The diachronic evolution of metaphors in the realm of English poetry: A comparative analysis of the literary works of Shakespeare, Wordsworth, and Eliot

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Valentina Kos[1]
Bebitnur Zhumabekova[2]
Rishat Saurbayev[3]
Fatima Yerekhanova[4+]
Bibigul Nygmetova[5]

[1,2,3]*Department of Foreign Philology, Toraighyrov University, Pavlodar, Kazakhstan.*
[1]*Nazarbayev Intellectual School of Science and Mathematics in Pavlodar, Pavlodar, Kazakhstan.*
[1]*Email: valikikos2@gmail.com*
[2]*Email: beibitnur@mail.ru*
[3]*Email: rishat_1062@mail.ru*
[4]*Department of Languages and Literature, Central Asian Innovation University, Shymkent, Kazakhstan.*
[4]*Email: siliconoasis702@gmail.com*
[5]*Higher School of Humanities, Margulan Pedagogical University, Pavlodar, Kazakhstan.*
[5]*Branch of JSC National Centre for Advanced Studies "Orleu", Institute of Professional Development in the Pavlodar region, Pavlodar, Kazakhstan.*
[5]*Email: bibigul-n@mail.ru*

(+ Corresponding author)

ABSTRACT

This study explores the diachronic evolution of conceptual metaphors in the poetry of William Shakespeare, William Wordsworth, and Thomas Stearns Eliot. Using a comparative method, quantitative frequency analysis, and qualitative examination of metaphorical features, it seeks to determine the transformation of metaphorical language from the Renaissance through Romanticism to Modernism. The works of the given authors were analyzed, and the metaphors were identified to accomplish the purpose. The frequency of use of metaphorical constructions, their typology, the use of metaphors in texts, as well as the comparison of the evolution of metaphorical language from the Renaissance (Shakespeare) through Romanticism (Wordsworth) to Modernism (Eliot), were considered. The study's methodological approach facilitates the expansion of corpus-based techniques to explore figurative language in literary texts. Its scientific importance is in its contribution to linguistics, literature, and history. The study's outcomes give us an understanding of metaphor as both a linguistic device and a cognitive-cultural phenomenon. The practical value of this study is in its contribution to historical linguistics and language categories. This research offers a deeper understanding of how poetic metaphors have evolved in English literature throughout history, as well as demonstrating their role in creating cultural and cognitive models of world perception.

Contribution/ Originality: This study offers a diachronic analysis of metaphor usage across three influential English poets: T. S. Eliot, W. Shakespeare, and W. Wordsworth. This helps advance the fields of literary studies, historical linguistics, and cognitive poetics. The study uses a comparative literary method to show how metaphorical language changes from the Early Modern era to Modernism in response to changing linguistic, philosophical, and cultural paradigms.

1. INTRODUCTION

Lakoff and Johnson (1980); Al-Bder (2025); Meng, Li, and Sun (2025); Fludernik and Timofeeva (2025); Sharma (2025); Boldireff and Bober (2022) and Guo (2025) had a crucial impact on the evolution of cognitive linguistics, proving that metaphors are not only a literary device but also a fundamental cognitive mechanism, and also providing an essential background for our study: The diachronic evolution of metaphors in the realm of English poetry: A comparative analysis of the literary works of Shakespeare (1609); Wordsworth (1798) and Eliot (1915)". The above-mentioned research detected that language not only reflects thinking but also shapes it. Continuing the ideas of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), it can be noted that their conceptual metaphor concept allows us to understand how abstract ideas and complex phenomena are comprehended through well-known specific areas of experience. As stated by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), a conceptual metaphor is a systematic juxtaposition of two domains: the source domain and the target domain. For example, universal metaphors such as "time is money" or "life is a journey" reflect how people structure their thinking and perceive the world.

This theory revealed new horizons in the study of language, providing tools for analyzing not only artistic texts but also scientific, business, and political discourses. It also affirmed that metaphors are important means of transporting cultural and cognitive figures that vary depending on language and historical era.

It is notable to consider metaphors in a diachronic aspect, as they not only reflect the way of thinking in a certain time but also demonstrate world changes in cultural, social, and historical perception. In this context, English poetry (Salih, 2025; Young, Rajendran, & Rahman, 2024) is a valuable material for analysis, as it includes works from different time periods from the Renaissance to modernity each contributing to the development of metaphorical language with its own unique features.

