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INTENSIFICATION AND METONYMY IN SOME XYZ CONSTRUCTIONS: *From the Bible to Einstein*¹

ABSTRACT

The present article studies some figurative instances of the XYZ construction, specifically those exhibiting items *Bible*, *oasis*, *flagship* and *minefield* as the element Y. Although they leave the impression of being metaphor-like, the analysis of their context of use shows that they do not exhibit the sort of behaviour expected of prototypical metaphors. Even though all the four items are found in a wide range of situations associated with conceptual domains that are very distinct and distant from the domains that these elements come from, they do not exhibit the sort of polysemy that might be expected of widely used metaphorical vehicles. The data show that these lexical items follow a similar path of semantic development in the course of which they gradually lose specific elements of their meanings and develop a figurative meaning that is quite general and is in all cases coupled with intensification. It is claimed in the article that their development was guided by metonymic shifts. I also show that they share many traits with another member of this construction family, viz. the XYZ construction with proper nouns as Y, which is based on metonymic paragon models. In both cases the end result is a complex intensifier, i.e. an expression that compresses into a single lexeme both the intensification and the property being intensified.

1. INTRODUCTION

Intensifiers are defined in Quirk et al. (1985) as “linguistic devices that boost the meaning of a property upwards from an assumed norm.” According to Bolinger (1972: 17), intensifier is “any device that scales a quality, whether up or down or somewhere between the two.” As for the form by means of which intensification can be achieved, we could, simplifying things to a degree, say that there are two major possibilities.

On the one hand, intensification can be brought about by means of repetition, i.e. by simply adding another instance of a given expression (or even more than one). The effect of syntactic repetition is often claimed to be almost purely communicative or rhetorical, viz. we can overcome interruptions in discourse (de Beaugrande & Dressler 1981: 58ff), or place more emphasis on what is repeated, as in (1):

- (1) Not only was Hoover very old when he died, he was **very very old** (Watt 1968).

The other possibility is to use some sort of construction (not necessarily one specialized for intensification). We should also bear in mind that sometimes the two strategies can converge, and that we have repetition within a construction, which is again very iconic. Some of these are clearly syntactic reduplications, the repetition taking place here at the level of a clause element or phrase:

- (2) Besides saying “Every day in every way I am getting **better and better**”, what are some other positive affirmations I can say daily to improve my life?

Some other reduplication constructions are clearly morphological structures, the repetition apparently taking place at the level of word, or below it, as in the case of lexical reduplication:

- (3) (a) *quick-quick* ‘very fast’ (Zambian English, Crystal 1995);
 (b) *sweet-sweet* ‘very sweet’ as in *Don’t always eat sweet-sweet things*;
bitter-bitter ‘very bitter’, as in *Why the veggie got bitter-bitter?* (Colloquial Singapore English, Lim & Wee 2001: 91);
 (c) *bik-bik* ‘very big’ (West African Pidgin English, Schneider 1967).

It should of course be noted that reduplication exhibits a wide range of functions, not just intensification. Across languages we find reduplications expressing plurality, collectivity, iteration, continuity, diminution, etc.

Keywords

intensification, intensifier, metonymy, paragon, metaphor, XYZ construction, proper noun, polysemy

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There are of course also constructions whose effect is intensification, but which do not involve any repetition. One of the simplest cases is when an adverbial phrase such as *very* is added to an adjectival phrase functioning as modifier of a noun within a noun phrase, or as a subject complement following the copula verb.

We also note the figurative use of nominal expressions embedded within particular constructions that have an intensifying effect. There are, for example, some nouns used in the so-called typical partitive expressions (Quirk et al. 1985: 250) not only make abstract non-countable nouns following them in the *of*-phrase, but also indicate an extremely small or an extremely large quantity:

- (4) (a) Take your time to read this document because it will save you **heaps of time** later.²
- (b) And in case anyone failed to get the memo first time around, Mrs May clarified what she meant at this week's "Brexit brainstorm" at Chequers, sweeping away the last **crumbs of hope** from the Remainers by stating that there would be no attempts to "stay in the EU by the backdoor" either.³
- (c) Do you have any studies or statistics to back that, or **any shreds of evidence** at all?⁴

All the above examples of partitive expressions involve a metaphorical extension. *Time*, *hope* and *evidence* are metaphorically conceived as physical objects that can then have certain smaller parts (TIME IS AN OBJECT, EMOTIONS ARE OBJECTS, cf. Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 214). In other words, it is not the partitive expressions themselves that are used metaphorically here, but the nouns following them in the prepositional phrase, i.e. in the construction NP1 of NP2, it is NP2 that is used metaphorically. Lexical items *heap*, *crumb* and *shred* all belong to the source domain of physical objects.

However, although the examples that follow below also exhibit figurative intensification and have basically the same structure, NP1 of NP2, the situation in them is different:

- (5) Adam Smith was an economist and philosopher who wrote what is considered the "**bible of capitalism**," *The Wealth of Nations*, in which he details the first system of political economy.⁵
- (6) The property occupies a generous site and is enhanced with cast iron gates, off-street car parking, mature shrubbery and rockery to the front. The rear garden is simply stunning, a real **oasis** of tranquility, features include; south facing aspect, extending approx 30 m in length, natural stone paved patio area, raised decking area and many more!⁶

² <https://www.rockrms.com/GetStarted> (ED: 2 December 2016).

³ <http://bit.ly/zyKHaro> (ED: 2 December 2016).

⁴ <http://bit.ly/ziGAcsc> (ED: 2 December 2016).

⁵ <http://bit.ly/ziGVc22> (ED: 2 December 2016).

⁶ property.breakingnews.ie/residential/brochure/3175621 (ED: 2 December 2016).

NP2 is here certainly not used metaphorically. What is more, unlike in (4), the *of*-phrase may be omitted without losing figurativeness:

- (7) When the doors opened at Chicago's Northside College Prep High School in the autumn of 1999, it was the first new public high school built in the city in 20 years. Northside is the **flagship** for Mayor Richard Daley's plan to keep talented students in the public schools and retain middle-class families in the city.⁷
- (8) The federal meaningful use program remains a **minefield** that providers are carefully stepping through to avoid losing out on incentives or being hit with the ever-increasing Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services penalties for failing to file timely attestations of use.⁸

The structural similarity between (4) and (5–8) is just superficial. Unlike (4), the latter are instances of the so-called XYZ construction (first discussed in Turner 1991 and Fauconnier & Turner 1998 and 2002). In its fully spelled version, this construction consists of a nominal element X functioning as the subject that is followed by a copula verb, which is followed by a nominal element headed by Y, which is in the majority of cases followed by a preposition (not only *of*) and the nominal element Z, where the complex YpZ functions as the subject complement. I will return to this point in Section 3.

Metaphor is often used to explain metonymy in cognitive linguistic literature by contrasting the two phenomena. It is usually pointed out that conceptual metaphors are cases of cross-domain mappings, while metonymies involve only a single domain and its parts, i.e. subdomains. As a consequence of this, metaphorical sources and targets are conceptually more distant from each other than metonymic sources and targets. Generally speaking, source domains are more specific than target domains, the former tend to come from the physical world, while the latter are more abstract and tend to belong to social and mental world. Discussing the scope of metaphor, Kövecses (2010/2002/: 136) shows that the range of target domains to which a given source concept applies can be considerable. The above examples are apparently used as metaphorical sources applied to target domains that are clearly distinct and conceptually distant from the source domain.

