



Metaphors and political discourse

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Annotation: *Metaphor has a wide range of applications in everyday speech and allows us to communicate our thoughts vividly. The main functions of metaphor in political discourse are heuristic, argumentative, and interactive, smoothing the most dangerous political speech that touches on controversial political issues. In this thesis, we investigated metaphor used in modern political discourse in the English language, proceeding from the cognitive point of view.*

Key words: *figurative language, metaphor, cognition, discourse, political discourse*

As a means of communication, language plays a crucial role in our daily lives. People use language in a variety of ways to express their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. It's not always easy to articulate those meanings. The speaker occasionally expresses himself in an oblique and ambiguous manner. Using, for example, In speech, metaphorical language is used to express a point. In order to produce some specific meaning or effect, figurative language deviates from what users of a language understand as the standard meaning of words or the regular arrangement of words. There are various types of figurative language; but, one of them, metaphor, is appealing enough to be studied and thought to play an essential part in cognition.

A metaphor is defined as "a figure of speech in which a word or phrase actually expressing one kind of object or thought is substituted for another to convey a likeness or analogy between them."¹ It derives its meaning from the Greek term "metaphorá," which means "transfer."² A metaphor, unlike a simile, makes a parallel between two phrases without utilizing the words "as" or "like." The objects that are compared are from "various classes of experience," which leads to a new understanding through the use of specific language.³

From a "classical" standpoint, metaphor is described as a figure of speech in which one term is used to imply something distinct from literal meaning, such that one item or idea is related to a different thing or idea. Metaphor studies have taken on a completely new appearance since the 1980s, as evidenced by *Metaphors We Live By*, co-written by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), which made a significant contribution to the linguistic field through their interpretation of the metaphor system in the context of cognition. According to them, metaphor is primarily a technique of thinking about one thing in terms of another, and its primary function is comprehension. They discovered that metaphor is present in everyday life, not just in language, but also in cognition and action.

Discourse is made up of suggestions or fragments of proposals, and the content of the discourse is usually centered around some "support" notion known as the "subject of discourse" or "discourse topic." Understanding discourse, the interpreter constructs elementary propositions in common

¹Merriam-Webster (2014b). Metaphor. Retrieved January 10, 2014, from <http://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/metaphor>

²Oxford Dictionaries (2014). Metaphor. Retrieved January 10, 2014, from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/metaphor>

³ Burkholder, T. R. & Henry, D. (2009). *Criticism of Metaphor*. In J.A. Kuypers (Ed.), *Rhetorical Criticism: Perspectives in Action* (pp. 97-114). Lanham, MD: Lexington Books



value, incorporating new information included in another interpreted proposal into the framework of the previously received interim or preliminary interpretation.

As metaphor influences how we think and act, its cognitive function is critical in political speech. Politics deals with complex topics that might be difficult to grasp at times. That is why metaphor is a necessary and commonly used figure of speech in political discourse: it aids in the understanding of difficult issues and serves as a persuasive tool.⁴ Thus, metaphor is a tool for understanding politics by contrasting tough political issues in the focus with simpler and more intelligible issues in the frame. It has the potential to sort out redundant information or reorganize information in a more accessible manner in this manner.

The public goal of political speech is to impress in people - community citizens – the importance of "politically correct" behaviors and/or evaluations. In other words, the objective of political discourse is to persuade, not to describe (i.e., not to refer to), but to awaken in the destination of intentions, to provide reason for believing, and to motivate action. As a result, the effectiveness of political discourse can be measured in terms of this purpose. The symbols are used in speech policy (with a few exceptions), and its success is determined by how well these characters resonate with the mass consciousness: a politician must be able to strike the right chord in the consciousness; policy statements must be placed in the "universe" of opinions and evaluations (that is, all the many inner worlds) of its addressees, "consumers" of political discourse.

Any discourse, not just political in nature, aims to present a system that takes into consideration the possible interpreter's perspectives in order to influence the audience's intents, opinions, and rationale for their actions. According to A. Schopenhauer, the art of persuasion lies in the deft employment of delicately touching human notions. Because of this and abrupt changes, it is possible to move from one belief to another, sometimes contrary to the speaker's expectations.⁵

For example, the political speech of former British Prime Minister Theresa May on July 17, 2019: "It has been democratic politics, an open market economy and the enduring values of free speech, the rule of law and a system of government founded on the concept of inviolable human rights that has provided the nexus of that progress in the past. And a healthy body politic will be essential to consolidating and extending that progress in the future. It is on that score that today we do have grounds for serious concern."⁶ The politician used the metaphor "a healthy body politic".

The use of the state, society, or the church and its institutions as biological (usually human) bodies in Western political thought is an ancient metaphor. In terms of its ancient origins, the metaphor implies a hierarchical leadership and division of labor, and it has a strong autocratic or monarchical meaning.

The first recorded example of the political metaphor of the body is found in the Rigveda (1500s BC), one of the oldest sacred books of Hinduism.⁷ There, the South Asian caste system is explained by comparing the priest to the "mouth", the soldier to the "hand", the shepherd to the "thigh" and the farmer to the "foot" of humanity. So, the goal of a politician using this metaphor is to have a "body" (i.e., the state) that is both politically and socially and, of course, spiritually healthy and strong in order to achieve all-round development in the future.

In conclusion, the use of metaphors in political discourse is a linguistic strategy used around the world. From the above analysis, it can be said that the metaphor helps the people to understand the

⁵Schopenhauer A. 1819/73 – Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung: 1. Bd. Vier Bücher, nebst einem Anhang, der die Kritik der Kantischen Philosophie enthält. 4. Aufl // A. Schopenhauer's sämtliche Werke / Hrsgn. v. Julius Frauenstadt. 2. Aufl: Neue Ausgabe. Bd. 2. – Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1891.

⁶<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-speech-on-the-state-of-politics>

⁷<https://www.britannica.com/topic/body-politic>



various political issues in the society and therefore represents their general attitude towards politics. The use of metaphors not only helps to convince people of a particular point of view, but also influences people's opinion on political issues.

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