Metaphor in Everyday Communication and Its Impact on Understanding: A Cognitive and Discourse Perspective

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https://doi.org/10.56201/ijelcs.vol.11.no6.2026.pg67.80

Abstract
This paper examines metaphor in everyday communication and its impact on understanding from cognitive and discourse perspectives. The study aims to explain how metaphor functions in ordinary communication and contributes to meaning construction and interpersonal understanding. Specifically, it examines the cognitive role of metaphor, explores its discourse and pragmatic functions, and considers its emotional, cultural, and communicative implications. The study adopts a qualitative literature-review approach, drawing on recent scholarship in cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, discourse analysis, pragmatics, and computational linguistics. The reviewed literature shows that metaphor is not merely a stylistic device but an important cognitive and communicative resource through which speakers conceptualise abstract experiences, frame events, express emotions, evaluate situations, and establish interpersonal connections. However, its effects on understanding depend on familiarity, context, cultural knowledge, and pragmatic intention. The paper concludes that metaphor should be viewed as a context-sensitive resource that connects conceptualisation with discourse and social interaction. The proposed framework integrates metaphorical expression, conceptual mapping, contextual activation, pragmatic inference, and interpersonal understanding.

Keywords: *Metaphor, Communication, Cognition, Discourse, Understanding*

1. Introduction

Metaphor has traditionally been viewed as a literary and rhetorical device used to add creativity or stylistic effect to language. Contemporary linguistic and cognitive research, however, recognises metaphor as a fundamental resource for conceptualising experiences, organising knowledge, evaluating situations, and constructing meaning. A major development in this perspective is Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), which argues that abstract concepts are often understood through systematic relationships with more concrete and familiar domains. For example, expressions such as defending a position and attacking an argument reflect ARGUMENT IS WAR, while moving forward and reaching a goal reflect LIFE IS A JOURNEY. Metaphor therefore operates at both cognitive and communicative levels. It enables speakers to represent abstract experiences through familiar conceptual structures, while also serving explanatory, evaluative, persuasive, emotional, and interpersonal functions. However, metaphor does not automatically facilitate understanding. Its interpretation depends on linguistic context, pragmatic inference, cultural knowledge, conventionality, and communicative purpose (Gibbs,

2011; Kövecses, 2008; Steen et al., 2010). Consequently, metaphor may enhance understanding when speakers share relevant conceptual and cultural knowledge but may also create ambiguity in intercultural communication. This paper examines metaphor as a cognitive and discourse phenomenon in everyday communication. It addresses its cognitive and communicative functions, its contribution to understanding abstract experiences, and the conditions under which it facilitates or constrains interpersonal and intercultural communication. The paper argues that metaphor is neither merely stylistic ornamentation nor an automatic cognitive shortcut; rather, it is a context-sensitive meaning-making resource arising from the interaction of conceptual knowledge, context, pragmatic reasoning, cultural experience, and communicative purpose.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Metaphor as a Cognitive Phenomenon

The study of metaphor has moved considerably beyond the traditional conception of metaphor as a decorative or rhetorical feature of literary language. Contemporary scholarship increasingly regards metaphor as a multidimensional phenomenon involving cognition, language, discourse, culture, emotion, and social interaction. Although Lakoff and Johnson (1980) established the influential argument that metaphor is fundamental to conceptualisation, recent scholars have questioned whether metaphor can be adequately explained through fixed conceptual mappings alone. Kövecses (2020) maintains that Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) remains an important account of the cognitive significance of metaphor, but argues that the theory requires a more elaborate treatment of context, cognition, and actual metaphor use in discourse. In his extended formulation, metaphor cannot be understood independently of the contextual circumstances in which it is produced and interpreted. This represents an important development from the earlier version of CMT because it brings naturally occurring discourse into the centre of metaphor analysis. Bundgaard (2020), however, adopts a more critical position. His assessment of CMT acknowledges evidence for the psychological reality of cross-domain mappings but questions whether such mappings alone constitute a sufficient theory of concepts. His position suggests that metaphor research should distinguish between evidence that a metaphorical association exists and the stronger claim that abstract concepts are fundamentally structured through metaphor.

