

Analysing the Conceptual Metaphors In Yar'Adua's 7-point Agenda

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Abstract

This paper is an exploration of the conceptual metaphors embedded in Yar'Adua's 7-point agenda. Although writers have x-rayed Yar'Adua's 7-point agenda from different perspectives, no such studies have mirrored it from the angle of conceptual metaphors. Therefore, this paper examines the use of metaphors in comprehending and interpreting the 7-point agenda. The conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) and its principles, as propounded by Lakoff and Johnson, is used as the basis for analysis. The employment of conceptual metaphors in this paper will help the readers to construe the underlying meanings in Yar'Adua's 7-point agenda by delineating the agenda. Also, the application of structural metaphors has revealed the critical issue of poverty prevalent in the Nigerian society together with the issues of incompetency, sentiment and indifference demonstrated by the Nigerian political leaders. In all, the paper showed that Yar'Adua's 7-point agenda is laced with the intended frantic rebirth of the Nigerian economy and infrastructural development of the Nigerian nation.

Keywords: Conceptual Metaphor, Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), 7-point Agenda, Structural Metaphor

Introduction

This paper is a study of the conceptual metaphors in Yar' Adua's 7-point agenda. It analyses the writer's communicative power through the employment of metaphors. Its method of analysis is qualitative and interpretative because it analyses the underlying metaphors in the excerpts and demonstrates how they enhance the transmission of ideas to the governed. Politics is majorly concerned with civil government, the state, public affairs, human conflict and its resolution as well as the source and exercise of power. It is power and a springboard with which politicians display power through the language they employ and the way language lends support to their opinions. Moreover, most of the administrative activities of the government are done by speeches, and metaphors are pervasive in almost every human speech.

Language is a veritable tool for communication. And every human communication ostensibly potends meaning and cognition. Ahumaraeze Innocentia remarks that "communicators engage through various acts to impact on their audience or readers. Thus, information, meaning construction, cognition and meaning deconstruction become the link or binding force between those that generate and those that receive the communication events" (326). Every communication carries a message whose meaning must be deciphered by the receiver.

The decoding is often done through conceptual metaphor. Metaphor is not merely an instrument of language but exists in human thoughts and actions. Also, language may appear empty if metaphor is not explored in the language of communication.

Moreover, conceptual metaphor is one of the instruments that polish the language with which speakers project their messages or ideas. Nikolina Borcic et al. note that:

scientists who deal with language policy and conceptual metaphor in a language find the subtle expression of emotions through the use of metaphor, one of the essential characteristics of a successful persuasive political communication. Conceptual metaphors in that way shape the themes of a certain society and also affect social reality by emphasizing certain parts of the theme or approach to the theme. The use of conceptual metaphors makes it possible to point out that part of the target domain to which one wants to direct the attention of the recipients (87)

The above expression reveals that conceptual metaphor can be used to address any political or socio-political matters. The pervasiveness and the role of metaphors in human communication informed politicians that they can easily be misconstrued, by the electorates, through the application of conceptual metaphors in their messages. Furthermore, Kovecses Zoltan describes metaphor as 'a cognitive process in which one domain of experience (A) is understood in terms of another domain of experience (B). Metaphor consists of a source (B) and the target domain (A) such

that the source is a more physical and the target a more abstract kind of domain. Examples of source and target domains include the following: source domains: WARMTH, BUILDING, WAR, JOURNEY; target domains: AFFECTION, THEORY ARGUMENT and LIFE'. (355). By the above domains, speakers or politicians x-ray myriads of abstract and thorny economic, political events, social activities and other areas of life. In this manner, politicians and their messages become better understood as a result of the projection of things already known by the people. Relatively, Chikogu Ray remarks that 'metaphor reproduces a vivid picture of the content and intents of the mind' (14). The above explanation echoes the fact that conceptual metaphor can resonate with realities and illuminates one's comprehension of complicated issues.

Again, most democratically elected presidents, like Yar'Adua, transmit their policies using conceptual metaphors. Zoltan opines that '...we make use of a relatively small number of cognitive processes in making sense of our experience' (372). Every man tries to make sense of the world in which he lives and structures his knowledge in organizing domains. Cynthia Taylor and Bryan Dewsbury note that "metaphors are crucial in the production of knowledge in that they allow us to make concrete connections between abstract concepts and everyday experiences" (1). The Position of the above authors indicates that metaphors enable humans to create an interconnection between two distinct domains of life. The creative power of metaphor has placed most users of language, especially politicians on the path of restructuring the knowledge of others in construing complex socio-political issues.

