end of this year's tournament.]
- (10) CLB Qatar đã phải bỏ ra số tiền lên đến 8 triệu euro để thuyết phục "gã khổng lồ" Italia **nhượng lại** cựu trung vệ Bayern Munich. [10]
[Qatar FC paid up to eight million euros to persuade "the giant" Italy to **transfer** the ex-midfielder of Bayern Munich for them.]

- (11) Chuyển nhượng 11/02: M.U **tặng 'tân binh' khổng** cho Solskjaer; Real giật bom tấn Pogba. [11]

[Transfer news on 11/02: M.U **gave** Solskjaer **a giant “new recruit” for free**; Real snatched the bomb Pogba.]

Regarding the aspect “potential risks to commodities”, such attributes of COMMODITIES as *bị cướp* [getting robbed], *giật* [snatched], *bị cướp* [taken], *bị đánh cắp* [stolen], *hay bị nâng tay trên* [scooped]... are mapped onto the target domain FOOTBALLERS. These expressions suggest that the footballers discussed in sports news need to be protected and preserved like precious and rare things which can be stolen, robbed, snatched or scooped up for someone else's use if we do not keep an eye on them. For example:

- (12) Tìm "Fernandinho 2.0", Pep tính **nâng tay trên** mục tiêu 70 triệu bảng của Man Utd. [12]

[Looking for “Fernandinho 2.0”, Pep plans to **scoop** the 70-million-pound target of Man Utd.]

- (13) Do đó, có thể sự mâu thuẫn lớn đã khiến BLĐ Braugrana không muốn hợp tác với Arsenal khi mà chính đội bóng nước Anh **cuốn đi** vị Giám đốc bóng đá của họ. [13]

[Therefore, it is likely that the big conflict will result in Braugrana leaders being unwilling to cooperate with Arsenal when the English team itself **robbed** them of their football manager.]

- (14) Dự chi 120 triệu euro, Real quyết **cướp người** của Man Utd. [14]

[With its plan to pay 120 million Euros, Real is determined to **rob** Man Utd **of their players**.]

- (15) Chủ tịch Florentino Perez buộc phải sa thải người mà ông cất công **đánh cắp** từ Liên đoàn bóng đá Tây Ban Nha với **cú áp phe kinh điển** trước World Cup 2018 một ngày. [15]

[President Florentino Perez had to fire the person he had worked so hard **to steal** from Spanish Football Federation in **a classical deal** a day before World Cup 2018.]

Regarding the aspect “buying and selling of COMMODITIES”, the most frequently used metaphorical expressions in the news are *định giá* [price] (9 occurrences), *dốc hầu bao* [to disburse]/*móc hầu bao* [to pay out] (8 occurrences), *hét giá* [to charge a lot of money] (5 occurrences), *gạ bán* [offer

to sell] (4 occurrences), *gán* [assign] (2 occurrences) ... These are the basic practices in transactions for all types of COMMODITIES. In business, a businessman/trader has particular COMMODITIES which he prices [*định giá*] based on their value so that he can sell at the highest price. The trader's goal is to *offer a price, put it up for sale* and *negotiate* about his COMMODITIES. The buyer is convinced by the quality of the commodities and thus "*pays out*" to possess the commodities. During negotiation, the seller often *charges a lot of money* and *increases the price* to make the deal more favourable to him. When the negotiation ends up with *price reduction, discount* and *price fixing*, the transaction is considered a success for the buyer. The mentioned features of buying and selling a commodity are activated to be projected on the target domain FOOTBALLERS. News reporters consider personnel transactions between football clubs via transfer contracts to be the exchange of COMMODITIES on the market, in which a star player's talent and performance are assessed by club managers in the same way that the value of a commodity is priced. Club managers are compared to the buyers who go shopping and make careful judgments before *paying out*, and they also plan to hunt for the players in the transfer window. For example:

- (16) Tờ ESPN tiết lộ, Jose Mourinho một lần nữa muốn ban lãnh đạo ***đốc hầu bao*** để ***mua*** về một trung vệ trong phiên chợ Đông 2019. [16]

[ESPN reveals that once again, Jose Mourinho wants the board of directors ***to disburse*** to ***buy*** a midfielder at the Winter 2019 Fair.]