Thibodeau (2022) provides a further defence of the continuing relevance of CMT within contemporary psychological research. He argues that current metaphor scholarship is considerably more sophisticated than a simplistic version of CMT and that contemporary research already incorporates questions concerning associations, unconscious influence, cognition, and metaphorical motivation. Similarly, Wang (2023) revisits major controversies surrounding the original formulation of CMT, particularly the relationship between metaphorical language and metaphorical concepts, the distinction between conventional and novel metaphor, and the directionality of mappings between source and target domains.

The positions of these scholars reveal both continuity and disagreement. Kövecses (2020) seeks to extend CMT by incorporating context and discourse; Bundgaard (2020) questions whether conceptual mapping provides a sufficiently comprehensive theory of concepts; Thibodeau (2022) argues for the continued scientific usefulness of CMT; while Wang (2023) demonstrates that some of the original assumptions require reconsideration. Thus, contemporary scholarship does not reject CMT but increasingly treats it as a framework requiring contextual, psychological, and discourse-sensitive refinement.

Contribution of the present paper. Building on these positions, the present paper contributes a more integrated account of metaphor in everyday communication, rather than treating metaphor

primarily as an abstract conceptual structure or examining it exclusively in political, literary, or specialised discourse. The paper specifically connects three dimensions—conceptualisation, comprehension, and interpersonal communication—and argues that the communicative effect of metaphor emerges from their interaction. In this respect, the paper moves beyond asking whether metaphors structure thought to examine how such conceptual structures become resources for understanding and social interaction in ordinary communication.

2.2 Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Its Contemporary Development

Conceptual Metaphor Theory proposes that abstract concepts are frequently understood through more concrete domains of experience. The familiar mappings ARGUMENT IS WAR, TIME IS MONEY, and LIFE IS A JOURNEY illustrate how linguistic expressions can reflect broader conceptual relationships. Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) original formulation established the cognitive foundation for this approach.

Recent research, however, suggests that conceptual metaphors should not be interpreted as rigid or universally fixed structures. Kövecses (2020) proposes an extended version of CMT in which context, cognitive processes, and discourse usage are given greater theoretical importance. His argument is significant because the same conceptual metaphor may produce different linguistic realisations depending on the communicative environment.

Wang (2023) similarly demonstrates that several assumptions of the original CMT remain controversial. In particular, she identifies continuing debates concerning the relationship between metaphorical expressions and conceptual metaphors and the assumption that mappings operate straightforwardly from concrete source domains to abstract target domains.

Thibodeau (2022), in contrast, argues that contemporary scientific research should not discard CMT simply because some of its early formulations were theoretically strong. Instead, he maintains that the framework has evolved and continues to provide useful hypotheses for experimental investigation. Bundgaard (2020) provides a more cautious interpretation, arguing that empirical evidence can support cross-domain effects without necessarily validating the stronger claim that all abstract concepts are metaphorically structured.

The comparison indicates that the major contemporary disagreement is not whether metaphor has cognitive significance but how extensive that significance is and what mechanisms explain it. Kövecses emphasises contextual extension, Wang highlights theoretical controversies, Thibodeau defends empirically testable aspects of CMT, and Bundgaard calls for greater conceptual and empirical precision. Contribution of the present paper. This paper adopts a moderate position between these perspectives. It accepts the cognitive significance of conceptual metaphor but rejects an exclusively mapping-based explanation of everyday communication. It therefore proposes that metaphorical understanding should be analysed through the combined influence of conceptual mappings, discourse context, pragmatic inference, cultural knowledge, and interpersonal goals. This integrated position is particularly relevant to everyday communication, where metaphors are often conventional, context-dependent, and socially motivated.

2.3 Metaphor and Everyday Communication

Metaphor is particularly significant in everyday communication because ordinary speakers constantly use metaphorical expressions without necessarily recognising them as figurative. Expressions such as I am drowning in work, we are moving forward, she attacked my argument, and I have run out of time demonstrate how physical experiences are routinely recruited to communicate abstract states and processes.

