
Metaphorical Representations of Knowledge Structures in Media Texts

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Abstract: Media texts, operating at the intersection of information and persuasion, are particularly fertile ground for metaphorical framing. In these contexts, metaphors not only reflect cognitive patterns but also actively shape public perception and discourse. Phrases such as “unlocking knowledge”, “flood of information”, or “digital illiteracy as a blindfold” demonstrate how metaphor is used to frame contemporary issues of information access, learning technologies, and epistemic authority. In such way, media metaphors both reflect and influence societal attitudes towards knowledge production and dissemination in the digital age.

Keys words: media text, article, political speech, metaphor, knowledge structure, concept, conceptual, advertisement slogans, context, conceptual integration.

Metaphors are literary tools that suggest similarities between two things by describing one in terms of another. They are effective communication tools that make difficult concepts approachable, frequently arousing feelings and deepening comprehension. Metaphors in media consumption affect how we perceive things, structure conversations about different subjects, and understand information. In political discourse and advertising, metaphors are frequently employed to increase the persuasiveness and memorability of statements. By relating intangible ideas to concrete experiences, they can elicit powerful emotional reactions. By presenting topics in certain ways that affect attitudes and ideas, metaphors have the power to shape public conversation. Because it promotes a more thorough examination of the underlying meanings in media information, an understanding of metaphors improves critical thinking abilities. Metaphors can be interpreted differently in different cultures, which emphasizes how crucial context is while consuming media.¹

Newspaper articles, political speeches, broadcasts, advertisement slogans can be good materials to analyze. Contextual analysis, semantic-stylistic analysis, comparative analysis, conceptual metaphor analysis, conceptual integration analysis can be applied to analyze the media texts.

By offering familiar images that clarify difficult concepts, metaphors improve our comprehension of media messages. Metaphors have the power to arouse feelings and increase the impact of messages by relating new information to well-known experiences. This promotes critical thinking about the implications of those messages and helps people interact with content more deeply.

The interpretation of metaphors in the media is significantly influenced by cultural differences. Different societal norms, beliefs, or experiences might make a metaphor that has great resonance in one culture

¹ Langacker.R. Concept, Image, and Symbol: The Cognitive Basis of Grammar. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1991. - 400 p.

confusing or meaningless in another. Because misinterpretation might result in misunderstanding or conflict, this emphasizes the importance of critical assessment while consuming media across cultural boundaries. In a world of media that is becoming more globalized, being aware of these subtleties promotes more effective communication and interaction. For example, in news media, economic crises are often framed as natural disasters “market *tsunami*”, “economic *earthquake*”), evoking inevitability and helplessness.

Media uses metaphorical frames to package information. For instance, political debates framed as “wars”, for example, “battle for votes” emphasize conflict over collaboration.²

Metaphors are used in a variety of ways to convey meaning and elicit responses in media texts. These can include conceptual, narrative and visual metaphors.

Metaphors are powerful cognitive and communicative tools that shape our understanding of the world by linking abstract ideas to concrete experiences. In media, metaphors enhance storytelling, evoke emotions, and frame messages in ways that are both persuasive and memorable.

Visual Metaphors in Media. A visual metaphor is a representational technique in which one visual element is used to stand for another, drawing a comparison between them. Unlike linguistic metaphors, which rely on words, visual metaphors convey meaning through imagery, composition, and symbolic elements. Visual metaphors function by juxtaposing two seemingly unrelated entities, leading audiences to infer a deeper connection. This relies on cognitive mechanisms like analogical reasoning and conceptual blending, where familiar elements are mapped onto new contexts.

Advertising often employs visual metaphors to convey complex messages quickly and persuasively. For example, an anti-smoking campaign shows a cigarette burning from both ends, resembling a candle (metaphor for life burning away too quickly). Another example is that a car advertisement depicts a sleek vehicle emerging from a cocoon, visually likening the car to a butterfly, symbolizing transformation and freedom.

Cinematography often uses visual metaphors to convey emotions, themes, or character development. For instance, in *The Godfather*, oranges frequently appear before moments of death, subtly foreshadowing violence and mortality.

Political cartoons frequently use exaggerated imagery to critique social and political issues. For example, a sinking ship labeled “Economy” metaphorically suggests financial collapse, or an image of a brain inside a cage represents limited thinking or ideological confinement.

