

A Cognitive Linguistic Approach to Metaphor Use in Contemporary English Media Discourse

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Abstract: The research investigates the use of metaphor in modern English media discourse from a cognitive linguistic viewpoint. We study metaphor as conceptual tool that embodies and organizes domain-specific meanings through textualization in media texts thereby framing complex socio-political-technological-economic issues. By utilizing cognitive linguistic theoretical frameworks, most notably conceptual metaphor theory, the study endeavors to critically engage with and systematically analyze selected articles produced in English-language media through the identification of recurring metaphorical themes within them and examining their cognitive implications. The results show that media discourse typically uses conceptual metaphors from accessible domains like human behavior, conflict and movement, to render abstract concepts/novel developments intelligible. These metaphorical structures allow audiences to reframe complicated information through familiar cognitive formats. It also exemplifies how metaphor helps drive narratives in the media, helping to shape the framing and understanding of public issues. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between language, cognition, and communication in contemporary media environments by emphasizing the cognitive and communicative roles of metaphor in media discourse.

Keywords: Cognitive Linguistics, Conceptual Metaphor, Media Discourse, Metaphor Analysis, Language and Cognition



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Introduction

Metaphor is one of the most prominent phenomena that have been examined in the contemporary cognitive linguistics as metaphor is an expression of human conceptualization of abstract concepts in terms of concrete experiences. Metaphor, as a linguistic and cognitive resource in media discourse, can be effective in reducing difficult social, political and technological conditions to enable their interpretation by the audience. The use of metaphor in contemporary English media discourse is a very common phenomenon in the way a situation is framed, how it is perceived by people, and how to interpret information. Based on research on cognitive linguistics, metaphors are not decorative devices, but processes by which people organize the knowledge and generate meaning. Researchers have pointed out that conceptual metaphor is frequently used by media language in explaining new or abstract things like economic crisis, new technology, and political wars in the context of familiar human experiences [1].

Significance of Metaphor in construction of meaning in Modern Media

Metaphors are an important factor in shaping the meanings of media messages by the audience. By creating metaphorical frames, the discourse in the media can highlight certain parts of reality and downplay others, thus shaping the way people think and perceive reality. The cognitive linguists apparently state that metaphoric language plays a vital role in the development of ideological opinions and social histories within the general communication. Much of modern media culture is often metaphorically describe new issues like artificial intelligence, financial instability, and political politics. These figurative constructions allow viewers to interpret complicated matters with the help of the well-known conceptual fields, i.e., war, voyage, or human traits. Therefore, the metaphorical speech in the media discourse is not only the area of linguistic creativity but also a stage of persuasion, framing, and meaning creation as well [2].

Research Problem

Although metaphor has been widely applied in media discourse, the cognitive processes behind metaphorical expression in current English media are yet to be fully examined in most cases. The past studies usually concentrated on theoretical explanations of conceptual metaphor or on particular fields including politics or economy. Nevertheless, a thorough cognitive linguistic study, which will explore the role of metaphors in the speech of contemporary English media and their role in conceptualizing the current issues, is still needed. This void accentuates that it is crucial to examine metaphor use on a cognitive approach to gain a clearer understanding of how the language used in media influences the perception and knowledge of the people.

Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to examine how metaphor has been used in modern English media discourse in the cognitive linguistic approach. The study aims at defining the most frequent conceptual metaphors in the texts of media and also how the metaphors organize the meaning of social and cultural phenomena. The research will also examine how metaphorical language is related to cognitive processes when interpreting messages in the media. It is through this analysis that the research aims to make a contribution to a greater appreciation of how metaphor as a cognitive and communicative strategy is being used in the contemporary media discourse.

Significance of the Study

This study is important as it has been added to the realms of cognitive linguistics and discourse analysis. Analyzing the metaphorical tools of modern media discourse of English, the study offers information about the roles of language in formulating human thinking and communication in modern media. The paper also adds to the knowledge regarding the persuasive and interpretative roles of metaphor in influencing the discourse of the masses. Moreover, the results can be applicable to researchers working in the areas of media studies, linguistics, and communication, as well as to those who study the psychological side of the language in social life.