Much has not been done metaphorically considering the 7-point agenda of late president Yar'adua though it invokes myriads of issues relating to the rebuilding of the Nigerian economy and infrastructural development. The agenda has been examined from various perspectives. Despite the huge criticism of the agenda from the human social sciences, minor attention has been linguistically paid to it. The late President Yar'Adua's 7-point agenda was birthed in a bid to sail with the opportunity engendered by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for salvaging the globe from the problems orchestrated by absolute poverty. The 7-point agenda was indeed in line with the objectives of the MDGs. However, this present study seeks to lend a boost to the paucity of the linguistic works on Yar'Adua's 7-point agenda. This is achieved by focusing on conceptual metaphor, an aspect of cognitive stylistics.

Theoretical Framework/Literature Review

Conceptual metaphor theory is also known as cognitive metaphor theory propounded by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) for the investigation of metaphor in everyday language. They paid attention to the relevance of metaphor in language and thought. According to Lesley Jeffries and Dan McIntyre, they believe that metaphor is not merely a feature of language but a matter of thought which is central to our conceptual system and how we make sense of ourselves and the world we live in (138). To them, everyday language, thoughts and actions are preoccupied with metaphors, and our conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities. Norgaard Nina et al. perceive conceptual metaphor as “metaphorical patterns... a pervasive and fundamental component of the human thought process and not simply a linguistic device to enhance language, especially as found in literary discourse” (60). Relatively, Csabi Szilvia notes that ‘metaphor is a property of concepts, and not of words—this is why they primarily talk about conceptual metaphors. In their view, the most important role of metaphor is to help understand certain concepts better’ (214). Lakoff and Johnson assert that ‘our concepts structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people’ (124). The above words stress the significance of metaphor in construing complex concepts.

Also, the theory posits that one conceptual frame is construed in terms of another conceptual frame through mapping of the concepts in the two frames. In the words of Szilvia, ‘conceptual metaphors allow forms of reasoning and expressions from one domain to be used in another domain’ (214). He maintains that ‘...people often talk and think unconsciously about love in terms of journeys...grasping this view of metaphor is CONCEPT A IS CONCEPT B, where CONCEPT A is the target domain, and CONCEPT B is the source domain’ (214). He further notes that ‘there is a set of systematic correspondence, mappings, between the source and target domains, so the constituent conceptual elements of the source domain correspond to constituent elements of the target’ (214). The mapping of the two conceptual domains facilitates the interpretation of metaphorical expressions.

Lakoff and Johnson provide the following when they discussed argument in terms of war:

He attacked every point in my argument;
He shot down all of my arguments;
Your claims are indefensible;

I demolished his argument (124).

The above examples demonstrate a similar underlying conceptual metaphor, ARGUMENT IS WAR. The elements of the source domain of WAR are mapped onto a more abstract target domain. For one to be criticised can be described as being attacked or to lose an argument can be described as being 'shot down'. Lakoff and Johnson remark that 'many of the things we do in arguing are partially structured by the concept of war' (4). In lieu of the above, it is clear that when humans talk about argument or argue, they hinge on the same words as when they talk about war. Fairdough Norman avers that 'the militarization of discourse is also a militarization of thought and practice' (195). Jeffries and McIntyre stress that 'Cognitive metaphor theorists have begun to see these patterns as evidence that, far from being inactive, these conventional metaphorical ways of talking about particular activities and practices suggest that we conventionally think about these things in particular ways' (140).

In conclusion, Lakoff and Johnson distinguish several different types of conceptual metaphors based on their functions, and they are structural, orientational and ontological metaphors. Based on Csabi's explanation of the types of metaphors, structural metaphors project the structure of the source domain onto the structure of the target, therefore, speakers can understand one domain in terms of another. Orientational metaphors have an evaluative function. They make large groups of metaphors coherent with one another. Examples of these are metaphorical concepts that have an upward or downward orientation. Ontological metaphors provide an object/substance/container status to abstract targets without specifying the exact nature of these. Personification, a type of ontological metaphor is abundant in both poetic and everyday language (215).

Analysis

President Yar'Adua's Seven-Point Agenda

1. **Critical Infrastructure:** This would involve paying attention to adequate power supply to facilitate industrialization. Development of Rail, Road, Air and Water transportation to facilitate movement of persons, goods and service.
2. **Niger Delta:** This would involve complete overhaul of the region to ensure provision of physical infrastructure and empowerment of the people.
3. **Food Security:** Through this vision, the administration has declared interest in enhancing agriculture and water resources to ensure adequate food supply for

local consumption and export.

