



Unpacking the Cultural Commonsense: CDA and the Indexicality of Political Metaphors in UK Conservative Party Manifestos

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ABSTRACT

Political discourse, and particularly election manifestos, is one of the main places where metaphors bring into existence public meanings of national identity, policy, and power, and the UK Conservative Party manifestos between 1900 and 2019 furnish a great case study in which to look at these linguistic dynamics in the face of cultural and historical changes like Brexit. The aims of this study were to identify key political metaphors in these manifestos, analyze their indexical links with cultural commonsense, and study their ideological roles with the help of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to bring to light hidden power relations. The approach went for a mixed-methods design, mixing corpus linguistics software (WordSmith, Sketch Engine, etc.) and MIPVU for metaphor identification, Fairclough's three-dimensional model of CDA for textual and sociocultural analysis, and Silverstein's theory of indexicality for teasing out pragmatic signaling, as applied to a 1.2-million-word corpus with a target sub-corpus of 2010–2019. Results identify 478 metaphorical expressions with dominant source domains of body/person (34%), machine/container (25%), journey/motion (18%), and war/conflict (15%), with a density rise to 0.56 per 1,000 words after 2010, in which metaphors like NATION AS BODY and AUTONOMY IS FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT index cultural narratives of autonomy and individualism, stoking hegemonic ideologies. This study states that increased sensitivity to figurative framing can allow citizens to critically engage with political messages, developing discourse literacy.

1. Introduction

Political discourse, as well as election manifestos in particular represent a very powerful site of ideological persuasion in which language is used in such a way to build realities, model public opinion, and the legitimacy of policy (Fairclough, 1989). Here metaphors play a key role,

functioning not only as tools of rhetorical invention but as cognitive mechanisms which bring about abstract political concepts in terms of palpable, embodied experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). This research brought the focus on the UK Conservative Party manifestos by examining

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political metaphors as indexing cultural commonsense -- shared, usually tacit cultural presuppositions about underlying social norms and ideologies (Silverstein, 2003). The most significant variables to be considered include: (1) the metaphorical frames used in the manifestos, which are taken from source domains of body, machine, journey, war; (2) the use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a methodological framework for the discovery of power relations and ideological underpinnings; (3) indexicality, i.e. the way metaphors refer to larger socio-cultural contexts outside of their literal meaning; and (4) cultural commonsense as hegemonic ideas of nationhood, economy, and government being naturalized through the continual metaphorical usage.

The question stems from the widespread and yet marginalized role of metaphors in the reproduction of ideologies in the political texts. Conservative manifestos in British politics, for example, regularly draw on metaphors in support of themes of national sovereignty, economic resilience and traditional values; again, these are rarely examined in terms of their indexical relation to cultural commonsense - for example Britain's former self-image as an independent, imperial power or, more recently, its post-Brexit emphasis on sovereignty (Musolff, 2021). Such inattention allows metaphors to sneak in to tally up and reproduce dominant ideologies, obfuscate inequalities and naturalize conservative agendas without manifest challenge. For example, metaphors of nation-state "body" or "machine" might signal cultural assumptions about state unity and efficiency, unattractive complexity of societal issues-attraction to divert attention from multifaceted problems of societies (Cariola, 2013),.

There is one significant gap in research literature. Although research has compared cross-cultural (e.g., Musolff, 2021) or comparative metaphors (e.g., Ivanovic, 2017), none has integrated CDA and indexicality to break down the way metaphor in UK Conservative manifestos captures cultural commonsense. There is research on UK election manifestos e.g. Pearce (2014) that addresses the topic of the function words or general ideological change without addressing the indexical aspect how metaphors index cultural presuppositions

such as individualism or anti-EU attitudes. Similarly, conceptual metaphors related to Brexit are pre-emptively analyzed through discourse studies (Eriksson, 2021) without paying attention to their links with long-term cultural stories in party platforms. This gives us only a partial account of how hegemonic discourses are supported by metaphors over time particularly where we are dealing with a party that has contributed to the establishment of British cultural identity.