This article is committed to metaphor analysis in the works of English poets in a historical perspective, and it traces the dynamics of the metaphorical models used by Shakespeare (1609); Wordsworth (1798), and Eliot (1915) within the timeline. The primary objective of the study is to investigate changes in the structure and frequency of metaphors, as well as to compare the authors with one another and with themselves across different life periods, taking into account the cultural and historical context.

The research questions are as follows:

1) How do metaphor structures change over time?

2) What are the dominant metaphorical models typical of each period?

3) How does metaphor frequency vary across authors?

Analyzing poetic texts through a quantitative approach provides insights into how metaphors evolve and adapt to social and cultural changes. Shakespeare (1609); Wordsworth (1798), and Eliot (1915) were chosen as they belong to different eras, and their works demonstrate the peculiarities of metaphors of each historical period. The paper consists of a literature review, methodology, results, discussion, and conclusion.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Linguists worldwide have been studying the interpretation of metaphor (Acobo, 2025; Biscaro, Bruni, Cornelissen, & Oswick, 2025; Gao, Zhang, Zhang, & Yang, 2025; Hu, 2023; Mitić, Janić Mitić, & Stamenković, 2025; Niu & Ganapathy, 2025; Ollomurodov, 2023; Pham, 2024; Zou, Fuller, & Wang, 2025). The article endeavors to provide a brief overview of diverse metaphor interpretations and also explores the origin of metaphor and metaphorical models that poets built in different periods, taking into consideration that Shakespeare (1609); Wordsworth (1798) and Eliot (1915) were not compared to each other in the diachronic aspect before.

The article addresses the problem of the epistemological function of language, as during the study, the words do not always coincide with their meaning. Researchers find and build the bonds between words and meanings, making it subjective. However, Telia (1988) pointed out that a metaphor is often seen as a stylistic device or an artistic

expression and rarely as a linguistic structure. The study rejects the fact that metaphor is just a sort of expression and presents it in an entirely different "linguistic light".

In the past few years, linguists have paid less attention to metaphor as a stylistic device, focusing instead on cognitive processes and meaning transformation. Covering this gap has led to a significant evolution of the understanding of metaphor from "a figure of speech" to its current cognitive role in modern linguistics. Semino (2021) explored metaphor function in discourse, mostly in political and medical contexts, presenting metaphor as a strategic communicative tool. Kövecses (2022); Hussein and Ismail (2025) and Gelovani (2025) offer a new perspective on how conceptual metaphors and culture are related to one another.

As the study deals with poetic texts, other studies devoted to English poetry were analyzed, and the work on the analysis of the metaphorical system of William Shakespeare was found. Animalistic, natural, and conceptual images are studied in "The Development of Shakespeare's Imagination"(Clemen, 2013; Pokojná, Isenberg, Bruckner, Kozlíková, & Garrison, 2025). In addition, the work of William Wordsworth attracted the attention of researchers in terms of historical metaphors reflecting the unity of nature and human consciousness, "Wordsworth's Historical Imagination" (Simpson, 2014).

A quantitative approach to the analysis of metaphors in literature has been developed within corpus linguistics. According to Biber (2011), the systematic use of corpus methods reveals statistical patterns in the use of metaphors across various genres and eras.

Special attention has been paid to mathematical modeling methods, as these are particularly relevant for cognitive linguistics due to the difficulty of directly observing cognitive processes. While it is impossible to cover all the publications on this topic, a preliminary analysis reveals at least two interrelated approaches. On the one hand, there are various models of metaphor being considered, such as research on the "dynamic model".

The use of metaphor is especially relevant in various fields of study, such as Telia (1988) and Balashova (2015). On the other hand, metaphor itself can be understood as a model for human cognitive processes. For example, it can be used to describe how we think and process information.

The first approach to studying metaphor focuses on restoring or designing specific cognitive structures that are associated with the speaker or listener when they produce or perceive a metaphorical expression. The second approach views the linguistic essence of metaphor as the ability to describe one thing using words from another semantic field. This is seen as the key to understanding the thought processes behind the semantic transfer, which is derived from the Greek term "metaphora," meaning "transfer." Within the second approach, the term "metaphor" can refer to the same cognitive processes that occur when language functions, similar to what researchers study in the first approach.

At the same time, the distinction between these approaches is unclear, as in the first case, cognitive processes are seen as primary concerning language since they are the mental processes necessary for working with language expressions. In the second case, linguistic metaphors can potentially be seen as primary concerning cognitive ones, since the possibility of transferring meaning stems from the semiotic nature of language.

