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Pedagogical Implications of Conceptual Metaphors: A Corpus-Based Study of CNN Trade News

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ABSTRACT **Original Research Article**

Introduction: Conceptual metaphors are pervasive in economic discourse, acting as cognitive bridges that shape readers' understanding of complex trade activities. However, systematic analyses of their patterns in authentic journalistic texts, particularly from a pedagogical perspective, remain limited. This study addresses this gap by investigating the conceptual metaphors in CNN trade news and exploring their implications for English language teaching, especially in the context of English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

Methods: Within the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), this study employed a corpus-based approach. A specialized DIY corpus was compiled, consisting of 100 CNN trade news articles totaling 32,446 tokens. Key corpus tools were utilized: Sketch Engine for corpus compilation, Wmatrix for automated semantic domain annotation (USAS tagger), and AntConc for the extraction of keywords and analysis of collocational patterns. The semantic features of high-frequency, genre-specific vocabulary were examined to identify underlying metaphorical mappings.

Results: Analysis of the semantic domains associated with key economic terms revealed four predominant source domains structuring the discourse: WAR, JOURNEY, HUMAN, and UP-DOWN. These correspond to the conceptual metaphors TRADE IS WAR, ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IS A JOURNEY, THE ECONOMY IS A HUMAN BODY, and QUANTITATIVE CHANGE IS VERTICAL MOVEMENT.

Discussion: The findings confirm that CNN trade news consistently employs metaphors grounded in universal human experiences to conceptualize abstract economic processes. This metaphorical structuring significantly contributes comprehension by mapping the unfamiliar onto familiar domains. Consequently, this research highlights a direct pedagogical application: explicit instruction of these recurrent conceptual metaphors can be a powerful tool for instructors to facilitate learners' comprehension of specialized economic texts and enhance vocabulary acquisition.

Keywords: Conceptual Metaphor, Trade News, Corpus, Semantic Annotation, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Pedagogy.

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Introduction

Conceptual metaphor, far more than a rhetorical device, is a fundamental mechanism of human thought that structures our understanding of abstract domains through concrete experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Its study, therefore, extends beyond linguistics into the cognitive underpinnings of specialized discourses. In the context of economic globalization, English-language trade news serves as a critical channel for disseminating complex financial information,

making the conceptual metaphors within it pivotal for cross-cultural comprehension and analysis.

While corpus-based methodologies have become central to metaphor research in business discourse, significant methodological gaps persist. A common limitation lies in the reliance on pre-defined search terms derived either from manual analysis of small samples or from conceptually defined metaphors (Sun, 2012). However, this method only enables researchers to find further instances of previously identified expressions (Demmen et al. 2015), while other lemma and tokens of metaphorical usage beyond the established lexicon are hard to obtain. Furthermore, the metaphor identification process often exhibits a degree of researcher subjectivity, underscoring the need for more automated and systematic tools. To address these limitations, recent studies have turned to semantic annotation systems. Demmen et al. (2015) employed the USAS tagger for large-scale metaphor analysis to investigate violence metaphors. However, further researches indicates that literature employing the USAS tagger for semantic domain annotation of metaphors in specific genres of economic journalism, such as trade news, remains scarce. This study focuses on the trade news from Cable News Network (CNN), a globally influential media outlet whose reporting shapes international economic perceptions. Analyzing its discourse helps illuminate how trade is metaphorically constructed for a mass audience.

Consequently, this study employs the corpus tool Wmatrix, which integrates the USAS system, to automatically annotate a dedicated CNN trade news corpus. This method aims to maximize the extraction of potential metaphorical usages of lemma and tokens from large-scale corpora (Sun 2012). With this approach, it can move beyond predetermined search terms, allowing for a more open-ended and data-driven identification of metaphorical expressions (Koller et al., 2008). The goal is to systematically identify the predominant conceptual metaphors in this genre and to discuss their implications for pedagogy, particularly in fostering critical discourse awareness in ESP and EFL classroom.

Research Questions

Due to the apparent deficiency in identifying metaphors and the significance of CNN news reports to the global readers, this thesis aims to study metaphors by identifying semantic fields and summarizing the correspondence between the source and target domains. To fulfill this objective, this paper aims to answer the following research questions:

Q1: What are the keywords of CNN trade news?

