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ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

Cognitive Metaphors as a Means of Persuasive Influence in Texts of Various Genres

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Abstract— The present research is dedicated to the effectiveness of cognitive metaphors as a means of persuasion in political, media, and artistic discourses. Even though numerous studies have already been conducted on metaphorical conceptualization in particular discourse types, comparisons of metaphor structure, function, and audience reactions are rare. In the present study, 30 English texts (published between 2020 and 2024) belonging to the genre of political speech, media, and art (10 texts in each genre) were selected among materials from political databases, English-language magazines and literary journals. 90 people aged 20-35 (M = 26.2) evaluated metaphorical messages using C. Osgood's semantic differential, questionnaire about the effectiveness of persuasive message and free answers. Content analysis and contextual-semantic analysis, along with descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVA were used to identify some patterns. The major source domains in political discourse include: WAR, PATH, MECHANISM, BODY and GAME, in media discourse: ELEMENT, DISEASE, THEATER, ORGANISM, and WEAPON, in artistic discourse: NATURE, LIGHT/DARKNESS, JOURNEY, BODY, and EVERYDAY LIFE. The research revealed the following: political metaphors have a tendency to be normative and rationalizing; media metaphors are critical-evaluative and disturbing; artistic metaphors show better emotional appeal and symbolism. The distinctive feature of the research is a combination of conceptual, pragmatic, and recipient-based analysis of cognitive metaphors. The findings of the research contribute to the development of cognitive metaphor theory by providing evidence concerning the persuasive and emotive effects of metaphor usage.

Index Terms— Artistic discourse, Genre specificity, Media discourse, Political discourse, Pragmatic function

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Introduction

In recent years, cognitive metaphor has been increasingly viewed not only as a stylistic feature, but as the very process whereby people structure, understand, and describe difficult experiences. From a cognitive point of view, metaphors provide an opportunity to structure abstract or difficult

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phenomena in terms of more familiar experience. Modern studies continue to explore this approach by examining the cognitive mechanisms, that underlie the generation and understanding of metaphors. According to Gibbs Jr (2026), metaphorical statements can occur via the cognitive process of evaluation, which people perform upon experiencing disruptions, contrasts, or significant changes in their experience. This idea adds to the concept of the close relationship between metaphor and the process of constructing meaning. Another representative work in the field by Strohanova (2025) focuses on the linguocognitive nature of metaphor.

Communicative use of metaphors comes to the fore in discourse where speakers attempt to frame an event, influence the interpretation process, or produce a particular evaluation. One of the most researched areas of discourse is political discourse. Recent studies have found that conceptual metaphors may play a role in the interpretation of political messages since they connect abstract political processes with conventional conceptual systems and direct the interpretation of political agents, events, and issues. For example, Bachryj (2024) emphasizes the importance of Conceptual Metaphor Theory for interpretation of political discourse since it adds to the creation of political meaning through the use of metaphor. Similarly, Shevchenko (2024) illustrates that conceptualization through metaphor in political media discourse may occur through the interaction of verbal and multimodal means.

The persuasive quality of metaphors has recently attracted increased scholarly attention. Pstrąg (2026) demonstrates that metaphorical language in political discourse can serve a persuasive function by offering frameworks for conveying political messages. Wu et al. (2026) further develop the above idea by exploring connections between metaphor, argumentation, topoi, and heuristics in political speech. According to the proposed theoretical framework, metaphor operates both as a tool of description of political reality and as a part of argumentative techniques used for making some particular interpretation cognitively accessible and persuasive. The results of the study have implications for the role of metaphor as a communicative tool in shaping conceptual meanings and performing pragmatic functions.

Metaphoric framing is not limited to political discourse. Metaphor is a major instrument in media discourse, where it used to shape and convey the information, construct evaluations, and influence interpretation of socially significant events. The latest studies on metaphorical constructions in English language journalism focus on the relations between cognitive and pragmatic components of metaphor and prove that metaphorical construction can serve for the development of specific interpretive and evaluative strategies (Darisera et al., 2026; Musarrat & Ahmad-ur-Rehman, 2026; Voynalovich & Khmara, 2025). The same idea is highlighted by Truba et al. (2024), who explore the psycholinguistic processes of constructing images, suggestion, and manipulation through linguistic means.

There are still some issues concerning metaphor in cognitive linguistics that have not been adequately discussed. Firstly, it seems that modern researches are limited to the examination of specific discourse domains, such as political and media discourses. As a result, one cannot make empirical comparisons of the structure and functions of metaphors in various genres. While political and media metaphors have been extensively studied, it is not entirely clear what different source domains can contribute to their pragmatic and persuasive function depending on the discourse context. Secondly, modern research tend to either concentrate on the conceptual and linguistic features of metaphor or on its communicative and persuasive role without making an attempt at the integration of both these issues in one research design. Thus, the relationships between the source domain, genre-related pragmatic function, and audience evaluation deserve empirical investigation.

Artistic discourse can be another area which has not been adequately investigated yet. The main problem here is that the role of metaphor in artistic communication goes far beyond conveying some information and creating a certain interpretation of events or phenomena. At the same time, in contrast to political and media discourse, there is comparatively little empirical research concerning the effects of metaphor upon the recipients of artistic discourse.

The core research problem addressed by the current study involves the underdeveloped empirical knowledge about the variability of cognitive metaphors in different types of political, media, and artistic discourse in terms of conceptual structure, pragmatic function, and recipient effects. However, the problem under consideration is not limited to the question of the presence or absence of metaphors in various contexts. Instead, the research problem implies that specific source domains used in metaphors and the ways of their functional adaptation to certain communicative purposes may be differ depending on the genre of discourse. It is also important to determine whether there are any genre-related differences in the way that recipients evaluate the metaphorical messages. Addressing the problem requires the integration of textual and pragmatic aspects of metaphor with recipient-level data.