In other words, in the first approach, cognitive metaphors (specific cognitive structures) are seen as fundamental concerning linguistic metaphors. In the second approach, linguistic metaphors, while not necessarily being ontologically fundamental, act as the initial step in research and, epistemologically, determine the entire process of further modelling of cognitive processes. The most commonly held view on this issue is that both approaches have their merits and disadvantages, and it is important to consider the context and goals of the research when choosing an approach.

Formulated by Kulchitskaya (2013), the linguistic metaphor is secondary to the cognitive one because it exists due to the presence of a human brain, thinking, and speech. Other forms of objectification of the metaphor, such as behavior, visual art, and gestures, are also phenomena that can be used to judge the presence of metaphor in conceptual thinking, and more deeply, the action of the cognitive mechanism.

The answer to the "chicken-and-egg paradox" is clear if we do not ask why metaphors exist. Do we need them? Not considering the metaphor's stylistic and artistic value, their necessity may be explained by limited linguistic means. Practical speech or scientific discourse exists without metaphor, but including metaphors enriches both.

The main objective of a metaphor is to explain an unknown and difficult image by drawing parallels with something easier and familiar to us. Metaphors are used to describe abstract concepts such as grief, inspiration, happiness, or love.

In terms of cognition, metaphors are mental structures that transfer meaning from one image to another. They can be traced in our language usage, as well as in our thoughts and actions.

Despite the benefits, metaphors also have limitations. They can sometimes be misleading, as they work within certain contexts. Therefore, to ensure a metaphor reaches its goal, it is important to be aware of these limitations.

Mostly, metaphor studies consist of theoretical concepts and models. For example, Chudinov and Budaev (2007) mention the classical theory by Blavatsky (1993) where metaphor is an expression of language. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) consider metaphor to be a mental structure, and it is also supported by Richie (2013), who disagrees that the interpretation of metaphor is formulated on common knowledge among speakers. Additionally, the concept of metaphorical scenarios is discussed by Musolff (2006); Baryshnikov (2025) and Qiu and Tay (2025) present the descriptive theory. Due to these different approaches, there is no single definition or model of metaphor that can be applied universally.

The constructed models of cognitive metaphors have different names: "metaphorical archetype" (Panchenko et al., 2020) "basic metaphor" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), "image-scheme" (Lakoff, 1987), among others.

Tracing cognitive processes, it is important to consider the main characteristics emphasized in recent research. There are at least three general interpretations of the metaphor in linguistic studies: a metaphor is a trope or figure of speech, a specific linguistic nomination, or a cognitive structure providing mechanisms for thinking, constructing, and objectifying knowledge.

The consideration of metaphor as a literary device can be traced back to the works of Aristotle and is based on a stylistic approach to linguistic analysis. However, in linguistics, a trope refers to a figure of speech that uses a word or phrase in a non-literal sense to enhance the expressiveness of language. A metaphor is defined as a specific type of trope that involves using a commonly used word to refer to a different class of objects or phenomena. The purpose of a metaphor is not only to add beauty and expressiveness to language but also to serve a more practical function, such as helping to understand complex concepts or ideas. In this sense, the instrumental aspect of the metaphor becomes more prominent, while its expressive purpose may fade into the background. The term "metaphor" has a broader meaning in foreign publications and can include other types of figurative language, such as similes and personifications.

This can be applied to different types of words used in an indirect sense, including metonymy and synecdoche. This is in the spirit of Cassirer (1925) work, which was translated into Russian and published in 1990.

Starting with the basic idea that there are at least two components in the structure of a metaphor two entities between which the transfer of thought takes place researchers focus on how this correlates with seemingly disparate semantic layers. Metaphors are often used to name both these entities and the transfer process. Therefore, in many studies, you can find the expressions "source," "target," "goal," "metaphorical projection," "metaphorical reflection," "metaphorical framework," "metaphorical focus," and "metaphorical formula" used after Lakoff (1987); Chudinov and Budaev (2007) and Baranov and Dobrovolsky (1996) and other famous researchers.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Manuscript Design

This study employs a continuous sampling method, enabling the collection of extensive data for quantitative analysis. Descriptive and statistical approaches are utilized to classify metaphors, systematize them, and estimate

their prevalence in texts. The diachronic aspect of the study emphasizes the relationship between language change and the evolution of conceptual thinking.

A fundamental technique in linguistics is applied to research: comparative analysis, which traces the historical development and the author's evolution. This method helps to understand the process of language change by comparing authors with each other; the historical and socio-cultural evolvement is prominently seen. By comparing early and later works of the author, linguists trace interior personal change.