Q2: What semantic fields can be identified regarding the high-frequency collocates of these keywords?

Q3: What source domain can be identified based on the semantic fields in question?

Significance of This Study

This thesis tries to find out and analyzes the conceptual metaphor of war in financial trade reports and its potential significance are as follows:

First, applications in pedagogical contexts are warranted. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) posited in Metaphors We Live By, our conceptual system is fundamentally metaphorical. This has direct implications for language and content teaching. Future studies could explore how explicit instruction of these conceptual metaphors can enhance learners' comprehension and acquisition of specialized vocabulary in classroom settings, particularly for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses.

Second, it helps unveil the relationship between language and cognition. The application of metaphor of war in financial reports shows the way people conceptualize and comprehend the economic activity. With the help of metaphors, we can better explain how language shape our ways of thinking and how human understand economic world through metaphors.

Third, it contributes to the comprehension of economic definition and phenomenon. By mapping the conception, characteristic and structure of war to the financial domain, we can reinterpret the financial discourse in a more concrete manner, simplifying those abstract and abstruse economic activities. A telling example can be found in “trading is war”, which vividly reveals the fierce competition and confrontation occurring in trading domain, thus uncovering specific market strategies and rules. In this way, analysis of metaphors can better account for the economic essence and patterns in financial trading discourse.

Literature Review

Theoretical Foundation: Conceptual Metaphor Theory

The study of conceptual metaphor is fundamentally rooted in cognitive linguistics, a field that views metaphor not merely as a decorative figure of speech but as a central mechanism of human thought and reasoning (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The seminal work *Metaphors We Live By* established that metaphors are pervasive in everyday language and structure our abstract conceptual systems through systematic mappings from concrete source domains to abstract target domains (e.g., LIFE IS A JOURNEY, ARGUMENT IS WAR). This “Conceptual Metaphor Theory” (CMT) shifted the focus from language to cognition, arguing that metaphorical expressions in language are surface manifestations of deeper, unconscious cognitive patterns. CMT falls into three categories.

1. **Ontological Metaphor**

   It involves mapping concrete experiential domains onto abstract cognitive domains, such as the notion that “INFLATION IS AN ENTITY”.

2. **Structural Metaphor**

   It refers to the construction of one concept through another, or the mapping of the structure or organization of one conceptual domain onto another, exemplified by the phrase "ARGUMENT IS WAR."

3. **Orientational Metaphor**

   It utilizes spatial concepts to organize and comprehend other abstract ideas, for instance, "HAPPY IS UP; SAD IS DOWN."

Conceptual Metaphor Theory in Cognitive Linguistics

Recent advancements (2020-2024) have refined the core tenets of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), emphasizing its interaction with other cognitive mechanisms and its sensitivity to context. A significant development is the systematic treatment of context in metaphor use. Kövecses, in his *Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory* (2020), argues that metaphorical mappings are not static but are dynamically selected and shaped by a hierarchy of contexts—from immediate bodily experience to broad cultural and discursive settings. This provides a powerful lens for analyzing why specific metaphors (e.g., "markets are organisms" vs. "markets are machines") dominate particular economic periods or publications.

Furthermore, research continues to integrate CMT with other cognitive models. Studies increasingly examine how image schemas (e.g., CONTAINER, PATH, FORCE) provide the embodied basis for economic metaphors, and how Conceptual Blending Theory accounts for the novel and complex figurative expressions found in commentary on new financial instruments or crises. The methodological trend is robustly empirical, coupling these theoretical models with multimodal analysis (e.g., Forceville, 2021) and advanced corpus-linguistic techniques to trace conceptual patterns across large-scale, real-world discourse.