The current study aims to address this research problem by carrying out a comparative analysis of cognitive metaphors in political, media, and artistic discourse. In addition to the analysis of the concepts used as metaphorical source domains and their functional role in a particular genre of discourse, this research examines the evaluation of metaphorical messages by the recipients on the basis of standard quantitative measurements.

In this research, the goal is to determine and to compare the conceptual, pragmatic, and recipient-related features of cognitive metaphors in political, media, and artistic discourse. The four specific objectives of this study are 1) to determine the most used source domains of cognitive metaphors in political, media and artistic discourse; 2) to examine how metaphorical structures play distinct roles in political, media, and artistic communication; 3) to analyze recipients' evaluation of metaphorical messages and 4) to find the connections between the discourse type, the metaphorical structure, the pragmatic role of the metaphorical construction, and the recipient's response.

This research is based on the assumption that cognitive metaphors demonstrate systematic genre-related differences. It is expected that political metaphors would more often play normative, rationalizing, and persuasive roles; media metaphors would more often frame situations in critical and evaluative ways; and artistic metaphors would reveal high levels of emotional and symbolic involvement.

It is further assumed that these genre-related differences in cognitive metaphorical structure and its pragmatic function would be manifested

in recipients' evaluation of metaphorical messages.

There are three significant contributions that this research in the existing knowledge about metaphor. Theoretically, this research advances current understanding of cognitive metaphor by revealing the connection between its conceptual structure and its pragmatic role in discourse. Empirically, this research provides a comparative analysis of political, media, and artistic discourse and includes recipient-level data in the analysis of metaphorical communication. Methodologically, the integration of the qualitative analysis of metaphorical constructions with the quantitative analysis of recipients' response is proposed by this research.

Literature Review

The studies related to cognitive metaphor have paid more attention to the relationship between conceptual mapping, interpretation, and communication effectiveness. The latest research confirm that the structure of metaphors involves a mapping process that is based on the contextual and cognitive aspects (Garello, 2024; He, 2021; Strohanova, 2025).

There are many academic works devoted to the study of metaphors in political discourse. As empirical studies show, conceptual metaphors facilitate framing, evaluation, and persuasion in politics (Castro Seixas, 2021; Chahbane & Zrizi, 2023; Lapka, 2021). Moreover, Zeng et al. (2021) revealed that the metaphorical framing might differ depending on the political and historical context. Nonetheless, such research is mostly oriented on texts and rarely combine metaphor analysis with quantitative assessment of responses of recipients.

Such patterns have also been observed in media discourse. Pandemic and crisis communication studies reveal the use of WAR, apocalypse, and other metaphors to create specific event representation and evaluation (Lacković et al., 2021; Voynalovich & Khmara, 2025; Younes & Altakhaineh, 2022). Ahrens et al. (2022) continued exploring the impact of metaphors on people's support for foreign-policy positions. De Saint and Blanco (2021) showed that the different metaphorical domains can evoke different emotional and cognitive reactions. This means that the impact of metaphors is context-sensitive, whereas the methodologies of the studies are diverse.

The studies of persuasive communication offer even stronger evidence of recipients' responses. Septianto et al. (2022) explored the persuasive nature of metaphors in advertisements, Khairulin (2021) and Truba et al. (2024) analyzed psychological and psycholinguistic mechanisms of linguistic influence, and Prymachenko et al. (2022) highlighted the role of media discourse in creating public consciousness. However, outcomes such as persuasion, emotional reaction, attitudinal change, and behavioral change are different things.

Artistic aspects of metaphor have received relatively less attention in the literature on persuasive influence. Botelho (2021) pointed out the role of interpretation and experience in metaphor use in literary language and argued that artistic metaphors could work differently from persuasion strategies used in political and media discourses. The field of study is largely fragmented in terms of discourse types and methodologies used (Alkhammash, 2023).

Thus, the role of metaphorical frames and recipient response is stressed, but the literature lacks systematic comparisons of political, media, and artistic discourses in terms of their use of the same measures for analysis and quantitative assessment. This study aims to fill this gap by combining the analysis of metaphorical source domains and the pragmatics of metaphor use with the quantification of recipients' perception of metaphors in terms of their persuasiveness, emotional appeal, and memorability. Importantly, these recipient responses are taken into account as such and not as indicators of any changes in beliefs or behaviors.

Theoretical framework

Operationalization of Cognitive Metaphor Theory (CMT) theory is done through treating the concept of cognitive metaphor as a multidimensional construct that correlates the cognitive source domains of metaphors with genre-specific communicative purposes and recipients' evaluations. At the level of textual analysis, metaphorical expressions were extracted and classified based on their cognitive source domains (conflict, journey, construction, nature, and human experience). Then, the target concepts and contextual meanings of the metaphors were analyzed to show how the source domain is mapped onto the target concept and what evaluative or emotional meanings the mapping entails in a specific genre.

Operationalization of the concept of genre-specific framing was done through three contextual-semantic characteristics: evaluative orientation, emotional orientation, and communicative purpose. These characteristics were coded for each extracted metaphor and the differences between metaphors from different genres were identified. In this way, the theoretical concept of genre-specific framing was translated into measurable textual characteristics.

The framework's recipient-response component was operationalized through the participants' evaluation of metaphorical messages. It was measured using a 7-point semantic differential and the persuasive message effectiveness questionnaire. Specifically, persuasiveness was operationalized in terms of the perceived ability of the persuasive message to influence the participant, emotional response was operationalized as the emotional and affective evaluation of the message, and memorability was operationalized by participants' ratings of how strongly the metaphorical message is remembered.

Accordingly, the proposed CMT pathway – source domain → conceptual mapping → genre-specific framing → recipient response – is used as an operational framework for organizing textual coding and reception measures, rather than as a causal model. Indeed, the present study tests differences in recipients' evaluations across different genres (political, media, artistic) using one-way ANOVA, while the operational relationships among the pathway stages are interpreted within the limits of the study design.