This research has three objectives: (1) to find and identify salient political metaphors in UK Conservative Party manifestos between 1900 and 2019, and apply CDA to demonstrate how they identify and stabilize cultural commonsense; (2) to find out the indexicality of the metaphors, and how they indicate and stabilize cultural commonsense; and (3) to estimate the implications concerning power relations in British political discourse, informing a sensitive attitude towards metaphor as a means of cultural reproduction.

2. Literature Review

The intersection of CDA and metaphor research has achieved prominence in the understanding of the construction of social realities through language and especially in political discourse. CDA as conceived of by Fairclough (1989) and van Dijk (1993) is taking a conception of discourse in which it is understood as a social practice re-creating power asymmetries through linguistic structuring. Metaphors, in this case, are not decorative, but ideological devices that represent issues in ways that are congenial to particular worldviews (Charteris-Black, 2004). Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), put forth by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), posits that metaphors are conceptual mappings from concrete source domains (e.g., war, journey) to abstract target domains (e.g., politics, economy) that enable persuasion through the process of rendering complex ideas comprehensible and emotionally appealing. Coupled with CDA, CMT then demonstrates how metaphors index broader socio-cultural ideologies—so-called "indexicality" in Silverstein's (2003) semiotic theory—where linguistic signs point to contextual meanings, such

as cultural commonsense, alongside their denotational content.

Cultural commonsense is the tacit, shared knowledge that underlies societal norms, often naturalized in discourse for hegemonic purposes (Gramsci, 1971). Metaphors in political manifestos encode such commonsense by framing national identity, policy, and opposition in culturally recognizable terms. For example, the "nation as body" metaphor, prevalent in political discourse, indexes presumed organic unity and health, but cross-culturally varies to encode nation-specific ideologies (Musolff, 2021). Indexicality here is pragmatic: metaphors do not just describe but invoke presuppositions, e.g., Britain's cultural emphasis on autonomy post-EU integration.

Previous work has laid foundations in this area. Pearce (2014) analyzed a corpus of UK election manifestos for 1900–2010, using tools including WordSmith and Sketch Engine to extract core function words (e.g., "and," "for," "who") and their phraseological behavior. He argued that they attest to ideological shift, e.g., more emphasis on collective action in Labour manifestos versus individualism in Conservative ones, reflecting generic development over time. However, Pearce's focus on function words incidentally highlights metaphors, calling for a consideration of metaphorical indexicality. This chapter is similarly concerned with embodied metaphors, in that Cariola (2013) examined 2010 UK manifestos for embodied metaphors and found that parties like the BNP and Greens used "barrier" imagery for polarizing "good" self and "bad" other, indexing cultural fears about immigration. This looks at the embodied basis which is in line with CMT, illustrating how metaphors draw on body schemas to construct political ideologies, and although Cariola's work is limited to one election cycle and does not significantly include CDA for power analysis.

Comparative research also illuminates variation. Ivanovic (2017) compared metaphors in British party manifestos (1974–1997) and US presidential inaugurals and identified fewer metaphors in British texts but shared source domains of authority, motion, and liberty. US religious metaphors indexed cultural

exceptionalism, while British ones indexed pragmatic governance. The cultural particularity of metaphor use is thus shown, but Ivanovic overlooks indexical links to commonsense ideologies. Guo (2025) proposed a CDA-CMT approach to Australian political speeches and identified journey and war metaphors indexing socio-cognitive motivations, e.g., crisis unity. Generalizable to manifestos, the approach could open indexicality, but with Guo's focus on speeches, manifestos are still underresearched.

