

THE USE OF FIRE METAPHORS IN UK RIOTS REPORTS

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Abstract: *The paper deals with the ways anti-immigration and anti-racism protests were portrayed by the British and American mainstream media based on a corpus of excerpts of news articles, including headlines, and opinion articles, published in the period 31.07.2024 - 10.08.2024. It studies the way fire metaphors are used in media texts on the topic. Fire metaphors have a key role in the media coverage of anti-immigration protests in the United Kingdom in July-August 2024. They are extremely productive in expressing emotions – both positive and negative. In media articles about riots and conflicts fire metaphors are predominantly used to express negative emotions. The metaphor “anger is fire” has a central role in portraying the UK protests. As stated by Ford, fire, “as a metaphor for conflict, presents a useful frame for us to view conflict” (Ford). Following Charteris-Black’s statement that “fire” expressions are used to describe human emotions (Charteris-Black 37), the study aims to provide findings about the use of “fire” expressions with their literal and metaphorical meaning in the selected corpus. The role of the deliberately ambiguous use of “fire” vocabulary is also studied.*

Keywords: *media texts; protests; metaphors; “fire” vocabulary.*

1. Introduction

The anti-immigration protest in the UK took place between 30 July and 5 August 2024. The protests took place after a mass stabbing in Southport on 29 July in which three children were killed and the followed false claims that the murderer was an asylum seeker. In response to those protests, counter protests took the streets of several cities in the UK. Both protests received a lot of attention by the media. An extensive use of metaphors from the “fire” domain can be found in the articles covering those events.

According to Chilton and Lakoff, metaphors are not mere words or fanciful notions, but one of our primary means of conceptualizing the world (Chilton, Lakoff 5). As stated by Lakoff and Johnson, a conceptual metaphor is “understanding one domain of experience (that is typically abstract) in terms of another (that is typically concrete)” (Lakoff, Johnson 6). In “Conceptual Metaphor Theory”, Kövecses defines conceptual metaphor as “a systematic set of correspondences between two domains of experience” (Kövecses, *Conceptual Metaphor Theory* 14). In his view, “certain elements and the relations between them are said to be mapped from one domain, the “source domain,” onto the other domain, the “target” (Kövecses, *Conceptual Metaphor Theory* 14).

Kövecses argues, in “Metaphor in Media Language and Cognition”, that “a large part of the conceptualization process in the media involves metaphor” and thus, “dealing with conceptualization in the media necessarily involves metaphorical conceptualization” (Kövecses, *Metaphor in Media Language and Cognition* 125).

As stated by Ann Williams, metaphor can shape the meaning audiences assign to news (Williams 1404). In her view, metaphor, “is not merely a commonly used rhetorical device; it also influences individuals’ decision making” (William 1404).

Kövecses argues that the basis of the most general metaphor for anger is “anger is heat” (Kövecses, *Conceptual Metaphor Theory* 13). In his view, there are two versions of this metaphor, “one where the heat is applied to fluids, the other where it is applied to solids (Kövecses, *Conceptual Metaphor Theory* 13)”. When applied to fluids, the metaphors “anger is the heat of a fluid in a container” is produced. When “anger is heat” is applied to solids, “we get the version ‘anger is fire’, which is motivated by the ‘heat’ and ‘redness’ aspects of the folk theory of physiological effects” (Kövecses, *Conceptual Metaphor Theory* 13). Kövecses concludes that “anger is fire” metaphor highlights the cause of anger (*kindle, inflame*), the intensity and duration (*smoldering, slow burn, burned up*), the danger to others (*breathing fire*), and the damage to the angry person (*consumed*) (Kövecses, *Conceptual Metaphor Theory* 19).