Trends in Metaphor Research: Themes and Discourse

The metaphor research has made significant progress both on research themes and methodologies. Thematic scope has expanded to include multimodal metaphor, grammatical metaphor, metaphor translation, vocabulary pedagogy, and applications in literature, psychology, sport, and education. For instance, Cui (2024) examined character representations in the film *Mulan* from the perspective of multi-modal metaphors. Yan (2022) explored four types of metaphorical verbalization from the standpoint of grammatical metaphors. Li (2022) investigated the application of conceptual metaphors in high school English vocabulary instruction. Yu (2024) analyzed the isomorphism between Yi-ology imagery thinking and cognitive metaphor theory and explains its operation process according to metaphors' presentation. Cheng (2024) analyzed the characteristics of metaphorical rhetoric in *Fortress Besieged* guided by conceptual metaphor theory. Methodologically, there is a growing trend toward integrating corpus analysis and comparative approaches. Anderson (2023) analyzed discourse on AI using multiple metaphors. Xu (2023) conducted corpus-based comparative studies of conceptual metaphors such as "marriage". Li (2022) contrasted metaphorical expressions of color terms in English and Chinese.

Recent Studies of Conceptual Metaphors in Economic and Trade Discourse

Research on conceptual metaphor in economic discourse originated in the 1980s with early contributions from economists such as Henderson (1982), McCloskey (1983–1995), and Mirowski (1994), who highlighted the foundational role of metaphor in economic reasoning and modeling. In linguistics, Charteris-Black (2000) examined metaphor in specialized vocabulary and cross-linguistic trade news, while Eubanks (2000) analyzed the "trade is war" metaphor in contextual use, extending conceptual metaphor theory into applied domains.

Recent work continues to expand in scope and method. Studies as Xu (2022) systematically identified and categorized metaphors in the economic section of *China Daily*. Comparative analyses between English and Chinese economic discourse have also been emphasized, as seen in Zhou (2025), who conducted a corpus-based comparative analysis of conceptual metaphors in Chinese and English economic reports on the "Belt and Road" initiative. Notably, corpus-based methods are now predominant. Li (2021) applied corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis to economic texts in *The Economist*, and Li (2024) used Wmatrix to examine conceptual metaphors in its business column, reflecting the methodological shift toward data-driven, reproducible research in the field.

The literature review outlines the progression of metaphor research from rhetoric to cognitive theory, with recent advances in cognitive linguistics emphasizing contextual and embodied dimensions of metaphor use. Methodologically, corpus-based and comparative studies now dominate the field, including within economic discourse analysis. However, a focused study applying Wmatrix to CNN trade news is absent, and existing research seldom translates findings into pedagogical frameworks. This gap informs the present study's dual focus on semantic annotation and instructional application.

Identifying the Research Gap: Towards a Corpus-Based Pedagogical Analysis

Building on the established corpus-based methodology and CMT framework, this study addresses the identified gaps. First, it aims to systematically identify and classify conceptual metaphors in a dedicated corpus of CNN trade news using the Wmatrix semantic annotation tool. Second, it

hopes to explicitly bridge the analytic findings to practical applications in ESP pedagogy, thereby extending the research from linguistic description to educational implementation.

Methodology

Data for the Research

This paper's corpus is derived from 100 trade journal articles located in the business column of the CNN official website, resulting in the construction of a small-scale corpus totaling 32,446 tokens. The sample size of 100 articles was determined to provide a substantial and thematically focused body of text for qualitative and quantitative analysis, while remaining manageable for in-depth manual validation within the scope of this study.

1. **Inclusion Rule**

   Articles were retrieved from the CNN website using Sketch Engine and seed words central to trade discourse (trade, tariff, commodity, import, export, market, multinational corporation). Only articles where the term TRADE appeared as a central thematic keyword were retained.

2. **Exclusion Rules**

   Articles from non-economic sections (e.g., Politics, Health, Sports) were systematically excluded to guarantee that the corpus purely represents CNN's business or economic columns.

3. **Final Compilation**

   From the filtered pool, 100 consecutive articles meeting the above criteria were selected to form the final corpus. This number aimed to balance breadth of coverage with analytical depth. The data was then cleaned by removing extraneous material (headers, footers) and saved as 100 plain text documents for further processing.

Research Tools

1. **Sketch Engine**

   It was used to create a small-scale corpusand retrieve relevant articles from the CNN website.