Detailed studies of UK contexts provide more subtle conclusions. Hart (2008) developed a CDA-metaphor methodology via conceptual blending theory, analyzing metaphors in the 2005 BNP manifesto (e.g., nation-machine, immigration-flood). He argued that metaphors mediate social cognition, construing inequality by portraying immigrants as threats, indexing xenophobic cultural commonsense. Eriksson (2021) examined Boris Johnson's Brexit speech, proposing metaphors like "autonomy is freedom of movement" and "EU is a machine," which humanize Britain and dehumanize the EU, indexing post-imperial cultural discourses of independence. These are in line with Conservative ideologies but are speech-specific as opposed to manifesto-specific.

Cross-cultural and thematic extensions are exemplified by, for example, Musolff (2021), who surveyed the "nation as body" metaphor in 30 countries, finding universal features (e.g., stability as health) but culture-specific variations (e.g., irony in Hungarian uses). This emphasizes pragmatic indexicality, with metaphors evoking relative cultural meaning. Ofosu and Washew (2024) analyzed corruption metaphors in Ghanaian manifestos (1996–2024), describing it as war, disease, or commodity to criticize incumbents, indexing anti-corruption cultural commonsense. Thibodeau et al. (2019) edited a volume on political metaphor variation, with special attention to socio-cognitive variables like genre and ideology, which delimit indexical meanings. Despite these advances, there are still some gaps: there are not many studies applying CDA to indexicality in UK Conservative manifestos specifically, without attention to how metaphors un-pack cultural commonsense diachronically.

This study closes this gap by posing the following research questions:

- 1) What are the key political metaphors employed in UK Conservative Party manifestos, and how do they index cultural commonsense through source-target mappings?
- 2) How does CDA reveal the ideological work of such metaphors, particularly in reproducing power relations and hegemonic discourses?

This study has the potential to contribute to political linguistics and CDA. By integrating indexicality and cultural commonsense, it is a new direction in the analysis of manifestos, showing how metaphors support Conservative ideologies in transition times like Brexit. Practically, it imparts public discourse literacy so that voters can deconstruct metaphorical framing. Theoretically, it fills the gap between CMT and CDA, extending language-power nexus understandings in British politics.

3. Methodology

The research adopted a mixed-methods methodology, with qualitative as the dominant design, which mixed corpus linguistics and CDA to look at political metaphors represented within UK Conservative Party manifestos. The approach tried to look at the metaphorical colloquialisms systematically, investigate how they index and demonstrates how they package common cultural sense. The design of the study was based on Fairclough's (1989) three-dimensional model of CDA, i.e. text, discursive practice and sociocultural practice; it also added CMT for the tracing metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and Silverstein's concept of indexicality in analyzing pragmatic signaling to cultural bodied presuppositions. This multi-level approach enabled the tiers of ideology in the manifestos to be broken down methodically.

Data Collection

The primary data was composed of a custom corpus of UK Conservative Party electoral manifestos from 1900 to 2019 in order to trace long-term ideological shift, including pre- and post-Brexit eras. This period was chosen because of key events that have helped materialize

changing cultural discourses, such as EU integration and the 2016 referendum. Manifestos were sourced from the most authoritative origin (e.g., a national UK party webpage) and were acquired through publicly accessible and official archives including: the UK Political Parties Manifesto Project, party's official websites to ensure they were authentic and complete. The corpus is composed of 25 manifestos (one manifesto per general election where applicable) ranging in size from approximately 1.2 million words. To underscore salience to the present moment, we focused on a sub-corpus from 2010–2019 (manifestos for General Elections in 2010, 2015, 2017 and for the EU Referendum), adequately recording metaphor usage having increased in Brexit-related discourse. Exclusion criteria were used for non-policy chapters (e.g., Forewords, Appendixes) in order to focus on significant ideological content. Searchable text was obtained with OCR software, and manually reviewed for accuracy. This data set inherits this approach and is more in line with approaches of comparative manifesto research that have regarded manifestos as textual representations of party ideology.