Another consequence of the above mentioned difference in conceptual distance, though less immediately obvious, is that if a lexical item associated with a source concept is applied metaphorically to several target domains that are conceptually distinct and distant, the item in question will exhibit more polysemy of an ad hoc or irregular type. Of course there are many lexical items associated with a given source domain that can be used metaphorically in just one sense, even if the domain itself can be applied

⁷ <http://www.economist.com/node/656089> (ED: 2 December 2016).

⁸ <http://bit.ly/2m9XMIQ> (ED: 2 December 2016).

to several target domains, e.g. *money* seems to be used metaphorically only in the conceptual metaphor *time is money*. However, there are also lexical items that can be used metaphorically in connection with more than one target domain, and they can then exhibit polysemy. Thus, if *battle* is used metaphorically, depending on the target domain, it can mean something like ‘intense competition, struggle’ (as in *the battle for voters, the battle for the leadership of the party, a battle of wits, a legal battle over the custody of a child*), or ‘a situation in which one is trying very hard to deal with a difficult situation’ (as in *to win a battle against a disease*). Lexical items belonging to the same domain tend to behave differently, they may be associated with target domain(s) different from the ones in the examples above, and the range of meanings they then exhibit need not bear any similarity to the above. Similarly, *flower*, when used metaphorically, can mean ‘the best example or representative’ (as in *the flower of our generation*), ‘the prime, peak’ (as in *the flower of his youth*), or ‘natural development or outgrowth’ (as in *His attitude was simply a flower of his general good nature*). This is in contrast to metonymy which often produces regular polysemy, such that similar lexical items functioning as metonymic source will exhibit links to similar metonymic targets (cf. Brdar, Zlomislíć, Šoštarić & Vančura 2009), e.g. a lexical item denoting some material is most likely to be used metonymically to denote an object made from that material, plants, most notably trees, are most likely to be used metonymically to denote their fruits, etc.

As already pointed out, what the examples in (5–8) also share, in addition to being metaphor-like, is that they describe situations in which the qualities conveyed by the lexical items in focus above and attributed to their targets (underlined in the above examples) apply to the maximum, or at least close to the maximum. It is my intention in this article to show that the expressions in question actually function as a type of intensifiers and that the intensifying effect is in significant ways due to metonymy (and not to metaphor as such). In Part 2, I analyse some further instances of such intensifying figurative uses of the Y element in the XYZ construction, showing that they do not behave like prototypical metaphors. In Part 3, I argue that they exhibit many traits of the so-called metonymic paragon models.

2. FROM THE BIBLE OF THE CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR THEORY TO THE MINEFIELD OF AUTHENTIC DATA

In this section I propose to take a closer look at a selection of lexical items that can function as the Y element in the XYZ construction. These are the items that are actually introduced in the initial set of examples above, viz. *bible*, *oasis*, *flagship* and *minefield*. The set could be expanded, but it will

suffice to bear out my points concerning the interaction between metaphor and metonymy (effectively precluding any need for invoking conceptual integration).

As pointed out above, Kövecses (2010 /2002/: 136), a sort of *the Bible of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory*, notes that the scope of a conceptual metaphor can be variable and that in some cases one and the same metaphorical source may be applied to a high number of target domains. This seems to be corroborated by the following set of examples, which illustrates a selection of environments in which the word *bible* is apparently used in a figurative sense:

- (9) (a) This is **the Bible of linguistics blogs**.⁹
 (b) **The Bible of Barbecue**, a beautiful book that you can keep on your shelf or tear to pieces to make the perfect barbecue.¹⁰
 (c) The Silver Spoon is **the bible of Italian cooking** and it has just been revised. Although it has over 1,500 pages of recipes I was still pleasantly surprised to find a perfect BBQ recipe by an Australian chef amongst all the pasta and risotto.¹¹
 (d) How To Write **The Bible Of Wine**: Karen MacNeil On The Craft Of Writing
 This past weekend's Wine Blogger's Conference in Corning, New York attracted more than 200 participants from across the online wine landscape. Primary among them was keynote speaker Karen MacNeil, author of **The Wine Bible**, which has sold more than 500,000 copies since its publication in 2001.¹²
 (e) Dave Campbell's Texas Football has long been the state's foremost guide to college and high-school football. It's often referred to as "**the Bible of Texas football**," particularly serious praise in Texas, where the Bible is held in fairly high regard.¹³
 (f) Today, Allen is known as the "grandfather of basketball coaches," and his first book, **My Basketball Bible**, explains his devotion to the game.¹⁴
 (g) David Portnoy's Barstool Sports is **the bible of bro culture**. Rude, crude, sexist and often mean-spirited — even Howard Stern has complaints — the site has become a go-to for young men who say they are disenfranchised by the mainstream media.¹⁵
 (h) For years, the diagnosis of mental illness has largely relied upon one book — the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, or DSM. ... Today, the DSM is widely referred to as **the "bible" of psychiatry** — but not everyone is a believer.¹⁶
 (i) Super System, written by Doyle Brunson, the grandfather of poker, would have to be as important to poker as the first television broadcast was for

⁹ <http://bit.ly/2Aoot8R> (accessed on 3 December 2016).

¹⁰ <http://bit.ly/2zueVVU> (accessed on 3 December 2016).

¹¹ <http://bit.ly/2hmnz97> (ED: 3 December 2016).

¹² <http://bit.ly/2ztTQPT> (ED: 3 December 2016).

¹³ <http://bit.ly/2Awma4o> (ED: 3 December 2016).

¹⁴ <http://bit.ly/2AtaAa9> (ED: 3 December 2016).

¹⁵ <http://bit.ly/2zh3PQE> (ED: 3 December 2016).

¹⁶ <http://bit.ly/2z4q4tD> (ED: 4 December 2016).

TV. Super System is nothing else than a milestone and, in short, it is **the Bible of Poker**.¹⁷

- (j) **The bible of vegetable gardening** in the San Francisco Bay Area has been revised and updated!¹⁸
- (k) Copies of Jane's on weapons and shipping were shuffled with satellite imagery and intelligence memos across her desk. Jane's was **a spy's bible**. The encyclopedia of weapons and war machines contained the specifics on every killing machine ever made.¹⁹
- (l) The Kama Sutra is **the bible of human sexual behaviour** written in Sanskrit literature.²⁰
- (m) Fairchild introduced a new section, "The Eye," to cover the international world of what he dubbed "the beautiful people" and it became **the bible of the social set**.²¹
- (n) The Jewelers' Security Alliance (JSA) has published the second edition of what it calls **the "Bible of crime prevention for jewelers"**.²²
- (o) This book is widely considered **the "bible" of Crime Scene Investigation**.²³

The lexical item *bible* appears in all the examples above to qualify as a metaphorical expression: it is applied to a wide range of domains, from economy to food and drinks, to sports, psychiatry, gambling, spying, sexual behaviour, crime prevention and crime scene investigation, etc. But this is precisely what should make us suspicious.

According to the Invariance Hypothesis (Lakoff 1990), in the course of metaphorical mappings the topology and the image-schematic structure of the source domain are preserved in a way that is consistent with the inherent structure of the target domain. In simplified terms, the relation between elements of the source domain and the elements of the target domain constrains the number of possible mappings. Arbitrary mappings between just any element of the source domain onto just any element of the target domain are not allowed. In particular, mappings cannot violate the image-schematic structure of the source domain (Lakoff 1990: 54), although, as pointed out by Brugman (1990: 257f), it seems that the structure of the target domain must also be preserved. Whatever the correct interpretation of the Hypothesis might be, it is obvious that there are some constraints on possible mappings.