Recent research supports the view that metaphor is deeply integrated into ordinary communication. Tong, Shutova, and Lewis (2021) describe metaphor as an indispensable component of human cognition and everyday communication and emphasise the interaction between linguistic, cognitive, and social dimensions of metaphor. Their work is especially relevant because it connects theories of human metaphor processing with developments in computational language processing. Thibodeau and Flusberg (2022) further emphasise the importance of context in metaphor comprehension. They argue that listeners construct mental models using metaphor together with prior knowledge, contextual information, and other communicative resources. Their account therefore treats metaphor comprehension as part of broader discourse processing rather than as an isolated lexical operation. Ifantidou (2021) gives particular attention to the interpretive and emotional dimensions of metaphor. She argues that metaphorical utterances can contribute to comprehension partly because they trigger affective responses and enrich aspects of meaning that are not fully specified by literal propositional content.

Gibbs (2022) likewise stresses the complexity of metaphor research, identifying continuing challenges involving metaphor identification, metaphorical meaning in discourse, online processing, and the relationship between metaphorical source domains and interpretation.

These scholars therefore converge on the importance of metaphor in ordinary meaning construction but differ in emphasis. Tong et al. (2021) highlight the integration of cognitive, social, and computational perspectives; Thibodeau and Flusberg (2022) emphasise context and mental-model construction; Ifantidou (2021) foregrounds emotional and pragmatic enrichment; and Gibbs (2022) stresses the complexity and methodological challenges of metaphor research.

Contribution of the present paper. The present study brings these perspectives together by treating everyday metaphor as a phenomenon that simultaneously performs cognitive, communicative, interpersonal, and emotional functions. Rather than assuming that metaphor is universally beneficial, the paper proposes that its effectiveness depends on the relationship among metaphor familiarity, context, cultural knowledge, speaker intention, and hearer interpretation.

2.4 Metaphor and Comprehension

The relationship between metaphor and understanding is one of the central concerns of metaphor research. Earlier approaches sometimes treated figurative language as requiring additional processing because the hearer must move beyond literal meaning. Contemporary research presents a more nuanced picture in which comprehension depends on familiarity, context, conventionality, and communicative purpose. Thibodeau and Flusberg (2022) argue that metaphor comprehension involves the construction of mental models in which linguistic input interacts with prior knowledge and contextual information. This suggests that metaphor does not operate simply by replacing literal meaning with figurative meaning; rather, hearers integrate metaphorical information into a broader representation of the situation under discussion.

Ifantidou (2021) similarly argues that metaphor can contribute to understanding by enriching the informational content of an utterance and generating emotional responses. From this perspective, comprehension includes both propositional and non-propositional dimensions.

Thibodeau's (2022) broader discussion of metaphor and scientific reasoning further suggests that metaphors can contribute to understanding not simply because they provide direct descriptions but because they influence how people think about a phenomenon. Metaphorical framing may therefore guide attention toward particular relationships or consequences.

Gibbs (2022), however, cautions against overly simple explanations of metaphor processing. He points out that metaphor comprehension involves several unresolved questions, including how metaphorical meaning emerges during online processing and how discourse affects interpretation. The comparison reveals that metaphor may facilitate understanding, but its effect is neither automatic nor uniform. Conventional metaphors may be readily understood, while novel metaphors can require greater inferential effort. Context may also make an otherwise ambiguous metaphor transparent. Contribution of the present paper. The paper therefore replaces the stronger claim that metaphor is simply a "cognitive shortcut" with the more defensible concept of metaphor as a contextual cognitive resource. This distinction is important. A metaphor may reduce interpretive difficulty when it activates familiar knowledge, but it may increase processing demands when it is novel, culturally unfamiliar, ambiguous, or deliberately unconventional. The paper consequently contributes a conditional account of metaphor's impact on understanding.

2.5 Metaphor, Context and Discourse

The discourse perspective emphasises that metaphor acquires meaning through its communicative environment. A metaphor cannot always be adequately interpreted by examining the lexical expression alone. The surrounding discourse, communicative purpose, social relationship, and cultural background all contribute to interpretation.

Kövecses (2020) explicitly argues for strengthening the contextual component of CMT and incorporating actual metaphor use in natural discourse. This position is important because it shifts attention from abstract conceptual mappings to the ways speakers deploy metaphors in specific communicative circumstances. Richardson and Mueller (2022) demonstrate this movement towards discourse-sensitive analysis by examining how metaphor use unfolds and is recontextualised during a debate. Their analysis shows that metaphor is not static; its meaning and function can develop as discourse progresses.