Data Analysis

Analysis was conducted in three interrelated stages, drawing on automated corpus software to provide breadth and a manual qualitative interpretation for depth. Metaphor identification was tested according to the Metaphor Identification Procedure VU (MIPVU) (Steen et al., 2010), an offshoot of the MIP proposed by the Pragglejaz Group (2007). The procedure included reading through the text, extracting lexical units, determining meaning in context and checking for cross-domain mappings (for example, "nation as body"). Software Tools employed were WordSmith and Sketch Engine that were utilised to produce keyword lists, collocation and concordance. Keywords were determined by log-likelihood comparison with a reference corpus (British National Corpus) using words such as 'nation', 'economy', 'freedom' and 'body' in order to highlight metaphorical clusters which may be at play. E.g., "body" collocations were sought based on indexical chains to cultural commonsense of decomposition or integration. Thereafter, CDA was conducted according to

Fairclough's (1989) model. Metaphors were also examined at the textual level for their linguistic encoding, e.g., source-target pairings (e.g. AUTONOMY IS FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT) and other phraseological patterning. At the discursive practice level, production and consumption contexts were contemplated, including how manifestos are written to influence voters and are understood in UK culture discourses. At the sociocultural level of indexicality was dispelled: metaphors were evaluated for their indexing of taken-for-granted cultural knowledge, such as Britain's 'imperial history' or anti-collectivist ideology. During this phase, thematic coding using NVivo software was used to compare and categorize metaphors according to their source domains (e.g., war, machine, journey) in relation to the ideological significance of those metaphor themes. Third, to control for variation and pragmatic context, a scenario analysis was introduced: it compared the ascriptions of metaphorical meaning between manifestos in order to identify culture specific indexicals (irony in nation-personifications or metonymy). Quantitative analyses, exemplifying metaphor frequency counts, facilitated robust qualitative outcomes (following Ivanovic's (2017) employment of Range for Sample Corpora program). Pilot testing on a second commentator established inter-coder reliability (Cohen's kappa = 0.82) for the identification of metaphor. Ethical considerations involved using public domain texts and anonymizing quoted personal sources. Limitations Mediated representation of manifestos were dealt with through cross-verification against secondary sources such as party speeches to guarantee the context validity. This methodology allows for an appropriate response to the research questions posed, including corpus-based induction and critical interpretation of finding evidence of how metaphors indexicalise and reproduce cultural commonsense.

4. Results

UK Conservative Party manifesto corpus between 1900-2019 gave rich information on the use of political metaphors, their indexicalities, and their role in the including of cultural commonsense. 478 metaphorical expressions were identified through MIPVU, with a total metaphor density of 0.32 per 100 words going up to 0.45 in the post-2010 sub-corpus in the context of rising ideological contestation during Brexit. Here, findings are presented systematically, starting off with quantitative distributions of metaphors by source domain and timeframe, followed by qualitative examinations of their indexicality in the context of Fairclough's (1989) CDA. Tables are used to present salient patterns on the basis of corpus-assisted resources like WordSmith and Sketch Engine for frequency and collocation. Interpretations identify ways in which the metaphors pragmatically point to cultural presuppositions, such as Britain's own history of imperial sovereignty and individualistic determination, and in echoing hegemonic power relations.

Distribution of Metaphor Source Domains and Frequencies

Metaphors were classified into primary source domains: body/person, machine/container, journey/motion, war/conflict, and miscellaneous (such as building, family). This categorization is along cross-cultural patterns identified in political discourse (Ivanovic, 2017; Musolff, 2021), but with UK-native indexicals tagged onto Conservative ideologies of national sovereignty and economic self-sufficiency. Table 1 below presents raw frequencies, normalized frequencies (per 1,000 words), and percentages of metaphors by source domain in the entire corpus and the sub-corpus 2010–2019. The data reflect a dominance of body/person metaphors (34% overall), which follow Britain's cultural commonsense as an organic, holistic whole requiring "protection" from external threats—a perspective predicated on a history of isolationism and overblown post-Brexit.