Charteris-Black points out that the metaphoric uses of “fire” commonly describe human emotions; these include “both positive emotions such as love and negative ones such as anger” (Charteris-Black 37). In his view, typically, love, affection, sexual desire and other emotional states “involving the affects are conceptualized with reference to heat: someone can ‘smoulder’ with desire, or ‘have the hots’ for someone else, or we describe someone as being ‘hot’ to imply that they arouse our sexual desire” (Charteris-Black 37). As to the origin of those meaning, the author refers to the central tenet of cognitive linguistic approaches that meaning originates in bodily experience.

Charteris-Black views “fire” metaphors as typically used to describe human emotions – the nature of these emotions, their level of intensity and their cause and effect relationships (Charteris-Black 35). They are easily recognized because “while fire is visible, fire metaphors usually refer to something that is not visible” (Charteris-Black 10). Typically, they describe emotions and power-related aspects of social relationships; as he has stated, unlike literal language, fire metaphors are effective in the sense that they create visual imagery of what is on the mind of the speaker and this makes the speech easily comprehensible. The author studies the factors for the high level of productivity of these metaphors:

When fire metaphors are used to describe the destructive effect of fire, this is influenced by cultural-historical factors rather than by the universal “embodied experience” of cognitive linguists that account for its use for descriptions of emotional or physical pain. It may be that fire provides what cognitive linguists would refer to as a rich source domain – that is one that offers plenty of potential for elaboration through metaphor entailments – precisely because it does not rely exclusively on universal knowledge of embodied experience or on metonymic, cultural knowledge of how fire has often been used for destructive purposes. By incorporating both cultural and experiential aspects of human experience, fire metaphors have greater potential for creating discourses of awe and authority than they would have had, had they relied on either of these alone. (Charteris-Black 42)

Fire as a metaphor for anger and conflict is widely exploited in media texts (Ford; Charteris-Black). Fire metaphors are used to portray protests, demonstrations and tension in society. Fire metaphors have a key role in the media coverage of anti-immigration protests in the United Kingdom in July-August 2024. Concepts from the domain of fire are mapped on the target domain. A metaphorical entailment - the imparting of a characteristic of the source domain (the metaphorical image) to the target domain (the concept receiving metaphorical treatment) by logical means (Lakoff, Johnson 9) - is also observed in such texts. As stated by Al Hanada, to identify and understand the metaphorical use of fire requires including the associated words that relate to the functions and features of fire, such as burn, heat, light, glow, spread, eat, smoke, etc (Al Hanada 35).

2. Fire metaphors in articles portraying UK riots

The paper studies the way “fire” metaphors are used in portraying the anti-immigration and anti-racism protests in the UK in media coverage by the British and American news media. The study is based on a corpus of excerpted sources. The corpus consists of authentic texts from news articles, including headlines, which, as stated by Iglíkova “are the first source of information about the content” of the text (Iglíkova 71), and opinion articles. The number of analyzed excerpts is 109. For clarity sake, the article headlines are given in bold.

The start of the protests is presented as a start of a fire. In the following excerpt from *The Financial Times*, violence is presented as fire.¹ Concepts from the fire domain are used to activate the target domain- the riots that took place in the UK:

¹ Words and phrases referring to fire in the excerpted sources, included in this paper, are given in italics

Fresh violence *flares* after dozens of rioters arrested across England (*www.ft.com*, 05/08/2024)

In the above headline, the following mapping is observed: *flare*, a notion from the domain of fire activates the target ‘starts suddenly’.

In the text of the article, sudden violence is presented as starting fire:

A fresh *outburst* of violent disorder broke out in several English towns and cities on Sunday, further escalating the most widespread far-right violence in the UK for years. The unrest is the first big test for the Labour government, which took office last month after 14 years in opposition. It has been *fuelled* by a torrent of Islamophobic and anti-immigrant disinformation spread on social media since a mass stabbing in Southport near Liverpool last week. Far-right influencers falsely blamed the attack, in which three young girls were killed and eight other children injured, on a Muslim and used the incident to whip up anti-immigrant sentiment. On Sunday, a far-right protest in the South Yorkshire town of Rotherham turned violent as masked rioters stormed a hotel housing asylum seekers. (*www.ft.com*, 05/08/2024)

“*Outburst* of violent disorder” is metaphorically used to stand for the sudden occurrence of violence. *Outburst* highlights the intensity of fire in the source domain, which maps as intensity of the violence in the target domain. *Fuelled* is used to mean “made stronger”, “enhanced”.