Methods and Materials

Research procedure

An exploratory comparative mixed-method research design was used, which included the analysis of metaphorical structures qualitatively and the evaluation of reactions of recipients quantitatively. Such a design was chosen due to the goal to explore whether there are any differences in metaphorical sources and their pragmatic functions in political, media, and artistic discourses and whether these differences can be observed in recipients' reactions.

Textual part was created based on a purposively selected corpus of 30 English-language texts written from 2020 to 2024. There were 10 texts in each genre – politics, media, and arts. The equal distribution of texts in the corpus was done for the sake of equal representation of each genre in terms of analyzing metaphors and not for the sake of statistical representation of the entire body of each discourse. The corpus was sufficient in size for an exploratory qualitative comparison due to the fact that each text underwent systematic analysis of metaphors, coding of cognitive domains, and contextual-semantic analysis, with these procedures independently conducted by two trained coders.

The texts were chosen based on four predetermined criteria: (1) unambiguous affiliation with the respective genre of discourse, (2) discussion of socially and culturally meaningful problems, (3) the use of clear metaphors, and (4) a publication date between 2020 and 2024. The sources used in the study include governmental and political archives, English-language media outlets, and literature.

The recipient part comprised 90 participants. In order to make sure that there is comparability in the three experimental conditions, the group of participants was divided equally into three genre groups, consisting of 30 participants each. Such division is consistent with the number of discourse genres included in the textual corpus. The group of participants can be considered a convenience sampling and not a representative one. The purpose of this sampling was the preliminary examination of recipients' reaction to metaphorical messages.

This procedure incorporated two complementary levels of analysis: investigation of metaphorical structure in the textual corpus and evaluation of selected fragments at the recipient level.

Sample

The corpus of texts comprised 30 texts written in English, 10 of which belonged to each of the three discourse genres – political, media, and artistic. All the 30 texts formed the corpus from which the metaphorical expressions were extracted. A text was used as the unit for corpus selection, while a metaphorical construction was the unit of qualitative linguistic analysis. Having gone through the process of metaphorical expressions selection and coding, 45 metaphorical constructions were selected for further detailed analysis from the 30 texts. Consequently, the figure of 45 should not be taken as referring to any additional texts. Rather, it is the number of metaphorical constructions found within the 30-text corpus and chosen for detailed contextual-semantic analysis. Therefore, the number of metaphorical constructions was different from the number of texts, since one text could contain more than one metaphorical construction.

The sample of participants comprised 90 people aged 20-35 (M= 26.2). Out of the 90, 54 people (60%) were women, while 36 (40%) were men. Participants were selected at Kyiv National Linguistic University and M. P. Dragomanov National Pedagogical University. Participants mostly had a linguistics education or were studying languages. The eligibility criteria included having enough English language knowledge to analyze the texts of the study.

The use of two universities was used in an attempt to limit the dependency on a single institutional environment, while retaining a sufficiently homogenous linguistic and educational context for the purpose of the exploratory comparison. However, it must be noted that the sample was not designed as a representative sample of the broader population of English-language readers. Particularly, the skew towards language-related students limits the ability to generalize the findings at the level of the recipient beyond the participants with relatively high level of linguistic and metalinguistic proficiency.

The sample size of 90 was selected in view of the comparative nature of the exploratory design, with 30 participants in each of the three conditions of the discourse intervention. Such allocation of observations was deemed sufficient to allow for equal representation of the three genres and provide an adequate basis for between-condition statistical analysis at the stage of initial exploration. As such, the sample should be regarded as an analytical sample, as opposed to a population sample, from which conclusions cannot be extrapolated. All participants were briefed regarding the nature and procedure of the experiment and provided written informed consent prior to participation. No personally identifiable information was retained in the analytical sample.

Research methods

The study involved both qualitative and quantitative methods, to investigate the structural properties of metaphor organization and the persuasive effects it could have on the recipient.

Metaphor identification and cognitive-domain coding. Metaphorical expressions were identified through close reading of each text, which were then coded according to their cognitive source domain. The coding scheme was informed by principles of cognitive linguistics and conceptual metaphor theory.

Contextual-semantic analysis. Contextual-semantic analysis provided insight into how the interpretation and pragmatic function of a metaphor depended on the contextual environment and discourse genre in which it appeared. The analysis focused on the association between the metaphorical expression, its target concept, the evaluative meaning, emotional orientation, and communicative purpose.

The scale for semantic differential assessment. The recipients' subjective assessment of metaphorical fragments was estimated with the help of an instrument which was developed on the basis of C. Osgood's semantic differential approach. Selected metaphorical fragments were estimated by participants on a scale from 1 to 7 according to various dimensions, such as persuasive-unpersuasive, emotional-neutral, favorable-hostile, and others. A high rating meant that the corresponding evaluative feature was pronounced in the fragment.

The persuasive message effectiveness questionnaire. For the evaluation of four dimensions of persuasive influence, namely perceived persuasiveness, emotional involvement, speaker confidence, and receptivity to the speaker's perspective, there was used a standardized persuasive message effectiveness questionnaire adjusted to the Ukrainian research context. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's alpha; its value proved to be satisfactory ($\alpha = 0.84$).

Associative response analysis. An original open-ended method was employed to elicit spontaneous associations that participants made with the metaphorical expressions. Participants were asked to give an account of images, meanings, feelings, or ideas triggered by metaphorical expressions. The responses were then subjected to coding and categorization in terms of figurative, emotional, and logical-semantic associations. Thus, this method provided an additional measure in terms of qualitative data concerning how metaphorical expressions were understood by recipients.

Statistical analysis. Statistical tests were performed to determine whether recipients' assessments of metaphorical messages varied across different genres of political, media, and artistic discourse. Descriptive statistics were calculated using Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) for all dependent variables. Prior to inferential statistical analysis, the assumptions of one-way ANOVA were tested. The assumptions of normality were checked with the help of the Shapiro-Wilk test and a Q-Q plot. Homogeneity of variances was tested with Levene's test. Violations of assumptions were not revealed. One-way ANOVA was run in order to check whether recipients' evaluations of metaphorical messages differed in terms of three discourse genres. Where there were significant omnibus effects, Tukey's HSD post-hoc test was performed to find out significant differences between pairs of genres. Statistical significance was set at .05, and p-values are reported where applicable. In addition to the statistical significance, effect size was reported using eta squared (η^2) for omnibus ANOVA effects and Cohen's d for comparisons between groups. 95% confidence intervals (95% CI) for mean differences were reported to provide a measure of effect's precision. The magnitude of effect was interpreted along with its confidence interval, not taking into account statistical significance only.