- (17) Trước đó, đội chủ sân Old Trafford từng ngó ý muốn mua cầu thủ người Senegal nhưng Napoli đã ***hét giá*** lên đến 90 triệu bảng. [17]
[The team that owns Old Trafford once offered to buy the Senegalese player before, but Naples ***charged*** 90 million pounds for him.]

- (18) Juventus hy sinh Dybala để ***tậu*** Mbappe. Theo *Tuttosport*, Juventus muốn ***bán đứt*** Paulo Dybala với giá hơn 100 triệu euro để ***gây quỹ*** chiêu mộ Kylian Mbappe. [18]

[Juventus sacrificed Dybala to **buy** Mbappe. According to *Tuttosport*, Juventus wanted to **sell off** Paulo Dybala at 100m euros to raise fund for recruiting Kylian Mbappe.]

- (19) Raiola muốn thực hiện thương vụ với Real Madrid nên sẵn sàng **để giá ưu tiên** cho đội chủ sân Bernabeu - **bán** De Ligt với giá 80 triệu euro, cho dù Ajax muốn tới 90 triệu euro. [19]

[Raiola wanted to make a deal with Real Madrid, so he was willing to **offer a discount** for Bernabeu host - **selling** De Ligt for 80 million Euros, although Ajax wanted up to 90 million Euros.]

- (20) Tottenham có thể sẽ phải đưa ra những động thái **hạ giá cầu thủ** của mình. [20]

[Tottenham may do something to **reduce the price** of their players.]

- (21) Chợ hè chưa mở, Emery đã tính chuyện **săn "hàng" miễn phí**. [21]

[Although the summer fair is not yet opened, Emery has already planned to **hunt for free "commodities"**.]

- (22) Dù kỳ chuyển nhượng Đông vừa qua hầu hết các câu lạc bộ lớn tại Anh đều khá trầm lắng, thế nhưng đây rõ ràng chỉ là sự yên lặng trước giông bão khi mà **phiên chợ Hè** tới mới là thời điểm **những cuộc đấu giá điên rồ** diễn ra. [22]

[Although the last Winter transfer window was not very busy at most big clubs in England, this is apparently the calm before the storm because the upcoming **Summer fair** promises **some crazy bidding**.]

Regarding the aspect “places where commodities are exchanged”, the most frequently used are “*thị trường*” [market] (23 occurrences), “*chợ* [open market]/*phiên chợ* [fair]/*phiên mua sắm* [transaction]” (19 occurrences). Through these linguistic expressions, footballers are viewed as a special commodity bought and sold in an open market or supermarket by clubs managers. In football, there are two periods of time during the year in which footballers are transferred and that time is called transfer window, normally in winter and summer. Therefore, the expressions like “*phiên chợ mùa Đông*” [Winter Fair], “*phiên chợ mùa hè*” [Summer Fair]) indicate the places where the trading activities of the winter and summer transfer windows take place. The

football player market is busy with bargaining and competition between those who put the players up for sale and those who want to buy them. They save money to “go shopping”, and before buying a player, they also watch how he plays and go to the matches he plays to “view the commodity”, assess his value and decide whether to invest in him. For example

- (23) Tờ ESPN tiết lộ, Jose Mourinho một lần nữa muốn ban lãnh đạo “*độc hâu bao*” để mua về một trung vệ trong *phiên chợ Đông* 2019. [16]

[ESPN reveals that once again, Jose Mourinho wants the board of directors “*to disburse*” to buy a midfielder at Winter 2019 Fair.]

Regarding the aspect “target/potential customer of commodities”, the metaphorical expressions are related to the wealthy people such as *đại gia* [bigwig], *ông lớn* [tycoon], *tỷ phú* [billionaire], *thiếu gia* [rich kid], *nhà giàu* [the rich], and extremely tall and strong people (*gã khổng lồ* [giant]) ... Of the expressions, the most frequently used are “*ông lớn*” [the big] (19 occurrences), *đại gia* [big money] (4 occurrences). When used in the researched Vietnamese sport news, these linguistic expressions refer to large well-resourced clubs with the ability to assess footballers’ value and close deals with high-value contracts. The news writers consider football players in transfer window contexts to be costly COMMODITIES; therefore, those who can buy the players must be the wealthy clubs. These clubs are authoritative and willing to pay a lot. When bidding is needed, they are also wealthy enough to bid at a higher price, and so are able to buy the most wanted players in the world. For example:

- (24) Cùng với đó, Juventus sẽ bán hậu vệ trái hiện tại của họ là Alex Sandro. Có thông tin cho rằng Real Madrid quan tâm Sandro lẫn Dybala, vì vậy rất có thể sẽ có sự mua bán trao đổi giữa hai *Gã khổng lồ* này. [24]

[Meanwhile, Juventus is going to sell their left back Alex Sandro. It is said that Real Madrid is paying attention to both Sandro and Dybala; therefore, there might be a transaction between these two *giants*.]