The article aims to identify patterns in the use of metaphorical models, which not only enhance our understanding of the poetic tradition but also contribute to cognitive linguistics. It demonstrates how the evolution of metaphors reflects the development of human thought.

3.2. Article Sampling

The Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP), as proposed by Group (2007), is used to analyze the works of Eliot, Wordsworth, and Shakespeare. This process involves systematically identifying vocabulary units and determining their fundamental meanings as well as meaning modifications in the usage of metaphor. Compared to Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and MIP, this approach is relatively new in the field of linguistics. Additionally, with quantitative corpus-based techniques, the study analyzes the evolution of cognitive structures and cultural background in poetic discourse. The frequency of metaphor use, metaphor count, and their meanings are analyzed to trace the dynamics and changes in language, cognition, and history. Therefore, the study provides new methods and perspectives for cognitive and historical linguistics.

Kövecses (2022), in his conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), identifies metaphors as a part of cognitive process as they connect abstract ideas, for example, life and journey, and create mappings between them, so the given approach uncovers cognitive processes that have an impact on our language.

Corpus analysis and other computational methods, which draw upon linguistics, collect and analyze metaphors from immense poetic discourse by identifying the amount and the frequency, which helps to discover cross-textual trends and trace historical changes.

4. RESULTS

Based on the research questions, the poetic texts of W. Shakespeare, T. S. Eliot, and W. Wordsworth were analyzed using a systematic methodology. The formula to calculate the frequency of metaphors per 1000 words is provided.

$$M_f = \frac{M_c}{T_w} \times 1000$$

Where:
- Mf: Frequency of metaphors per 1000 words.
- Mc: Total number of identified metaphors in the text.
- Tw: Total word count of the text.

Poetic texts of different lengths were compared consistently with the help of this method.

Example Analysis: Shakespeare's *Sonnet 18* (Shakespeare, 1609) consists of 114 words, and 15 metaphors were identified, showing a metaphor frequency of:

Mf = 15/114 * 1000 = 131.5

Relatively, W. Wordsworth's *Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey* (Wordsworth, 1798) consisting of 1227 words, contains 60 metaphors, demonstrating the following result.

Mf = 60/1227 * 1000 = 49.

The formula shows W. Shakespeare uses metaphors more frequently, which can be explained by the Renaissance the period of time in European literature and culture rich with figurative language.

T.S. Eliot's *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (Eliot, 1915), which is 1053 words, was analysed for the count of metaphors as well; 80 metaphors were found, the formula of frequency is.

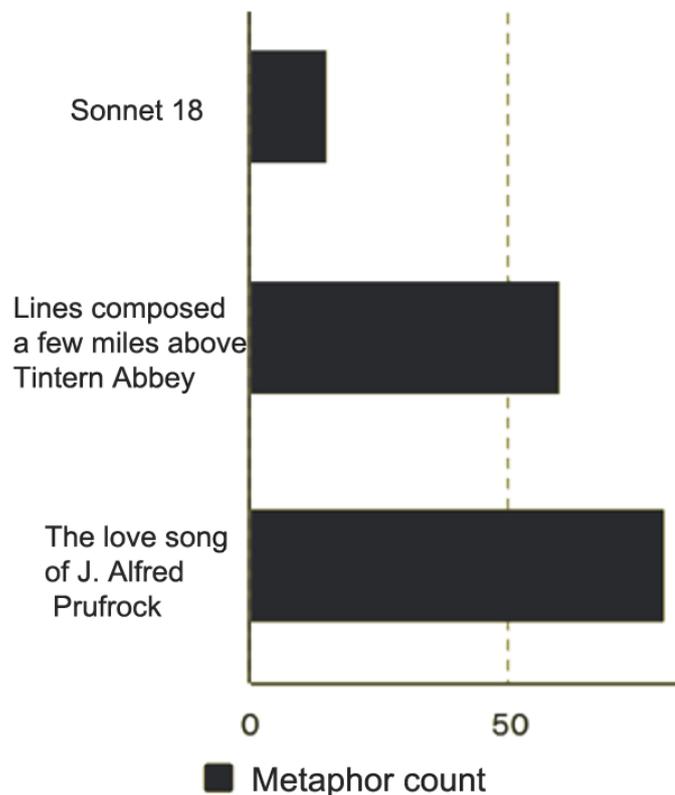$$Mf = 80/1053 * 1000 = 75.9$$

Metaphor count per word

Figure 1. Metaphorical density in selected poems.

Figure 1 illustrates the metaphorical density in "Sonnet 18" by W. Shakespeare, "Lines, Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey" by W. Wordsworth, and "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" by T. S. Eliot.