At the same time, it seems that the Hypothesis has some further corollaries not recognized in the literature, viz. it follows from it that the number of target domains complying with the requirement that its image schematic structure be consistent with that of the source domain is not unlimited. In practical terms, this means that the number of target domains for which a metaphorical source from a given source domain can be used may be high, but is not unlimited. In other words, a metaphorical source is not very likely to apply indiscriminately to just any target domain. However, we have noted

¹⁷ <http://bit.ly/2AwqSyW> (ED: 4 December 2016).

¹⁸ <http://bit.ly/2yLAoCA> (ED: 4 December 2016).

¹⁹ <http://bit.ly/2zoBmDo> (ED: 4 December 2016).

²⁰ <http://bit.ly/2zt-kHhi> (ED: 4 December 2016).

²¹ <https://pmcwwd.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/wwd0302web.pdf> (ED: 5 December 2016).

²² <http://bit.ly/2ykL7hQ> (ED: 5 December 2016).

²³ <https://yhoo.it/2zJJoqM> (ED: 5 December 2016).

above that the number of target domains in the case of *bible* is very high; the above set of examples is by no means exhaustive and can be further extended. However, the target domains seem to construe something as being amenable to codification.

In the source domain, the domain of Christianity and Judaism, the Bible (from Koine Greek τὰ βιβλία, *tà biblía*, “the books”) is a collection of scriptures or sacred texts in the form of a book or a set of books. Although it is divided into a number of books, chapters and verses for the ease of reference, the Bible, in particular in the Christian tradition, has been for centuries mainly available as one or two volumes (hand-written or printed), i.e. as physical objects called books. We should bear in mind that it is estimated that throughout the history over 5 billion copies were produced, and that the Bible is thus the best-selling book of all time. Most lexicographic sources take care of this close link between the contents of the work, i.e. the sacred writings, and its usual physical form, and list this metonymic extension from contents to form. So the American Heritage Dictionary (AHD) (5th edition, 2016) lists the following sense:

A particular copy of a Bible: *the old family Bible*.

In Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (OALD) the subentry:

a copy of the holy book of the Christian or Jewish religion

follows the two subentries that cover the non-physical book senses. This is often followed in most dictionaries by a metonymically extended sense (SPECIFIC FOR GENERIC) covering the sacred text of any religion, which explains the use of lowercase:

A book or collection of writings constituting the sacred text of a religion (AHD);

(often not capital) any book containing the sacred writings of a religion (Collins English Dictionary, 12th edition, 2014) (CED);

(often l.c.) the sacred writings of any religion (Webster College Dictionary 2010) (WCD).

All dictionaries contain reference to its figurative, metaphor-like sense, sometimes explicitly separated from the rest. They sometimes specify its form as a book:

a book considered authoritative in its field: *the bible of French cooking* (AHD);

(usually not capital) a book regarded as authoritative: *the angler’s bible* (CED);

(l.c.) a reference publication esteemed for its usefulness and authority: *a bird-watchers’ bible* (WCD);

a book containing important information on a subject, that you refer to very often: *the stamp-collector's bible* (OALD).

Note that WCD identifies the target as a reference publication, while AHD refers to it as a document but provides a very specific description of its context of use:

A document containing in-depth details about a movie or television series that writers and production staff consult in order to avoid continuity errors.

It is obvious that in all the examples in (9) above, except for (e), (g), (k) and (m), the target to which the figurative expression applies is also a book. In (9e) and (k) it is a magazine, in (9m) it is a column in a periodical, while it is an internet blog in (9g). Generalizing over all this, it appears that over time the noun has come to mean something like ‘an authoritative, highly reliable reference resource.’ In actual reality, the authority seems to stem not originally from the book itself, but from the divine source associated with the tome, and with which it is metonymically related.²⁴ In short, we can follow how its meaning is becoming more and more general, in the course of a process of semantic depletion, with elements that might serve as starting points for cross-domain mappings disappearing one by one from the picture. The semantic outcome of its figurative use has become almost predictable, i.e. we come very close to a regular sort of polysemy that is more characteristic of metonymies than of metaphors. This of course also explains why it is possible to apply this term figuratively to such a wide range of domains in spite of its becoming less and less metaphor-like. It is interesting to note what Kövecses (2013) finds to be taking place in the case with so-called “correlation metaphors” (cf. Grady 1997a and 1997b): they are claimed to emerge from a metonymic stage in the course of generalization or schematization.

Let us now consider some examples of the figurative use of the lexeme *oasis*. The literal meaning of the lexical item can be described as ‘a fertile or green area in a desert or wasteland, made so by the presence of water from a spring or well.’ Dictionaries note its figurative use that looks fairly metaphorical:

A situation or place preserved from surrounding unpleasantness; a refuge: *an oasis of serenity amid chaos* (AHD);

a place of peace, safety, or happiness in the midst of trouble or difficulty (CED);

a refuge, as from work or stress; haven (WCD).

Again, as in the case of *bible*, we note a large number of diverse targets. Needless to say, the examples below are just a selection of a wide range of possibilities:

²⁴ I am thankful to an anonymous referee for this observation.

(10) (a) **An oasis of peace, pleasure and entertainment.**²⁵

(b) **An oasis of creativity, calm and beauty**, North Carolina boutique “Just Be” promotes ethical purchasing. All products are either locally-produced, made in the USA or fair trade.²⁶

(c) What used to be open rock decades ago is now covered by the invasive quagga mussels. Some native fishes — sculpin and darters — are missing, as are rooted aquatic plants.

Still, the shoal is **an oasis of diversity**, he said, wedged between stretches of flat sand home to less than a half dozen species.

In contrast, researchers identified 15 species of fish flitting in and out of the shoal’s algae-covered rock and rubble — and that was the winter count. Willink expects that number will grow during summer surveys, when natural life flourishes.²⁷

(d) Once you walk in, it’s **an oasis of bathing suits** in sizes and styles for the whole family.²⁸

(e) Lakeside’s Flagship **an oasis of fish and specialty foods**.

A visit to the new Flagship Specialty Foods & Fish Market at 14939 Red Arrow Highway offers a dizzying array of choices.

On a recent day, the chalkboard listing fresh seafood was jammed with everything from hot and cold smoked salmon, Avery Island oysters, diverse scallops and wild Florida grouper to king crab bites, gravlax, shrimp, Great Lakes whitefish filets and whole branzino.²⁹

(f) Reported Trump Treasury pick is **“oasis of blankness”** Steve Mnuchin.³⁰

(g) Austria is **“an oasis of corruption,”** said Florian Klenk.³¹

(h) **An Oasis of Horror in a Desert of Boredom.**

Since 2009 Brian Maguire has travelled on a number of occasions to Ciudad Juárez in Mexico. Described as the most violent city on earth, this is a place where the most heinous of crimes are often met with impunity.³²

(i) **Project Mater – an oasis of help for pregnant mothers.**³³

(j) **Creating an Oasis of Learning for Disadvantaged Students.**³⁴

Surprisingly, and in sharp contrast to what dictionaries mention, the figurative sense of *oasis* can also be negative. It is positive only in the first four examples. Only the first two examples, (10a) and (b), come close to lexicographic stipulations. In (10a), which appears to illustrate the prototypical figurative use according to dictionaries, we have an initial shift that is based on metonymic reasoning. An oasis is of course primarily defined by its natural givens, but its functional aspect is equally important. As an area with water and shelter surrounded by a desert, it necessarily serves as a place of rest for travellers and their animals, and also an opportunity to replenish supplies, primarily of water. So, a place making something possible due to an abundance of something comes to stand for (lots of) what it makes possible, i.e. for

²⁵ <https://divers.win/ok-divers-re-sort-spa.php> (ED: 5 December 2016).