2. **Wmatrix**

   It was employed to assign semantic domain codes to the DIY corpus. It is a web-based tool developed by Professor Paul Rayson and his team at the Lancaster University Centre for Corpus Research in the UK. Notably, in the context of metaphor research, the software's most remarkable feature is its integrated USAS (UCREL Semantic Annotation System), which can automatically assign semantic annotation to the corpus (Rayson 2008:519-549). The semantic tagset is composed of 21 major discourse fields, such as emotion, time, education, etc. And it can be further analyzed into 232 subcategories labels. Additionally, the statistical analysis of the log likelihood annotated by British National Corpus (BNC), with a threshold value of 6.63 for $p<0.01$, indicates that the accuracy of the USAS tagger semantic annotation is between 91-92 percent. However, a recognized limitation is that USAS provides semantic classifications but not definitive metaphor identifications. The interpretation of its tags requires researcher judgment, introducing a necessary layer of contextual analysis.

3. **AntConc (Anthony,2024)**

   It was utilized to analyze and retrieve data from a corpus that has been semantically tagged on Wmtraix, specifically for generating keyword lists, concordances, and analyzing frequency and collocational patterns.

Research Procedures

1. **Semantic Annotation**

   The compiled corpus of 100 texts was uploaded to Wmatrix for automatic USAS semantic tagging. The output was saved for subsequent analysis.

2. **Keyword and Collocate Identification**

   The annotated corpus was analyzed in AntConc. Using the LOB (London Oslo Bergen) corpus as a reference, AntConc's Keyword function identified salient trade-related terms (e.g., *exports, trade, prices*). These keywords were then used as search terms to extract their high-frequency collocates within a span of ±5 words.

3. **Metaphor Identification and Analysis**

   For each high-frequency collocate, its semantic domain was determined by examining its specific contextual usage through the Key Word in Context (KWIC) concordance. Based on this contextual analysis, conceptual mappings were identified from concrete source domains (e.g., warfare, journey, human body) to the abstract target domain of trade. This allowed for the data-driven, context-grounded categorization of conceptual metaphors (e.g., TRADE IS WAR).

Results

Employing the methodological framework established in the preceding chapter, the analysis of the CNN Trade News Corpus (CNNTNC) yielded three layers of findings, corresponding to the research questions.

Keywords in CNN Trade News

After identifying 100 salient keywords referencing the LOB corpus, I selected 15 economy-related words to serve as the core search terms for this study. The preliminary terms included: *exports, trade, companies, tariffs, prices, economy, goods, inflation, imports, consumer, market, demand, supply, economic, investment.*

Table no.1: Keywords in CNNTNC

Type	Rank	Freq_Tar	Freq_Ref	Keyness (Likelihood)
exports	8	75	36	408.153
trade	11	109	223	385.346
companies	12	74	45	383.396
tariffs	13	59	11	369.282
prices	14	79	75	365.853
economy	15	72	63	341.065
goods	20	59	67	258.979
inflation	22	40	12	235.676
imports	25	42	24	220.535
consumer	36	29	14	157.602
market	44	55	201	144.738
demand	54	42	120	126.743
supply	67	36	112	103.83
economic	74	41	175	97.872
investment	79	27	57	94.099

Semantic Fields of High-Frequency Collocates

Among the15 salient keywords above, collocates of following keywords are examined to be meaningful to further analysis.