Ahrens and Zeng (2022) similarly adopt a pragmatic perspective, demonstrating that conceptual metaphors can perform referential and evaluative functions in governmental discourse. Their findings indicate that metaphorical mappings may vary when speakers have particular pragmatic reasons for selecting them. Van Poppel (2021) approaches metaphor from argumentation theory and demonstrates that metaphor can perform argumentative functions. Her work shows that metaphor should not be viewed merely as a means of description; it can also participate in reasoning and persuasion.

The positions of these scholars complement one another. Kövecses emphasises contextual integration; Richardson and Mueller demonstrate the dynamic development of metaphor within discourse; Ahrens and Zeng highlight pragmatic and evaluative functions; and Van Poppel demonstrates metaphor's argumentative potential.

Contribution of the present paper. Drawing these perspectives into everyday communication, this paper argues that metaphor should be analysed as a discourse action rather than merely a linguistic form. In ordinary interaction, speakers use metaphor not only to represent experience but also to accomplish interpersonal purposes such as explaining, evaluating, persuading, criticising, encouraging, expressing emotion, and creating solidarity. The contribution is therefore to connect cognitive metaphor theory with the social and pragmatic functions of metaphor in everyday interaction.

2.6 Metaphor as an Evaluative and Persuasive Resource

Metaphor is capable of influencing how people evaluate events, individuals, and social situations. When a speaker describes a difficult task as a mountain, the expression does more than indicate difficulty; it constructs the task as something large, demanding, and requiring effort. Similarly, describing a person as a pillar of the community constructs that person positively by associating them with strength, stability, and support. Ahrens and Zeng (2022) demonstrate that conceptual metaphors may perform referential and evaluative functions, showing that metaphor selection can be influenced by pragmatic purposes.

Van Poppel (2021) extends this argument to persuasion and argumentation, showing that metaphor can participate in argumentative discourse rather than functioning solely as stylistic decoration.

Richardson and Mueller (2022) further demonstrate that metaphors may be developed, contested, and recontextualised during discourse. This suggests that metaphorical meaning can be negotiated between participants rather than simply transmitted from speaker to hearer.

The scholars therefore share the view that metaphor can influence interpretation, but they approach the issue differently: Ahrens and Zeng emphasise evaluation and reference, Van Poppel emphasises argumentation and persuasion, and Richardson and Mueller emphasise dynamic discourse development. Contribution of the present paper. The present paper extends these insights to interpersonal communication by arguing that metaphorical evaluation operates at both social and cognitive levels. Metaphor can influence not only how an event is conceptualised but also how interlocutors position themselves and others within an interaction.

2.7 Metaphor, Emotion and Social Interaction

Metaphor is also closely related to emotional communication. Speakers frequently use metaphor to represent experiences that are difficult to express through literal language. Expressions such as my heart is broken, I am drowning in sadness, I am boiling with anger, and she is carrying a heavy burden connect emotional states with bodily and physical experiences.

Ifantidou (2021) gives particular importance to the emotional effects of metaphor, arguing that metaphorical interpretation may generate affective responses that contribute to the understanding of an utterance. Thibodeau and Flusberg (2022) place emotion within a broader social-pragmatic account of metaphor comprehension, arguing that listeners integrate metaphor with contextual information and prior knowledge when constructing mental representations.

Gibbs (2022) likewise emphasises the complexity of metaphorical thought and language, suggesting that metaphor cannot be reduced to a purely linguistic or cognitive operation because it is embedded in human action and discourse.

These perspectives converge on the view that metaphor has an important affective and interpersonal dimension. However, they differ in explanatory emphasis. Ifantidou foregrounds emotional enrichment, Thibodeau and Flusberg stress social-pragmatic processing, while Gibbs emphasises the broader relationship between metaphor, cognition, discourse, and human action.

Contribution of the present paper. The paper integrates these approaches by proposing that emotional metaphor can serve as a bridge between individual cognition and interpersonal communication. Metaphor allows speakers to externalise subjective experiences and provides hearers with conceptual and emotional resources for interpreting those experiences. The paper therefore treats metaphorical emotion as both a cognitive representation and a social communicative act.

2.8 Metaphor, Culture and Intercultural Communication

Metaphorical conceptualisation is also influenced by culture. Although some metaphorical patterns may emerge from broadly shared bodily experiences, the particular expressions used by speakers are shaped by cultural practices, historical experiences, institutions, and social environments.