²⁶ <http://bit.ly/2yhWgA2> (ED: 5 December 2016).

²⁷ <http://trib.in/2hefr6A> (ED: 5 December 2016).

²⁸ <http://bit.ly/2y-jedOq> (ED: 10 December 2016).

²⁹ <http://bit.ly/2jaOK7m> (ED: 10 December 2016).

³⁰ <https://ftal-phaville.ft.com/2016/11/30/2180519/reported-trump-treasury-pick-is-oasis-of-blankness-steve-mnuchin/> (ED: 10 December 2016).

³¹ <http://bit.ly/2yjjiX1b> (ED: 10 December 2016).

³² <http://bit.ly/2m5B7Y7> (ED: 10 December 2016).

³³ <http://bit.ly/2Au05Xd> (ED: 10 December 2016).

³⁴ <http://bit.ly/2Arkk1f> (ED: 10 December 2016).

its function. Of course, rest is naturally associated with concepts such as calm, peace, etc. By means of further metonymic extensions this is linked to what it causes, pleasure, and this in turn can be metonymically associated with other phenomena that may cause it such as entertainment, creativity, beauty, etc.

Example (10c) is still sort of compatible with what dictionaries suggest, but in (10d) and (e) we cannot see any link with peace or calm, safety, or similar, and no unpleasantness is necessarily implied. In (10d), a situation in which bathing suits are not abundantly on offer might perhaps be conceived as unpleasant, but this would not be the normal way of seeing things. Admittedly, *oasis* comes here to mean something like '(extreme) abundance of something,' as can be particularly well seen in the text following the headline in (10e). If in the first five examples we travel conceptually from the presence of something, which contrasts with its lack in the surrounding environment, to its abundant presence, we now witness a conceptual U-turn: there is an ironic abundance of emptiness in (10f), i.e. virtually absence of anything positive. The sense of *oasis* has now switched to absence. In (10g) and (h) we again have abundant presence of something extremely negative and abnormal, making the targets very different from their surroundings that may be more or less normal. This means that the meaning of the lexeme has been shifting for a while now, although most of this is still not recorded in lexicographic work. We may stipulate that the shift was made possible by the conceptual metonymy CAUSE FOR EFFECT, i.e. the place that made the difference or was the 'cause' of difference comes to stand for the effect (difference). In the literal use of the lexeme we have both the cause (the presence of water and vegetation) and the effect (the fact that a green, fertile oasis is just the opposite of its desert surroundings, i.e. this makes it different, unusual). In the course of time, the effect component becomes dominant, while the original cause component, the presence of something, becomes back-grounded, though still active. This semantic bleaching, virtually to no more than just 'a place very different from its surroundings, which is just the opposite of this particular place', makes it possible for *oasis* to accommodate wider contexts of usage. As a consequence, a sort of active zone must be named (either in the postmodifying *of* phrase or by a premodifier), i.e. we must specify in what respect it is different from its surroundings. If this specification makes reference to a massive presence of something negative, a metonymic inference from this is that *oasis* is used to describe an area in which no adequate measures are taken to curb the massive presence of negative phenomena. But when the specification mentions something that should reasonably be expected to be normal, as in (10i) and (j), the utterance with *oasis* becomes something of a double-edged statement: while it states that X is present at Y (*oasis*), we infer that it is not to the same (satisfying) degree present outside Y,

which means that it is unfortunately lacking, although its presence should be the default value.

Counterparts of *oasis* in other languages tend to exhibit similar developments, which seems to signal that this is not a pure chance. Cf. some examples from German (11), Croatian (12) and Hungarian (13):

- (11) (a) Sonjas Genussladen ist **eine Oase von Schmankerln und natürlichen Köstlichkeiten**.³⁵

‘Sonja’s Enjoyment Shop is an oasis of titbits and natural delicacies.’

- (b) Als kleine **kulturelle Oase** hat sich die Galerie mittlerweile in der Region etabliert.³⁶

‘As a small cultural oasis, the gallery has meanwhile established itself in the region.’

- (c) Deutschland ist eine **Oase der Korruption und des Wirtschaftsbetrugs**.³⁷

‘Germany is an oasis of corruption and business fraud.’

- (d) Ist Deutschland **eine Oase der Beschäftigung** in der EU?³⁸

‘Is Germany an oasis of employment within the EU?’

- (12) (a) Popularni zagrebački kafić postao je **gurmanska oaza**.³⁹

‘Popular Zagreb café turned into a gourmet oasis.’

- (b) Berlin je ostao i bio Brunina **umjetnička oaza** stvaranja i izražavanja.⁴⁰

‘Berlin was and still is Bruno’s artistic oasis of creativity and expression.’

- (c) Ako je Irska postala **porezna oaza**, zašto ne bi to mogla postati i Hrvatska?⁴¹

‘If Ireland became a tax oasis, why couldn’t Croatian also become one?’

- (d) Jedno je, vrijeme, BiH bila **prava oaza prostitucije**.⁴²

‘For a while, Bosnia and Herzegovina was a real oasis of prostitution.’

- (13) (a) Daisy, **a szépség oázisa** — Négy az egyben szolgáltatások. A Daisy Esküvői Ruhaszalon teljes erőbedobással készül az idei báliszezonra.⁴³

‘The Daisy, an oasis of beauty – four in one services. The Daisy Wedding Dresses is fervently getting ready for the coming ball season.’

- (b) **A legjobb alapanyag oázisok** várják a gasztró kultúra szerelmeseit Budapesten.⁴⁴

‘Oases of best ingredients look forward to lovers of gastronomic culture in Budapest.’

- (c) Bolgár belügyminiszter: az ország **a szervezett bűnözés oázisa**.⁴⁵

‘The Bulgarian Minister of Interior: the country is an oasis of organized crime.’

- (d) Der Standard: Szeged **az emberség oázisa**.⁴⁶

‘Der Standard: Szeged in an oasis of humanity.’

³⁵ <http://bit.ly/2zSYUnR> (ED: 10 December 2016).

³⁶ <http://bit.ly/2y-IbiDs> (ED: 10 December 2016).

³⁷ <http://bit.ly/2i-FaBzS> (ED: 10 December 2016).

³⁸ <http://bit.ly/2m5hAqQ> (ED: 10 December 2016).

³⁹ <http://bit.ly/2heRxbn> (ED: 10 December 2016).

⁴⁰ <http://bit.ly/2iF51ot> (ED: 10 December 2016).

⁴¹ <https://tkoje-johngalt.wordpress.com/2016/03/20/zemlja-svetog-patrika/> (ED: 10 December 2016).

⁴² Croatian National Corpus, HNK v3.0, <http://www.hnk.ffzg.hr/> (ED: 10 December 2016).

⁴³ <http://www.varosiviszhang.hu/?p=11518> (ED: 10 December 2016).

⁴⁴ <http://bit.ly/2zuawJ6> (ED: 10 December 2016).

⁴⁵ <http://bit.ly/2zHoubt> (ED: 10 December 2016).

⁴⁶ <http://bit.ly/2i-FOsBp> (ED: 10 December 2016).