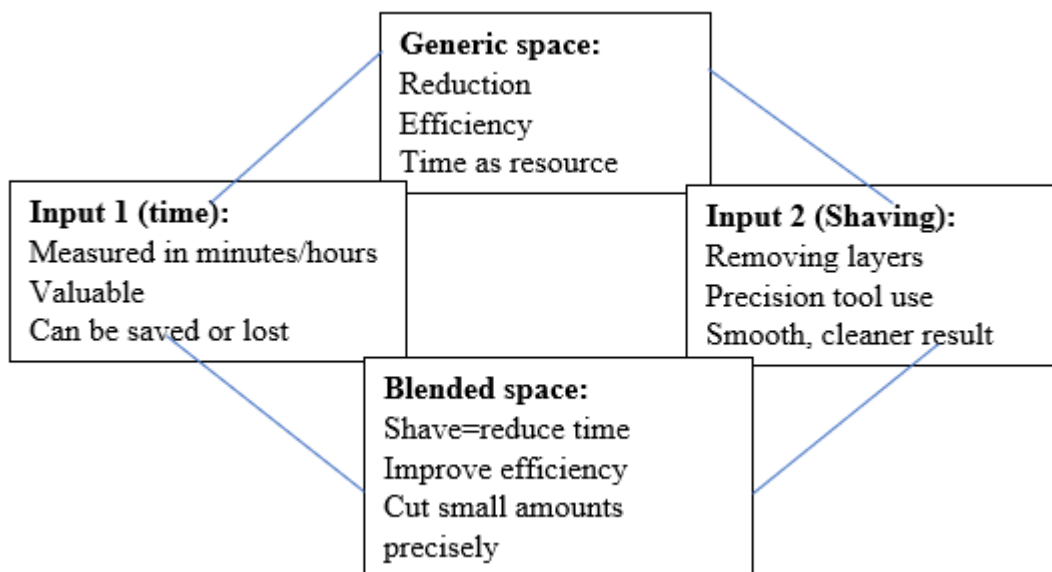
Visual metaphors engage audiences by appealing to their subconscious associations, making messages more memorable and emotionally resonant. They also transcend linguistic barriers, making them effective in global media contexts.

Conceptual Metaphors in Media. A conceptual metaphor, as described by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), refers to the cognitive process where one conceptual domain is understood in terms of another. Conceptual metaphors structure thought and language, influencing perception and communication. For example, the metaphor “ARGUMENT IS WAR” leads us to use phrases like “defend your point,” “attack their position,” and “win the debate.” Media frequently employs conceptual metaphors to frame narratives and shape public discourse.³

“Shave your time”. The phrase encourages someone to cut down on unnecessary time use. It implies being precise with how you manage time, optimizing tasks or schedules, gaining extra minutes by removing non-essential activities.

² Charteris-Black.J. *Politicians and Rhetoric: The Persuasive Power of Metaphor*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. - 272 p.

³ Lakoff.G, Johnson.M. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980. - 242 p.



“The Economy is a Machine”: Phrases like “kick-start the economy” or “fix the financial system” suggest the economy operates like a mechanical device.

“Time is Money”: Common in business media, with phrases like “spending time” or “saving time.”

“Life is a Journey”: Used in narratives like *The Lord of the Rings*, where characters embark on physical journeys that symbolize personal growth.

“Love is a Battlefield”: Frequently used in romantic films where love is depicted as a struggle or conquest.

“Knowledge is Light”: Common in education-related media, where learning is metaphorically depicted as illumination, for example, an animated character getting a lightbulb above their head when they have an idea.

“A Brand is a Person”: Companies personify their brands. For instance, Apple is depicted as innovative and cool, while Microsoft is serious and professional.

Conceptual metaphors shape how audiences interpret reality, influencing social norms and public attitudes. They are particularly powerful in political discourse, where they can frame policy debates and ideological positions.⁴

Narrative Metaphors in Media. A narrative metaphor is a storytelling structure that symbolically conveys deeper meanings through characters, plot, and setting. These metaphors often align with archetypal stories, such as the hero’s journey, the fall from grace, or the rebirth trope. Narrative metaphors function by embedding symbolic elements within a story, encouraging audiences to draw parallels between fiction and real-world experiences.

The Hero’s Journey: Seen in *Star Wars*, *The Matrix*, and *Harry Potter*, where a protagonist undergoes trials, transformation, and eventual triumph.

The Phoenix Metaphor: In *The Dark Knight Rises*, Bruce Wayne rises from despair, symbolizing resilience and rebirth.

“Rags to Riches”: Used in political campaigns to depict candidates as self-made individuals, for example, Barack Obama’s rise from humble beginnings.

“The American Dream”: Frequently used in films like *The Pursuit of Happiness*, emphasizing perseverance and success.

⁴ Pinker.S. *The Language Instinct*. New York: William Morrow, 1994. - 526 p.

“Overcoming the Monster”: Brands use this structure to position themselves as problem-solvers, for instance, a cleaning product defeating tough stains.

Narrative metaphors create emotional engagement, making media content more compelling and relatable. They also help shape cultural values, reinforcing dominant ideologies or challenging them through subversive storytelling.

In conclusion, metaphors in media whether visual, conceptual, or narrative play a crucial role in shaping perception, persuasion, and storytelling. Visual metaphors simplify complex ideas and make messages more impactful. Conceptual metaphors influence thought and discourse, subtly shaping societal beliefs. Narrative metaphors structure stories in ways that resonate deeply with audiences. Understanding these metaphorical structures allows us to critically analyze media messages, revealing the implicit meanings and ideologies they convey. Whether in advertising, film, or politics, metaphors are essential tools for maintaining a meaning in contemporary media.

The list of used literature:

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