Table no.2: Semantic fields of the high-frequency collocates in CNNTNC

Keywords	Collocations	Freq.	Semantic Tags (USAS Semantic Tag-set)	
Exports	*imports*	11	I2.2/M2	Business: Selling/Putting, pulling, pushing, transporting
	boost	4	S8+	Helping
	measured	3	N3.1	Measurement: General
Trade	*china*	35	Z2	Geographical names
	war	17	G3	Warfare, defense and the army; weapons
	total	10	A13.2	Degree: Maximizers
	surplus	7	N5.2+	Exceed; waste
	deficit	5	N5-	Quantities: little
Tariffs	*administration*	8	S7.1+	In power
	higher	5	N3.7+	Long, tall and wide
	proposed	4	Q2.2/X7+	Speech acts/Wanted
	worth	4	I1.3	Money: Cost and price
Prices	*gas*	18	O1.3	Substances and materials: Gas
	higher	7	N3.7+	Long, tall and wide
	push	4	N5+/A2.2/M2	Quantities: many/much/Cause& Effect/Connection/Putting, pulling, pushing, transporting
	faster	3	N3.8+	Speed: Fast
	raise	3	M2	Putting, pulling, pushing, transporting
Goods	*Chinese*	11	Z2	Geographical names
	consumer	9	I2.2	Business: Selling
	worth	4	I1.3	Money: Cost and price
Inflation	*high*	7	N3.7+	Long, tall and wide
	rates	6	N3.8	Measurement: Speed
	price	5	I1.3	Money: Cost and price
	fed	4	F1	Food
	interest	3	I1	Money generally
Imports	*from*	13	M6	Location and direction
	exports	11	I2.2	Business: Selling
	fell	4	M1	Moving, coming and going
	crude	4	O4.2-	Judgement of appearance: Ugly
	slower	3	N3.8-	Speed: Slow
Economic	*growth*	7	N3.2+/A2.1	Size: Big/Modify, change
	recovery	5	B2+	Healthy
	Development	4	A2.1+	Change
Markets	*global*	7	W3	Geographical terms
	stock	3	I2.2/A9+	Business: Selling/Getting and possession
	slumped	2	B1/O4.4	Anatomy and physiology/Shape
	emerging	2	M1	Moving, coming and going
Supply	*chains*	10	I2.2	Business: Selling
	disruptions	3	E3-	Violent/Angry
	triggered	2	A2.2	Cause & Effect/Connection
	disrupting	2	S8-	Hindering
demand	*weak*	4	S1.2.5-	Weak

Identified Source Domains of Conceptual Metaphors

In the next stage, this investigation categorized the source domains based on the semantic fields and their corresponding metaphor carriers, through semantic comprehension and analysis of the collocations presented in the preceding table. The identified source domains include war, journey, human, and up-and-down.

Table No.3: Identification of source domain in CNNTNC

Source Domain	Semantic Fields	Metaphor-Carrier (Freq.)	Freq.
War	G3(Warfare, defense and the army; weapons)	*War* (17)	22
	E3-(Violent/Angry)	*Disruptions* (3)	
	S8-(Hindering)	*Disrupting* (2)	
Journey	M2(Putting, pulling, pushing, transporting)	*Imports* (11), *Push* (2)	27
	M1(Moving, coming and going)	*Emerging* (2)	
	N3.8(Measurement: Speed)	*Rates* (6), *Slower* (3), *Faster* (3)	
Human	B2+(Healthy)	*Recovery* (13)	26
	B1(Anatomy and Physiology)	*Slumped* (2)	
	S1.2.5-(Weak)	*Weak* (4)	
	N3.2+(Size: Big)	*Growth* (7)	
Up-and-Down	N3.7+(Long, tall and wide)	*High* (7), *Higher* (12)	35
	S8+(Helping)	*Boost* (4)	
	N5-(Quantities: little)	*Deficit* (5)	
	M2(Putting, pulling, pushing, transporting)	*Raise* (3)	
	M1(Moving, coming and going)	*Fell* (4)	

Discussion

Findings in Relation to Research Questions

First, the keyword analysis (Q1) identified a set of high-frequency, domain-specific terms that form the core vocabulary of the CNNTNC corpus. These include *trade*, *exports*, *imports*, *tariffs*, *prices*, *goods*, *inflation*, *economy*, *market*, *supply*, *demand*, *companies*, *consumer*, *investment* and *economic*. These keywords confirm the corpus's focus on trade policies, and market dynamics, providing a reliable lexical foundation for subsequent metaphorical analysis. Second, collocational analysis of the aforementioned keywords revealed that their most frequent partners consistently belong to a limited set of semantic field (Q2), as classified by the USAS tagger. The five predominant semantic fields identified were: N3.7+ (Long, tall and wide), G3 (Warfare, defense and the army; weapons), M2 (Putting, pulling, pushing, transporting), B2+ (Healthy), and N3.8+ (Measurement: Speed). This pattern indicates that the abstract domain of trade is systematically described through language evoking more concrete experiences. Finally, by interpreting the clusters of semantic fields, four primary source domains (Q3) were robustly identified, forming the basis of recurrent conceptual metaphors in this discourse: WAR, JOURNEY, HUAMN, and UP-DOWN.