Metaphor coding procedure and reliability

Metaphors were identified via the Metaphor Identification Procedure Vrije Universiteit (MIPVU), a systematic approach aimed at differentiating metaphorical uses of lexical units from non-metaphorical uses. In accordance with MIPVU guidelines, each text was scanned for metaphoric lexical units whose contextual meaning would be compared with their more basic, concrete, or historically prior meaning. When the contextual meaning of a lexical unit contrasted with its more basic meaning in such a way that the two could be seen in relation to one another, the lexical unit was categorized as metaphorical. This approach was systematically applied to all 30 texts.

After identifying metaphors, the next step was to code them across three analytic dimensions, namely: (1) source domain, (2) target concept, and (3) pragmatic function. Source domains were the domains of conceptual knowledge whose attributes would be transferred into the target concept whereas target concepts referred to the phenomena or entities conceptualized through the use of metaphor. Primary categories of source domains included: WAR, PATH/JOURNEY, MECHANISM, BODY, GAME, DISEASE, THEATER, ORGANISM, NATURE, and LIGHT/DARKNESS. Pragmatic functions referred to the function performed by the metaphor in its discourse context, including normative, rationalizing, critical-evaluative, disturbing, emotional-symbolic, and other functions.

The coding was conducted separately by two trained coders who were provided with the same coding manual and coding examples prior to conducting the main analysis. Both coders coded the same full set of 30 texts independently.

The inter-coder agreement was computed at three levels: metaphor identification, source domain classification, and pragmatic function classification. Cohen's Kappa (κ) measure was employed to compute inter-coder reliability with κ being equal to 0.89 for metaphor identification, $\kappa = 0.86$ for source domain classification, and $\kappa = 0.82$ for pragmatic function classification. These measures showed substantial agreement and high consistency in the coding process.

Disagreements were analyzed after the independent coding procedure. The coders discussed the respective lexical unit along with its immediate and wider textual context and made a consensus decision following the established coding rules. It is crucial to note that consensus coding was performed only after the calculation of inter-coder reliability and, thus, did not increase the initial agreement rate. The final dataset for the analysis included the consensus-coded metaphors.

To further ensure coding consistency, the coding guidelines included operational definitions of all source domains and pragmatic functions, as well as some examples of each category. In cases where metaphor could be coded in more than one source domain, the dominance of particular conceptual mappings within the immediate context of the discourse was considered by the coders.

Instrument validation

The persuasive message effectiveness questionnaire was adapted for the Ukrainian research setting and organized around four theoretically meaningful constructs: persuasiveness perception, emotional immersion, the speaker's credibility, and receptivity towards the perspective. Before conducting the main survey, the adapted questions were examined for their semantic meaning and relevance to the discussed constructs. The adaptation of the tool was based on the framework of persuasive communication, with the aim of ensuring that the questions reflected the recipient's perception of metaphorical messages directly.

Since the current research is exploratory, and the questionnaire was developed specifically for the purposes of this research, no factor analysis was conducted to validate the instrument used. Consequently, the construct validity of the instrument developed cannot be considered as thoroughly validated. The results achieved with the help of this questionnaire are thus viewed as preliminary findings regarding the reaction of recipients to the stimuli presented to them.

Ethical considerations

The research was carried out in accordance with the principles of the declaration of Helsinki. Participants were recruited voluntarily, and all of them received the necessary information regarding the nature of the research and the procedure itself.

Results

As a result of the analysis of the 30-text corpus, 45 metaphorical constructions were selected for contextual-semantic analysis. These constructions were found in the texts of the three genres contained in the corpus. The 30 texts made up the source corpus whereas the 45 metaphorical constructions served as the linguistic units and were coded according to the following criteria: source domain, evaluative orientation, emotional orientation, and communicative function.

When reading the text which is divided into three types of things such as political things, media things, and artistic things. One can identify various kinds of metaphors people use to describe things. These metaphors vary not only by their sources but also by the purpose and the emotion they cause. As the result of our research we have found out that there were five basic metaphors people use in order to persuade others. These findings are presented in Table I.

Table I
Cognitive metaphors in political discourse

Source domain	Typical example	Function of metaphor	Persuasive impact
War	We must fight for our future.	Mobilization (creating an image of struggle, enemy, interests' protection).	A call for unity and action against an external or internal threat.
Way	The country is on the road to recovery.	Organizational (perception of goal, direction, controlled process).	Building a sense of control and reliable political leadership.
Mechanism	The political system needs to be recalibrated.	Rationalization (technical thinking, simplification of complex political processes).	Strengthening trust in reforms as technically justified solutions.
Body	This policy is the backbone of our society.	Symbolic and value (strengthening the image of stability, systematicity, unity).	Enhancing the legitimacy of political decisions through the metaphor of bodily necessity.
Game	They are playing political games with national interests.	Discrediting, which involves engendering the perception of frivolity or manipulativeness among adversaries.	Promoting a negative assessment of opponents and cultivating a contemptuous attitude towards them.