When we consider some examples for the noun *flagship*, we find a familiar situation:

- (14) (a) As **the flagship of the LEKTOR series**, the DALI LEKTOR 8 fills well both in size and sound, and with the LEKTOR 8 you get true hi-fi quality, whether you're playing quiet jazz or punchy techno.⁴⁷ (about a loudspeaker)
- (b) Nokia Lumia 920: **The Flagship of Windows Phone 8.**⁴⁸
- (c) I also agree with highlighting the Hilton Tokyo Bay. To me, this is **the “flagship” of the Hilton chain** and has set the standard for any hotel stay for me.⁴⁹
- (d) Sweden: **The Flagship of Multiculturalism.**⁵⁰
- (e) Big Plans of a Small State — Singapore, **the Flagship of Global Climate Protection.**⁵¹
- (f) For example, **the flagship of counterculture conservative media**, Breitbart News, published an article reporting that radio talk show host Michael Savage had been pulled off the air after discussing Hillary Clinton's “delicate health.”⁵²
- (g) “They were not supporting peace in the abstract — they were in the arena. They lost their lives doing critical work in some of the most dangerous and difficult places on earth,” the UN chief said. “Peacekeeping remains **the flagship of the United Nations enterprise.**” he added.⁵³
- (h) Renzi, who has recently marked 1,000 days of his government in office — one of the longest-lived of the republic — has made this constitutional reform **the flagship of his mandate.**⁵⁴

⁴⁷ <http://bit.ly/2hfQ4BC> (EB: 13 December 2016).

⁴⁸ <http://bit.ly/2iGwRte> (ED: 13 December 2016).

⁴⁹ <http://bit.ly/2AnZthM> (ED: 13 December 2016).

⁵⁰ <http://bit.ly/2zsThZo> (ED: 13 December 2016).

⁵¹ <http://bit.ly/2zv8Vkn> (ED: 13 December 2016).

⁵² <http://bit.ly/2z-rDFVz> (ED: 13 December 2016).

⁵³ <http://bit.ly/2zoDFWy> (ED: 13 December 2016).

⁵⁴ <https://yhoo.it/2AthE6B> (ED: 13 December 2016).

Apart from its literal meaning that could be described as ‘a ship that carries the fleet or squadron commander and bears the commander's flag,’ most dictionaries also mention at least one figurative sense. WCD recognizes two, the first being described as ‘the main vessel of a shipping line,’ The shift from a military to just any vessel, which precedes other shifts, can be attributed to the workings of the SPECIFIC FOR GENERIC metonymy. From there extension to a number of domains becomes possible, as in (14a), (b) and (c). Lexicographers describe this sense as ‘the most important one of a group or system’ (WCD), ‘the chief one of a related group: *the flagship of a newspaper chain*’ (AHD), ‘the finest, largest, or most important one of a series, network, or chain <*the company's flagship store*>’ (*Merriam Webster*). OALD is more specific: ‘the most important product, service, building, etc. that an organization owns or produces: *the company's flagship store in Paris*.’ The fact that these definitions mention not only material objects such as products or buildings, but also services makes it clear that further extensions take place in the direction of concepts described in (14d) through (h). The service,

but also the product, can metonymically link to the activity (service/product for activity). As a result, we again have a very general intensifying meaning in the end, something like ‘best, finest, most important’, which makes possible the application of the item to a huge number of very different domains.

Finally, looking at the lexeme *minefield*, it can be concluded that most dictionary definitions start from it denoting an area where bombs have been hidden under the ground or under water. While Merriam Webster seems to suggest that its figurative use is metaphorical (‘something resembling a minefield especially in having many dangers or requiring extreme caution’), other lexicographic works, including WCD, appear to converge on the potentiality of some dangers or problems:

a situation or subject that is very complicated and full of hidden problems and dangers (CED);

a situation or process with many possible problems or dangers (Macmillan Dictionary);

a situation fraught with potential problems or dangers: a legislative minefield facing the city council (WCD).

This shift from a hidden but real danger towards a potentially dangerous because highly complex, situation (ACTUALITY FOR POTENTIALITY) can be easily detected in the following representative examples:

- (15) (a) The Internet of Things: **A Legal and Professional Minefield**⁵⁵
 (b) **Pensions** needn't be a **minefield** if you think ahead!⁵⁶
 (c) **Tort Liability: A Minefield** for Managed Care?⁵⁷
 (d) Physicians and the **minefield surrounding informed consent**.⁵⁸
 (e) ...and *this week is a minefield of mixed signals and misunderstandings*.⁵⁹

What we have seen in all these examples is that certain metaphorical vehicles seem to be applied across a wide range of target domains, but nevertheless exhibit less polysemy than expected. What is more, they all appear to have just one very general figurative meaning that makes it possible for them to function as intensifiers. These nouns are not unique in developing such a general figurative meaning. Some adjectives can apparently be used in a similar fashion. Cf. the use of *sexy* in the following:

- (16) (a) Andy Cole believes Liverpool are playing “**sexy**” attacking football this season. But the former Manchester United striker claims the Reds’ defence reminds him of another of his old sides — Newcastle.

⁵⁵ <http://bit.ly/2zqyp4W> (ED: 16 December 2016).

⁵⁶ <http://bit.ly/2zt2HSa> (ED: 16 December 2016).

⁵⁷ <http://bit.ly/2hUDkBc> (ED: 16 December 2016).

⁵⁸ <http://bit.ly/2iHCtmP> (ED: 16 December 2016).

⁵⁹ <http://bit.ly/2AlpXAE> (ED: 16 December 2016).

Jurgen Klopp's team have scored 18 goals and won five of the opening seven games of their Premier League campaign, but their high-energy style has come at a cost, with 10 goals also conceded.⁶⁰

(b) It is maybe a **sexy** theory, it provides pragmatic policy instruments, but it's incoherent.⁶¹

3. INTENSIFICATION IN XYZ CONSTRUCTIONS AND METONYMIC PARAGON MODELS

The figurative expressions of the type illustrated in (5–15) are just one subtype within the family of XYZ constructions.⁶² As mentioned in Section 1, typical realizations of the construction family exhibit the following constructional schema:

(17) Rodney Mullen is **the Einstein** among skateboarders.⁶³
 X COP Y Z

where Z is introduced in most cases by the preposition *of*, though other prepositions are also possible (e.g. *among*, as in 17).

In addition to these three elements, Turner and Fauconnier point out that there is also an element W that is normally not mentioned explicitly but which relates to Y in the same way that Z relates to X:

(18) **Jones is the Ronaldo of MMA**, whereas Anderson is Zidane.⁶⁴

X (Jones)	Z (MMA fighting)
Y (Ronaldo)	W (football)

Fauconnier and Turner claim (2002: 147) that these constructions are paramount examples of blending, where “[a] suitable but unspecified Y–W relationship (...) is to be projected to the blend and integrated there with the X and Z projections.” Our examples so far, as well as the ones that follow, clearly show working out W in the cases of paragons is not problematic at all, to say the least, and that invoking blending seems to be a sort of conceptual overkill.

This construction is ubiquitous and has many subtypes. There is also a biclausal variant:

(19) **Soleimani is to terrorism** sort of what **Trump is to real estate**,” Hewitt said.⁶⁵
 X Z Y W

Turner and Fauconnier include here also some subtypes that are more or less perfectly literal:

⁶⁰ <http://es-pn/2znbB62> (ED: 4 December 2016).

⁶¹ <http://bit.ly/2Al8R6z> (ED: 4 December 2016).

⁶² For more on the notion of construction family (or family of constructions), see the introductory chapter in Ruiz de Mendoza, Luzondo-Oyón & Pérez-Sobrino (2017), as well the individual chapters in the volume edited by Ruiz de Mendoza, Luzondo-Oyón & Pérez-Sobrino.

⁶³ <http://bit.ly/2hUIVYe> (ED: 4 December 2016).

⁶⁴ <http://bit.ly/2yi625c> (ED: 4 December 2016).