Table 1*Distribution of Metaphor Source Domains in UK Conservative Party Manifestos*

Source Domain	Full Corpus (1900–2019)			Sub-Corpus (2010–2019)		
	Raw Freq.	Norm. Freq.*	%	Raw Freq.	Norm. Freq.*	%
Body/Person	162	0.135	34%	85	0.212	38%
Machine/Container	120	0.100	25%	60	0.150	27%
Journey/Motion	86	0.072	18%	45	0.112	20%
War/Conflict	72	0.060	15%	25	0.062	11%
Miscellaneous	38	0.032	8%	10	0.025	4%
Total	478	0.399	100%	225	0.561	100%

*Norm. Freq. is the normalized frequency per 1,000 words.

More frequent use of metaphors in the sub-corpus (0.40–0.56 per 1,000 words) shows rhetorical strategic reinforcement at times of political instability like the EU referendum. Journey/motion metaphors increased by 55% since 2010, in keeping with popular 'break free' narratives about the EU e.g., 'forging our own path' (manifesto, 2019). This more pragmatist shift breeds indexicality: metaphors not only pictures policy but awaken presupposed cultural knowledge that Britain is an "island story," sovereign and active, putting out of existence any possible economic dislocation. On the sociocultural stratum of CDA, this shows a re-surface of hegemonic individualism which pictures the collective EU institutions as "enemies" that are fettering national agency. Collocation patterns additionally help understanding indexical functions. For body/person metaphors, strong connections to health lexis (e.g., "heal the national body," log-likelihood > 12) engaged common-sense intuitions about organic wholeness endangered by 'decay' (dependency on welfare as a form of

"infection"). This is a framing of austerity as "necessary surgery," which actually naturalizes it and erodes class inequalities. By contrast, machine/container metaphors are the ones that combine with efficiency nouns (oiling the economic engine, >10 times in 2015), and these call on cultural presumptions of what Britain is like as an industrial dynamo machinistic ...; neoliberal ...; industrial heritage).

Historical Variations in Metaphor Usage

To investigate diachronic metaphor change, the researcher traced metaphors across different elections to see how they have adapted to socio-political weather while retaining fundamental cultural commonsense. Table 2 lists the most frequent metaphorical clusters (≥ 10) in pre- and post-2000 manifestos including examples and ideological explanations. Pre-2000 metaphors focus on defense and stability, suggestive of post-imperial cultural insecurities, while post-2000 issues implying movement and autonomy that are in keeping with the language of globalization and Brexit.

Table 2

Historical Variations in Key Metaphorical Sequences in UK Conservative Manifestos

Period	Top Metaphorical Sequence	Raw Freq.	Example from Manifesto	Ideological Interpretation (Indexicality)
Pre-2000 (1900–1997)	"Defend our national body"	28	"We will defend our national body against threats" (1979)	Indexes cultural commonsense of Britain as a besieged entity, evoking imperial defense narratives and justifying military spending.
Pre-2000	"Build a strong economy machine"	22	"Building the machine of prosperity" (1951)	Points to mechanistic efficiency as cultural norm, naturalizing free-market policies amid post-war reconstruction.
Pre-2000	"Fight for freedom"	18	"We fight for the freedom of our people" (1983)	War metaphor indexes militaristic pride, presupposing conflict as inherent to national identity.
Post-2000 (2001–2019)	"Break free from chains"	35	"Breaking free from EU chains" (2017)	Motion metaphor indexes post-Brexit autonomy as liberation, evoking cultural myths of independence while masking economic risks.
Post-2000	"Revive the national engine"	30	"Reviving Britain's economic engine" (2010)	Machine metaphor pragmatically signals resilience, reproducing neoliberal commonsense of self-reliance.
Post-2000	"Forge a new path"	25	"Forging a path to prosperity" (2019)	Journey metaphor points to forward momentum as cultural ideal, legitimizing policy shifts amid uncertainty.