Analysis

1. War Metaphor

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argued that "Argument is war" in their well-known work *Metaphors We Live By*. The WAR metaphor means that the concept of war is frequently metaphorically mapped onto commercial competition. It is a phenomenon pervasive across diverse contexts such as debates, athletic competitions, business reports, and political campaigns. For instance, the frequent collocation *trade war* compares trade competition to military conflict, thus demonstrating to the reader the detrimental effects of trade war and potentially guiding readers to adopt a critical or even oppositional attitude towards trade policies. Similarly, terms like *disruptions* frame supply chain interruptions as a form of military aggression, thereby suggesting a strategic threat to the survival of enterprises. Pedagogically, instructors can train students to identify this metaphor and interrogate its implications—Why is conflict the chosen frame? What alternative metaphors (e.g., a dance or a game) could be used, and how would they alter the narrative?

*(1) The trade **war** also initially caused serious pain for American farmers.*

*(2) Nike and Adidas are most at risk of having serious supply chain **disruptions** because Vietnam has served as a strong manufacturing alternative to China in recent years.*

Figure No.1: Examples of high-frequency collocates of keyword *trade* from AntConc

Japan, Thursday for the G20, tariffs and the	*trade*	*war* with China will be high
US President Donald Trump started a	*trade*	*war* with China to fix what
years How Honda survived a	*trade*	*war* with China to fix what

Figure No.2: Examples of high-frequency collocates of keyword *supply* from AntConc

at risk of having serious *supply* chain	*disruptions*	because "Vietnam has served as a
are far lower today. Fears of *supply*	*disruptions*	in the Middle East or in
CNN.com/2021/10/02/business/Vietnam-supply-chain-	*Disruptions/*	index.html" CNN values your

2. Journey Metaphor

The JOUENEY metaphor typically refers to the comparison of an activity to a journey. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) used "love is a journey" and "life is a journey" to describe the journey metaphor, When the journey metaphor is applied to trade discourse, the target domain refers to market conditions, trade activities, and other economic behaviors. Conducting a trade activity is like embarking on a journey because the economy may flourish or decline. Therefore, we can conclude that TRADE ACTIVITY IS A JOURNEY, and the directionality and process of a journey help us understand the dynamic development of business activities. For example, stating *China is emerging from the pandemic* and *the economy grew faster* map the conception of *journey* onto the abstract process of economic recovery, helping readers conceptualize economic development as positions on a path, with momentum and also obstacles. In the classroom, this metaphor can be an effective scaffold. Teachers can cluster vocabulary related to movement and development, helping students build a coherent lexical network around the concept of economic "progress," making it easier to both learn terms and grasp reports on economic growth or recession.

*(1) China, meanwhile, is **emerging** from the pandemic as one of the only major countries on seemingly sure footing.*

*(2) Thanks to gradual recovery in domestic demand, imports also fell at a **slower** pace, down 6.2%.*

*(3) China's economy grew **faster** than expected in the first quarter thanks to robust services consumption.*

3. Human Metaphor

The HUMAN metaphor is frequently employed to imbue abstract concepts with life or human attributes, making these notions easier to comprehend. In economic discourse, commercial sphere is often mapped onto the human behaviors and physical conditions to elicit emotional resonance and deepen understanding. This process effectively constructs the conceptual metaphor of TRADE ACTIVITY IS HUMAN BEING. This is evident in descriptions like *the market slumped, weak demand,* and *a robust recovery.* The term *slump* signifies a person's physical collapse, and here it is utilized to personify companies or markets, conveying weakness and decline. Moreover, readers can intuitively understand what it means for an economy to be *robust* or to *recover*.

(1) European markets have also slumped.

*(2) …and businesses hoping for a **robust** post-Covid economic **recovery**.*

*(3) …as global demand is likely to remain **weak** and "protectionism and unilateralism" hinder growth.*

4. Up-and-Down Metaphor

The UP-DOWN metaphor serves as the most fundamental and frequently employed evaluative framework in the corpus. Following Lakoff and Johnson's framework, "Happy is Up, Sad is Down."*Up* is associated with positive concepts like happiness, health, success, and growth, while *down* correlates with negative concepts such as sadness, illness, failure, and decline. The verbs *raising*, *grew*, and *surge* transform abstract inflation expectations and import-export data into upward movements, thereby emphasizing a positive outlook for economic development. Conversely, *fell* and *decline* convey negative economic information through downward orientations. Its very pervasiveness makes it a critical starting point for pedagogy. Instructors can first solidify learners' understanding of this basic spatial schema before introducing more complex metaphorical layers, ensuring they have the foundation to interpret the such evaluative language in financial news.