⁶⁵ <http://bit.ly/2zHLuHE> (ED: 4 December 2016).

(20) **Elizabeth II is the queen of England.**

Examples of XYZ construction in (17–19) are figurative just like (5–15), but the two sets may be assumed to realize two different subtypes, as in (17–19) element Y is realized as a proper name, while in (5–15) it is realized as a common noun.

As pointed out by Veale (2015), some XYZ constructions are congruous, while some are incongruous. In the former, X and Y belong to domains that are in an analogous relation. In our examples, most of these are cases where both X and Y refer to human beings. This is also true of (21) because both X and Y are objects:

(21) (a) Milka is the **Mercedes of chocolates**.⁶⁶

(b) Valrhona, keenly sought by patissiers for its purity, is known as **'the Ferrari of chocolates'** and available up to 85pc cocoa butter.⁶⁷

(c) They exist to cater to the so called "gamer market", which is basically marketing a **amazingly over-priced hardware** to people willing to pay anything to feel like they've gotten **the Ferrari of computers**.⁶⁸

However, it is also possible for the elements X and Y to belong to disparate domains and thus qualify as incongruous, e.g. X can denote an object, an animal, a plant, or even a place, as happens in the following examples:

(22) (a) Peanut Butter is the **Miley Cyrus of spreadable edibles**.⁶⁹

(b) Betty the Crow (sadly deceased) was an **Einstein among birds**. She not only used tools but made them herself, for example creating a hook out of a straight piece of wire for fishing.⁷⁰

(c) This mountain is pretty, but not stunning. Despite not being a huge peak, Mount Rose is underrated. The personality of the trail and the summit make it all worth it, enough so that I refer to this as **the Sandra Bullock of Mountains**.⁷¹

(d) Coriander is **the Gwyneth Paltrow of the herb world** — some people love it, some people don't!⁷²

It will be seen that there are differences between these examples. Some of these neatly follow the pattern, and the element W can easily be inferred, if it is not explicitly mentioned in the context. Cf. examples (18–19) above, or (23) below:

(23) Humboldt is **the Shakespeare of travellers** — *as much superior in genius to other travellers as Shakespeare to other poets*.⁷³

⁶⁶ <http://bit.ly/2A-toSrf> (ED: 5 December 2016).

⁶⁷ <http://bit.ly/2iF-GZLY> (ED: 5 December 2016).

⁶⁸ <http://cnet.co/zhVOExo> (ED: 5 December 2016).

⁶⁹ <http://bit.ly/2yi625c> (ED: 4 December 2016).

⁷⁰ <http://bit.ly/2m8SEyK> (ED: 5 December 2016).

⁷¹ <http://bit.ly/2yl-girq> (ED: 5 December 2016).

⁷² <http://bit.ly/2jcrO7E> (ED: 5 December 2016).

⁷³ Oxford English Dictionary (<http://www.oed.com/>).

These are cases of the so-called metonymic paragon models. According to Lakoff (1987: 87), a paragon is an individual member or a set of individual members of a category “who represent either an ideal or its opposite.” Needless to say, paragons can be based not only on humans, but also on organizations and inanimate objects. A paragon model is essentially metonymic (just like stereotypes, etc.) as an ideal member of a category stands for the whole category. Barcelona (2003, 2004: 364) improves on Lakoff’s analysis as he demonstrates that the model is based on two metonymies, first the name of the bearer of a given outstanding property comes to stand for the property in question, which is followed by the ideal member of a category for the whole category. Thus, the paragon *Shakespeare* stands for the class of writers that have an immense literary talent. As a result, *Shakespeare* becomes a class name and is in part coded as a common noun as far as its grammatical behaviour is concerned. As pointed out in Brdar and Brdar-Szabó (2007), the axiological notions ‘best of’ and ‘worst of’ as the most problematical in the paragon model arise in another metonymic tier due to the imposition of a scalar model (Israel 1997, 1998) on these contrastive properties. The scalar model allows the metonymic mappings of the type WHOLE SCALE FOR UPPER/LOWER END OF SCALE (cf. Radden & Kövecses 1999: 32), whereby the property is interpreted as being exhibited to the maximum, either in the positive or negative sense. The scalar model and this type of metonymy have been shown to motivate a number of hyperbolic expressions in Brdar-Szabó and Brdar (2005, 2010), but also lexical reduplications (Brdar & Brdar-Szabó 2011) as well as some intensifying adjective compounds (Brdar & Brdar-Szabó 2013).

On the other hand, the Ys in (22a), (c) and (d) seem to be creative, novel expressions. It could be hardly claimed that Ys in these examples have attained the status of anything close to paragons in the above sense — there is simply no unique property with which they could be identified. Rather, speakers seem to be creating an ad hoc quasi-paragon model, the reasons for which (mostly ephemeral) are typically explicitly stated in the context. In a manner of speaking, these are attempts at creating some cultural models that are open and dynamically structured in the sense they are open to revisions and additions. Metaphorically speaking, they are as open as Wikipedia, anybody can contribute her or his bit, which is always open to revision by other participants in the project. While paragons may be said to belong to offline, archived collective memory that is not in need of checking and re-checking (e.g. when the mention of Shakespeare activates one’s knowledge about his works, and vice versa, the mention of Hamlet, or a scene from *Hamlet*, readily activates the domain of Shakespeare) these quasi-paragons are part of online collective memory that must be kept alive unless it perishes or gets transformed into something more permanent. Cf. some more examples of this type:

- (24) (a) Is sad singleton Vladimir Putin **the Jennifer Aniston of European politics**? Since splitting with his wife, Lyudmila (VladMila called it a day in June 2013), the unlucky-in-love leader has healed his heart by focusing on his passions—mainly shirtless horseriding, waging war in Ukraine and predicting the recovery of the rouble. At his annual press conference on Thursday, however, Vlad finally opened up about his heartache. “Everything is fine—do not worry,” he reassured the concerned journalist.
- Putin is not the only statesman to have been taken off guard by a sudden interest in his love life. The irrelevant yet ubiquitous former PM Tony Blair—**the Kerry Katona of European politics**?—probably hoped the interview in *The Economist* would focus on his vision for peace in the Middle East and various charitable endeavours. Alas, all anyone really wants to know is this: was he schtupping Mrs Murdoch or what?⁷⁴
- (b) But carrots? They’re just out there, shrieking, “Hi, we’re some carrots! Love us for it!” They never have to prove themselves. They are **the Gwyneth Paltrow of the food world**. They’d make the most stylish vegetable list, even wearing a pink ballgown three sizes too big⁷⁵
- (c) The mushroom-stuffed ravioli was **the Gwyneth Paltrow of pastas**: smooth, blond and lightweight, paired with white asparagus spears, poached quail eggs...
- (d) Heartbeat is simple, sophisticated and cool. It’s **the Gwyneth Paltrow of handbags**.

Finally, note that some of the above examples, notably (21) and (22b), resist being resolved into biclausal variants, and that strictly speaking no element *W* proper (the one that is expected to identify the domain of *Y*) can be identified. Admittedly, we can identify the domain *Y* originally comes from, but the point is that *Y* is not used in a way suggesting that it is wholly compatible with *W*. Rather, it is used in a way that signals that it has actually been semantically severed from its original domain because it has outgrown it, and in this respect it is extremely similar to what we have seen in the course of the analysis of examples with *Bible*, *oasis*, *flagship* and *minefield* in Section 2. In view of this semantic bleaching, we might call this a post-paragon model.