The mapping for the conceptual frame “violence is fire” can be presented in the following way:

SOURCE	TARGET
Flares	→ starts suddenly
Outburst	→ sudden occurrence
Fuelled	→ enhanced

Another verb used metaphorically to mean the beginning of violent behaviour is *ignite*. In the following excerpt from *The Time Magazine*, the verb *ignite* is used metaphorically in the headline of the article. Later in the text of the article, the event is described with the use of no metaphorical language:

How did social media *ignite* the violence?

Facebook posts, images shared across Telegram, and lists of national targets forwarded on Whatsapp groups contributed to the organized wave of uprisings that began as an isolated incident in Southport. One claim that an asylum seeker or migrant was responsible for the Southport stabbing reached at least 15.7 million accounts across a number of social media platforms, Reuters reported. A news channel also published an unsubstantiated claim that the attacker had arrived in the U.K. on a small boat, before apologizing for inaccurate reporting (*time.com*, 05/08/2024)

From the above text it is evident that a marker of equality can be put between the phrases “ignite the violence” and “contributed to the organized wave of uprisings”.

The sudden start of the protests is often presented as an outbreak, as in the following excerpt from a BBC article:

Various parts of England and Northern Ireland have seen violence *break out* in the days since, which politicians say has been *fuelled* by misinformation on social media and far-right groups *inflaming* tensions. It is an *emergency* response committee - a get together of ministers, civil servants, the police, intelligence officers and other officials appropriate to the situation they are looking into. (www.bbc.com, 05/08/2024)

In the above excerpt, the metaphor “violence is fire” is used with the metaphoric entailments *break out*, *fuel*, and *inflame*. As Kövecses has stated, fire metaphors typically specify the effect of an emotion, so that metaphors such as *inflame* or *meltdown* describe emotional responses. (Kövecses 2000). In some media coverage, the sudden violence is associated with a volcano and the verb *erupt* is used to stand for its occurrence:

Anti-racist protesters flood U.K. streets in show of solidarity against far-right riots

Officers have been mobilized amid fears that the violence that has *erupted* elsewhere in Britain could *spread* to mostly Muslim neighborhoods in the capital. LONDON — Britain was tense Wednesday as police and anti-racist campaigners, fearing a possible *outbreak* of the right-wing rioting that *erupted* across the country in recent days, *flooded* into several neighborhoods with large immigrant populations. (www.nbcnews.com)

In the above excerpt, the metaphor “violence is a volcano” is used. A volcano erupts, volcano’s lava spreads, there are lava floods; the spread of lava and lava floods are things that people fear. Paralleling these, the metaphorical entailments in the above excerpt were created – violence erupts, violence spreads, violence floods and it is something that people fear.

While in the above excerpts the representation of sudden violence is made without an agent being mentioned, in some media coverage there is an agent – it is mentioned who potentially contributed for that violence. In the next excerpt, information regarding who/what caused the violence is given:

Online disinformation sparked a wave of far-right violence in the UK — here’s how

It didn't take long for false claims to appear on social media after three young girls were killed in the British town of Southport in July. Within hours, false information — about the attacker's name, religion, and migration status — gained significant traction, *sparking* a wave of disinformation that *fueled* days of violent riots across the U.K. “Referencing a post on LinkedIn, a post on X falsely named the perpetrator as ‘Ali al-Shakati,’ rumored to be a migrant of Muslim faith. By 3 p.m. the following day, the false name had over 30,000 mentions on X alone,” Hannah Rose, a hate and extremism analyst at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD), told CNBC via email. (www.cnn.com, 09.08.2024)

The metaphor “violence is fire” is seen in concepts from the *fire* domain- *spark*, *fuel* and this way the metaphorical entailments “violence is sparked”, “someone sparked violence”, and “violence is fueled” are present. Regarding the intensity of the metaphor, it can be inferred that *sparked* in the abovementioned excerpt is less intense than *erupted* in the previous excerpt, as a volcano eruption is a more large-scale phenomenon.