4. **Human Capital Development:** This would involve reform of education sector to improve skills and enhance standards.
5. **Land Tenure and Home Ownership:** Review of the Land-use laws to facilitate proper use of the nation’s land assets for socio-economic development; and citizens’ access to mortgage facilities.
6. **National Security and Intelligence:** Through this strategy, the administration intends to give adequate attention to the provision of security to lives, and property.
7. **Wealth Creation:** This aspect would be used to initiate the process of diversification of the nation’s revenue base and increase production to provide jobs.

(Source: Federal Ministry of Information and Communications 2007)

The above seven-point agenda is the primary thrust of Yar’Adua’s administration. This policy is birthed to salvage the excruciating poverty and its effects on the Nigerian nation. Also, it is aimed at aligning with the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The analysis below demonstrates how this agenda can be implemented and achieved through the explicit knowledge of conceptual metaphors:

Excerpt 1

Critical Infrastructure: This would involve paying attention to adequate power supply to facilitate industrialisation. Development of Rail, Road, Air and Water transportation to facilitate movement of persons, goods and services.

From the above excerpt, it is clear that infrastructure is talked about as a machine. Here, infrastructure has become a machine. Machine is the source domain while infrastructure is the target domain (INFRASTRUCTURE IS A MACHINE)

Target Domain	Source Domain
Infrastructure	Machine
Stimulant	Productive
Poor/Deplorable	Weak/Faulty
Inaccessible	Grounded
Durable	Durable
Maintenance	Maintenance

The mapping reveals that infrastructure and machine have common qualities that enable anyone to construe infrastructure in terms of a machine. Machine produces what it is designed to produce while infrastructure stimulates economic prospects. A machine can develop faults after series of production while infrastructure can be in a deplorable state. A machine can be grounded and become useless while infrastructure can become inaccessible and abandoned. A machine is durable if built with sophisticated materials while infrastructure is durable if built with high-quality material. A machine is maintained regularly while infrastructure requires quarterly maintenance. The above features help the readers interpret the metaphor. Also, the above analysis shows that if infrastructure is taken as a machine, there would be rapid economic growth in the country.

Excerpt 2

Niger Delta: This would involve complete overhaul of the region to ensure provision of physical infrastructure and empowerment of the people.

The above excerpt demonstrates the conceptual metaphor, NIGER DELTA IS AN ENGINE

The source domain is engine while the target domain is Niger Delta. The metaphor implies that Niger Delta can be better comprehended in terms of engine. This can be seen in the element of the two domains share.

Target Domain	Source Domain
Niger Delta	Engine
Crude Oil Supply	Repair
Oil Spillage	Burn fuel
Clean-up	Maintenance

The mapping shows that Niger Delta and engine are related in some aspects. Niger Delta can be described in terms of an engine because of the elements they possess. They both involve in supply. Niger Delta supplies the nation with crude oil for socio-political and economic sustainability, just as an engine supplies energy for maximum productivity. Niger Delta can be renovated for development while an engine can be repaired to re-undertake a task. Niger Delta encounters oil spillage just as an engine burns fuel. Niger Delta can be cleaned-up to prevent health hazards while an engine is maintained to ensure longevity. It is obvious from the above explanation that the Niger Delta region is the engine (mainstream) of the Nigerian economy and the instrument of development in Nigeria.

Excerpt 3

Food Security: Through this vision, the administration has declared interest in enhancing agriculture and water resources to ensure adequate food supply for local consumption and export.

This excerpt demonstrates the conceptual metaphor, PERSON IS ADMINISTRATION

The source conceptual domain is person while the target conceptual domain is administration. Here, administration is construed in terms of a person due to the elements they have. This is shown through the mappings.

Target	Domain
Source	Domain
Administration	Person
Interest	Interest
Strong	Strong
Weak	Weak/Sick
Failure	Failure

The mapping has revealed that an administration can be comprehended in terms of a person. Just as a person has an interest in certain activities, an administration can also develop an interest in certain areas of a nation's economy. A person's health can be strong while an administration can also be strong. A person can be weak or sick just as an administration can be weak. A person can fail just as an administration can be a failure. Yar'Adua has an interest in food security, and the presidency must work tirelessly to avoid failure in the provision of food for local consumption and export.

Excerpt 4

Human Capital Development: This would involve reform of education sector to improve skills and enhance standards.

The excerpt above displays the conceptual metaphor, HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT IS A BUILDING. The source domain is building and the target domain is human capital development. The metaphor indicates that human capital development can be talked about in terms of a building. This can be observed in the conceptual mappings of the elements possessed by the two domains.

