The President as a Traveller and a Hero: Conceptual Metaphors in Inaugural Speech

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The aim of the present study is to demonstrate the importance of metaphor in purveying concepts and identities in Iranian political discourse. The choice of the source of the study – presidential inaugural speech, is motivated by the abundancy in figurative language and conceptual metaphors as an intrinsic feature of political discourse. The corpus consists of ten inaugural speeches of three presidents of Iran – Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Hassan Rouhani and Ebrahim Raisi, which are available on the web at htpp://president.ir. The total corpus size is 19023 words. The lexical units in the corpus have been identified and analysed following the metaphor identification procedures of the Pragglejaz Group (2007) and Steen et al. (2010), the Conceptual Metaphor Theory of Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and the Critical Metaphor Analysis introduced by Charteris-Black (2004). As a result of the process of identifying the metaphor-related words in the texts, the role of metaphors for the comprehension of various abstract concepts is discussed. BUILDING, JOURNEY, CONFLICT, HUMAN BODY, LIGHT, and PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT tend to be productive source domains for Iranian political discourse. The analysis focuses on metaphorical linguistic expressions that are manifestations of conceptual metaphors, such as POLITICS IS A JOURNEY, NATION IS A PERSON, ABSTRACT IDEAS ARE PHYSICAL ENTITIES. Since metaphors are repetitive and indirect references to fundamental abstract concepts, they seem to be an effective tool in constructing a coherent political worldview, attracting public's sympathy, and enhancing the Iranian identity. The variation of main conceptual metaphors in the speeches of three presidents is also concerned and it is assumed that it may be a specific indication of each president's personal rhetoric style, as well as a reflection of their political worldview.

References
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