

METAPHOR, POLITICS AND GENDER: A CASE STUDY FROM GHANA

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ABSTRACT

The study analyses the use of metaphor in a corpus of interviews and speeches given by the former president of the republic of Ghana, the late Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings, and his wife Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings, a politician, businesswoman, president of the 31st December Women's Movement, founder of the National Democratic Party (NDP) and the presidential candidate for National Democratic Party the 2016 election. The theoretical background relies on the notion of metaphor as both a conceptual and linguistic phenomenon. I also relied on the social constructivist view on gender and language to address the potentially gendered language use by the politicians. The rationale for the study is based on the assumption that due to their socialisation, women and men perceive the world differently (Kövecses 2005:90) and therefore express these different cognitive models in language features such as metaphoric expressions. Combining quantitative -corpus-based investigations with qualitative text analysis, I concentrated on metaphors that are often used to conceptualise political activity, mainly JOURNEY and WAR metaphors. The analysis reveals that Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings uses a slightly higher number of pronounced expressions relating to the JOURNEY metaphor. On the other hand, there was a more pronounced use of the WAR metaphor by the late Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings. Their metaphor use would allow for inferences about gendered metaphor usage by politicians, and more generally about analysing metaphor in political discourse in Ghana.

Keywords: conceptual metaphor, gendered language, cognitive models

Kövecses, Zoltán. (2005). *Metaphor in Culture. Universality and Variation*. New York: Cambridge University Press.