Source: consolidated by the authors based on the results obtained

The other idea often applied is to unite people by using war rhetoric. In that case, people get united for some leader or some goal. After hearing phrases such as "We have to fight for our future" or "Our economy is under attack", one can see that there are two parties involved. It is extremely important to people that something should be done. The idea of war tells people that they have to choose one of two parties – either "us" or "them". This is how people get attached to the topic and wish to do something to solve the problem. The idea of war is a way of saying "I'm in danger". That it's necessary to put a stop to themselves and to the people that they care about. The second frequently used instrument is the PATH metaphor. PATH helps us understand situations more clearly. When hearing a phrase such as "The country is on the road to recovery" one thinks that it looks like recovery will take place when this country is on its way to the path of recovery and the country is stable, improving. The way PATH works is that it makes people trust their leaders. It helps people to realize that the leaders are consistent and they can be trusted. PATH is extremely good at doing this: it proves that the leaders act deliberately; that they have a plan and that there's progress made. This PATH is essential because it creates some faith in the leaders of a country and makes people believe that we are in safe hands. This MECHANISM metaphor is the example of rationalization.

”The political system needs to be recalibrated” constitutes one of the politics as diagnosis, adjustment, or modernization of a system. The effect, therefore, is that of persuasion on the part of technical legitimacy in decision-making under the rhetoric which essentially strips off the emotional dimension from the political field. The concept of body teaches us that our leaders should make the decisions. When people say ”This policy is the backbone of our society” means that the nation is a human being. Our bodies need all elements and you see that the whole society needs to be in place. The way of describing our country gives people the impression that the decisions our leaders make are those which we have no choice in, we cannot manipulate them. The body concept helps our leaders make sure that all their decisions are treated as the decisions so people cannot object to them. The concept of game is extremely important. It gives people a negative impression. This concept comes when people say things such as ”They’re playing political games with national interests” meaning that the others understand that they do not take it seriously, they are playing and do not care whether one side has the view or the other isn’t. The concept of game is used by many people to portray opposing views as ridiculous. The idea of game makes people doubt the opinions of other people. When we analyze the thoughts of journalists we find five possible ideas about what they think. These ideas about how people think determine how people perceive things. They help people justify certain things and shape their feelings about them. They simplify complicated issues and influence how people feel about certain things. The results are given in Table II.

Table II
Cognitive metaphors in media discourse

Source domain	Typical example	Function of metaphor	Persuasive impact
Element	A wave of protests swept through the city	Anxious/Emotional (uncontrollability, chaos, threat)	Creating a sense of fear, destabilization, and the inevitability of change
Disease	Corruption is a cancer	Pathologizing (refers to the negative characterization of a societal phenomenon as a pathological condition).	Creating a need for “treatment”, i.e. reforming the system
Theater	The government’s response was a political theater	Ironic-critical (demonstrative behavior, staging of political events)	Undermining trust in politicians by presenting their actions as fake
Organism	The economy is bleeding	Dramatization (image of bodily injury, crisis)	Evoking sympathy or anxiety, emphasizing the painfulness of change
Weapon	The media is a weapon in the hands of the elites	Manipulative (exposing the influence of information resources as a tool of struggle)	Cognizance of the media’s role as a formidable entity that shapes and governs public opinion.

Source: consolidated by the authors based on the results obtained

The elements metaphor was the most evocative metaphor. In illustrative writing such as “A wave of protests swept through the city,” protest actions mimic the figure of an uncontrollable natural force. This kind of rhetorical strategy brings a sense of disorder and danger to readers. Persuasive influence is to be demonstrated by highlighting distressing scenes, and suggesting its inevitability. These are what are called diseases when people use the disease to indicate ill-health. It provides insight as to why these problems are something happening in us from within. When I say things like “corruption is a cancer” we’re not just saying that corruption is a bad thing. We equate it like a disease we must cure. We are conditioned to think that action is necessary to correct the situation. Our society is a physically sick body you just have to figure out how to make it healthy again. The disease idea, it tells us, means we need to change so much to heal our society in the way our doctors would prescribe us a drug to cure any pain or illness. Similarly, when people say ”The government’s response was a theatre” like the theatre metaphor has us making sure we’re critical and ironic of the people who use it. We look at this picture in our heads and politics might be fake, formal and cynical. The advantage of this theatre idea is that it makes us question the government so that we see that they’re hiding their real faces and not being honest about what they do.

The theatre metaphor does a good job of this, and it’s why the government does not always tell the truth. The economy being like a living thing is its human qualities, and the same holds for the expression ”The economy is bleeding.” This makes the people feel passionate about the issues in the economy as if they are an injury. It does not only make people feel sorry, it also makes you see how painful the problems are. That’s the thing. This can inspire people to take action to repair the economy. The economy itself could literally be a living thing as a way of thinking about it. The weapon metaphor — such as “The media is a weapon in the hands of the elites” — has the meaning of media as a tool of targeted influence. This way the metaphor is creating an environment of distance from the source of information, highlighting its damage to independent thought. The tactic here is to induce skepticism and undermine trust in the media as a neutral arbiter. But looking at what artists say we can see five places where they are using metaphors to consider things. These areas are unique in that they are heavy on figures of speech and emotionally sophisticated. Artists’ metaphors mean far more than their work appearance. They also influence how people feel and think when they encounter art. The details can be found in Table III. Artistic discourse and the metaphors that artists wield are so important in this because they define what art should be and how it feels to us. Metaphors permeate artistic discourse that manipulate the mind of the reader.

Table III
Cognitive metaphors in artistic discourse

Source domain	Example	Function of metaphor	Persuasive power
Nature	He roamed through the forest of his memories	Figurative-semantic (revealing an internal state using natural images)	Evoking empathy through vivid natural images
Light/Darkness	Hope was dying out like a candle	Existential/contrast (illustrating the polarity of emotional state)	Empowering emotions through metaphorization of states
Travel	Her life was a journey through a winding road	Narrative (building a character's life story with the help of travel metaphor)	Evoking identification with the character through the experience of travelling and searching
Body	Her words cut like knives piercing the silence	Emotional (enhancing the experience with the help of body images)	Bolstering drama through visualization of pain/emotional tension
Everyday life	He felt trapped in a room with broken clocks	Psychological (metaphorizing everyday life as limitation/stress)	Creating the feeling of being immersed into the inner life of the character