4.1. Comparative Analysis of Metaphor Usage

T.S. Eliot
- Metaphor density: Eliot's labour presents a significant amount of figurative language, characterized by a split, complex vision, which is typical for the Modernist inclination the literature movement of the 20th century.
- Category of metaphors: Surreal metaphors are used to address existential crises, alienation, and frustration.
- William Wordsworth
- Nature metaphors: Wordsworth's metaphorical language is inspired by nature and personal emotions, and figurative language is aimed at sublime experience expression, which is typical for the period of Romanticism.
- Category of metaphors: Emotional resonance can be seen in the poetical texts of William Wordsworth. Nature is presented both as beauty, tranquility, and also death and grief. Although human-nature harmonious relationships can be traced throughout Wordsworth's poetry.
- William Shakespeare
- Structure: Shakespeare`s metaphors are well structured and are based on human emotions and social issues.
- Dramatic function: metaphor is used to express emotions, to enhance dramatic action, to reveal characters.

The findings underline a broader literary trend where Eliot's Modernist metaphors articulate a fragmented, complex worldview, fundamentally differing from Wordsworth's nature-centric ideals and Shakespeare's rhetorical brilliance. Various metaphorical techniques are identified in the poetic texts of three authors; it is also clear that metaphor choices correspond to the feelings and emotions of the author. In conclusion, Wordsworth and Shakespeare raise relationship issues based on human emotions towards each other, while Eliot is focused on self-analysis and the anxiety of existence.

The influence on reader perception and emotional resonance provides us with rich insights into the metaphorical approaches used by the authors. Moreover, metaphors reflect social change and offer a deeper understanding of social life in each historical period.

According to metaphor density, Eliot's poetic text exceeds both Shakespeare's and Wordsworth's, which proves that Modernist poetry is overflowing with figurative language. Alienation, doubt, and existential crisis are highlighted in Eliot's poetry, while tranquility and nature-driven metaphors by Wordsworth, and rhetorical metaphors by Shakespeare, express the trend of the given period.

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" by Eliot (1915) provides a vivid example of a routine activity: "*I have measured out my life with coffee spoons*", which symbolizes boredom and inevitability and creates a stark contrast to Romanticism and the Renaissance.

Based on the above findings, we may conclude that metaphors reflect the worldview of the century, as well as certain relationships and profound emotions of a particular person.

4.1.1. Source Domains

Shakespeare regularly used divine imagery and human nature to portray abstract concepts such as love, beauty, life, death, and universal truths, which are typical of the Renaissance. Wordsworth reinforced emotional depth and unity with nature through metaphors. Eliot captured the disillusionment of contemporary life in his Modernist poetry using fragmented and frequent metaphors, emphasizing urban ruin and alienation.

4.1.2. Purpose and Function

Shakespeare's metaphor choices reveal universal truths and evoke strong emotional reactions, as well as organize lyrical dilemmas in his plays.

Wordsworth, on the contrary, represents nature as a source of inspiration, a teacher, a friend, and a communication partner.

Eliot, on the contrary, by the help of metaphors, addresses the problems of the 20th century to highlight splitting and alienation.

4.1.3. Diachronic Evolution

The study proves that metaphors evolved throughout the Renaissance, Romanticism, and Modernism, and they also prioritize universal truths and hierarchical structures. Wordsworth's metaphors focus on life awareness and human-nature connections. Modernist metaphors, created by Eliot, force readers to reconsider meaning.

The study detects the frequency and distribution of metaphors in various literary periods and reveals certain patterns. Shakespeare used metaphors with a frequency of approximately 120 per 1000 words, while Wordsworth utilized roughly 60 metaphors, and Eliot demonstrated a shift towards complex imagery with a quantity of approximately 50 words per 1000.

These findings accentuate the diachronic development of metaphors on the material of English poetic texts and their role in the general language development. Over the comparison of three authors, mentioned above, it can be noticed that metaphors reflect linguistic creativity and provide insight into the cultural and intellectual contexts of the historical periods they are presenting.

Implementing the MIP to Shakespeare's play "*As You Like It*" (Act 2, Scene 7) reveals the conceptual metaphor that *life is a stage*. The passage, "*The whole world is a stage, and all men and women are just players,*" shows the case where the source area (the theatre) is mapped onto the target area (human life). By the help of this metaphor, Shakespeare portrays life as a planned performance where people assume roles and follow a premeditated script dictated by fate or society.

