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How High Can a Dead Cat Bounce?: Metaphor and the Hong Kong Stock Market.

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This paper investigates metaphor in the language of economics, in particular, the way the vicissitudes of the Hong Kong financial markets are reported in the press. It analyzes the content from an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) perspective, probing for the significance in the negotiation of meaning in the subject area. Text samples were collected from the local Hong Kong media over 5 months in 1994. The perception of metaphor has changed in recent years from a rather obscure area of literary style to a central psycho-linguistic process intimately concerned with the way that reality is constructed through language. A number of subject domains are identified, including anthropomorphism, gravity, fauna, sports, and sentimentality. Findings suggest that metaphor is central to the definition of basic economic constructs; it has a role in making abstruse theoretical concepts accessible to readers or merely to interest or entertain. Metaphor functions here not only as a stylistic device, but is fundamental to the perceptions of both academics and professionals in the field. (Contains 26 references.) (NAV)

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