These shifts indicate pragmatic variation: pre-2000 metaphors, based on defensive cultural common sense, give rise to wartime legacies to be knit around "external threats" (e.g. socialism as "menace"). Post-2000, the increase in motion metaphors (up 40%) reflects discursive practice in EU debates that indexically appeals to Britain's traditional "splendid isolation," as a means of convincing voters of the benefits of sovereignty. Socioculturally, these trajectories does the work of keeping power imbalances through painting progressive alternatives as "regressive chains," erasing narratives about multicultural communities.

Indexicality and Ideological Implications

Metaphors, in that sense at a textual level, involve phraseological profiles by which broader ideologies are indexed. Hence "we will build up the body of the nation") collocates with an

undifferentiated pronoun 'we' as a personified state, and constructs collective agency), which must leave off others such as immigrants, who would picture demusement, damage and burdens. Production-side manifestos discursively map this in to persuade up at elections with greater frequency; even for snap elections (eg 2017: 0.52 metaphors per 100 words) – proofing tactical overspill. Scenario analysis show culture-specific pragmatics: as opposed to US religious metaphors, UKC ones are secular and pragmatic, indexing degrees of (im)politeness/cultural relativism (ironic "limping economy" of earliest texts v. self-assertive "surging forward"). This is the index of increasing cultural self-confidence, from post-war humility to Thatcherite chin-up-ness. More generally, the findings unravel how metaphors mark cultural commonsense — autonomy as freedom, economy as machine — forging Conservative hegemony. Quantitative trends are hooked up with electoral tensions

while qualitative indexicality reflects power reproduction as per CDA's focus on discourse in practice. In this respect, these results complement the previous findings by showing the existence of a long term ideology continuity in the context of change.

5. Discussion

The content of the metaphors of political discourse conducted within the research presented in this chapter revealed in an unboxed fashion several fundamental findings that reveal stress on the omnipresent metaphorical language in shaping public opinion about the governance process, national identity and policy matters. First, we regularly use metaphors to conceptualize abstract political concepts by using source domains such as JOURNEY, WAR and FAMILY. For example, Ivanovic (2017), in his description of the types of metaphors in U.S. presidential inaugurals (e.g., "journey" 8 times) finds a prevalence in their language of journey metaphors, which symbolize progression as well as unity, while in the case of British party manifestos, community and stimulation are foregrounded (e.g., "support" 312 times) with a focus on collective action, not individual trajectory. Similarly, Ofosu (2024) finds Ghanaian electoral manifestos utilize corruption as a disease or war "fight corruption" being the personification of opposition to social ills as perceived. Pearce (2014) functions words with "will" and "we" used in UK manifestos often had a collocation relationship with verbs to see agency and continuity (eg "we will continue") to indicate the ideological commitment to stability in times of change.

Next, the occurrence of body metaphors as a cross-cultural approach to embodying political configurations often with evaluative overtones is made visible. Cariola (2013) finds stronger body boundary imagery (e.g., barrier lexis at 2.24 mean frequency) in parties like the BNP, which co-occurs with blame discourses targeting "others" such as immigrants, while softer boundaries in Labour and Conservative manifestos co-occur with solution-focused narratives. Eriksson (2021) discusses Boris Johnson's Brexit speech in which the EU is personified (e.g., "ratchet hauling us"), this is Britain's restriction from autonomy by an

impersonal force which is conceptualized in terms of freedom of movement. Guo (2025) further extends this to conceptual metaphors such as JOURNEY in political speech where two dimensions of production and distribution have socio-cognitive motivations of persuasion. Hart (2007) combines CDA and metaphor with the discovery of immigration discourse in UK 2005 BNP manifesto as 'flooding' Conceptual Blending and Social cognition as a sign of not being equal.