A computational linguistic approach and CMT together validate this metaphor as part of the wider Renaissance tendency to shape human experience through theatrical imagery. The theatre-based metaphors in Shakespeare's works support the theory that viewing life through the lens of performance was a deeply rooted cognitive model during that time.
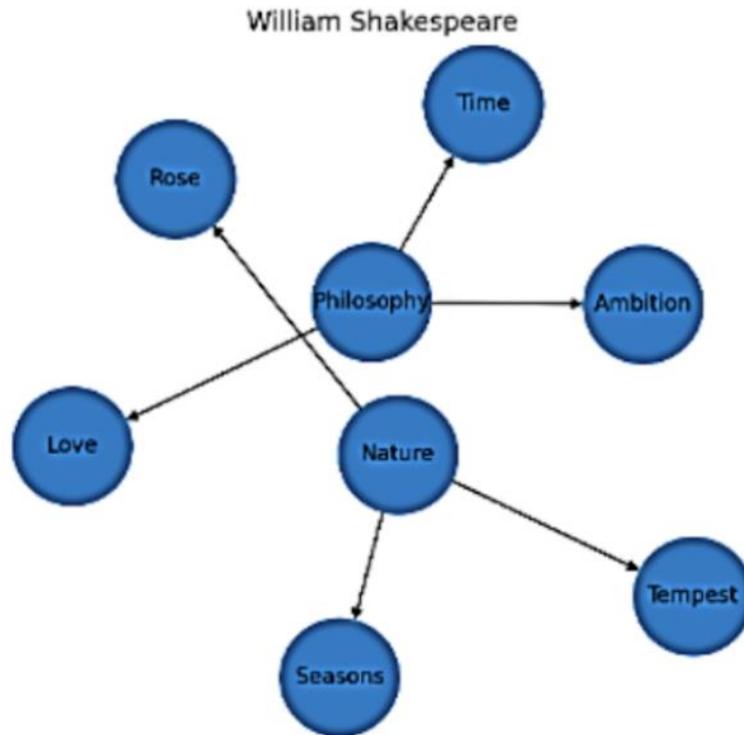

Figure 2. W. Shakespeare`s poetry mind map.

Figure 2 depicts W. Shakespeare's poetry mid map, emphasizing the key concepts of his poetic works.

"I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" by Wordsworth (1798) contains another metaphorical pattern: human emotion is weather. The poet describes his emotional state as "I wandered lonely as a cloud," drawing a direct comparison between his feelings and a drifting cloud in the sky. Although the word "cloud" can refer to a mass of condensed water, its use here suggests an abstract representation of loneliness and isolation.

The CMT (Cognitive Metaphor Theory) framework demonstrates that romantic poetry frequently employs metaphors to associate natural elements with human emotions. This reinforces the concept that nature serves as an extension of personal experience. Wordsworth's consistent use of weather-related metaphors highlights an intrinsic link between landscapes and psychological states, a hallmark of romantic poetics.
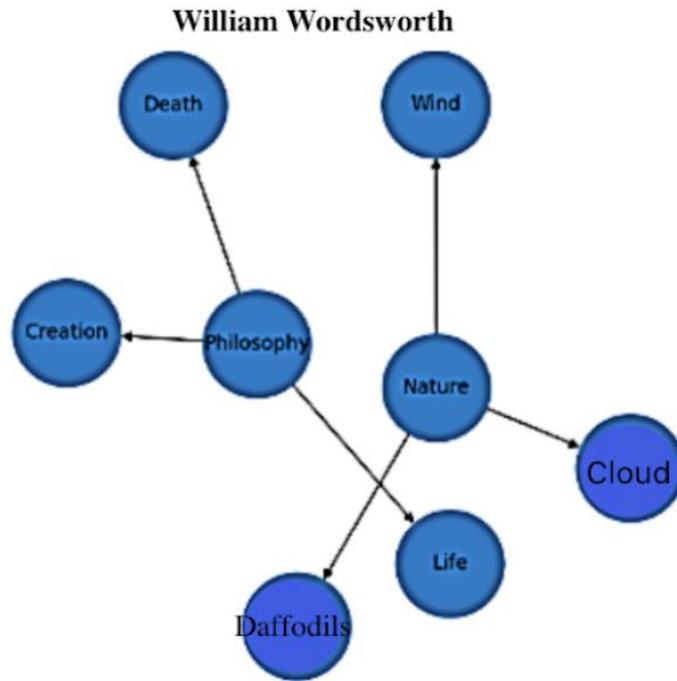
William Wordsworth

Figure 3. W. Wordsworth`s poetry mind map.

