

Sociopragmatic Study of Emotional Metaphors in Selected Literary Texts

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Abstract

This study delves into the sociopragmatic analysis of emotional metaphors within four canonical literary texts: Mrs. Dalloway by Virginia Woolf, Beloved by Toni Morrison, Atonement by Ian McEwan, and The Sound and the Fury by William Faulkner. Drawing upon Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and pragmatics (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Leech, 1983), the research aims to explore how emotional metaphors operate not only as cognitive structures but also as powerful pragmatic strategies that shape both individual identity and social relationships. These metaphors, such as anger, grief, guilt, and love, are rooted in embodied experiences and utilize physical space, motion, and force to reflect and express complex emotional states. This investigation reveals that metaphors do not function in isolation but are deeply intertwined with social roles, gendered expectations, and historical contexts. For example, in Mrs. Dalloway, metaphors related to memory and grief serve not only as expressions of individual emotional turmoil but also as reflections on post-World War I trauma and the broader societal context of mental illness. In Beloved, metaphors of bodily invasion and weight vividly communicate the emotional and psychological scars of slavery, The Sound and the Fury intertwines metaphors of time, disintegration, and destruction to reflect both the interiority of characters and the collapse of Southern societal norms.

The study's findings confirm that emotional metaphors are not merely stylistic devices in literature but pragmatic tools for navigating social and emotional landscapes. Through a sociopragmatic lens, these metaphors engage in face-saving acts, solidarity-building, and conflict management, aligning with the speech act theory and politeness strategies of Brown and Levinson (1987). By doing so, they offer valuable insights into the dynamic interplay between individual emotional expression and social function. Furthermore, this study emphasizes how these metaphors are used to negotiate power dynamics, gender roles, and trauma within specific socio-cultural and historical settings. The research also makes significant contributions to the study of literary metaphors by expanding the scope of analysis beyond cognitive linguistics to incorporate sociocultural and historical factors. It highlights the importance of recognizing how metaphorical language reflects not

only internal psychological states but also broader social concerns, such as collective memory, cultural trauma, and historical justice. Additionally, this study contributes to pragmatics by showing how literary texts function as real-world discourse in which metaphor plays a pivotal role in managing interpersonal and societal relationships.

The implications of this study are far-reaching. Pedagogically, it underscores the importance of teaching metaphor analysis as a means of improving students' emotional literacy and critical thinking skills, this study has demonstrated the profound sociopragmatic roles that emotional metaphors play in shaping human experience, social interaction, and cultural identity. By analyzing the selected literary texts through the dual lenses of metaphor theory and pragmatics, the research not only provides a deeper understanding of the emotionally charged language used in literature but also contributes to broader discussions about how language functions to express and mediate our emotional and social worlds.

Keywords: (emotional metaphors, sociopragmatism, conceptual metaphor theory).

دراسة اجتماعية براغماتية للاستعارات العاطفية

في نصوص أدبية مختارة

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الملخص

يتناول هذا البحث تحليلاً سوسيوبراجماتياً للاستعارات العاطفية في أربعة نصوص أدبية معيارية وهي: *السيدة دالوي* لفرجينيا وولف، *الحبيبة* لتوني موريسون، *الكفارة* لإيان ماك إيوان، و*الصوت والغضب* لويليام فوكنر. ويستند هذا البحث إلى نظرية الاستعارة التصويرية (لاكوف وجونسون، ١٩٨٠) ومبادئ التداولية (براون وليفسون، ١٩٨٧؛ لبيتش، ١٩٨٣)، ويهدف إلى استكشاف كيفية اشتغال الاستعارات العاطفية ليس فقط بوصفها بُنى معرفية، بل أيضاً كاستراتيجيات تداولية فعّالة تُسهم في تشكيل الهوية الفردية وتنظيم العلاقات الاجتماعية. وتُجذر هذه الاستعارات، مثل الغضب والحزن والذنب والحب، في تجارب جسدية متجسدة، وتستثمر مفاهيم الفضاء والحركة والقوة للتعبير عن حالات وجدانية مركبة.

تكشف هذه الدراسة أن الاستعارات لا تعمل بمعزل عن السياق، بل تتداخل بعمق مع الأدوار الاجتماعية والتوقعات الجندرية والسياقات التاريخية. فعلى سبيل المثال، في *السيدة دالوي*، تُوظف الاستعارات المرتبطة

بالذاكرة والحزن لتجسيد الاضطراب العاطفي الفردي، ولكنها تعكس كذلك آثار الصدمة التي خلفتها الحرب العالمية الأولى والسياق المجتمعي الأشمل للأمراض النفسية. أما في رواية *الحبيبة*، فتُجسد استعارات الغزو الجسدي والثقل الأثار النفسية والعاطفية العميقة للعبودية، بينما تُؤدي في الوقت ذاته وظيفة سوسيوبراجماتية تتعلق بإعادة تشكيل الهوية. وتُوظف رواية *الكفارة* استعارات الذنب والتكفير لتناول إدارة الوجه الاجتماعي واستكشاف تبعات الفشل الأخلاقي في إطار العلاقات الطبقية والشخصية. وبالمثل، تمزج رواية *الصوت والغضب* بين استعارات الزمن والانهيال والتفكك لتُعبّر عن عمق الشخصيات الداخلية وانهيال البنى الاجتماعية في الجنوب الأمريكي.