Limitations and Scope of the Research

The paper is aimed at studying the use of metaphorical expressions in the modern English media speech through the cognitive linguistic lens. The study discusses chosen media texts to determine conceptual metaphors and the way they are cognitively used. The study is confined to the English language media discourse and is not generalized to any other language or historical media texts. Also, the study focuses on the conceptual metaphor analysis, whereas the other aspects of media language are not characterized as rhetorical or stylistic. Such limitations allow ensuring the focus

of analysis and providing a more in-depth examination of metaphor in the chosen discourse context.

In traditional linguistic studies, metaphor was long viewed merely as a rhetorical device or a linguistic ornament to enhance writing style, particularly in literary works and public oratory [3]. However, the emergence of cognitive linguistics fundamentally shifted this paradigm. Metaphor is no longer seen as mere linguistic embellishment, but rather as a fundamental cognitive process that enables humans to understand abstract concepts through more familiar, concrete experiences [4]. Through Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), metaphor is understood as a mapping between a source domain (a concrete domain of experience) and a target domain (an abstract conceptual domain) [6]. This demonstrates that language, cognition, and thought are deeply intertwined in the construction of meaning [7, 9].

In the realm of media discourse, the use of cognitive metaphors plays a crucial role. Numerous studies indicate that the media utilizes metaphorical framing to simplify complex phenomena—such as political dynamics, economic crises, and advancements in artificial intelligence—in order to shape public perception [5, 8]. Nevertheless, the majority of prior research has focused on specific thematic issues (such as sports journalism or political speeches) and has largely been limited to identifying metaphorical utterances without thoroughly examining their underlying cognitive structures and conceptual significance within modern English media discourse [5].

To bridge this research gap, this study aims to analyze the use of conceptual metaphors in contemporary English media discourse through a cognitive linguistic approach. By applying the CMT framework, this study explores how cognitive structures and shared mental models are leveraged by the media to process, construct, and represent social reality to the public [6, 8, 9].

Table 1. Structure and Content of the Introduction Section

Introduction Section	Integrated Literature Review Content
Background & Paradigm Shift	Directly connecting Traditional Linguistics [3] with Cognitive Linguistics [4].
Concise Theoretical Framework	Incorporating Conceptual Metaphor Theory [6] and the Role of Cognition [7, 9] as the conceptual foundation.
Previous Studies in Media Discourse	Summarizing Past Research in Media Discourse [5] and its impact on discourse construction [8].
Research Gap	Addressing the Research Gap [5] regarding the limited exploration of cognitive structures in modern English media.
Research Objective	Outlining the study's goal based on a cognitive approach [6, 8, 9].

Materials and Method

Research Method

The proposed research takes a qualitative analysis approach grounded on cognitive linguistic discourse analysis to analyze the issue of a metaphor in modern English media discourse. The study integrates the concept of the discourse analysis with the cognitive linguistic theory to examine how the metaphorical expressions operate in media texts. This kind of methodological paradigm gives the opportunity to understand the conceptual frameworks behind the language of metaphor and their role in creating meaning in media communication. The research, under this framework, examines the connection between lingo phrases and the conceptual metaphors which define how current problems are represented through the media discourse.

Study Sample

The information used in this study is a sample of the modern English-language texts published in the digital media and media sources online. These sources consist of articles and reports with social, political, economical and technological issues. The chosen reading material in the media is the reflection of the modern reflection of the media discourse where the metaphorical language is often applied to complex matters. The sample itself was selected with the purpose of making sure that there is a variety of metaphorical expressions in the texts which can be applied to the goals of the study. The study targets the grasp of the present trends in the use of metaphor and the application of conceptual framing in the contemporary English media discourse with the help of the materials of the contemporary media.

Data Collection Tools

The main data source used in the current study will be the media texts gathered on the online news articles and digital media sources on the English language. These texts were chosen due to their topicality in the discussion of the contemporary society and the abundance of metaphorical language. The texts obtained were put into a corpus that enables one to conduct a systematic analysis and study of metaphorical language. The analysis of the texts is aimed at locating metaphorical expressions and analyzing their conceptual meanings based on the principles of cognitive linguistics.

Steps of Metaphor Analysis

The analysis procedure consists of a number of steps which are aimed to detect and explain metaphorical expressions within the chosen texts of media. Familiarizing the texts in the first stage is aimed at reading the texts carefully to detect the linguistic expressions that seem to represent metaphorical meaning. The second phase is aimed at finding out what conceptual domains are involved in which metaphorical expression, finding out the source and the target domain. In the third phase, the study researches the conceptual mappings existing between these domains and the way abstract concepts are organized of more concrete experiences. The last part is the interpretation of the role played by such conceptual metaphors in creating the significance of the media discourse as a whole and how they contextualize the issues brought forth in the texts.