Figure 3 demonstrates W. Wordsworth`s poetry mind map, reflecting the poet`s main thoughts.

Eliot's metaphors are often complex and fragmented, reflecting the characteristics of Modernism and the existential ambiguity of the time. We can see this by applying the MIP (Metaphor Identification Process) to his work. Eliot employs disruptive, contradictory, and intertextual metaphors that contribute to the theme of cultural decay and regeneration in his poems, contrasting with the emphasis on natural imagery in Wordsworth's poetry or the orderly use of metaphor in Shakespeare's works.
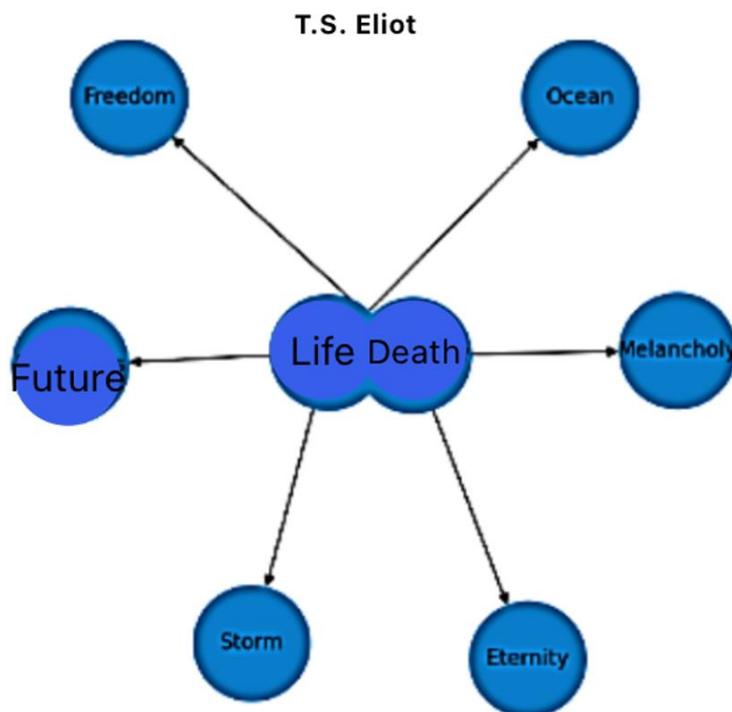
T.S. Eliot

Figure 4. T.S. Eliot`s poetry mind map.

Figure 4 presents T.S. Eliot`s poetry mind map, highlighting the major themes and key ideas explored in works.

There are notable diachronic changes in the way that human experience is conceptualized when comparing Eliot, Wordsworth, and Shakespeare. Shakespeare's metaphor LIFE IS A STAGE depicts a performative, socially constructed view of life that aligns with the hierarchy and role-playing ideals of the Renaissance. On the contrary, the emphasis on nature and personal emotion is presented in HUMAN EMOTION IS WEATHER.

The Romantic emphasis on personal emotion and nature, on the other hand, is consistent with Wordsworth's *"human emotion is weather"* metaphor, which shows a natural explanation of human experience. However, the modernist approach disrupts this romantic metaphorical structure. In "The Waste Land," T.S. Eliot depicts the world as broken and disillusioned through his metaphor, "cultural decay is a barren landscape." This difference demonstrates the existential crisis caused by World War I and the Third Industrial Revolution. Unlike Eliot's existential and Wordsworth's natural metaphors, Shakespeare's structure is a metaphorical universe with easy explanations of complex human emotions.

5. DISCUSSION

Computational linguistics methods verify the development of corpus-based metaphors depending on cultural and social transformations over time. Using MIP and CMT, the study provides a clear view of how metaphor serves as a cognitive bridge between language, culture, and history.

Moreover, there are significant changes in Shakespeare's early and late works, and we may highlight the most notable tendencies in his poetic language evolution. In early plays such as "Romeo and Juliet," "A Midsummer Night's Dream," and "Henry VI," Shakespeare actively uses ornamental, colorful metaphors characteristic of the Renaissance. They are often based on astronomical images (stars of fate, sun, moon), "Juno on a Chariot Drawn by Peacocks" (A Midsummer Night's Dream, 1600; in "Romeo and Juliet" (1597), "Juliet Is the Sun". Metaphors in early works are often expressive and hyperbolized, which corresponds to the Baroque style and influence of traditional poetics of the 16th century. Later plays such as "Hamlet," "Macbeth," "The Tempest," and "King Lear" show a shift towards more abstract, philosophical, and existential metaphors. Nature is used not just as a decoration but as a reflection of the inner experiences of the characters. For example, the storm in "King Lear" symbolizes the chaos in Lear's mind. Gloomy metaphors of time, decay, and death also appear: "Life is a shadow, a roaming actor" ("Macbeth," 1623); "We are such stuff as dreams are made on" ("The Tempest," 1611).

