

**An Analysis of the Use of Metaphor
in Barack Obama Inaugural Speech at 20 January 2009**

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Introduction

“Fish need water to be a fish; humans need metaphor to do and think about politics,” said by Thompson, 1996, p. 185. “Metaphors are the essential parts of language by the formation of concepts and meaning,” said by Franke, 200; and Lakoff & Johnson, 1980. According to Franke (year?), Metaphors serve to name the unnameable, creating a framework where concepts are seen.

The goal of this paper is to focus on the explanation of the distinctive metaphors in “Barack Obama’s inaugural speech when he was sworn in as the 44th US president on 20 January 2009”. This aim of the present study is to highlight U.S.A, new president’s usage of “metaphor” in his first speech. I’ll depend on the illustration & the clarification given by “George Lakoff & Johnson’s conceptual metaphor”. Finally, I’ll write my deductive discovery, exploring that United States’ new president has used “metaphor” in an effective manner and creative method to persuade his people about his future strategy. His amazing speech tries to show his people, his ability to find a solution to the enormous proportion of the decline of the economy that threatened the US, and the public passion was that they lost a significant amount of their national self-confidence.

I. INTRODUCTION

We use “metaphor” in all spheres of our life. The metaphor refers to mystery in using implicit unspoken meanings which cause a case of misunderstanding and undeclared state of doubt when you listen to special “metaphorical” utterance that says something that is really different from its actual meaning. Hawkes (1980:1) says that a metaphor signifies *Language which doesn’t mean what it says*. This clarity constructs and defines the impression that the user of metaphor looks like a false, a lie, deceive or misleading utterance, phrase, sentence or even a word. By travelling backwards to lovers utterances of Juliet “*The lights that shines from your eyes*”, we can say that she did not mean to say that Romeo’s eyeballs bright or shiny in the room they remain in. As the poets say, “*A poem is a bird*”, he does not mean to say that the poem can flutter the wings and tail. These two cases are not

only part of many examples to create the impression of metaphor as the full expression of “*absurd*” and “*falsehood*”, said by Max Black in Ortony, 1993:21.

I will now concentrate on the use of metaphor in political speeches. A salient feature of metaphor in this case lies on its excellence and specifications that differ greatly in other categories and areas, such as business writing, and literary arts and science and technology. This distinction refers to the function of poetry and literary work to deliver a message, thoughts or ideas for the reader, mentioned by Culler, (1975:55.) Culler says that *by showing what properties of language were being exploited in particular texts and how they were extended or organized* (1975:55). He wants to say that what is going to take advantage of the properties of language in certain texts, and how it was extended or organized. Politics are also termed as a struggle for power in order to implement some of the political, economic and social ideas into practice. In this process, language plays a crucial role, and is prepared for each political action, accompanied by, and influenced by language. This paper analyses the discourse of political speech, an address & remarks by President Barack Obama. To determine what we have analysed in this study, is the formulation of a problem of this paper: What's the distinction of metaphor in Obama's speech?

2.0 BASIC THEORIES AND ANALYSIS

The basic theory of this study includes three aspects as follows: (1) The definition of metaphor (2) George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's conceptual metaphor (3) The Biography of Obama. Those three aspects within this topic are discussed in the following:

2.1 DEFINITION OF METAPHOR

The term ‘metaphor’ refers to the use of a word or phrase to refer to something that was not related and referred to the direct connection and the connection between the word and phrase used and the thing described. A simile is a figure of speech that implies the implicit comparison between two or things or things that are poles apart, but have some common features made hidden between them.

In simple English, in describing a person, place, thing, or do something else, even if it's not really that “something else”, you speak is considered as metaphor.

In literary use, a metaphor “from the Greek: metapher in rhetorical trope” is defined as an indirect comparison between two or more seemingly unrelated subjects that typically uses “*is a*” to connect the first theme, for example: “*Man is a wolf*”. This is a form of indirect analogy comparing a man is like a wolf. A metaphor is confused and usually with simile, which make a comparison between two subjects using “*like*” or “*as*”. An example of a simile: “*He was as sly as a fox.*” He is cunning as a fox.