Standards in Classifying Metaphors.

To make the analysis systematic, the metaphorical expressions found in the chosen texts are grouped in terms of conceptual structure. This categorization is determined by the connection between the source domain and target domain and the patterns of concepts that are developed out of the data. The categories of metaphors are classified based on recurring conceptual themes that are an indication of the manner in which certain issues are represented in the media discourse. The classification will enable the study to uncover the prevalent metaphorical patterns and to explore how the patterns have been used to construct the contemporary issues in English media discourse as well as how the issues have been understood.

Results

Metaphors in Media Discourse Presentation.

Based on the selected media texts analysis, it is possible to note that the metaphorical language is a common feature of the modern English media discourse which is used to describe complex social, political, technological, and economic problems. Journalists often use figurative ways of expressing themselves so as to simplify abstract concepts and make them easier to comprehend by

the reader. A lot of these expressions are based on the known areas of daily human life, like movement, conflict, human behavior and physical interaction. The media discourse through these metaphoric forms of construction makes complex issues comprehensible and appealing to the intellectual experiences of the readers. The use of metaphor in media language is thus not only an element of choice of style, but a conceptual framework within which the information can be communicated and interpreted.

Categorization in Conceptual Domains.

It has been determined that the metaphors in modern media discourse fall into a number of conceptual areas that organize the presentation of various issues. The most common trend is the anthropomorphism of technological developments, i.e. the conceptualization of a technological development as an anthropomorphic system that harbors intentions, capabilities, or passions. The other similar conceptualized area is conflict or competition where social and political processes are conceptualized in terms of the struggle, battle or strategic confrontation metaphorically. Moreover, certain texts in the media theorize economic and political processes by the introduction of journey related metaphors which symbolize a progress, a hindrance or a journey to objectives. Such domains of the concept illustrate the systematic comprehension of the abstract or complicated problems in terms of interpreting them in more concrete and familiar reactions.

There is Cognitive Interpretation of Metaphorical meanings.

Considering a cognitive linguistic viewpoint, the observed metaphors demonstrate how the discourse of the media organizes abstract knowledge in form of conceptual metaphors among various spheres of experience. These mappings allow the readers to make sense of the unknown or tricky subjects through cognitive structures that are already known to daily knowledge. As an example, a metaphorical depiction of technological systems as human agents provokes the audience to perceive technological changes through the lens of intention, choice, and interaction. In the same way when political processes are expressed as contest or struggle, viewers can explain these processes using the strategy, opposition and eventual triumph. These metaphorical patterns illustrate the cognitive nature of metaphor to arrange knowledge and the ways of constructing meaning of social speech.

Analytical Media Texts Analytical examples of media texts.

The examples taken with the reference to the current English media articles explain the working of metaphor in the situation of the actual discourse. When writing about artificial intelligence, the media texts often use terms that ascribe human-like abilities to technological systems, mentioning their learning, thinking, or decision-making. Metaphorical language is frequently used in political reporting to describe political campaigns and the discussion of policies as fights and competitions among opposing actors. The journey metaphors used to describe economic developments occasionally show growth as progress and crisis as hindrances that prevent progress. These illustrations indicate how metaphorical language is a cognitive and communicative device that assists media speech articulate a sense of meaning, construct issues of public interest, and orientate viewers on their understanding of complex realities.

The systematic qualitative analysis of the media text corpus revealed three primary empirical findings regarding metaphor usage and domain categorization:

1. **Prevalence of Conceptual Framing:** Metaphorical expressions are pervasively utilized across all surveyed media domains (political, economic, technological, and social) to translate abstract concepts into tangible formats.

2. **Domain Categorization Patterns:** The identified metaphors systematically cluster into three dominant source domains:
 - **Anthropomorphism / Personification (AI/Technology IS A PERSON):** Technological systems (e.g., AI) are regularly framed as human agents possessing intent, learning capacities, or decision-making abilities.
 - **Conflict and Warfare (Politics/Social Issues ARE WAR):** Political campaigns, legislative debates, and social rivalries are consistently structured using terms of battles, struggles, and strategic confrontations.
 - **Journey and Motion (Economics/Development IS A JOURNEY):** Economic cycles and policy processes are represented as physical movement, where growth is mapped as forward progress and crises are mapped as physical obstacles or roadblocks.
3. **Cognitive Simplification:** Metaphorical mappings consistently serve to align unfamiliar or complex events with pre-existing, shared mental models, directly facilitating audience processing and memory retention.