Wordsworth's metaphorical style evolved throughout his work, demonstrating the development of his worldview and the evolution of romanticism. In "Lyrical Ballads" (1798), simple natural metaphors are used; in comparison with "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" (1802), the metaphors reflect the poet's complex feelings and emotions in a natural context. Over time, metaphors become more reflective and melancholic. In the early works, nature serves as a source of inspiration, while later works are dedicated to memory and loss. In "The Prelude," nature is presented as a memory of the past: "I hear the echo of youth in the noise of the stream" (1850). The author never completed it, and it was published after his death.

T. S. Eliot radically changed the approach to the use of metaphors in English poetry, moving from a traditional romantic and symbolist heritage to modernist fragmentation and layering. In his work, two key stages can be distinguished that demonstrate the evolution of metaphorical language: the early period and the late philosophical period. In early works, especially in "The Waste Land" (1922), Eliot uses disparate, dissonant metaphors that convey the crisis of European civilization after the First World War. Unlike Wordsworth and Shakespeare, his metaphors rarely create a single, harmonious picture instead, they deliberately destroy the logical integrity of the text. Late Eliot's metaphors became more symbolic and philosophical. In "Four Quartets" (1935–1942), there is no modernist fragmentation; instead, more harmonious images explore time, memory, and spiritual experience: *Time present and time past are both perhaps present in time future* a metaphor, which paradoxically unites various time layers.

The significance of the study lies in its stylistic and literary value as well as its cognitive insight. Metaphors highlight the authors' style and shed light on historical and cultural transformations over time. Abstract ideas are

conceptualized, and parallels between human knowledge and human thought are drawn. The study can be implicated for further literary studies along with cultural and historical analysis. Linguistics and cognitive research may benefit from the study as it contains diachronic and cross-author data.

6. CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates the evolution of metaphorical frameworks in English poetry from the Renaissance to Romanticism and Modernism by analyzing the poetic texts of Wordsworth (1798), Shakespeare (1609), and Eliot (1915). The results show that the metaphor usage reflects general changes in society over time.

The key findings revealed that Shakespeare employed well-structured and rhetorical metaphors based on universal and cosmic imagery, while Wordsworth used natural and emotional metaphors together with romantic ideals, and Eliot employed fragmented, abstract metaphors reflecting anxieties and frustrations.

The findings are supported by methods such as computational linguistic techniques and demonstrate how metaphors change along with literary and intellectual contexts. Metaphors serve as both artistic devices and cultural and cognitive identifiers. Teachers can integrate the findings into teaching figurative language and help students understand deep cultural and historical meanings.

The recommendations are as follows:

1. To broaden the research by including more writers and texts to generalize the results.
2. To apply NLP, MPI, and machine learning for metaphor detection.
3. To determine the presence of comparable diachronic shifts in poetic traditions other than English through cross-linguistic research.
4. To demonstrate the cognitive depth of figurative language to students by integrating metaphor analysis into education and training.

6.1. Limitations and Future Research

The procedure provides a consistent scheme to qualify the frequency of metaphors, though it has certain limitations. One of the drawbacks is the incapacity to convey the complex of layered metaphors and complex poetic structures totally. The difference in the interpretation of metaphors may lead to misunderstanding in classification. In terms of improvement, future research may include innovative methods such as machine learning algorithms and NLP to facilitate semantic analysis and to allow a broader diachronic study of metaphor. Additional research may also concentrate on cross-linguistic comparisons to analyze how metaphors evolve across languages.

Comparative methods may also be used to trace the evolution of metaphorical structures. The analysis of French symbolism, German Romantic poetry, or Eastern literature may shed light on both specific and universal conceptual methods in order to find out which models are specific to English poetry and which are part of a global phenomenon. The extended study may show the development of metaphor from Old English to modern English poetry. The understanding of metaphorical transitions may be improved by studying other literary genres: prose, dramaturgy, and philosophical works. The "brain-computer" metaphor shows a valuable parallel for understanding the diachronic metaphor evolution (Brette, 2022). Historical metaphors such as Shakespeare's, Wordsworth's, and Eliot's reflect changing cultural paradigms. Spreading the study of political and scientific speech may help understand how metaphorical language shapes thinking in non-literary fields.

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