Kövecses (2020) argues that a satisfactory theory of metaphor must incorporate contextual and cultural variation rather than assuming that conceptual mappings operate identically across all situations. Gibbs (2022) similarly identifies variation as a major challenge for metaphor scholarship and emphasises the need to examine metaphor across different communicative and cultural contexts. Wang (2023) further demonstrates that several assumptions associated with the original CMT require reconsideration, including assumptions concerning the directionality and systematicity of metaphorical mappings.

These perspectives indicate that metaphor is simultaneously grounded in human experience and shaped by cultural context. Consequently, a metaphor that is transparent to members of one community may be opaque to members of another.

Contribution of the present paper. This paper applies this insight to multilingual everyday communication, particularly contexts where speakers use English alongside indigenous Nigerian languages. It proposes that metaphor should be treated as an important but underexamined source of potential misunderstanding in intercultural communication. The contribution lies in connecting cognitive metaphor research with the practical communication problems associated with culturally diverse speech communities.

2.9 Metaphor Identification and Methodological Issues

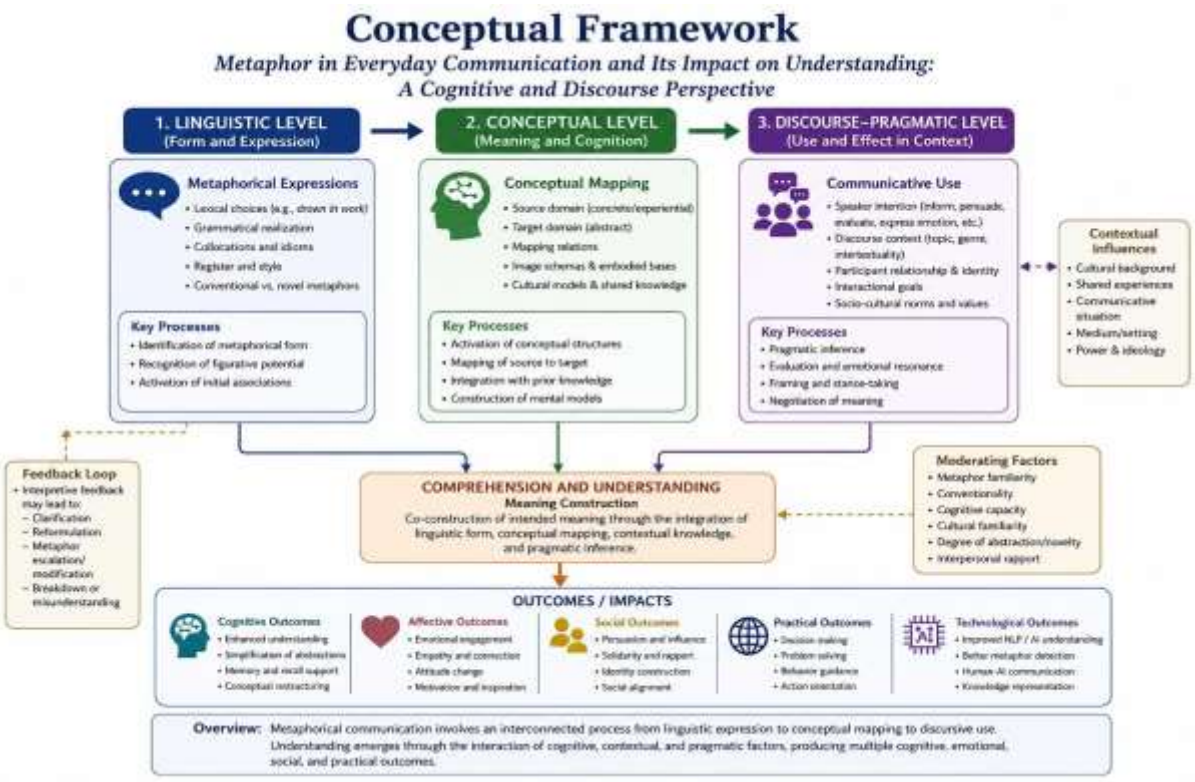
A major concern in contemporary metaphor research is the reliable identification of metaphorical expressions. Intuitive identification can lead researchers to classify expressions inconsistently. The development of systematic procedures has therefore become an important methodological contribution to the field.