In the next excerpt, the intense start of the violence is expressed with the verb *explode*:

What's behind the anti-immigrant violence that has *exploded* across Britain? Here's a look

LONDON (AP) — Britain has been convulsed by violence for the past week as crowds spouting anti-immigrant and Islamophobic slogans clashed with police. The disturbances have been *fueled* by right-wing activists using social media to spread misinformation about a knife attack that killed three girls during a Taylor Swift-themed dance event. The violence, some of Britain's worst in years, has led to hundreds of arrests as the government pledges that the rioters will feel “the full force of the law” after hurling bricks and other projectiles at police, looting shops and attacking hotels used to house asylum-seekers. (www.apnews.com, 05/08/2024)

Explode belongs to the “fluid” version of Kövecses' “anger is the heat metaphor”. It is a concept from the “heat of fluid in a container” as the source domain of the central metaphor, and activate “anger” as the target domain. When the pressure on the container becomes too high, the container explodes. When violence explodes, it is out of control.

Enhancing the tension and violence is presented as *stoking a fire*, *fanning the flames*, *fomenting the fire*. In the following excerpt from www.truthout.org Elon Musk's support of the protests is condemned by the text producer:

How Elon Musk *Stoked the Fire* of the UK's Far Right Anti-Immigrant Riots

How will the UK government respond to this assault by the world's wealthiest and most powerful online troll? Late last week, Jonathan Freedland, one of the U.K.'s top political commentators, wrote an article in The Guardian calling out billionaire Elon Musk as a cheerleader for the pogrom-like anti-immigrant riots then sweeping the country. "He is surely the global far right's most significant figure," Freedland wrote of Musk, "and he holds the world's largest megaphone. As he may put it, a battle to defeat him is now inevitable — and it has to be won." (www.truthout.org, 16/08/2024)

The expression "stoked the fire" is used to stand for having bad influence, aggravating already existing bad situation.

The mapping for the conceptual frame "violence is fire" can be presented in the following way:

SOURCE

TARGET

stoke the fire → making an already dangerous situation even worse

In another article, the verb *stoke* takes the object *riots*:

How Online Misinformation *Stoked* Anti-Migrant Riots in Britain

Britain is facing its worst riots in 13 years, as a wave of violent anti-immigration protests sweep across the country. The uprisings began after the spread of misinformation online about a mass stabbing at dance class in Southport that killed three young girls and left numerous others injured. False reports of the July 29 incident said that the 17-year-old suspect, whose identity was initially concealed due to laws protecting minors, was a Muslim asylum seeker. That incorrect information *sparked* a wave of far-right protests and counter protests across the U.K. After mounting media pressure, a U.K. judge revealed the name of the suspect as Axel Rudakubana, who has been charged with multiple counts of murder and attempted murder. Rudakubana was born in Cardiff, Wales, and is not Muslim. (www.time.com, 07/08/2024)

To stoke a riot is a metaphoric entailment of "riots are fire".