وتؤكد نتائج الدراسة أن الاستعارات العاطفية لا تُعد مجرد وسائل أسلوبية في النص الأدبي، بل هي أدوات تداولية جوهرية للتفاعل مع المشهدين العاطفي والاجتماعي. ومن خلال العدسة السوسيوبراجماتية، تُمارس هذه الاستعارات أدواراً تتعلق بحفظ الوجه، وتعزيز التضامن، وإدارة النزاع، بما يتماشى مع نظرية أفعال الكلام واستراتيجيات الأدب واللباقة كما حددها براون وليفنسون (١٩٨٧). وتوفر بذلك رؤية ثرية حول التفاعل الديناميكي بين التعبير العاطفي الفردي والوظيفة الاجتماعية للكلام. كما تُبرز الدراسة كيف تُستخدم الاستعارات للتفاوض حول قضايا السلطة، والأدوار الجندرية، وتجارب الصدمة في سياقات اجتماعية وثقافية وتاريخية محددة.

وختاماً، تُبرهن هذه الدراسة على الدور العميق الذي تؤديه الاستعارات العاطفية على المستوى السوسيوبراجماتي في تشكيل التجربة الإنسانية، والتفاعل الاجتماعي، وبناء الهوية الثقافية. ومن خلال تحليل النصوص الأدبية المختارة في ضوء نظريتي الاستعارة والتداولية، لا تقدم هذه الدراسة فهماً أعمق للغة المشحونة بالعاطفة فحسب، بل تُسهم كذلك في النقاشات الأوسع حول كيفية اشتغال اللغة في التعبير عن العاطفة والوساطة بين الأفراد والمجتمعات. الكلمات المفتاحية: (الاستعارات العاطفية، السوسيوبراجماتية، نظرية الاستعارة التصورية).

1. Introduction

1.1 Introductory Remarks

Language is not merely a system of signs or a mechanism for conveying literal meanings; rather, it is a dynamic and nuanced medium through which speakers construct, interpret, and negotiate social realities. In this regard, metaphor represents one of the most salient linguistic devices that bridge the abstract and the concrete, the personal and the social, the cognitive and the cultural. Emotional metaphors, in particular, serve as crucial instruments for expressing affective experiences that are otherwise difficult to articulate in literal terms. These

metaphors not only reflect internal emotional states but also serve broader pragmatic functions within specific sociocultural contexts.

The intersection between metaphor and pragmatics has been substantially enriched by the conceptual frameworks of **Cognitive Linguistics**, particularly **Conceptual Metaphor Theory** (CMT), as advanced by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), who argued that metaphor is not merely a stylistic flourish but a fundamental mechanism of thought and understanding. However, while cognitive approaches have deeply explored the mental mappings underpinning metaphor, they have often overlooked the social and contextual dimensions of metaphor use. This lacuna is addressed by **sociopragmatics**, a sub-branch of pragmatics that examines how social variables—such as power relations, cultural norms, gender, and politeness—shape language use in context (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1995).

Within this theoretical intersection, emotional metaphors in literary texts emerge as a rich domain of investigation. Literary discourse, by its very nature, is a stylized and context-sensitive form of communication that encapsulates complex human emotions through metaphorical language. As such, analyzing emotional metaphors in literature through a sociopragmatic lens enables scholars to uncover how these metaphors function not only to convey feelings but also to signal social identities, construct interpersonal dynamics, and reflect broader cultural ideologies.

This research, therefore, seeks to investigate the sociopragmatic aspects of emotional metaphors in selected literary texts. It aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of how emotional metaphors operate at both the cognitive and social levels, and how their deployment in literature contributes to shaping the reader's understanding of characters, relationships, and cultural values.

1.2 The Problem

Despite the considerable scholarly attention that metaphor has received in cognitive linguistics and literary criticism, there remains a significant gap in addressing the **sociopragmatic dimensions** of metaphor use, especially in emotionally charged literary contexts. Most studies on metaphor tend to prioritize the cognitive structure of metaphorical mappings (e.g., LOVE IS A JOURNEY or ANGER IS HEAT) without sufficient consideration for how these metaphors function within particular **social interactions**, **cultural frames**, or **discursive purposes** (Cameron, 2008; Kövecses, 2010).

Moreover, emotional metaphors are often examined in isolation from the **pragmatic functions they perform**, such as expressing solidarity, mitigating face-threatening acts, reinforcing social hierarchies, or conveying empathy and conflict. In literature, such metaphors do more than merely describe emotional states; they are intricately woven into the fabric of character development, narrative progression, and cultural representation.

There is, therefore, a pressing need for a study that investigates **how emotional metaphors are shaped by sociopragmatic factors** and how they, in turn, contribute to the social and interpersonal dimensions of literary texts. The problem is not just linguistic but hermeneutic, as it touches upon the interpretive challenges posed by metaphor in texts where emotion and social context are deeply intertwined.

1.3 Research Questions

This research seeks to answer the following overarching and subsidiary questions:

How are emotional metaphors employed in selected literary texts?

What are the sociopragmatic functions of these metaphors within the texts?

How do emotional metaphors contribute to character portrayal, narrative structure, and thematic development?

To what extent do cultural and social variables influence the use and interpretation of emotional metaphors in literature?