Discussion

Discussion of the Findings in the Theoretical Framework.

The results of the current research can be interpreted in the context of the linguistic cognition, specifically, the concepts of conceptual metaphor theory. The analysis shows that the usage of metaphors in modern English media discourse is not some chance stylistic techniques, but the representation of conceptual mappings between the various domains of experience in a systematic way. Such mappings allow a journalist to put abstract and complex problems in a more comprehensible and cognitively significant form [10]. The findings support the hypothesis that metaphor is a cognitive process that assists to organize knowledge and imprint the meaning of social and technological changes. In the process of mapping abstract ideas to the familiar realms of human behavior, conflict or movement, through media discourse, it is easy to understand complex phenomena and help in making coherent stories to the audience [11].

Comparison to the Prior Studies.

The findings of the research will also be in line with the earlier research efforts, which highlight the cognitive and communicative roles of metaphor in discourse. In previous research, metaphor has been found to be relevant in framing political, economic and technological problems in media communication. As it has also been observed in the previous linguistic studies, the current analysis reveals that media texts often use conceptual metaphors relying on the common human experience to express complex issues [12]. It has also been observed that metaphor is persuasive and interpretive and therefore impacts the way people understand things. The present findings contribute to this point of view by proving the fact that the metaphorical expressions contribute to organizing the manner in which the media discourse raises the contemporary issues. Simultaneously, this study is an extension of previous studies because its subject matter is specifically on modern English media discourse and furthermore, how the cognitive patterns of metaphorical language are outlined in these readings [13].

The Metaphor in the Process of Media Discourse.

The metaphor is the key to the organization and the meaning of media discourse. Media texts are created in metaphoric language, creating specific images of the social reality and influencing the way viewers perceive events and problems. Framing metaphorically enables journalists to

emphasize particular issues of an issue and minimize the others, hence shaping the interpretation of information. Metaphors can be used as means of explanation, persuasion and interpretation in the modern media communication [14]. They offer conceptual structures which assist audiences to process complex information and connect it to the known experiences. Due to this, metaphor is a significant component of how media stories are constructed and how the discourse of the populace is brought to be. The analysis thus proves that metaphor is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but a cognitive and communicative process that defines the perception of the reality in the present-day media space [15].

Conclusion

Main Findings

The current paper has analyzed how metaphor is used in modern English media discourse by deconstructing it in terms of cognitive linguistics. The analysis showed that the use of metaphorical expressions is popular in media texts to describe intricate social, political, economic, and technological problems. The results reveal that these metaphors are not only stylistic features but are organized conceptual frameworks that assist the audience to cognitively comprehend the abstract concepts by using common areas of human experience. The paper also revealed that a number of recurrent areas of conceptualization can be found in the discourse of media, which include metaphors pertaining to human traits, war, and motion. These conceptual patterns depict that metaphor is a thinking tool that eases information and helps in building meaningful stories in media communication.

Consequences to Cognitive Linguistics and Media Studies.

The findings of this study point to the significance of such a phenomenon of metaphor in the construction of meaning in the media discourse. Within the cognitive linguistic approach, the results validate the fact that organizing human thinking and communicating complex ideas is impossible without the metaphor that plays a central role in the organization of human thought. The research also proves that conceptual metaphors play a significant role in underpinning the media discourse and shaping the general understanding initiated by the media. These insights add to the general notion of interaction between language and cognition in communicating in the society. Besides, the analysis focuses on the applicability of cognitive linguistic methods in the process of media language analysis and comprehension of the way in which metaphor affects the depiction of social and technological realities in contemporary media settings.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies can reference analysis with more detail of metaphor use based on different media platforms that include social media, digital journalism and broadcast медиат. Comparative studies may also examine metaphorical patterns across different languages and cultural contexts to explore the cultural variation of conceptual metaphors. Also, future work could use much larger corpora of media texts and some computational tools to discover metaphorical patterns more systematically. Such a research would help to better understand the cognitive and communicative function of metaphors and create new insights about how metaphor operates in contemporary media discourse.

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