Gibbs (2022) identifies metaphor identification as one of the continuing challenges in metaphor scholarship and stresses the difficulty of determining metaphorical meaning in naturally occurring discourse. Steen and colleagues' methodological tradition provides systematic procedures for identifying metaphor in discourse, while more recent discourse-oriented research continues to demonstrate the importance of combining linguistic identification with contextual interpretation.

Kalinin (2022) distinguishes between approaches that investigate the metaphorical nature of discourse and those that examine the discursive nature of metaphor. This distinction is useful because it demonstrates that researchers can study metaphor either as evidence of broader discourse characteristics or as a phenomenon whose meaning emerges within discourse itself.

The present paper adopts the second orientation while also recognising the cognitive significance of metaphor. It therefore treats metaphorical expressions as linguistic evidence whose interpretation requires attention to conceptual structure, context, communicative purpose, and social interaction.

Contribution of the present paper. The methodological contribution is the proposal of an integrated analytical orientation in which metaphor is examined at three interconnected levels:



At the linguistic level, the researcher identifies metaphorically used expressions. At the conceptual level, source and target domains are examined. At the discourse-pragmatic level, the researcher determines what the metaphor accomplishes in the communicative situation. This integrated approach avoids reducing metaphor either to individual words or to abstract conceptual mappings.

2.10 Metaphor and Natural Language Processing

The increasing importance of artificial intelligence has expanded metaphor research into computational linguistics. Metaphor poses a significant challenge to natural language processing because successful interpretation often requires contextual and conceptual knowledge rather than literal lexical interpretation. Tong, Shutova, and Lewis (2021) provide a comprehensive review of neural metaphor processing and demonstrate how advances in deep learning have created new opportunities for automatic metaphor detection and processing. Their work connects findings from cognitive research with computational approaches to language.

Rai and Chakraverty (2020) similarly review computational approaches to metaphor processing, covering rule-based systems, machine-learning approaches, and deep-learning methods. Their survey demonstrates the interdisciplinary character of computational metaphor research.

Panicheva, Mamaev, and Litvinova (2023) demonstrate that automatic conceptual-metaphor detection can be used in psychological research and argue that computationally detected metaphor can complement manually identified metaphorical data.

These scholars differ primarily in emphasis. Rai and Chakraverty focus on the development and classification of computational approaches; Tong et al. integrate linguistic, cognitive, social, and

neural perspectives; while Panicheva et al. demonstrate the potential of automatic metaphor detection for psychological research.

Contribution of the present paper. The present paper extends this discussion by arguing that computational systems designed for multilingual environments should incorporate not only metaphor detection but also context, cultural knowledge, discourse function, and pragmatic interpretation. This is particularly important for low-resource African languages, where metaphorical expressions may be poorly represented in available computational datasets.

3. Comparative Synthesis of the Reviewed Scholarship

The reviewed literature demonstrates that contemporary metaphor research is characterised by convergence around the importance of metaphor but disagreement concerning its mechanisms, scope, and interpretation.

Concept	Scholar 1	Scholar 2	Scholar 3	Major point of comparison	Contribution of this paper
Conceptual metaphor	Kövecses (2020)	Bundgaard (2020)	Thibodeau (2022)	Cognitive significance is accepted, but the scope of CMT is debated	Integrates cognition with everyday discourse and interaction
CMT controversies	Kövecses (2020)	Wang (2023)	Thibodeau (2022)	Context, directionality and conceptual structure remain contested	Proposes a context-sensitive interpretation of CMT
Metaphor comprehension	Thibodeau & Flusberg (2022)	Ifantidou (2021)	Gibbs (2022)	Comprehension involves context, emotion and inferential processing	Reframes metaphor as a contextual cognitive resource rather than an automatic shortcut
Metaphor in discourse	Richardson & Mueller (2022)	Ahrens & Zeng (2022)	Van Poppel (2021)	Metaphor can be dynamic, evaluative and argumentative	Applies these functions to everyday interpersonal discourse
Emotion and interaction	Ifantidou (2021)	Thibodeau & Flusberg (2022)	Gibbs (2022)	Metaphor connects emotional and	Integrates emotion with

				cognitive processes	interpersonal meaning
Culture	Kövecses (2020)	Gibbs (2022)	Wang (2023)	Metaphor is shaped by contextual and cultural variation	Highlights implications for multilingual Nigerian communication
Methodology	Gibbs (2022)	Kalinin (2022)	Steen et al. (2010)	Identification and contextual interpretation remain methodological concerns	Proposes linguistic–conceptual–discourse analysis
Computational metaphor	Rai & Chakraverty (2020)	Tong et al. (2021)	Panicheva et al. (2023)	AI approaches increasingly combine linguistic and cognitive insights	Advocates culturally and contextually sensitive metaphor processing