Simply a metaphor is carried out in the form of: “*The first subject is a second subject*”, said by Edi Subroto 1986:45. He says that the first theme is the second theme, that a metaphor can be classified as

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metaphor if there is a new joy in reading the language of the expressions, expelling monotony and brighten extinct object, as a symbol for something that is reality dead.

In the development of theories of metaphor, there are several local and foreign linguists who have tried to describe their complicated understanding about metaphor. They are: *Pradopo* (1987), *Edi Subroto* (1991), *Herman Waluyo* (1991), *Andrew Orthony* (1993), and *Wellek* (1993). The theoretical concepts would be explained one after the other.

Pradopo (1987:66) clarifies the meaning of metaphor involves two expressions, firstly the tenor and secondly the vehicle. The tenor talks about the compared objects while vehicle talks about the comparison. Then it was said that metaphor sees things through the middle of other objects. This metaphor describes this object with the same result which already has a different significance.

Edi Subroto (1995:38) indicates that using metaphor is specifically created on the similarity of the two references ever. He called the first reference "*tenor*", the meaning of the word & sense while he named the other one "*vehicle*". The similarity of the individual mandate is the primary builder of the foundation of the metaphor.

According to *Edi Subroto*, one of the most important factors in the conscience of the metaphor is the distance between the "tenor" and the "vehicle". If the distance from each of them is very close to the level of similarity, the metaphor is less expressive, less effective. If the distance between both of them is not so real, the metaphor has the powerful expression. The metaphor like "black wolf" to represent "night shadow" by Arthur Rimbaud is what he is told in the poem is an example of an effective and expressive metaphor "*Edi Subroto*, 1995:39".

"*Herman Waluyo* 1991:84", means that the metaphor is the idea or approach to the target by direct or indirect comparison. From the standpoint of "*Andrew Orthony*, 1993:2", in his book entitled "*Metaphor and Thought*": it seems better, but in an attempt, to two alternative methods of metaphor – a metaphor as the core of the creativity of language function and metaphor as deviant and parasitic on normal – to a more fundamental and differentiate in the opinion about the relationship between language and the world. The conclusion of the experts, what language can enrich our concepts, is understanding of the concepts of allegory, "metaphor".

2.2. FORMS OF METAPHORS

There are two kinds of metaphors:

A *simile*, where compared by two things differently as symbolic example.

An analogy, where a comparison carried between the verbal things.

Both types of metaphors usually use a word "like" or "as" followed by a comparative word. If this leads to misunderstanding or obscure, we should have a look at some examples to get a better understanding of exactly what we mean.

"He is the black sheep of the family" is a metaphor because he can't be a sheep or black. Anyhow, we can compare to describe a black sheep as a sign of this person. The black sheep is an uncommon animal and typically stays away from the herd, and usually stays away from the herd, and the person who shares similar characteristics.

In addition, a metaphor compares the development which is diverse from a simile i.e. we can't use *"like" or "as"* in the development of a comparison. In fact, the comparison makes implicit or subtle comparison and not an explicit. Metaphors can be stronger, but they can also be tricky to identify at times.

A lot of people consider metaphor applied in lyric poems or poetic images, and with no effect in the people's daily life. Honestly, let me say that all of us are speaking, writing and thinking in metaphors in our daily life. Metaphors from time to time are created in our mutual language. These so-called traditional metaphors are known as "conventional metaphors". When you describe somebody with a *"night owl"* or an *"early bird"* or saying *"life is a journey"* are famous "conventional metaphors", these examples usually come to your ears and are grasped, caught, accepted by the majority of addressees.

2.3. CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR

We all speak in metaphors even we recognize that or not; metaphors do something in the way we think something exciting and at the same time create our deep clear vision & understanding to what we are listening to.