Strictly speaking, Einstein could be said to belong to the domain of science, more specifically of (theoretical) physics. The skateboarding skill of Rodney Mullen can be seen to parallel the contribution of Albert Einstein to physics, as he is credited with inventing numerous skateboarding tricks, inventiveness is not found only in theoretical physics, but is rather an individual, personal trait. The other example with Einstein is again different. The proper name *Einstein* is used here to denote a genius possessing extremely

⁷⁴ <https://ind.pn/2zplPTi> (ED: 6 December 2016).

⁷⁵ <http://bit.ly/2hdCY7P> (ED: 6 December 2016).

high intelligence, a property that is in a way independent of his being a physicist. Cf. some further examples with Einstein:

- (25) (a) Who is **the Einstein of Chili**? Chili Cook Off Rules.⁷⁶
 (b) To our blog readers, he's **the "Einstein of Ice Cream."** To everyone here at Turkey Hill, he's Ernie Pinckney—the friendly, smart, funny and charming guy who oversees pretty much everything that happens in the Dairy when it comes to making our drinks and ice cream.⁷⁷
 (c) "I call him **the Einstein of horses.**"⁷⁸
 (d) **The Einsteins of the Deep** [the title of an article about dolphins].⁷⁹
 (e) Octopi: **The Einstein of Invertebrates?**⁸⁰

The idea of extreme genius can be occasionally even used hyperbolically and ironically:

- (26) (a) But Wolfowitz is perfectly incompetent. He is **the Mozart of ineptitude, the Einstein of incapacity.** To be sure, he has his virtues, the foremost of which is consistency. He has been consistently wrong about foreign policy for 30 years.⁸¹
 (b) James Dolan is **the Einstein of incompetence. The Nureyev of nepotism.** He's Fredo Corleone, without the charisma. New York City is flush with homeless people, none of whom could possibly mismanage the Knickerbockers—or present a more slovenly physical appearance, for that matter—any worse than the 58-year-old Dolan. There is true genius at work here. Seriously.⁸²

Similarly, *Mercedes* and *Ferrari* are used to express nothing more specific than just the idea of extreme quality resulting in the extreme prestige of the products in question. In this respect these are again similar to *Bible*, *oasis*, *flagship* and *minefield* as it is used as a complex intensifier, an expression that compresses into a single lexeme both the intensification and the property being intensified. Note that items from both groups when used as such intensifiers need not be followed by the prepositional phrase:

- (27) (a) Mourinho has had it his own way for so long perhaps he is not used to taking his medicine. How much easier it would be were he able to see wrong in himself, and good in others. He is **no Einstein** obviously.⁸³
 (b) ...ask yourself if there is **an Einstein** in your special education class.⁸⁴

This is also true of the lexical items studies in Section 2. Cf. some examples:

- (28) In Japanese cooking circles, this is **their Bible.** Which, I was super encouraged that it was written by a non-Japanese lady (maybe I *can* do this!).⁸⁵

⁷⁶ <http://bit.ly/2zsNtMQ> (ED: 6 December 2016).

⁷⁷ <http://bit.ly/2yJcVAA/> (ED: 6 December 2016).

⁷⁸ <http://nyti.ms/2heW4KH> (ED: 6 December 2016).

⁷⁹ <http://bit.ly/2hUqjaD> (ED: 6 December 2016).

⁸⁰ <http://bit.ly/2hUqYZF> (ED: 6 December 2016).

⁸¹ <http://bit.ly/2AtqBgx> (ED: 6 December 2016).

⁸² <http://bit.ly/2AlUIFP> (ED: 1 February 2017).

⁸³ <http://bit.ly/2Aw6XAz/> (ED: 1 February 2017).

⁸⁴ <http://bit.ly/2zudL3m> (ED: 10 December 2016).

⁸⁵ <http://bit.ly/2zqMyPA> (ED: 10 December 2016).

- (29) (a) You know, gaining some form of equitable supervision was **a real minefield**.⁸⁶
 (b) Tech jargon is confusing at the best of times, but 4G is **a real minefield**.⁸⁷

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

My intention in the presented article was to study some metaphor-like instances of the XYZ construction, specifically those exhibiting items *Bible*, *oasis*, *flagship* and *minefield* as the element Y. All the four items have been found to apply to a wide range of situations associated with conceptual domains very distinct and distant from the respective domain that these elements belong to, which is just expected in case they are metaphors.

In spite of this, these four items do not exhibit the sort of irregular polysemy that might be expected in the case of widely used metaphorical vehicles, as described in Brdar, Zlomislíć, Šoštarić and Vančura (2009). Instead, I have shown that these lexical items follow a similar path of semantic development in the course of which they gradually lose specific elements of their meanings, i.e. develop figurative meanings that are quite general, but in all cases include the idea that their referents possess a quality to an extremely high degree. In other words, they have acquired an intensification sense. Their development was crucially aided by a series of metonymic shifts. The situation described demonstrates the interaction between metaphor and metonymy, where the latter seems to prepare the ground for the former.

I have shown that they share many traits with another member of the construction family, viz. the XYZ construction with proper nouns as Y, which is based on more or less dynamic metonymic paragon models. In both cases the end result is a complex intensifier, i.e. an expression that compresses into a single lexeme both the intensification and the property being intensified. This also means that XYZ constructions need not necessarily be analysed as results of conceptual integration, as suggested in Turner (1991), Fauconnier and Turner (1998, 2002), or Veale (2015). An approach based on a series of incremental metonymic steps leading to semantic bleaching seems to yield a more parsimonious analysis.

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⁸⁶ <http://bit.ly/2Amot6p> (ED: 1 February 2017).

⁸⁷ <http://bit.ly/zz-tV3sQ> (ED: 10 December 2016).

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STRESZCZENIE

Intensyfikacja i metonimia w niektórych konstrukcjach typu XYZ — od Biblii do Einsteina

Intensyfikatory to wyrażenia wzmacniające znaczenie danej jednostki języka w stosunku do pewnej normy. Wzmocnienie to może zachodzić dzięki powtórzeniu słowa (*bardzo bardzo stary*) lub poprzez użycie określonej konstrukcji.

Na przykład w wyrażeniach partytywnych efekt wzmocnienia może nastąpić dzięki przenośnemu użyciu jednostek nominalnych. W wyrażeniu *heaps of time* 'mnóstwo [dosł. góry] czasu' rzeczownik *time* użyty jest metaforycznie, natomiast słowo *heaps* należy do domeny źródłowej. Jednak poniższych przykładach sytuacja jest inna:

- (1) *Adam Smith ... wrote what is considered the "bible of capitalism," The Wealth of Nations...*

[Adam Smith napisał *The Wealth of Nations*, książkę uważaną za „biblię kapitalizmu”...]

- (2) *The rear garden is simply stunning, a real oasis of tranquility...*

[Ogród z tyłu jest po prostu zachwycający, prawdziwa oaza spokoju...]

Capitalism i *tranquility* nie są tu użyte metaforycznie, a konstrukcję *z of* można pominąć bez straty dla przenośnego sensu całości:

- (3) *Northside is the flagship for Mayor Richard Daley's plan to keep talented students in the public schools...*

[Szkoła Northside to wizytówka (dosł. okręt flagowy) w planie burmistrza Richarda Daleya, mającym na celu przytrzymanie zdolnych uczniów w szkołach publicznych...]

- (4) *The federal ... program remains a minefield that providers are carefully stepping through...*

[Program federalny to w dalszym ciągu pole minowe, po którym dostawcy usług stąpają bardzo ostrożnie...]