4. Research Gap

The literature demonstrates substantial theoretical and empirical development in metaphor research, but several gaps remain.

First, much of the influential literature has focused on conceptual structure, psychological processing, political communication, media discourse, or computational metaphor detection. Comparatively less attention has been devoted to the intersection of cognition, discourse, emotion, and interpersonal understanding in everyday communication.

Second, although recent scholars increasingly recognise the importance of context, there remains a need for integrated accounts that explain how conceptual mappings interact with pragmatic and social factors during ordinary communication.

Third, the literature demonstrates that metaphor can facilitate understanding, but the frequently repeated assumption that metaphor invariably reduces cognitive effort is theoretically problematic. Recent research suggests that familiarity, conventionality, context, and cultural knowledge determine whether metaphor facilitates or complicates interpretation.

Fourth, there remains a need to connect contemporary metaphor theory with multilingual and intercultural communication. This is particularly significant in Nigeria, where communication frequently occurs across English and indigenous languages.

Fifth, computational metaphor research has developed rapidly, but culturally grounded metaphor resources remain insufficient for many African languages. Existing computational approaches therefore provide an important technological foundation, but their effectiveness depends partly on the availability of linguistically and culturally representative data.

5. The Specific Contribution of the Present Paper

Against this background, the present paper makes a modest but distinct contribution in five respects.

5.1 Integrating Cognitive and Discourse Perspectives

Rather than treating metaphor exclusively as a cognitive mapping or a discourse strategy, the paper integrates both perspectives. It argues that metaphor is simultaneously a means of conceptualising experience and a communicative action performed within a social context.

5.2 Reframing the "Cognitive Shortcut" Claim

The paper questions the generalisation that metaphor always functions as a cognitive shortcut. It proposes instead that metaphor functions as a contextual cognitive resource. Familiar metaphors may facilitate interpretation, whereas novel, culturally unfamiliar, or ambiguous metaphors may require greater inferential effort.

5.3 Linking Comprehension with Interpersonal Meaning

Existing scholarship has often examined metaphor comprehension and metaphor discourse separately. This paper brings them together by arguing that understanding metaphor involves both the construction of conceptual meaning and the interpretation of interpersonal intentions.