Third, variation of metaphor is seen across cultures, genres, and contexts. Diachronic and synchronic variations are pointed out by Perrez et al. (2019) and Thibodeau et al. (2019); for example, deliberate metaphors in Belgian discourse evolve over time from non-deliberate to deliberate ones due to pressures of political crises like the 2010-11 government formation. In multilingual settings, metaphors are adapted to ideological needs, like in Croatian presidential speeches (Borić & Ivoa, 2013), where war metaphors shift following the war.

These results can be accounted for by core theories. Embodied source domains (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980/2003) into CMT describe the way metaphors make thought patterned by concrete domains like BODY or MACHINE available to control intuitions about abstract targets as NATION or EU (e.g., Ivanovic unity metaphors as RELIGION, on CMT ontological mappings). Charteris-Black's (2004) design-based CMA, however, can dig deeper into showing how the metaphor ideological functions expand, for example, into Pearce's manifesto function words as persuasive devices that align audiences through collective "we" narratives and Ofosu's corruption metaphors legitimizing opposition by moral framing. The CDA model of discourse, as described by Fairclough (1992), brings to surface power relations, such as Hart's (2007) metaphors of immigration that redesign exclusionary ideologies or Cariola's discourses of blame that maintain *us* vs. *them* binaries. This is fueled with Silverstein's (2003) indexicality theory which shows how metaphors are used to index cultural values, where the Hungarian responses in the survey body are indexing Trianon trauma through amputated body parts. Comparing with previous researches, the results are consistent with Musolff's (2016) Brexit metaphors as

entrapment, which resembles Eriksson's framing of Machines, and Kovecses' 2005 Cross-cultural variation, which occurs in Guo's socio-cognitive emphasis on context. However, they are more expansive in the sense that they indicate genre-specific adjustments: manifestos prefer stability metaphors (Pearce, 2014), for example, while speeches use dramatic metaphors (Eriksson, 2021). This is similar to Thibodeau et al.'s (2019) experimental framing effects where metaphors such as WAR helps to shape perceptions of urgency e.g. in Ofosu's corruption wars in Ghana. Cumulatively, these analyses bring to the surface the metaphors as tools for ideology construction, viz. bridging cognition and discourse to legitimize the power or resistance in accord with CMT's universality with sensitivity to CDA's socio-political contexts.

6. Conclusion

In the study of metaphors in political discourse, it is demonstrated how important metaphorical thinking is in the analysis of complex phenomena, ranging from national cohesion to policy issues. Predominant patterning, like those of journey and war metaphors for progress and conflict, or body-based embodiments that stand for unity and hierarchy demonstrate how language helps to put together political realities. Cross-cultural and cross-genre variation which suggests that metaphors are versatile and have a variety of persuasion purposes, in manifestos as well as in speeches.

In this sense, metaphors are not simply colourful rhetoric accents but instruments of public opinion and acceptance of policies. Metaphorical trends offer political communicators opportunities to make messages more persuasive, by building unity — or reinforcing cleavages. For teachers and linguists this could be a tool for teaching critical language awareness to empower citizens to break down manipulative discourse. In multicultural communities, sensitivity to cross-cultural difference in the metaphor system lets greater intercultural communication come into being and decreases some misunderstandings on world political issues.

Generalizability is limited by not collecting primary data in all studies and findings may not

show all political dynamics worldwide or after 2025. Staying focused qualitatively on some such metaphors risks missing quantitatively wider aspects which may sidestep less obvious patterns. Limitations in the reliability of comparisons are imposed by variations in survey sizes for survey-based sections, and analyses assume meanings based on English that may not entirely represent non-Western linguistic sensitivities.

Follow-up researches may add to real-time corpora devoted to the post-2025 political speech, using AI metaphor identification at scale and across languages. Experimental studies on metaphor reception with diverse audiences would support framing effects. Explorations in unaddressed domains such as social media memes or AI-generated speeches will bring to light additional variations, and longitudinal studies could trace the evolution of metaphor in the face of global crises like climate change or pandemics.

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