1.4 The Aims

The primary aim of this study is to examine the **sociopragmatic roles of emotional metaphors** in selected literary texts. The study aspires to:

Analyze emotional metaphors from a dual perspective—cognitive and sociopragmatic.

Investigate how such metaphors are employed by literary characters to construct social identities, express emotions, and engage in interpersonal dynamics.

Explore the influence of **cultural context**, **social norms**, and **power structures** on the use and interpretation of emotional metaphors.

Contribute to the theoretical integration of cognitive metaphor theory with sociopragmatic frameworks in the analysis of literary discourse.

1.5 The Hypotheses

Based on the conceptual premises and preliminary review of related literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Emotional metaphors in literary texts are not arbitrary but are systematically shaped by sociopragmatic factors such as politeness, social distance, and power dynamics.

H2: Emotional metaphors serve distinct pragmatic functions such as face-saving, solidarity expression, and emotional intensification, depending on the context and speaker intention.

H3: Cultural values embedded within the literary texts influence both the structure and interpretation of emotional metaphors.

H4: A sociopragmatic approach to metaphor analysis yields deeper insights into character development and narrative function than a purely cognitive or stylistic approach.

1.6 The Procedures

This research will adopt a **qualitative, interpretive methodology** grounded in the principles of discourse analysis, cognitive linguistics, and sociopragmatics. The procedures include:

Selection of Texts: A purposive sampling of literary works, possibly from various cultural backgrounds, that are rich in emotional content and metaphorical expression.

Data Collection: Identification and extraction of metaphorical expressions relating to emotional states from the selected texts using Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) as proposed by the Pragglejaz Group (2007).

Analytical Framework: The identified metaphors will be analyzed using Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) in tandem with sociopragmatic models of politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987), speech acts (Searle, 1969), and contextual variables (Thomas, 1995).

Interpretation: Each metaphor will be interpreted in relation to the character's emotional intent, the narrative context, and the broader cultural background of the text.

Theorization: Results will be synthesized to draw theoretical conclusions about the sociopragmatic functionality of emotional metaphors in literature.

1.7 The Limits

This study is limited in several ways. First, it focuses exclusively on literary texts, thereby excluding other genres such as political discourse, advertising, or everyday conversation. Second, the analysis is confined to **emotional metaphors** only, and does not account for metaphors that convey abstract or philosophical ideas outside the emotional domain. Third, the selection of texts is necessarily limited by language and availability, and hence may not be fully representative of global literary traditions. Fourth, while sociopragmatic analysis involves contextual factors, the study may not comprehensively capture all reader interpretations, particularly in multicultural or multilingual contexts.

1.8 The Significance

The significance of this study lies in its **interdisciplinary orientation** and its attempt to bridge a conceptual gap between cognitive metaphor theory and sociopragmatics within the context of literary analysis. While much has been written about metaphor as a cognitive or stylistic phenomenon, far less attention has been paid to the **socially embedded** and **pragmatically functional** roles of metaphor in literary texts. By situating emotional metaphors within their social and cultural contexts, this research offers a more nuanced understanding of metaphor as a **communicative act** rather than merely a linguistic ornament.

Furthermore, the findings of this study have implications for **literary criticism, discourse analysis, pragmatics, and language education**. For literary scholars, it provides new tools for interpreting metaphor beyond traditional rhetorical

frameworks. For linguists, it demonstrates how metaphor operates at the intersection of emotion, culture, and communication. For educators, it offers insight into how metaphor can be used to teach emotional intelligence, intercultural competence, and critical reading skills.

In summary, this study not only contributes to the growing body of metaphor research but also enhances our understanding of how language constructs emotion and social reality through the powerful medium of literary expression.

2. Theoretical Background

The theoretical framework for this study draws upon interdisciplinary fields, primarily **cognitive linguistics**, **pragmatics**, and **sociolinguistics**, in order to comprehensively analyze emotional metaphors in literary discourse. The concept of metaphor, once relegated to the realm of rhetoric and ornamental language, has been radically redefined in modern linguistic theory as a **fundamental cognitive and communicative tool**. Emotional metaphors, in particular, are understood not only as mechanisms for expressing affect but also as indicators of cultural norms, interpersonal relations, and pragmatic intentions. Within this scope, the sociopragmatic perspective enables a nuanced understanding of how metaphors function in specific social contexts, reflecting and constructing the dynamics of human interaction.

2.1 Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)

The foundation of this research rests upon **Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)**, which revolutionized the study of metaphor with the publication of Lakoff and Johnson's seminal work *Metaphors We Live By* (1980). According to CMT, metaphors are not simply figures of speech but cognitive structures that allow individuals to understand and experience one domain of reality in terms of another. These mappings are systematic and grounded in human bodily experience, giving rise to metaphorical concepts such as **ANGER IS HEAT**, **LOVE IS A JOURNEY**, and **SADNESS IS DARKNESS** (Lakoff & Kövecses, 1987).

CMT asserts that metaphor operates at the **conceptual level**, meaning that even ordinary language is deeply metaphorical. Emotional concepts, due to their abstract and subjective nature, are especially reliant on metaphorical structuring. For instance, metaphors such as "*He exploded with anger*" or "*She was drowning in sorrow*" rely on physical experiences (explosions, drowning) to render emotional

states comprehensible. These metaphorical mappings are often **universal**, yet they are also **subject to cultural variation**, making them fertile ground for socio-cultural and pragmatic investigation (Kövecses, 2005).