Source: compiled by the authors based on the findings

The underlying concept in use here is NATURE. NATURE is used in two ways. It helps us understand things. It allows us to picture things in our mind. When we say ”He wandered through the forest of his memories” for instance, it gives us a glimpse into what is happening in his mind. It is almost a picture of his thoughts and feelings. This use of NATURE evokes in us the sentiments of the individual. It also helps us understand what is going on inside the person. As a result, subjects are easier to manage. NATURE is used to help us see the person's world. The concept of light and darkness is similar to the way we say “Hope flickered like a dying candle”. This shows how people have different emotions. It sets up the tone for the story. It creates a dramatic impact. When we see light with dark it helps us grasp those ideas like hope, feeling hopeless, losing something and finding spirit again. The light-dark concept lands beautifully with the audience. Tempting to make them feel things further down the line about what is taking place in the story. The light and dark make the viewer feel more. JOURNEY is a great concept that allows us to tell a story and think about the life of the characters. People are comparing our lives to a trip with many problems, so when we say something like “Her life was a winding road” she is putting many issues you need to make multiple choices like that! To compare one JOURNEY with another makes readers understand this image. We all make every effort to progress, and there's meaning in our own JOURNEY. The body metaphor is a tool. Its vocabulary is use of the body to express emotions. Something like “Her words were knives cutting through silence” is a body metaphor. It evokes emotions — pain, anger, fear. And, at its best, is a metaphor of the body to grab people's attention and feel something. “It allows the reader to imagine and feel the emotions. Body metaphor works really well because it makes people have feelings and feel things. Life is like a picture reflecting what the people are feeling inside. It uses things we all see every day to explain feelings. For instance, when someone says ”He felt trapped in a room of clocks” it means they feel like they lose control over time, they feel stuck or they are confused inside. This type of conversation, LIFE makes people close, learn each other's feelings better.

The literary text engages readers' minds. It doesn't dictate what to think. The literary text, on the other hand, makes a reader reflect about whatever in the story. The reader needs to make sense of what the literary text is conveying and consider for themselves what it means to them. The literary text is, for that reason, because it asks the reader to truly question the experiences present in the story.

For example ”Her words were knives cutting through silence” illustrates the semantic change from the literal meaning (knife as a tool) to ”an emotion visual” (visualization): speech impact. From an artistic point of view, it does not consist of logical construction but works at the level of sensory perception. We conducted the survey to analyze the effects that metaphors exert on people's perception of texts. For that purpose we used the semantic differential test proposed by C. Osgood. We analyzed three factors: how people felt about the text, how persuasive it was and how well it was remembered. The results of the survey are presented in Fig. 1.

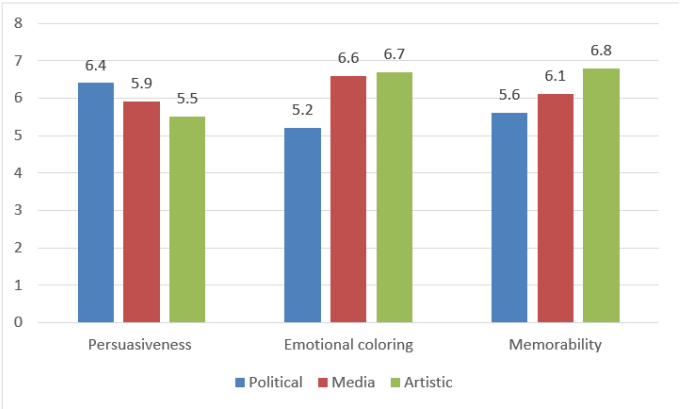

Fig. 1 *Evaluating the impact of metaphors in different genres Source: consolidated by the authors based on the results obtained*

The results provided by the data elucidated how metaphorical genre specificity could be present as it impacted recipients' attention-grabbing experience. The higher metrics for the emotional coloring score for the parameter were for artistic discourse (mean – 6.7), suggesting deep emotional connection to metaphorically rich artistic work. Likewise, media texts also received high emotional scores (6.3), possibly due to the use of vivid and dramatic metaphors, which seek to frighten and shock the reader. Political discourse scored a slightly lower than other forms (5.9) but still exerted an emotionally consistent force. Political texts score a 6.4 in persuasiveness. Political texts use metaphor to make people believe in something, get them to act or say it in layman's terms. They employ ideas, such as of war, machines and paths, to communicate their messages. It displays that metaphors seen in texts is not simply ornate but makes sense. Media discourse has a score 5.8 on the other hand it is less persuasive. The reason this is because the media does tend to play to people emotions. When they do not always rationalize their arguments, they do not substantiate what they say. Political texts tend to be clearer and more convincing because they have an ease of reading and comprehension in metaphors that is logical. When we speak of art we are talking about how something persuades us. It was scored a 5.5—very low in terms of persuasiveness in this one. So there's about how something looks and feels more important than whether it makes sense or not when you look at metaphors in art. In art metaphors are more about how they appear and feel than how logically persuasive they are. For memorability, the highest result also was achieved for artistic discourse (6.8), due to the high imagery and associative richness of metaphors. Media articles displayed an average level (6.0) because of the heavy level of repetition and contrast in imagery. Political texts scored lower (5.7) due to the predominance of stereotypical, monotonous metaphors making their long-term memory less powerful. So research has shown that metaphors in books and stories tend to strike a chord. They remember them. Politics metaphors work wonders in convincing people and news stories use them also with emotion and critical thinking. They are not as deep as the ones used in other genres.

The results demonstrated significant genre-related differences in recipients' responses to metaphorical messages across all three examined dimensions: emotional coloring, persuasiveness, and memorability. Descriptive statistics and inferential results are presented in Table IV.

