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Global Trends of Metaphor in News Reporting

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ABSTRACT

News institutions frequently employ metaphors as a technique for framing certain subjects. Given that media heavily influence public discourse, cohesion, and safety, it is crucial to understand how these linguistic tools and their presence in news are explored in academic research, and how future studies can contribute to enriching this field. This study conducts a bibliometric analysis to examine trends in research related to metaphor and news journalism. By analysing 11,027 Scopus-indexed publications from 1956 to 2025 using keyword co-occurrence with VOSviewer, we identify a heavy concentration of research and funding in Western nations, which reveals a significant gap in non-Western perspectives.

Keywords: Bibliometric analysis, keyword co-occurrence, metaphor, news, VOSviewer

INTRODUCTION

Metaphor is a cognitive mechanism used to simplify complex social and political issues to influence the emotional responses of the audience (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). The potential of this influence within a media text is greater than that of ordinary informational texts (Trnavac & Patterson, 2025). Although the important role of metaphors in news is widely acknowledged, the academic literature discussing this topic

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remains fragmented across different disciplines. Macroscopic mapping of the evolutionary trends, thematic clusters, and intellectual structure of this topic is still lacking. Thus, there is a need to create a systematic map to visualize this research landscape in order to identify new trends and future directions.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Metaphor plays a deeper role than just being a linguistic ornament. It is a fundamental element that shapes our basic understanding and practical engagement with the world (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008). Metaphor is also a strategic framing device used by communicators such as journalists, politicians, and advertisers to influence public perceptions of certain issues (Atmawijaya, 2025; Cotrina et al., 2025). This device is developed for critical rhetorical purposes and is spread by actors who hold particular interests (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989).

Based on research, news institutions have greater influence potential when they use metaphors compared to purely informational text. Their evaluative texts contain one and a half times more metaphors, stronger intent, and more structural metaphors (Kalinin & Ignatenko, 2022). The new media era, characterised by multimodality and transmodality, has fostered the spread of metaphors. Social media platforms and mass media rapidly disseminate metaphorical expressions and construct societal norms (Binotto, 2022). Research indicates that metaphors in online journalistic texts play a significant role in creating linguistic imagery, influencing readers' perceptions, and shaping their emotional responses and evaluations of the information (Arlanova, 2024).

Given the important role of metaphor in news reporting, it is crucial to understand how these linguistic tools and their presence in news have been explored in academic research, and how future studies can further enrich this field.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study addresses the following research question: What are the trends in metaphor and news research within Scopus-indexed publications?

To answer this question, the research uses bibliometric techniques, particularly co-occurrence analysis (Krabokoukis & Polyzos, 2023; Nadi-Ravandi & Batooli, 2022). This research uses a precise set of keywords, namely "Metaphor" and "News", within the comprehensive Scopus database from 1956 to 2025, resulting in 11,027 publications to analyse using VOSviewer software.

The result of this research is shown in Figure 1. It illustrates a comparison of the number of documents related to a specific topic across various countries or regions. The horizontal axis represents the number of publications, while the vertical axis lists the countries or territories. According to the visualisation, the United States has the highest

volume of documents, followed by the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and other nations. Within this dataset, Italy records the lowest number of publications. This graph visualizes research output by region, highlighting which countries are the most active and productive in a specific field. The disparities in publication volume often reflect differing levels of interest, funding, and institutional support across nations.

Figure 2 exhibits the overlapping clusters and the strong connectivity between keywords, revealing the integration of traditional linguistic frameworks with emerging digital and socio-political concerns. The growing significance of topics such as "pandemic," "racism," and "immigration" further underscores how contemporary global issues shape discourse-oriented research.

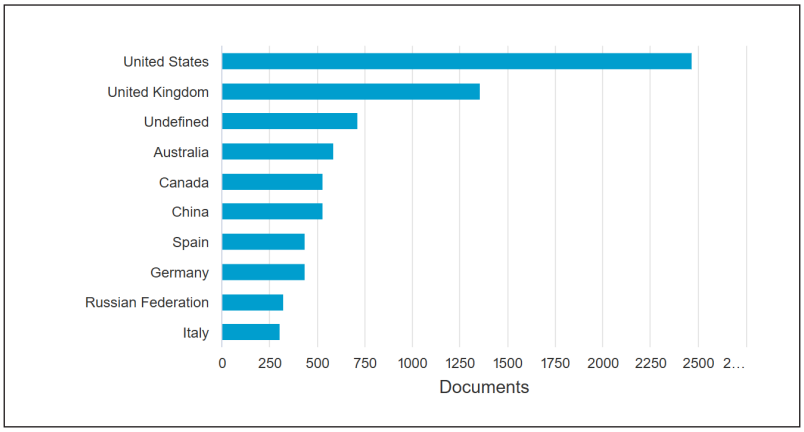

Figure 1. The countries that have published articles on the metaphor and news in the Scopus database

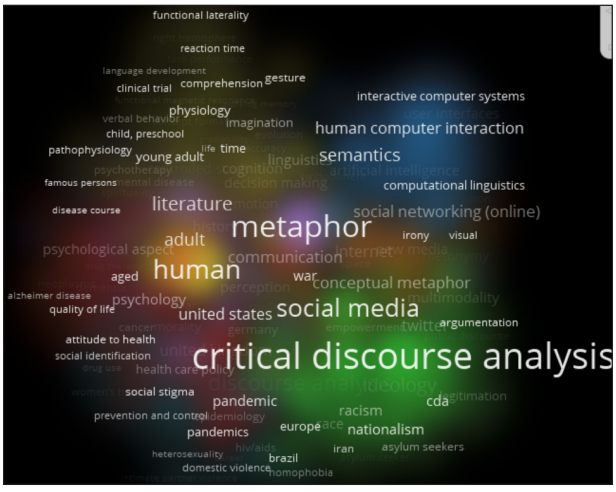

Figure 2. Cluster density visualisation

CONCLUSION

This bibliometric analysis reveals a dynamic and growing field of research on metaphor and reporting, organised around eight main thematic groups. These range from Health and Critical Discourse to Information Technology and the Environment, demonstrating the important role of metaphor as a cognitive and rhetorical tool across media discourse. A notable finding is the geographic imbalance in research output, which is predominantly concentrated in Western countries. This highlights major gaps and the urgent need for more diverse cultural and regional perspectives to enrich the field.

Systematically identifying these groups and associated research gaps, such as cross-cultural metaphor analysis, will allow future research to provide a strategic research roadmap for this area. This underscores the need for interdisciplinary studies that can further reveal how media metaphors shape the public's understanding of complex global issues, such as terrorism and immigration.

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