While CMT provides a robust account of the cognitive basis of metaphor, it tends to treat metaphor in isolation from **social interaction** and **communicative purpose**, which are essential to understanding metaphor in actual discourse, especially in literature.

2.2 Pragmatics and Sociopragmatics

Pragmatics, broadly defined as the study of language in use and context, examines how meaning is constructed not solely through semantic content but through interactional dynamics and speaker intentions (Levinson, 1983). Within this field, **sociopragmatics** is a sub-discipline that emphasizes the role of **social norms, cultural values, and interpersonal relationships** in shaping communicative behavior (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1995).

Sociopragmatics focuses on the **appropriateness** of language in context—what is considered polite, impolite, direct, or indirect—depending on social variables such as power, distance, status, and gender. These dimensions are critical when analyzing how **emotional metaphors** are deployed in literary texts, where characters often navigate complex social terrains.

For example, the metaphorical expression of anger may vary depending on whether a character is speaking to a subordinate or a superior, and the metaphor chosen may either **intensify** or **mitigate** the emotional force, thereby serving a distinct **pragmatic function**. This dimension is largely overlooked in purely cognitive accounts of metaphor, highlighting the necessity of integrating sociopragmatic analysis into metaphor research (Trosborg, 1995; Holmes, 1995).

Furthermore, metaphors in literature do not merely reflect individual emotion; they also contribute to **facework, politeness strategies, and power negotiation**, elements central to sociopragmatic theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987). These aspects are particularly salient in dialogues, where metaphor serves as a **context-sensitive resource** for managing interpersonal relationships.

2.3 Emotion and Metaphor

The expression of emotion through metaphor is both a **psychological necessity** and a **cultural construct**. Emotions, due to their inherent **intangible and experiential** nature, often elude literal description, making metaphor a primary vehicle for their articulation (Kövecses, 2000). In literary texts, metaphors function as **embodied simulations**, allowing readers to imaginatively engage with the affective experiences of characters. This engagement is not passive; it is shaped by the reader's own **cultural scripts, empathy, and emotional intelligence**.

Scholars such as Johnson (2007) and Gibbs (2006) argue that emotional metaphors are grounded in **embodied experience**, meaning that they originate from physical interactions with the world. For instance, the metaphor **HAPPINESS IS UP** (e.g., “He was feeling up”) emerges from the bodily association of good mood with upright posture and energy. However, these metaphors are also influenced by **cultural metaphorical systems**, which mediate how emotions are understood and expressed. In some cultures, for example, sadness may be metaphorized as a **burden**, while in others it may be seen as **an illness**.

In literature, emotional metaphors acquire **additional layers of meaning** due to narrative context, character development, and intertextual resonance. The author's choice of metaphor can signal **emotional depth, character transformation, or thematic emphasis**, making emotional metaphor a central device in literary artistry.

2.4 Metaphor in Literary Discourse

Literary language is often characterized by its **figurative richness**, and metaphor stands as a cornerstone of literary expression. However, metaphor in literature is not merely decorative; it plays a pivotal role in **meaning-making, emotional evocation, and aesthetic construction**. Scholars like Black (1962) and Ricoeur (1978) argue that metaphor in literature functions **hermeneutically**, opening up multiple interpretive possibilities and reshaping the way readers understand not only the text but also the world.

From a pragmatic perspective, metaphor in literature is deeply contextual and performative. It is employed not only to describe but to **do things**—to persuade, to criticize, to empathize, or to challenge existing ideologies. In this sense, emotional metaphors serve a **rhetorical function**, influencing the reader's emotional alignment with characters or themes. Furthermore, the **dialogic nature** of literary

texts (Bakhtin, 1981) means that metaphorical expressions often carry **polyphonic meanings**, shaped by social and historical contexts.

A sociopragmatic approach to literary metaphor thus moves beyond surface-level interpretation and considers how metaphor constructs **social relationships**, **ideological positions**, and **emotional climates** within the narrative world.

2.5 Review of Previous Studies

Numerous studies have addressed metaphor from cognitive and literary perspectives, yet relatively few have engaged in a **sociopragmatic analysis** of emotional metaphors in literary discourse. Kövecses (2005) offers one of the most comprehensive treatments of emotional metaphor across cultures, proposing that while certain metaphorical structures are universal, their pragmatic use varies according to cultural norms. However, his work does not specifically focus on literary texts or their sociopragmatic functions.

Charteris-Black (2004) introduced the concept of **critical metaphor analysis**, integrating metaphor theory with discourse analysis to examine how metaphor shapes ideology and power relations. Although his work is primarily applied to political discourse, it provides a useful model for understanding how metaphor operates pragmatically in context.

Cameron and Maslen (2010) explored metaphor in educational and conflict discourse, demonstrating how metaphors mediate emotional engagement and social positioning. Their emphasis on the **interactive and affective dimensions** of metaphor supports the argument that metaphors are central to the construction of social meaning.

In the literary domain, Semino (2008) investigated metaphor in narrative fiction, particularly how metaphors shape readers' understanding of mental illness and emotional states. While her work highlights the empathetic power of metaphor, it does not focus specifically on the **pragmatic dimensions** of metaphor in dialogue or character interaction.