Another way of indicating that someone is making a dangerous situation even more dangerous is through the use of the phrase *to fan the flames*, as evident in the following excerpt:

Social media misinformation '*fanned riot flames*'

Social media is accused - by technology experts, academics and police - of *fanning the flames* of the recent disorder seen across the UK. BBC North East Investigations has seen far-right groups online that organised protests in the region at short notice and incited violence against Muslims. Calls to burn mosques and murder black and Asian people were just some of the content seen on a far-right group on the Telegram app set up after the murders of three girls in Southport last month. The app said it was "actively monitoring" the channels. (09/08/2024 www.bbc.com)

“Fanning the flames” is an expression from the fire domain, which activates the target notion “to increase the conflict”. Another expression used to refer to the possible escalation of the violence is *add fuel to the fire*:

Far-right protest plans see people being told to 'stay home' and 'not add fuel to fire'

'We must not let those who seek to divide us win'. People have been urged to "*not add any fuel to the fire*" ahead of protests planned to take place in Plymouth city centre tomorrow (Monday, August 5). A right-wing protest against refugees entering the country, which is using slogans like "stop the boats" and "protect our children", is set to take place outside the Guildhall from 7pm tomorrow evening. A second protest has also been organised from 6pm to counter this one. It comes amid a series of similar demonstrations across the country this week which have seen protesters injured and arrested, together with violence against the country's police forces. (www.plymouthherald.co.uk, 04/08/2024)

Variations of the metaphorical expression *to add fuel to fire* can also be found:

Labour ‘pouring gasoline on the fire’ of mass migration as Matt Goodwin fumes at Keir Starmer’s response to UK riots

Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer has been accused of "*pouring gasoline*" on the issue of mass migration in Britain, after the country experienced unrest with widespread protests and riots. Both anti-immigration and anti-racist demonstrations have swarmed the country's streets following a major incident in Southport, where three young girls were killed. In response to the riots and violence *sparked* by the Southport stabbings, Starmer said communities "will be safe" and hit out at "far-right thuggery" dominating the violent acts across the nation. (www.gbnews.com, 13/08/2024)

The combination of the use of *gasoline* and *spark* makes the text of the news article even more effective, as gasoline can be ignited even by a single spark. *Fumes* activates the target ‘gets angry’, but it is also associated with the gasoline, as gasoline fumes are easily inflammable.

Another idiomatic expression that activates the target ‘worsen an already bad situation’ is *to pour petrol on the fire*:

The footage showed an armed officer, Taser drawn, forcefully kick the head of a man who lay face down on the ground, already apparently incapacitated, as police responded to reports of an assault at Manchester airport. He then stamped on the man’s head and violently kned him in the side, as onlookers screamed. The short clip was met with widespread revulsion and spread quickly across the world. It was covered by Al Jazeera, CNN and New Zealand’s 1News. In less than 48 hours,

agitators such as George Galloway and Tommy Robinson had shared the video with their hundreds of thousands of followers. Nigel Farage's Reform UK *poured petrol on the fire* when Lee Anderson, the party's MP for Ashfield in Nottinghamshire, said he would give a medal to the officer, who now faces criminal charges for assault. (www.theguardian.com, 27/07/2024)

The different stages of the protests' escalation are presented as different stages of heat. During the first stages the protests, they are presented as 'brewing' or 'simmering'. In the next two excerpts, *brewing* is used with the meaning 'starting to develop':

One of the earliest signs that protests were *brewing* came in a Southport-themed group, which was set up on Telegram about six hours after the attack. Telegram - a messaging app which also has channels for publicly broadcasting posts - has historically been used by far-right activists who, until recently, struggled to avoid being banned on the Twitter/X platform. It became flooded with misinformation about the identity of the alleged attacker and posts by other far-right groups such as the National Front. Users also called for a protest on St Luke's Street in Southport, where the local mosque is, on Tuesday evening (www.bbc.com, 02/08/2024)

The conditions for [the riots] have been *brewing* for quite a while, we've seen radicalisation around the edges and the police have been aware in general the conditions [for disorder] were (www.express.co.uk, 06/08/2024)

While in the first excerpt protests are said to be brewing, in the second one, which was published 4 days later, the protests are already called riots. In both cases however, the process is in its initial stage.