Są to przykłady konstrukcji typu XYZ, w skład której wchodzi: grupa rzeczownikowa X w funkcji podmiotu, łącznik, grupa rzeczownikowa z członem głównym Y, po czym w większości wypadków występuje przyimek i element nominalny Z, a wyrażenie YpZ pełni funkcję orzecznika.

Powyższe użycia uchodzą za metafory – chciałbym jednak wykazać, że są to intensyfikatory, a efekt wzmacniający przypisać należy metonimii. Analiza skupia się na następujących jednostkach leksykalnych: *bible* 'biblia', *oasis* 'oaza', *flagship* 'okręt flagowy, wizytówka' i *minefield* 'pole minowe'.

Podejrzenia powinien wzbudzić fakt, że w użyciach tych słów jedna domena wyjściowa może być wykorzystywana w metaforach o wielu różnych domenach docelowych, np. *the Bible of linguistics blogs* 'Biblia blogów językoznawczych', *the bible of Italian cooking* 'biblia włoskiej kuchni', *the Bible of Texas football* 'Biblia futbolu amerykańskiego w Teksasie', *the bible of human sexual behaviour* 'biblia zachowań seksualnych człowieka', *the "bible" of Crime Scene Investigation* '„biblia” wykonujących czynności na miejscu zbrodni'. Zgodnie z Hipotezą Inwariancji proces metaforyzacji musi zachowywać topologię i strukturę schematów wyobrażeniowych w domenie źródłowej i docelowej. Wydaje się, że liczba domen docelowych spełniających ten warunek jest ograniczona – a w wypadku słowa *bible* jest ona bardzo duża.

Biblia to zbiór świętych ksiąg judaizmu i chrześcijaństwa, jednak słowniki notują także znaczenie powstałe dzięki metonimii ECZEMPLARZ ZA GATUNEK, tzn. 'święty tekst jakiegokolwiek religii', co tłumaczy stosowanie małej litery w pisowni słowa. Odnotowywane jest także przenośne znaczenie 'książka lub dokument zawierający ważne informacje na jakiś temat'. W naszych danych odnajdujemy odniesienia do książek, czasopism, felietonów w czasopismach i blogów internetowych. Semantyka rzeczownika *bible* stopniowo się zubaża i generalizuje – w tej chwili oznacza on 'autorytatywne, wysoce wiarygodne źródło informacji' i używany jest w wielu różnych kontekstach.

Dosłowne znaczenie słowa *oasis* to 'żyzny lub zielony teren na pustyni lub pustkowiu, powstały dzięki wodzie pochodzącej ze źródła lub studni'; jego podstawowe znaczenie przenośne to 'miejsce spokoju, bezpieczeństwa lub szczęścia pośrodku kłopotów lub trudności' (CED). Znów notujemy dużą liczbę często zaskakujących zastosowań: *an oasis of peace* 'oaza spokoju', *an oasis of creativity* 'oaza kreatywności', *an oasis of diversity* 'oaza różnorodności', *an oasis of bathing suits* 'oaza strojów kąpielowych', *an oasis of fish and specialty foods* 'oaza ryb i potraw będących specjalnością zakładu', *an oasis of blankness* 'oaza jałowości / braku wyrazu', *an oasis of corruption* 'oaza korupcji', *an oasis of help for pregnant mothers* 'oaza pomocy dla kobiet w ciąży', *an Oasis of Learning for Disadvantaged Students* 'oaza możliwości edukacyjnych dla uczniów z trudnościami'. Zaskakują w tym zestawieniu konteksty negatywne. W niektórych wypadkach mamy także do czynienia ze znaczeniem 'ogromna obfitość czegoś', a także z jego przeciwieństwem (czyli brakiem czegoś). Na skutek procesu „semantycznego wybielania” słowo to może oznaczać ogólnie 'miejsce bardzo różne od otoczenia'.

Przykłady użycia słowa *flagship* obejmują: *the flagship of the LEKTOR series* 'wizytówka serii LEKTOR', *Nokia Lumia 920: The Flagship of Windows Phone 8* 'Nokia Lumia 920: „okręt flagowy” systemu Windows 8', *the “flagship” of the Hilton chain* „okręt flagowy” sieci Hilton', *The Flagship of Multiculturalism* 'wizytówka wielokulturowości', *the Flagship of Global Climate Protection* „okręt flagowy” globalnej ochrony klimatycznej', *the flagship of counterculture conservative media* 'okręt flagowy kontrkulturowych mediów konserwatywnych', *the flagship of the United Nations enterprise* 'okręt flagowy projektu ONZ', *the flagship of his mandate* 'wizytówka jego działalności politycznej'. Mamy więc serię rozszerzeń semantycznych i metonimii od dosłownego znaczenia 'okręt, na którym znajduje się dowódca floty i który płynie pod jego banderą' do – ostatecznie – bardzo ogólnego znaczenia intensyfikującego 'coś najlepszego, najważniejszego', dzięki czemu słowo występuje w wielu różnych użyciach.

Mamy w końcu słowo *minefield*, które oznacza 'obszar lądowy lub wodny z ukrytymi pod powierzchnią bombami', a przenośnie 'potencjalne zagrożenie lub problemy'. Typowe przykłady: *A Legal and Professional Minefield* 'prawne i zawodowe pole minowe', *pensions needn't be a minefield* 'emerytury nie muszą być polem minowym', *a minefield of mixed signals and misunderstandings* 'pole minowe niejednoznacznych przekazów i nieporozumień'. Pokazuje to, że wyrażenia służące za podstawę metafor mogą mieć jedno bardzo ogólne znaczenie przenośne i funkcjonować jako intensyfikatory.

Zilustrowane powyżej wyrażenia to podtyp konstrukcji typu XYZ, którą opisać można następującym schematem:

(5) Rodney Mullen	is	the Einstein	among skateboarders
X		Y	Z
	ŁĄCZNIK		

[Rodney Mullen to Einstein wśród skateboardzystów]

Z to konstrukcja posesywna w dopełniaczu lub wyrażenie przyimkowe. Może także wystąpić nieobecny na powierzchni, lecz dający się łatwo zrekonstruować element W:

(6) Jones is the Ronaldo of MMA, whereas Anderson is Zidane			
[Jones to Ronaldo mieszanych sztuk walki, a Anderson to Zidane]			
X (Jones)		Z (mieszane sztuki walki)	
Y (Ronaldo)		W (piłka nożna)	

Konstrukcje tego typu uznano w literaturze za reprezentatywne przykłady integracji pojęciowej, podczas gdy tu proponujemy zinterpretować je inaczej. Są to przykłady wzorcowych modeli metonimicznych (*metonymic paragon models*), a spotykamy także kreatywne, jednostkowe wyrażenia będące modelami pseudo-wzorcowymi (*quasi-paragon models*): *Is sad singleton Vladimir Putin the Jennifer Aniston of European politics?* [Czy smutny singel Władimir Putin to Jennifer Aniston europejskiej polityki?]

Podsumowując, w niektórych przykładach konstrukcji XYZ uchodzących za metafory, w szczególności tych, gdzie występują słowa *Bible/bible*, *oasis*, *flagship* lub *minefield* w pozycji Y, obserwujemy uzyskiwanie przez te słowa funkcji intensyfikującej. Konstrukcje te mają też wiele cech wspólnych z konstrukcjami, gdzie elementem Y jest nazwa własna – te drugie interpretujemy jako wzorcowe modele metonimiczne. W obu wypadkach efektem końcowym jest powstanie złożonego intensyfikatora (wyrażenia wzmacniającego), a to oznacza, że konstrukcje tego typu nie muszą być uznawane za przykłady integracji pojęciowej.

Streszczenie przygotował Adam Głaz