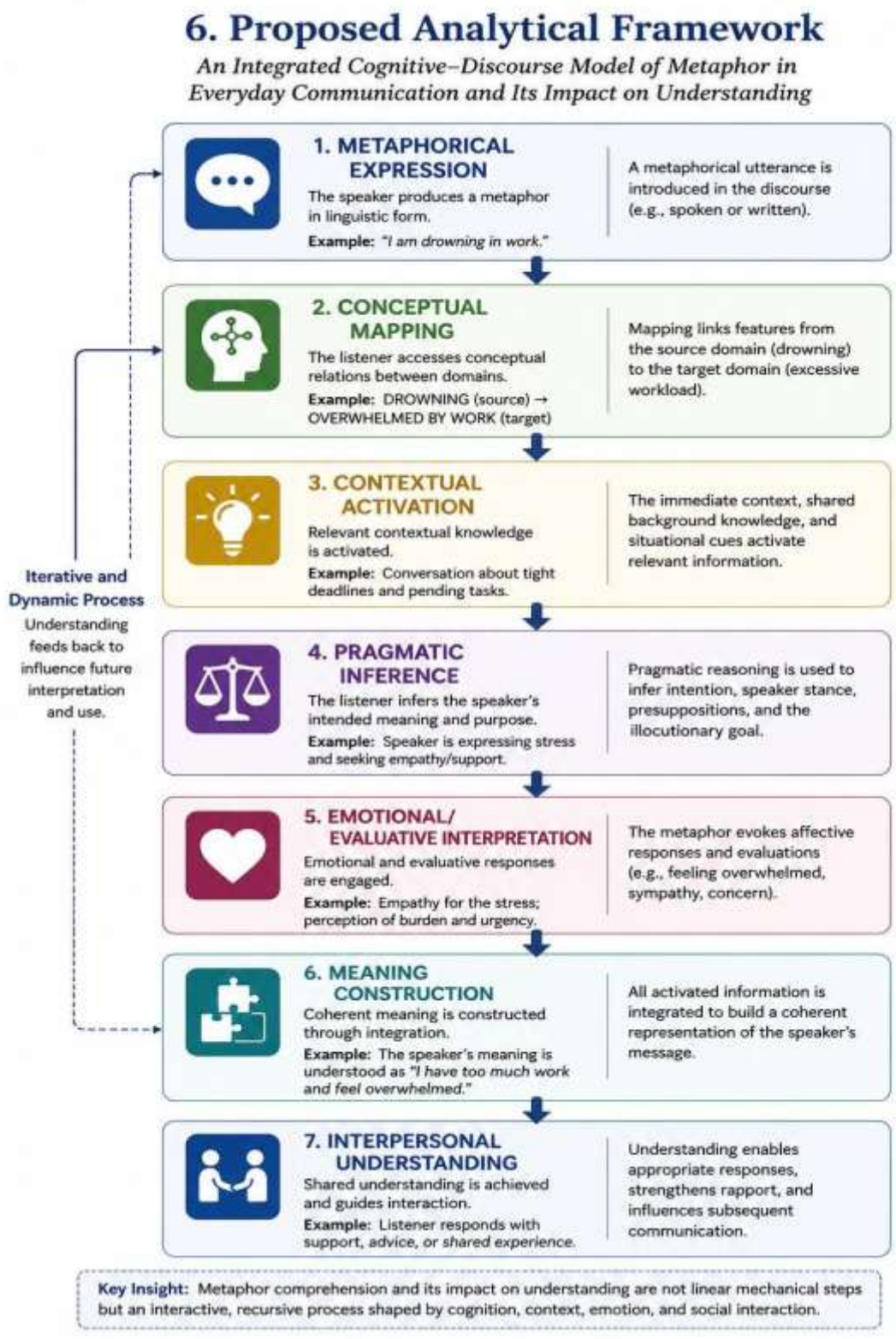
5.4 Highlighting Multilingual and Intercultural Communication

The paper extends the discussion to multilingual environments by emphasising the possibility that metaphorical expressions may produce misunderstanding when speakers do not share the same cultural and linguistic knowledge.

5.5 Connecting Metaphor Research with Language Technology

Finally, the paper connects cognitive and discourse approaches with computational metaphor processing. It argues that future language technologies should move beyond simple metaphor detection towards systems capable of interpreting metaphor according to context, culture, discourse function, and pragmatic intention.

The contribution is therefore not the proposal of a new theory of metaphor. Rather, it lies in bringing established cognitive, psycholinguistic, discourse, pragmatic, cultural, and computational perspectives into a single analytical framework for understanding metaphor in everyday communication.



Based on the literature reviewed, this paper proposes the above analytical relationship.

The framework assumes that metaphorical communication begins with a linguistic expression but does not end with lexical interpretation. The expression activates conceptual knowledge, which is interpreted within discourse context. The hearer then uses pragmatic and cultural knowledge to infer the speaker's intended meaning. Emotional and evaluative dimensions may subsequently influence the interpersonal interpretation of the utterance.

This framework differs from a purely conceptual approach because it recognises that metaphorical meaning is constructed dynamically. It also differs from a purely discourse-oriented approach because it retains the cognitive significance of conceptual mappings.

7. Conclusion

This paper concludes that metaphor is neither merely a decorative linguistic device nor an automatic cognitive shortcut; it is a context-sensitive cognitive and discourse resource through which speakers conceptualise experience, communicate attitudes and emotions, frame events, and negotiate interpersonal meaning. Therefore, the effectiveness of metaphor depends on the interaction among: conceptual familiarity; linguistic conventionality; discourse context; pragmatic intention; cultural knowledge; emotional salience; and the relationship between speaker and hearer. Accordingly, metaphor can facilitate understanding when these factors converge, but it can also create interpretive difficulty when they diverge.

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