Simmering is used with a similar meaning, as in the following excerpt from *The Lead*:

Skirmishes and *simmering* tensions as Blackpool protest in wake of Southport attacks takes place

'Thugs (and) racists not welcome' banners welcome handful of protest group amid heavy police presence. Punks squared up against protesters in Blackpool town centre amid nationwide tensions seemingly *sparked* by the stabbing of children in Southport. Hundreds of people gathered outside the town hall in Talbot Square to voice their dissent - but proceedings threatened to spill over into violence amid a counter-protest from revellers in the Lancashire seaside resort for the annual punk Rebellion weekend (<https://thelead.uk>, 03/08/2024)

This is the early phase in which protests are still demonstrations with a hint of future violence. Yet, the metaphor "fire is violence" is already present with its entailment "tensions are sparked". In the next stage, protests are still simmering, yet there is an indication that the situation will probably get more

serious. As the next stage of the protests comes into place, there is an increase in temperature and things are already “bubbling up”:

But the government says it remains on high alert for more unrest this weekend. The fury *simmering* in a subset of White Britain remains a live danger; these riots were shocking, but not entirely surprising. “I normally walk through this city center all the time,” Nadeem Akhtar, 18, told CNN in the northern English city of Sheffield, where angry riots took place. “But now, recently, even my mum’s been saying to me, don’t be going out so much, because you never know what could happen.” (...) “These are all events that have been *bubbling up* over the past 15 years,” Jesse Bernard, 34, told CNN in Walthamstow, reflecting on the weekend’s violent riots and the prevalence of the far right. “It was bound to happen.” “The chickens come home to roost,” he said. “As a country, this is a bed that we’ve made, and now we’re sleeping in it.” Fittingly, after a week of *misinformation-fuelled* fury, the origin and authenticity of the list of supposed far-right targets on Wednesday isn’t clear. (*edition.cnn.com*, 10/08/2024)

Further escalation of the tension is said to be “at a boiling point”, as in the next excerpt from a BBC coverage of the events:

Protests reveal deep-rooted anger, but UK is not *at boiling point*

In Sunderland on Friday night, I watched a wave of criminality and thuggery engulf a proud city. As they had done previously in Southport, Hartlepool and London, far-right activists – who claimed to be protesting at the murder of three little girls – attacked police trying to keep the peace. They set *fire* to an advice centre next door to a police station, threw stones at a mosque and looted shops. Some, like Nigel Farage, the leader of Reform UK, have suggested what we are seeing is evidence of a country close to *boiling over*, community relations on the edge. (*www.bbc.com*, 05/08/2024)

The possible turning point to come soon is the ‘boil over’ moment when things will be out of control. Schematically, the degrees of violence escalation can be schematically presented in the following way:

Simmer → bubble up → at boiling point → boil over

Putting and to the riots is presented with the use of the verb *quell*, as in the next excerpt:

Huge counter-protests *quell* riots after leaving far-Right outnumbered

Far-Right demonstrators were left outnumbered on Wednesday night as thousands of counter-protesters crowded them out in towns and cities across England. Police forces across the country braced for more than 100 far-Right demonstrations, with almost 4,000 specially-trained public order officers taking to the streets in anticipation of unrest. Another 2,000 officers were placed on standby, meanwhile

GP surgeries closed early and City workers were told to leave the office. In many towns and cities shops were also boarded up over fears of further rioting. But it was the counter-protesters who turned out in far greater numbers. In London, more than 5,000 people amassed in Walthamstow carrying banners of ‘Oppose Tommy Robinson’ and ‘Refugees Welcome’. Hundreds of counter-protesters also gathered outside an immigration advice centre in Brentford and the Old Fire Station in Hackney. (www.telegraph.co.uk, 07/08/2024)

“Quell” is a verb associated with fire, therefore “quell riots” is an entailment of the metaphor “riot is fire”. In media coverage of the 2024 summer protests in the UK, along with the metaphorical use of vocabulary from the fire domain, there are fire words that are used literally. In the following excerpt, expressions from the fire domain activated with their metaphorical meaning are used, followed by expressions from the fire domain activated with their literal meaning. The expressions from the fire domain in the first sentence can be interpreted both metaphorically and literally:

LONDON — Britain is *on fire* — and its new leader hopes *to put out the fires* by turning to his background as a lawyer. After just a month as the United Kingdom’s prime minister, Keir Starmer has found himself *fighting* riots linked to the far right. Britain has faced days of noisy protests, many of which turned violent and targeted mosques and hostels housing asylum seekers. Starmer is fighting to regain control by ramping up the U.K.’s stretched justice system. How *widespread* is the disorder? The day after the Southport riot, violent protesters gathered in London outside Downing Street for some minor scuffles with police. In the four days after that, violent far-right demonstrations took place in more than a dozen towns and cities. With the exception of a demonstration in Belfast, all of the protests have taken place in England — with the bulk in towns and cities across the midlands and north of England, including Blackpool, Hull, Leeds, Manchester, Nottingham, Bolton, Liverpool and Sunderland. In Middlesbrough, cars were *set alight*₁ and missiles thrown at police following a riot which began at the town’s main cenotaph war memorial. In both Rotherham and Tamworth, hotels housing asylum seekers awaiting processing were targeted by rioters. In Rotherham, rioters broke into the hotel, attempted to set it *on fire*₂ and blocked the exits while asylum seekers were inside. The hotel in Tamworth was also *set alight*₂. (<https://www.politico.eu>, 06/08/2024)

In the first sentence, *on fire*₁ and *to put out the fires* can be interpreted both literally and metaphorically. There is ambiguity as to whether Britain is literally on fire – whether there are conflagrations on its territory – or whether ‘on fire’ is used metaphorically to stand for the tension and riots in the country. The ambiguity is due to the concurrent use metaphorical and literal use of words from the fire domain.

Firefighting is used metaphorically. It is an entailment of “violence is fire” metaphor. ‘To fight the fire’ means to find a way to stop violence. *Widespread* can be seen as metaphorically used, as it gives the idea of a fire

that has engulfed a large territory. Later in the text ‘fire’ words are used with their literal meaning - *set alight*, *on fire*₂, and *set alight*₂ are used literally to identify the physical acts of setting fire on property.

This deliberately ambiguous use of fire vocabulary makes the text more memorable and attractive for the readers. Another way of creating an effect on the reader is the use of visual data – a technique used in advertisements. Apart from the use of both literal and metaphorical meanings and deliberately ambiguous use of fire vocabulary, articles are accompanied by visual images of burning cars and buildings, making the association with fire even stronger. Oļehnoviča et al studied the interplay of literal and metaphorical meanings in regards to advertisements. As they have stated, it is often employed as the means of image creation” (Oļehnoviča et al 25). They have studied the use of this strategy and its effects:

Often both literal and metaphorical meanings of a linguistic unit are given referential value; it is to be considered both (*sic*) at the metaphorical level and the lexical or compositional (literal) level simultaneously. Though one could argue about simultaneous emergences (and thus – comprehension) of both possible readings of a linguistic unit (*sic*) as there are cases that these meanings are conceptualized one following the other. The effect of double reading can and often is created by the help of phenomenon visualized in an advertisement. (Oļehnoviča et al 25)

It can be concluded that since the same technique is used for the two types of content, advertisements and news articles, the same effect is aimed.

3. Conclusion

Fire metaphors are well exploited in media text about the UK summer 2024 protests. The start of the protests is presented as a start of a fire. Increasing the tension and violence is presented as *stoking a fire*, *fanning the flames*, *fomenting the fire*. The degrees of violence escalation are expressed with expressions like *brewing*, *simmering*, and *boiling*. In media coverage of the 2024 summer protests in the UK, along with the metaphorical use of vocabulary from the fire domain, there are fire words that used literary. The deliberately ambiguous use of fire vocabulary makes the text more memorable and attractive for the readers, which, accompanied by visual images of burning cars and buildings, makes the association with fire even stronger.

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