

METAPHORS IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE



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***Abstract.** The aim of this article is to study the scope of metaphors as a persuasive tool inherent to political discourse in English. And when used in political discourse, it helps to create a special positive image of a politician. The political metaphor is one of the effective ways to manipulate a human consciousness.*

***Keywords:** political linguistic, political communication, metaphor, political discourse, lingual, manipulation, political metaphor.*

At the present time continually growing political activities stimulate an profound development of political technologies which are impossible without mass media. The media that reach large numbers of people in a short time, evoke attention of the society to political communication and political discourse.

The political discourse should enclose all those present in the mind of the speaker and listener components that can affect the perception of speech, of the political views of the author. And their function, when creating a text, is to use all possible tools for managing the audience opinions. In political discourse there is a wide range of linguistic means capable to influence the opinion of the masses in order to manipulate them. One of the main and effective ways to make the speech expressive and associative is the use of political metaphors.

Metaphors are an important area of linguistic study as they are considered one of the fundamental forms of reasoning and are built from concepts that “structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Thus, an understanding of the metaphors used by politicians might lead to an understanding of how those politicians (and the individuals they represent) perceive and operate in the world, and such an understanding might shed light on reasons for the growing political divide.

Studies on political discourse have been based on the view that metaphors play a central role in public discourse, particularly political discourse. These studies have argued that metaphors have significant rhetorical and persuasive use in political discourse. Beard (2000) claimed that by knowing how to use metaphorical language in an influential way, a politician could either gain or keep power. This study

therefore reviewed seven studies on metaphor in political discourse both in and outside Kenya to assess the role metaphor played in political discourse.

Since the initial proposal of Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) theory, conceptual metaphor analysis has been applied in a vast array of fields, including the political sphere. Lakoff (2002) himself analyzed conservative and liberal discourse in the United States and proposed two opposing worldviews that conservatives and liberals adhere to, both based on familial structures with the government as the parent and the citizens as the children. It should be noted that Lakoff recognizes the complexity and intersectionality of political ideologies, and he does not claim that his theory covers the full spectrum of conservative and liberal opinions. However, for simplicity’s sake, he has posited that his theory represents a central model of conservatism and liberalism.

Additionally, people may use metaphors to influence the way that others see issues, employing them as a persuasive technique in their language. For example, if they want someone to see that their stance on an issue is the morally superior one, they may say “We have the higher ground”, evoking the metaphor MORALITY IS UP. In this way, they are able to frame others’ perception of an issue and thus influence how they perceive and react to different events and people.

The persuasive power of metaphors has been an area of interest for decades with researchers interested in the persuasive techniques used in advertising, healthcare, politics, and more (e.g. Bowers & Osborn, 1966; Burgers et al., 2015; Landau et al., 2009; McGuire, 2000; Read et al., 1990; Scherer et al., 2015; van Enschoot et al., 2010). Within this research, they have also produced and refined various theories to explain why metaphors are persuasive. There are seven theories which appear to predominate, discussed below in chronological order.

The studies included a wide range of metaphors on a variety of topics (from geoengineering to elections), and the persuasive power of these metaphors was measured in the attitude reported by participants. Brugman et al. (2019) coded the effect direction as positive if the reported attitude was in line with the position reflected in the metaphorical frame (e.g. after exposure to the natural analogy frame, individuals reported positive attitudes toward geoengineering) and as negative if the reported attitude was not in line with the position reflect in the metaphorical frame (e.g. after exposure to the natural analogy frame, individuals reported negative attitudes toward geo-engineering).

Studying different examples we can say that the metaphor is used to create the name of reality and at the same time to understand the essential features of this reality. Contrary to a dead metaphor an active metaphor is one which is relatively new and

hence is not necessarily apparent to all listeners, although if the metaphor is well-selected, it will be easy enough to understand. Donald Trump's betting that the perils of today's world will blind us to its unlimited promise (Hilary Clinton). Yet, as she threw the Middle East into violent turmoil, things turned out well for her. The Clintons made almost \$60 million in gross income while she was Secretary of State (Donald Trump).

The given examples make possible to divide metaphors in positive and negative, depending on the way of manipulation. This is explained by the fact that the political discourse is contentious. Most often, political communication is intended to have an indirect impact on the distribution of power, on the opinion of the electorate, so a politician intensively resorts to the metaphor.

The role of metaphor in political discourse is significant and undeniable. It has the ability to influence the decision-making process, and its presence in the formal, sometimes incomprehensible and dry text allows to see clearly and imagine vividly a certain phenomenon of life, to understand, and define it better. Using appropriate metaphors appeals directly to the senses of listeners or readers, sharpening their imaginations to comprehend what is being communicated to them. Metaphors are also ways of thinking, offering the listeners and the readers fresh ways of examining ideas and viewing the world.

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