Target Domain	Source Domain
Human Capital Development	A Building
Investment	Construction
Experience	Shelter
Ruined	Ruined/Destroyed

The mapping portrays that human capital development can perfectly be construed in terms of a building. A building undergoes construction before completion while Human Capital Development is what every plausible government invests in. The essence of a building is to provide shelter for the man while the essence of human capital development is to provide the citizens with quality experience or training. A building can be ruined or destroyed just as human capital development can be ruined or halted in a country. If Yar’Adua’s administration perceives human capital development as a building, reforming and investing in education health and security will be achievable.

Excerpt 5

Land Tenure and Home Ownership: Review of the land use laws to facilitate proper use of the nation's land assets for socio-economic development and citizen’s access to mortgage facilities.

The above excerpt demonstrates that the review of land use laws can be talked about as a machine. Law has become a machine. Machine is the source domain while law is the target domain (LAW IS A MACHINE)

Target Domain	Source Domain
Law	Machine
Organization	Productive
Disrespect	Faulty
Review	Repaired

The mapping tells that laws can be comprehended in terms of a machine. Just as a machine facilitates the production of goods, laws bring about a consummate organization of human society. A machine can develop certain faults while some laws can be disrespected. A machine can be repaired if it develops faults while laws can be reviewed if not properly obeyed. The analysis shows that if land-use laws are

seen as a machine it would fast-track the citizen’s access to mortgage facilities and socio-economic growth.

Excerpt 6

National Security and Intelligence: Through this strategy, the administration intends to give adequate attention to the provision of security to lives and property.

A careful study of the above excerpt shows that the source conceptual domain is (person) while the target conceptual domain is (administration). Here, administration can be understood in terms of a person because of the qualities they both possess. This is displayed by the mappings below:

Target Domain	Source Domain
Administration	Person
Formidable	Sick
Concern	Focus/Concern
Security	Protection

From the above mappings, we can understand that an administration can be discussed as a person. A person can be healthy or sick just like an administration that is formidable or weak. Any administration that is weak lacks concerns and cannot ensure the security or protection of the governs. The Yar’Aduas administration portends to be formidable and laced with genuine concerns to fight against insecurity in Nigeria. Indeed, the administration did all it could to combat the forces perpetuating social and political insecurity in the country.

Excerpt 7

Wealth creation: This aspect would be used to initiate the process of diversification of the nation’s revenue base and increase production to provide jobs.

The above excerpt displays the conceptual metaphor, WEALTH CREATION IS A TREE. The source domain is (tree), and the target domain is (wealth creation). This metaphor means that wealth creation can be construed in terms of a tree. This can be viewed in the elements they share.

Target Domain	Source Domain
Wealth Creation	Tree
Follow up	Planting
Disrespect	Growth
Diversification	Branches
Profitable	Productive
Failure	Hewed

The mappings unfolds that wealth can only be created in a nation when she invests her resources into distinct businesses. Wealth creation is just like a tree planted, watered and later develops branches before production. The Yar'Aduas administration shows the readiness to shift attention from crude oil to other branches of the economy, like agriculture, tourism and so on. the administration believes that investing into other sector of the economy will bring about great productivity and employment of graduates in the country.

Conclusion

The Yar'Adua's 7-Point agenda can only be realised if the concepts discussed in the above domains are employed as implementation factors. The problem of successive administrations has been the implementation of their agenda caused by system failure. Ogoma Daniel notes that 'development is a product of the combination of many variables. Some of which are visionary and honest leaders and good governance' (17). If President Yar'Adua incorporates politicians who are morally balanced and patriotic in his government, his vision to redeem the citizens from absolute penury would be achieved. On the contrary, the Nigerian leadership is flooded with politicians who entrenched and snowball the principle of 'self' and 'other' Also, the Nigerian politicians inaudibly and clandestinely plunder the nation's economy. They incite bad governance and embezzle the nation's wealth to enrich themselves. Despite their agenda and exotic positions these politicians occupy, they have not been able to salvage the country and citizens from poverty. They steal with impunity and make open their loots. While employing words of hope, and promising to ameliorate the living standard of the poor, they orchestrate situations that propel the poor to go insane and die of hunger.

Lastly, any government that employs Yarbidua's 7-point agenda and implement it will redeem the poor from the doldrums of poverty. This is because the agenda is

characterized by the frantic rebirth of the Nigerian economy and infrastructural development of the Nigerian nation. But any government wrapped in stealing, incompetency, sentiment and indifference cannot achieve the 7-point agenda as projected by the Yar' Adua's administration.

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