- (25) Mùa giải gần kết thúc cũng là lúc các *ông lớn* châu Âu rục rịch lên kế hoạch kích hoạt những *thương vụ lớn* vào mùa Hè. [25]

[The end of this season is also the time when *the European tycoons* plan for big deals in summer.]

(26) *Đại gia Trung Quốc* vùng tiền chiêu mộ "sát thủ" Belotti. [26]

[*The Chinese bigwig* threw his money around to get "killer" Belotti.]

(27) Theo báo giới Anh, cái tên mới nhất mà *thiếu gia thành Manchester* nhắm đến là Tanguy Ndombele. [27]

[According to English media, the newest name that *the rich kid of Manchester* is looking for is Tanguy Ndombele.]

Regarding "intermediary activities involved in the purchase of commodities", Vietnamese people have terms like "cò" [intermediary] or "siêu cò" [super-intermediary] to denote those who introduces the parties and negotiate the price of a commodity in both big and small transactions. In Vietnamese sports news, agents who give advice on the transfer of players between clubs are regarded as "super-intermediaries" by writers considering footballers to be COMMODITIES. Such agents are taken to play an important role, and to have power, in the decision of whether to buy or sell a player. For example:

(28) "*Siêu cò*" *người Italia* chính là vũ khí bí mật giúp đội bóng chủ sân San Siro chiêu mộ cầu thủ đang thi đấu tại Hà Lan. [28]

[*The Italian "super-intermediary"* is the secret weapon that helps the team of San Siro recruit the players in the Netherlands.]

Our analysis of the data we have collected shows that the researched Vietnamese sports news is written with the association FOOTBALLERS ARE COMMODITIES. Through the use of this metaphorical association, the writers help readers to understand more about the role and value of footballers in football practices, and make vivid to readers the attraction and heat of the transfer market, where the allegiances of many star footballers in their prime are at stake. The players who perform well are viewed as hot and best-selling COMMODITIES who draw rich people's attention and make them want to possess or look for a chance to *steal* or *scoop*. The Vietnamese news writer use a great number of metaphorical expressions of FOOTBALLERS ARE COMMODITIES to report the player transfers in busy transfer windows with many buyers and sellers and many steps in each transaction from *viewing the*

commodity, assessing the commodity, putting the commodity up for sale, offering to sell, bidding, increasing the price, charging a lot of money, reducing the price to making a deal, and paying. The means of transaction between clubs is also reflected with various types of activities like *buying off, selling off, repurchasing, reselling, assigning, liquidating, lending, giving as a gift, and giving for free.* In general, aspects are activated from the source domain COMMODITIES and projected onto the target domain FOOTBALLERS; the target domain takes them and copies all the equivalent attributes.

Conclusion

By identifying the metaphorical expressions, clarifying the mapping schemes, associating, and projecting the aspects of “source” and “target” domains, this paper has explained the conceptual metaphor FOOTBALLERS ARE COMMODITIES that is used in Vietnamese sports news. It can be said that the aspects or attributes of COMMODITIES selected for mapping come from the news writers’ common knowledge about commodities. By decoding the mechanism of the metaphor construction and mapping scheme of the COMMODITIES metaphor, we reveal a consistent pattern in the language of sports news discourse: the writers all code “footballers” as commodities with all the features associated with commodities, viz. *“commodities’ value; means of purchase of commodities; risks to commodities; purchase and sale of commodities; target/potential customers of commodities; trading environment; intermediary activities related to the exchange, purchase and sales of commodities.”* The mapping helps readers understand more about footballers from a very interesting perspective. Their talent and skills are valuable and can be assessed; in other words, they are considered “a special commodity” for exchange. Therefore, star footballers sometimes move from one club to another club via transfers, and the personnel exchange between institutions is carried out via similar steps of buying and selling COMMODITIES, negotiation, and signing of work contracts.

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