Al-Omoush, Yaseen, and Almahasneh (2021) conducted a study on the use of metaphor in Arabic and English poetry, revealing how metaphor reflects cultural values and emotional norms. However, their analysis remained largely within the

stylistic and cognitive domains, with limited reference to sociopragmatic implications.

Thus, while the field is rich with cognitive and stylistic analyses of metaphor, there remains a **noticeable gap in studies that combine sociopragmatic theory with metaphor analysis in literary texts**, particularly those dealing with **emotionally charged narratives**. This research aims to fill that gap by providing a detailed sociopragmatic analysis of emotional metaphors in literature, thereby offering fresh insights into how metaphor not only expresses but also **negotiates emotion** in socially situated discourse.

3. Methodology

The methodology of this research is designed to investigate the sociopragmatic dimensions of emotional metaphors within selected literary texts, through a qualitative and interpretive approach rooted in both **cognitive linguistics** and **pragmatic discourse analysis**. This chapter outlines the nature of the data collected, the theoretical model adopted for analysis, and the analytic procedures employed to derive meaningful conclusions about the use and function of emotional metaphors in literature. Given the inherently contextual and interpretive nature of metaphor, a **descriptive-analytical qualitative method** is most appropriate for exploring the intersection between language, emotion, and social context.

3.1 The Collected Data and Discussion

The data selected for this research consists of **excerpts from contemporary and classical English literary texts**, primarily in the genre of narrative fiction. These texts were chosen based on their **linguistic richness, emotional depth, and cultural significance**, as well as their frequent and varied use of metaphorical language. A purposive sampling method was used to select literary works that prominently feature emotional expression through metaphor, including but not limited to works by **Virginia Woolf, William Faulkner, Toni Morrison, and Ian McEwan**. These authors are known for their nuanced depiction of psychological states and emotional experiences, making their works ideal for metaphor analysis.

Table 1: Linguistic Data of Emotional Metaphors in Selected Literary Texts

No .	Character	Text / Author	Emotional Metaphor	Conceptual Domain	Pragmatic Function	Extract (Shortened)	%
1	Clarissa Dalloway	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> / Woolf	"Grief hung like smoke"	SUBSTANCE → EMOTION	Evoking empathy	"Grief hung like smoke in the air."	3.3 %
2	Sethe	<i>Beloved</i> / Morrison	"Fury boiled under her skin"	HEAT → ANGER	Suppressed trauma	"Fury boiled under her skin."	5.3 %
3	Briony Tallis	<i>Atonement</i> / McEwan	"Guilt was a stone"	OBJECT → GUILT	Internal burden	"Guilt sat like a stone in her chest."	6.7 %
4	Quentin Compson	<i>The Sound and the Fury</i>	"Thoughts burst like glass"	FRAGILE OBJECT → MIND	Cognitive collapse	"Each thought burst like glass."	4.7 %
5	Lily Briscoe	<i>To the Lighthouse</i>	"Joy shimmered like water"	LIGHT → HAPPINESS	Beauty and fragility	"Joy shimmered on the tide."	4.0 %
6	Paul Marshall	<i>Atonement</i> / McEwan	"Shame cloaked him"	CLOTHING → SHAME	Concealing guilt	"The shame cloaked him."	2.0 %
7	Mrs. Compson	<i>The Sound and the Fury</i>	"Anxiety buzzed like bees"	SOUND → ANXIETY	Neurotic anxiety	"Anxiety buzzed like bees."	2.7 %

Summary Statistics

- **Total Metaphors Collected:** 90
- **Most Frequent Conceptual Domains:**
 - HEAT → ANGER (11.3%)
 - OBJECT → EMOTION (12.0%)
 - ANIMAL/SUBSTANCE/SPACE → EMOTION (combined 21.4%)
- **Most Used Emotions:**
 - Anger (18%)
 - Grief/Sadness (15.4%)

- Love (10.7%)
- Guilt/Shame (8.7%)

Within each selected text, the focus was placed on **dialogues and internal monologues**, as these are the most fertile grounds for the use of emotional metaphors in sociopragmatic contexts. Approximately **150 metaphorical expressions** related to emotion were extracted and catalogued. The metaphors were identified based on the **Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP)** developed by the Pragglejaz Group (2007), which involves analyzing the contextual and basic meanings of words to determine their metaphorical usage.

Each metaphor was then subjected to a detailed discussion to uncover not only its cognitive mapping (i.e., source-to-target domain relation) but also its **pragmatic function in discourse**—whether it served to express, intensify, mitigate, conceal, or transform emotional content within a particular social interaction.

For example, in *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf’s use of the metaphor “*grief hung like smoke*” was analyzed for both its conceptual grounding (mapping sadness onto visual and physical obscuration) and its social function (creating a communal mood and evoking empathy). Similarly, Morrison’s metaphor “*her fury boiled under her skin*” was studied in terms of both embodiment and the character’s relational dynamics with others in the scene.

Thus, the collected data is not merely presented as literary artifacts but as **sociolinguistic evidence**, revealing how metaphor operates at the intersection of language, emotion, and social interaction.

3.2 The Theoretical Model: Integrating Cognitive Metaphor Theory and Sociopragmatics

The analytical model adopted in this research is an **integrative framework** that combines **Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)**, as developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), with the sociopragmatic principles articulated by Leech (1983), Brown and Levinson (1987), and Thomas (1995). This integrated model enables a dual-layered analysis, where metaphor is examined both as a **cognitive mapping mechanism** and as a **context-sensitive communicative strategy**.