Table IV
Evaluating the impact of metaphors in different genres

Measure	Political	Media	Artistic	$F(2,87)$	p	η^2
Emotional coloring	5.90 ± 0.85	6.30 ± 0.80	6.70 ± 0.75	7.48	.001	.147
Persuasiveness	6.40 ± 0.70	5.80 ± 0.85	5.50 ± 0.90	9.34	< .001	.177
Memorability	5.70 ± 0.80	6.00 ± 0.85	6.80 ± 0.75	15.12	< .001	.258

Source: Consolidated by the authors based on the results obtained

In terms of emotional coloring, artistic discourse had the highest mean value (M = 6.70, SD = 0.75, 95% CI [6.42, 6.98]), whereas media and political discourses had means of 6.30, SD = 0.80, 95% CI [6.00, 6.60] and 5.90, SD = 0.85, 95% CI [5.58, 6.22], respectively. According to the one-way ANOVA, there was a significant influence of the genre of discourse on emotional coloring, $F(2, 87) = 7.48$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .147$. Therefore, about 14.7% of the variability in emotional-coloring ratings was accounted for by discourse genre. Tukey HSD post hoc analyses showed that the mean difference between artistic and political discourses was statistically significant (mean difference = 0.80, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.31, 1.29], Cohen's d = 1.00). The mean differences between political and media discourses (mean difference = 0.40, $p = .135$, 95% CI [-0.09, 0.89]) and media and artistic discourses (mean difference = 0.40, $p = .135$, 95% CI [-0.09, 0.89]) were statistically insignificant.

Perceived persuasiveness also showed a significant effect of genre. The political discourse had the highest score for persuasiveness (M = 6.40, SD = 0.70, 95% CI [6.14, 6.66]), followed by media discourse (M = 5.80, SD = 0.85, 95% CI [5.48, 6.12]) and artistic discourse (M = 5.50, SD = 0.90, 95% CI [5.16, 5.84]). The one-way ANOVA revealed a significant difference between the three types of discourse, $F(2, 87) = 9.34$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .177$. It was considered a large effect of the genre. Tukey HSD comparisons indicated that political discourse was more persuasive than media discourse (mean difference = 0.60, $p = .016$, 95% CI [0.09, 1.11], Cohen's d = 0.77) and artistic discourse (mean difference = 0.90, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.39, 1.41], Cohen's d = 1.12).

The largest effect of genre was found for memorability. Artistic discourse scored the highest (M = 6.80, SD = 0.75, 95% CI [6.52, 7.08]), followed by media discourse (M = 6.00, SD = 0.85, 95% CI [5.68, 6.32]) and political discourse (M = 5.70, SD = 0.80, 95% CI [5.40, 6.00]). The one-way ANOVA revealed a statistically significant effect of discourse genre on memorability, $F(2, 87) = 15.12$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .258$. That is, genre explained about 25.8% of the variance in memorability ratings. Post hoc Tukey HSD tests demonstrated that artistic discourse was significantly more memorable than political discourse (mean difference = 1.10, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.61, 1.59], Cohen's d = 1.42) and media discourse (mean difference = 0.80, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.31, 1.29], Cohen's d = 1.00). Political and media discourse differed statistically insignificantly in memorability (mean difference = 0.30, $p = .320$, 95% CI [-0.19, 0.79], Cohen's d = 0.36).

Taken together, the data demonstrate a differentiated impact of metaphors on discourse genres. Specifically, political discourse evoked the most pronounced persuasive assessments, while artistic discourse elicited the strongest emotional, and mnemonic evaluations. Media discourse took an intermediary position in emotional coloring and memorability. The significance of the omnibus effects and the corresponding effect sizes suggest that the genre of discourse was not merely related to minor metaphorical evaluations but played an important role in recipients' responses to metaphorical communication.

Discussion

These findings support the application of the concept of conceptual metaphor to the structure of genre-specific interpretation while at the same time showing the variability of its communicative effect depending on the discourse context. Higher perceptions of the persuasiveness of political metaphors confirm the findings of previous studies, which suggest that metaphorical framing can organize political positions and help develop persuasive communication (Castro Seixas, 2021; Pechko & Kharkevych, 2021). However, the current study expands on these findings by demonstrating that evaluative differences in the persuasiveness of metaphors are genre-dependent.

At the same time, these results confirm the assumption of the CMT theory concerning the involvement of metaphorical mappings into the interpretation of abstract concepts through more concrete source domains (Garello, 2024; He, 2021). The high memorability of artistic metaphors, in turn, demonstrates that the process of conceptual metaphor cannot work solely through persuasive framing. Depending on the communicative function of a certain discourse, conceptual metaphor can lead to different recipient reactions. This finding contributes to research on metaphorical functioning in literary discourse as a means of interpretation and experience (Botelho, 2021) as well as on emotional and cognitive reactions to different metaphorical domains (De Saint & Blanco, 2021).

Therefore, these findings expand CMT theory by revealing the significance of genre as the context of the use of metaphor. Rather than producing a single communicative effect, the same cognitive processes can be related to the different reactions of recipients, depending on the communicative purpose of the metaphor. This finding is consistent with empirical studies that demonstrate the context-dependence of metaphorical framing (Ahrens et al., 2022; Voynalovich & Khmara, 2025; Zeng et al., 2021).

Notably, the results of the current study do not mean, that metaphors can directly change people's beliefs or behavior. Perceived persuasiveness, emotional reaction, and memorability were measured in this study. Therefore, the contribution of the study lies in demonstrating differences in recipients' evaluations based on the genre of discourse and the connection between CMT-based analysis and the evaluation of communicative effects.

Study limitations

The research conducted has a number of drawbacks that have to be taken into account when considering the results of the study. First of all, the data used for analysis were limited because only 30 English-language texts were used as the corpus, which affects the representativeness of the analyzed discourse. Secondly, the participants were recruited from two Ukrainian universities and, therefore, cannot represent recipients from other cultural and educational background. Thirdly, the research was limited to analyzing only English-language discourse and cannot be generalized to any other language or discourse tradition. Fourthly, in the research an adapted measuring instrument was used to assess the perceived persuasive effectiveness and its results may be different from those obtained with the use of the standard one. Finally, the cross-sectional design and genre-specific corpus prevent any causal or generalized conclusions.