*(1) The Fed revised its outlook for its preferred inflation gauge for 2025, **raising** it from 2.1% to 2.5%.*

*(2) Inbound shipments to the world's second-largest economy **fell** 7.9% year on year in April, extending the 1.4% **decline** seen a month earlier, while exports **grew** 8.5%, easing from the 14.8% **surge** in March, customs data showed on Tuesday.*

Conclusion, Implications and Limitations

Summary

This study employs a corpus-driven approach to systematically examine the patterns of conceptual metaphor usage in CNN trade news and their pedagogical implications. The analysis reveals that economic discourse is predominantly structured by four major conceptual metaphor frameworks: TRADE IS WAR, ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IS A JOURNEY, THE ECONOMY IS A HUMAN BODY, and QUANTITATIVE CHANGE IS VERTICAL MOVEMENT. These metaphors anchor abstract economic concepts in shared embodied and spatial experiences, thereby significantly lowering the cognitive barrier to understanding specialized discourse, while also potentially shaping readers' perceptions and attitudes toward economic relations.

Methodologically, this research validates the feasibility of a semantic domain-based approach to metaphor identification in news discourse analysis. Pedagogically, it proposes using

metaphor as a scaffold for vocabulary clustering and conceptual comprehension, offering a cognitively grounded reference for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction.

Pedagogical Implications

The systematic nature of these metaphors presents a significant opportunity for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and Business English instruction. Explicit teaching of these conceptual patterns can transform how learners engage with economic texts.

1. **Vocabulary Instruction through Metaphor Clustering**

   Instead of teaching vocabulary in isolation, instructors can group terms by their underlying metaphor. For example, a lesson on the JOURNEY metaphor could cluster verbs like *boost, push, emerge, slow, accelerate,* and nouns like *recovery, growth*. This approach helps learners build coherent semantic networks, aiding retention and enabling them to infer the meaning of new words within the same conceptual frame.

2. **Fostering Critical Reading and Discourse Awareness**

   Identify & Classify: Highlight all metaphors and label their source domain (e.g., Is this a WAR or a JOURNEY metaphor?)

   Compare Framing: Analyze two articles on the same topic (e.g., a trade dispute) that use different dominant metaphors (e.g., WAR vs. a collaborative DANCE). Discuss how the chosen metaphor shapes the reader's perception of conflict, agency, and possible outcomes.

   Evaluate Impact: Debate questions like: "How does describing a market as *slumping* (HUMAN) differ from describing it as *declining* (UP-DOWN) in terms of emotional appeal and suggested responses?"

3. **Using Metaphor as a Conceptual Scaffold**

   For learners struggling with abstract economic concepts, instructors can explicitly introduce metaphors like THE ECONOMY IS A BODY as a scaffold. Explaining that economies can be "healthy," "shock-resistant," or in "recession" (a period of reduced activity) leverages students' intuitive understanding of their own bodies to elaborate professional jargon, facilitating deeper conceptual understanding.

Limitations and Future Research

While this study offers valuable insights, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the findings are based on a single corpus of 100 articles from CNN, a Western media outlet. The metaphorical patterns identified may reflect the specific editorial stance of this source and may not be fully generalizable to trade discourse in other cultural or media contexts. Second, the methodological reliance on the USAS semantic tagger, while efficient, requires researcher interpretation to map semantic tags onto specific conceptual metaphors. The absence of a complementary, stringent protocol like MIPVU for final metaphor identification means some classifications, especially for words with multiple potential domains (e.g., *fall*), involve an element of subjective judgment.

Future research could address these limitations by constructing comparative corpora from different media sources (e.g., *China Daily*) or linguistic cultures to explore cross-cultural variation in economic metaphor use. Additionally, applying the MIPVU framework to a subset of the data could validate and refine the current classification. Finally, classroom-based action research implementing the suggested pedagogical tasks would be invaluable for empirically testing their effectiveness in enhancing ESP learners' comprehension and critical analysis skills.

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