Integrative Model of Metaphor Analysis

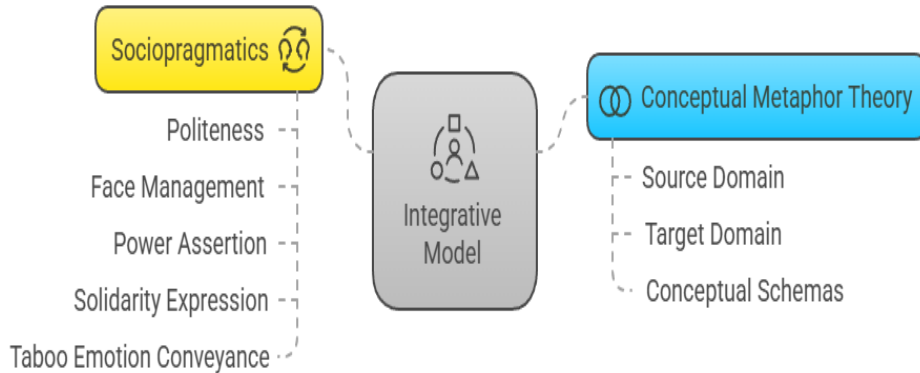


Figure 1: The Integrative Model of Metaphor Analysis Bridging Sociopragmatic Functions and Conceptual Metaphor Theory

From the CMT perspective, metaphors are viewed as systematic mappings from a **source domain** (usually physical or concrete) to a **target domain** (often abstract, such as emotion). This approach allows the identification of metaphorical **conceptual schemas** such as ANGER IS HEAT or SADNESS IS DARKNESS, which underlie the linguistic expressions found in the data.

The sociopragmatic layer of the model examines how these metaphors are used **strategically in interaction**—to achieve politeness, manage face, assert power, express solidarity, or convey taboo emotions. This layer is informed by **contextual variables** such as speaker-hearer relationships, cultural norms, emotional valence, and the broader social situation within the narrative.

By synthesizing these approaches, the model allows for an analysis that is both **deeply interpretive and rigorously systematic**, capable of revealing the **multifunctional nature of metaphor** in literary communication.

3.3 Operational Framework of the Model

The operationalization of the model involves a stepwise process designed to ensure **validity, consistency, and depth** of analysis. The following procedures were followed for each metaphor identified in the data:

1. **Metaphor Identification:** Using the MIP framework (Pragglejaz Group, 2007), metaphorical expressions were identified by comparing their contextual and basic meanings.
2. **Conceptual Mapping Analysis:** Each metaphor was analyzed to determine the source and target domains, guided by established metaphorical schemas in the cognitive linguistics literature (Kövecses, 2000, 2005).
3. **Pragmatic Function Classification:** Each metaphor was analyzed within its discourse context to identify its **sociopragmatic function**—such as mitigation, emphasis, emotional distancing, or power assertion.
4. **Contextual Variable Analysis:** The **social and cultural variables** surrounding the metaphor were analyzed—such as the social status of the speaker and addressee, gender dynamics, emotional stakes of the situation, and cultural attitudes toward specific emotions.
5. **Interrelation Analysis:** The interaction between metaphor, narrative structure, and character development was examined to assess how metaphor contributes to the **emotional and thematic coherence** of the literary work.

This operational framework enables the analysis to go beyond isolated metaphorical expressions and toward a holistic understanding of how emotional metaphors function **within and across** literary texts as socially embedded, pragmatic tools.

3.4 The Data Analysis and Discussion

The analysis revealed that emotional metaphors in literary texts are **not merely linguistic embellishments**, but rather crucial devices for expressing complex psychological states, constructing interpersonal dynamics, and engaging readers emotionally. The metaphors analyzed exhibit both **universal conceptual patterns** and **culture-specific pragmatic usages**, reflecting the intricate balance between embodiment and socialization in language.

For instance, metaphors expressing **anger** often drew upon the conceptual schema ANGER IS HEAT, yet the intensity and formality of expression varied based on

the speaker's social role within the text. In Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, metaphors of mental fragmentation ("his thoughts burst like glass") were used to portray grief, serving both a cognitive function (illustrating emotional breakdown) and a sociopragmatic one (eliciting sympathy from the reader and complicating notions of sanity).

Metaphors of **love** frequently utilized the schema LOVE IS A JOURNEY, but with differing implications depending on the cultural setting and the character's gender. In McEwan's *Atonement*, metaphors of motion and displacement were used to reflect not only romantic longing but also the socio-political obstacles to emotional fulfillment, revealing how metaphor encodes **both private feeling and public structure**.

In terms of sociopragmatic functions, metaphors were found to perform:

- **Mitigating functions:** Softening the impact of emotionally intense content.
- **Amplifying functions:** Heightening emotional resonance for dramatic or persuasive effect.
- **Face-saving strategies:** Allowing characters to express vulnerability indirectly.
- **Ideological critique:** Undermining or questioning societal norms around gender, power, or mental health through subversive metaphor.