Recommendations

The results of the present study can be the basis for some specific directions for further research. Firstly, future investigations could expand the analysis, moving from political, media, and artistic discourses to include religious, scientific, educational, legal, and advertising texts. This would allow researchers to determine whether the genre-related tendencies revealed in the present study are characteristic of more diverse communicative settings or rather peculiar to certain types of discourse only. It is also necessary to investigate whether the same cognitive source domains, such as WAR, JOURNEY, DISEASE, BODY, and MECHANISM, have identical pragmatic functions across different genres.

Secondly, comparative cross-cultural and cross-linguistic studies represent another important direction for elaborating on the cognitive theory of metaphor. Further research could compare metaphorical framing in English with that in other languages and cultures to see what source domains are culturally determined and which belong to the category of universal embodied experiences. For instance, one could try to find out whether metaphors of WAR or PATH in politics are effective with audiences from different cultures or are rather interpreted based on their own cultural experience.

Thirdly, future studies should rely on larger and more varied textual corpora. The use of a 30-text corpus in the current study serves as the foundation for the comparison of genres in terms of metaphors, but larger datasets would help to explore such aspects as frequency of metaphors' usage, distribution, co-occurrence, and diachronic changes in a more systematic way. Longitudinal corpora could be utilized to investigate changes in the metaphorical framing that occur in response to significant events in politics, society, the economy, or the health sphere. Participants should be also represented by more people with different ages, educational background, professional experience, and language proficiency. More varied and larger samples will enable researchers to generalize about cognitive and affective responses of recipients to metaphorical messages.

Fourth, future research on metaphors should use computational methods. Machine learning and natural language processing could help to automate the procedure of detection and classification of metaphors in accordance with their source domain. Language models based on transformers and other computational linguistic tools could be helpful for studying the frequency of metaphors, their semantic similarity, difference in context, and change of metaphoric perspective. However, human-coded examples could be helpful in verifying the outcome in terms of accuracy

and interpretability of the process of detection and classification of metaphors. This approach would allow researchers to examine large amounts of data while retaining theoretical control over the study of metaphors.

Fifth, future research should further empirically test the influence of metaphorical expression by measuring self-reports alongside behavioral and psychophysiological variables. In addition to using rating scales and questionnaires on the perceived effectiveness of metaphors in persuasion, researchers could measure the effects of threatening, conflicting, diseased, or emotionally-loaded metaphors in terms of reaction time, allocation of attention, eye movements, facial expressions, heart rate variability, electrodermal responses, and other validated psychophysiological measures. It may be possible to find out whether there are any attentional or physiological changes as a result of exposure to these types of metaphors.

Finally, future research can explore the potential for the design of controlled experiments wherein the same message is delivered using differing metaphorical framings. For instance, the same content in politics or the media could be framed using the WAR, JOURNEY, MECHANISM, or non-metaphorical approaches. This design would help identify the effects of metaphorical framing beyond the message content itself. These research designs provide clearer insights about causal relationships among cognitive metaphor, emotion, and persuasive power.

In general, future research needs to shift from relatively small and manually analyzed data sets to larger, multilingual, computer-assisted, and experimentally confirmed research methods. Cross-cultural comparisons, computer-assisted metaphor analysis, use of heterogeneous samples of participants, and additional measures like behavioral and physiological ones will enhance greatly the empirical foundation of the cognitive metaphor approach.

Conclusion

Metaphor in this aspect is integral to understanding things and the way we think about it. The way we use metaphors in politics and news and art, according to a study, is pretty different. They delved into what people are saying and discovered five core concepts that come up repeatedly in each of these topics. Metaphor is central in all of these domains. It can influence people's opinions. The study of metaphor is interesting because it's a means to show how metaphor is used through the political sphere and the news environment and art, how it influences people's feelings. Particularly, in a political text – ”war”, ”path”, ”mechanism”, ”body”, ”game” and in a journalistic text – ”element”, ”disease”, ”theater”, ”organism”, ”weapon” as well as in artistic texts – ”nature”, ”light/darkness”, ”journey”, ”body”, ”everyday life”. Because if you turn and see what metaphors do over kinds of texts, you will notice that they all work in different ways. Metaphors in texts help us comprehend things and can encourage us to act. In the media they make people feel when a wrong thing is happening, something that needs to be fixed. In artistic texts metaphors are about feelings, using images and symbols to convey meaning. It is hard to resist the temptation! And to see that numbers show even artistic texts are incredibly good at making people feel something or remembering something with 6.7 for coloring, 6.8 for memorability. Overall, political discourse was the most effective in terms of perceived persuasiveness, with the mean score of 6.4. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results revealed statistically significant differences at all parameters between genres ($p < 0.05$). The generated data suggest that cognitive metaphor is a flexible tool of persuasion, sensitive to genre, pragmatic and target communication circumstances, and has immense potential to further research in interdiscursive and intercultural dimensions. The findings from this study can pave the way to finding ways to communicate in politics, media and advertising. They can be used by us to develop readings that teach people read critically and understand metaphors. If made to fit someone they are learning about then this can also help make some stories and news articles more compelling and emotional. We can do later studies about other kinds of communication, such as technical writing, religion and advertising, and science to see how they utilize language. Findings can be applied to improve methods of interaction, whether in politics, the media, advertisement and so on. We also plan to investigate the ways metaphors influence people from different cultures. We had to consider the language and culture of our audience. It would seem to be interesting to consider, if there is anything new in it, to use methods similar to tracking where people look and how they react if they hear metaphors as well. We can also look at body reactions. So we will actually get a sense of how individuals actually feel when they hear metaphors. We are dealing with metaphors, so we will be studying metaphors and their influence, on people.

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None.

Conflict of interest

The authors have declared no conflict of interest in relation to the current study.

Ethical conduct

This study was carried out in compliance with the generally accepted ethics for conducting research with human subjects. All subjects gave their informed consent before participation in the study. The participation was voluntary and subjects were made aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any point during the research process. Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were ensured throughout the research process. The interview subjects also went through a recognized training course on “Research Ethics in Social and Behavioral Sciences.”

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