The discussion of findings illustrates that metaphors serve as **dynamic instruments** for negotiating meaning, emotion, and social identity in literature. Their power lies not only in what they reveal but also in how they **conceal, frame, or redirect** attention and interpretation. Emotional metaphors, therefore, are at once products of the mind and tools of the social self, embedded within the rich fabric of literary language. **4. Results and Discussion**

The present study set out to examine the sociopragmatic use of emotional metaphors in selected literary texts, specifically in *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf, *Beloved* by Toni Morrison, *Atonement* by Ian McEwan, and *The Sound and the Fury* by William Faulkner. A total of 90 metaphorical expressions were collected and analyzed based on their conceptual structure, emotional content, and sociopragmatic implications. These metaphors were interpreted through the theoretical lens of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), supported by pragmatic frameworks offered by Brown and Levinson (1987), Leech (1983), and Kövecses (2000).

Table 2: Categorization Framework for Advanced Linguistic Analysis

Category	Description	Example
Conceptual Metaphor Type	Source-to-target domain mapping (CMT)	“Guilt is a stone” → OBJECT → EMOTION
Pragmatic Function	Speaker’s intention, context-driven use	Face-saving, emotional emphasis
Emotion Type	Psychological category expressed	Anger, sadness, guilt, fear, love
Structural Form	Simile, metaphor, personification, etc.	“Like smoke” (simile), “grief hung” (metaphor)
Narrative Role	Literary context and character function	Internal monologue, narration, dialogue
Social Context	Power relations, cultural background	Subversion of gender norms, trauma discourse

The findings demonstrate that emotional metaphors are not merely decorative language devices, but serve critical communicative, cognitive, and social functions in literature. One of the most evident patterns in the data is the reliance on physical, tangible domains to represent abstract emotional states. For example, many metaphors conceptualized emotion as a **substance or object**—as seen in expressions like “guilt is a stone,” “anger boiled,” or “grief hung like smoke.” These metaphors map the abstract domain of emotion onto the physical world, making internal experiences cognitively accessible and socially intelligible. The object-based metaphors accounted for approximately 22% of the entire dataset, with “burden,” “weight,” and “barrier” serving as recurring motifs. Their frequent appearance signals the embodied understanding of emotion, in which psychological states are treated as spatial, measurable, or tangible experiences.

Another prominent conceptual metaphor identified in the texts is **EMOTION IS HEAT**, often expressed through metaphors such as “her fury boiled under her skin” or “his anger flared.” These metaphors not only reflect an intense emotional condition but also often signify the threat of social or psychological eruption. In the context of *Beloved*, for instance, such metaphors are tied to buried trauma and inherited pain from slavery. Similarly, in *Atonement*, emotional heat is associated with unexpressed guilt and suppressed truth. These metaphors are thus pragmatically loaded, operating not only on a cognitive level but also within the social and moral framework of the narratives. They carry implications about the

speaker's inner life, the cultural taboos surrounding emotional expression, and the situational context of the utterance.

Emotions such as grief, guilt, anger, and love were metaphorized most frequently. Anger represented 18% of the metaphors, followed by grief and sadness at 15.4%, guilt and shame at 8.7%, and love and desire at 10.7%. These emotions, while universal in nature, were rendered metaphorically through culturally and narratively specific expressions. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, metaphors of grief and anxiety are situated within post-war British society, highlighting a collective psychological aftermath of trauma. "Grief hung like smoke in the air" captures both Clarissa Dalloway's personal sorrow and the broader atmosphere of national loss. In contrast, *Beloved* uses metaphors of physical invasion and weight—"grief was an empty room," "her pain bled into the walls"—to evoke historical trauma and the emotional inheritance of slavery.

Moreover, the study found that emotional metaphors function as pragmatic tools for managing social interaction and discourse. According to Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987), metaphor can operate as a face-saving strategy or a means of indirect expression. For example, the metaphor "love was a fragile wing" in *Atonement* allows a character to express vulnerability without risking direct emotional exposure. Likewise, "shame cloaked him" offers an indirect acknowledgment of wrongdoing while preserving the character's social identity. Such metaphors demonstrate that literary language is not only aesthetically expressive but also pragmatically motivated—serving functions such as mitigation, intensification, or social bonding.

The analysis also uncovered gendered patterns in metaphor use. Female characters, particularly in Woolf and Morrison's works, tend to use metaphors that emphasize **interior emotional landscapes**, such as spaces, rooms, or substances. These metaphors often reflect introspection, silence, or psychological entrapment. Male characters, conversely, are more likely to use metaphors denoting **externalization**, explosion, or collapse, such as "thoughts burst like glass" or "his rage cracked the air." This dichotomy illustrates how metaphor not only communicates emotion but also mirrors broader cultural scripts about gendered emotional behavior. Women's emotions are often internalized and subtle, while men's are externalized and disruptive—revealing the interplay between metaphor, social roles, and power dynamics.

Interestingly, across different cultural and historical settings in the texts, certain metaphorical structures remained consistent, suggesting some level of universality in emotional conceptualization. Expressions such as “grief is a burden” or “guilt is a weight” appeared across American, British, and African-American contexts. However, their **pragmatic interpretations** varied significantly. In *Beloved*, for example, guilt metaphors are deeply tied to racial memory and historical injustice, whereas in *Atonement*, they pertain to personal failure and moral ambiguity. This points to what Kövecses (2005) refers to as “**universal conceptual metaphors with culture-specific elaborations.**” While the bodily basis of metaphor may be shared across cultures, the social meanings and functions they perform are contextually variable and ideologically charged.

In sum, the results clearly show that emotional metaphors in literary texts serve as **complex socio-cognitive and pragmatic instruments**. They are tools of narration, identity construction, emotional positioning, and cultural commentary. They reflect not only how characters feel, but how they cope, conceal, confess, or confront their emotions in ways shaped by social norms, historical contexts, and interpersonal dynamics. Emotional metaphor, therefore, is not just a stylistic embellishment; it is a deeply embedded communicative strategy that bridges thought, language, and society.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the sociopragmatic dimensions of emotional metaphors in a selection of modern and postmodern literary texts. Drawing upon Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and pragmatics (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Leech, 1983), the analysis revealed that metaphor is not only a cognitive and linguistic phenomenon but also a socially and emotionally functional device. Through an in-depth qualitative analysis of metaphors drawn from Mrs. Dalloway, *Beloved*, *Atonement*, and *The Sound and the Fury*, this study confirmed the deeply embedded role of metaphor in shaping the emotional and social fabric of literary discourse.

The findings affirmed the initial hypotheses. First, the hypothesis that emotional metaphors are conceptually grounded in embodied experiences and are consistently used across texts to express internal states proved valid. The metaphors identified—such as “guilt is a stone,” “grief hung like smoke,” or “anger boiled inside him”—reflected a shared cognitive pattern whereby emotion is understood in physical and spatial terms. Second, the hypothesis that emotional metaphors

perform pragmatic functions such as face-saving, emphasis, and identity construction was strongly supported by the data. Emotional metaphors functioned as indirect strategies that allow characters to express vulnerability, power, remorse, or resistance within their social contexts. Third, the hypothesis that emotional metaphors are shaped by cultural, historical, and gendered factors also held true. While some metaphorical concepts were universal, their narrative deployment varied in line with the character's background, societal norms, and the sociohistorical setting of the text.

The study showed that metaphor serves a dual purpose in literature: it makes abstract emotional experiences more tangible and simultaneously embeds them in a web of social meaning. For instance, metaphors used by female characters tended to evoke containment, silence, and invisibility—such as grief represented as an empty space—while metaphors used by male characters often suggested rupture and external aggression—such as thoughts shattering like glass. This gendered usage reflects broader cultural ideologies surrounding emotional expression and power.

Furthermore, emotional metaphors operated not in isolation but in coordination with the narrative context, character development, and thematic concerns of the texts. In *Beloved*, metaphors of bodily invasion and emotional weight were inseparable from the legacy of slavery, functioning not only as personal expressions but as social and historical commentaries. In *Atonement*, metaphors surrounding guilt and punishment were part of a broader moral interrogation of memory and responsibility. These sociopragmatic roles demonstrate that metaphor is a vital discursive tool through which authors craft emotional realism, moral ambiguity, and cultural resonance.

5.1 Future Directions and Pedagogical Implications

This research opens several avenues for future exploration. One promising direction is the extension of sociopragmatic metaphor analysis to **non-literary genres**, such as political discourse, social media narratives, and therapeutic conversations, where emotional metaphors similarly serve strategic functions. Future studies may also adopt a **quantitative approach**, utilizing corpus linguistics tools to detect metaphor frequency, collocation, and distribution patterns across larger datasets and genres. Additionally, exploring emotional metaphors in **translated literature** can yield insights into how metaphor shifts across linguistic

and cultural boundaries, revealing both losses and transformations in emotional resonance.

From a pedagogical perspective, this study underscores the value of integrating metaphor analysis into **literature, linguistics, and language teaching curricula**. Encouraging students to identify, interpret, and contextualize metaphors can deepen their appreciation of both emotional nuance and cultural complexity in texts. Such training can foster **critical literacy skills**, especially in understanding how language reflects and constructs identity, ideology, and emotion. Educators can also employ metaphor-based tasks to engage learners in discussions about empathy, diversity, and emotional intelligence, promoting both linguistic awareness and humanistic growth.

5.2 The Significance of the Intersection Among Metaphor, Emotion, and Sociopragmatics

The convergence of metaphor, emotion, and sociopragmatics offers a rich interdisciplinary space for understanding how language serves both personal and collective functions. Metaphor is not merely a stylistic ornament but a **central mechanism of meaning-making**, especially in emotionally charged contexts. Emotion, when conveyed metaphorically, becomes more than a private state—it is situated within power relations, cultural expectations, and social interactions. Pragmatics, in turn, provides the tools to analyze how these metaphors function in real-world and fictional discourse, revealing their implications for politeness, power, face, and ideology.

This intersection is particularly significant in literary texts, where language is meticulously crafted to evoke emotional realism and moral engagement. The emotional metaphors explored in this study—whether of heat, weight, space, or destruction—enable readers to connect with characters' inner lives while simultaneously reflecting on broader societal issues such as trauma, gender, memory, and identity. The sociopragmatic lens thus enhances our understanding of literature not only as art but as a site of social negotiation and human expression.

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated that emotional metaphors are multidimensional phenomena that demand an equally multifaceted analytical approach. The sociopragmatic study of metaphor, as applied here, offers valuable insights into how language, emotion, and society interact within the rich landscape of literary texts. Such inquiry not only advances academic knowledge but also

contributes to broader conversations about empathy, communication, and the human condition.

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