2.4. CONVENTIONAL METAPHOR

Approximately a vast number of 'metaphors' are so public that we do not even notice that they are metaphors. We can think of and consider the following "life as a journey", for instance. It is found in most of the advertisements:

- *"Life is a journey, travel it well. United Airlines"*
"Life is a journey. Enjoy the Ride. Nissan"
"Life is a journey. Enjoy the ride with a GM reward card. General Motors"
"Life's a journey--travel light. Hugo Boss Perfume"

2.5. EXTENDED METAPHOR

When you compare between two contrasting items that unusually go beyond the usual, original, or basic form of something that is known as an extended metaphor.

3.0 THE PROFILE OF US PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

Barack Hussein Obama was born in Hawaii on the 4th of August 1961. He has become the 44th President of America. He comes from African roots; he worked a lot to be a lovely character. He has

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worked as a Senator from Illinois since January 2005 until he was elected to be the president in November 2008.

He has graduated from Columbia University, Harvard Law School; there he became the chair of the Harvard Law Review. He was a social activist in Chicago before getting his law degree, and he worked as an advocate for civil rights in Chicago and taught constitutional law at the Faculty of Law at the University of Chicago from 1992 to 2004.

In the Illinois Senate, Obama served three terms from 1997 to 2004. After his failure to get a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in 2000, he sought for United States Senate in 2004. At the time of the campaign, many events made him to a famous character until he succeeded in the March 2004 in the primaries of the Democratic Party elections for the United States Senator from Illinois besides his first televised significant address in July 2004 at the Democratic National Convention. After that, another progress spots the lights on his personality to the public when he succeeded in November 2004 to win election to the U.S. Senate.

The man started to achieve his goal for the presidential elections in February 2007. In 2008, afterward closing the Democratic Party campaign of presidential primaries versus Hillary Clinton; he succeeded to win his party's selection. In the general election held in 2008, he has beaten John McCain the representative of the Republican Party and on January 20, 2009 he was inaugurated as the current US president. He was honored by Nobel Peace Prize On October 9, 2009.

4.0. TYPE OF ANALYSIS

4.1. Written

The following paragraphs contain the analysis of metaphor in "Barack Obama's first inaugural speech text". Depending on George Lakoff's conceptual theories of Metaphor, I'm going to concentrate on analyzing the conceptual representation of metaphor.

"THE NAMES OF CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR"

- 1- " CHANGE ARE MOVEMENT "
- 2 - " STATES ARE LOCATIONS "
- 3- " STATES IS A MOTION OVER A LANDSCAPE "
- 4- " POLITICS IS FIGHT/WAR "
- 5 – " ACTIONS ARE TRANSFER "
- 6 - " POLITICS IS A JOURNEY "
- 7 – " MORE IS UP ; LESS IS DOWN "

1. CHANGE ARE MOVEMENT

There are two metaphorical facts at this point.

(1) "Forty-four Americans have now taken the presidential oath. The words have been spoken during rising tides of prosperity and the still waters of peace."

(2) "The question we ask today is not whether our government is too big or too small, but whether it works – whether it helps families find jobs at a decent wage, care they can afford, a retirement that is

dignified. Where the answer is yes, we intend to move forward. Where the answer is no, programs will end."

(1) He uses "rising tide" and "still waters" but he means "prosperity" and "peace". This is clear in "rising tides of prosperity" and "the still waters of peace", if this movement was self-pushed or if there is a change of location or it keeps silent not even (e.g. Vibrated). This involves location change, or we may see a connection, link with other direction expressions as: forward, backward, upward, or downward.

So, the "rising tide of prosperity" can build as the state of *prosperity* has changed better than it was before, at the same time "peace" does not move forward it keeps "still". Added to that, moving here comes obviously as "flow of natural force the rising tides and substance still waters"

(2) He uses "We intend to move forward" and "programs will end" but he means the creative new ideas of US government strategy to offer more opportunities for those who can't find work or job and how to improve the standard of social warranty.

Obama wants to convey to the addressee that all US presidents from number 1 to the 44 had worked very hard for the prosperity of American citizens. All of them focused their efforts to serve the same goal, target how to make America better than any other country in the world, using all available possibilities to achieve this target how to increase, develop the economy, making all Americans have and enjoy prosperous life. They can do this when the people themselves support the country, government & their president.

2. STATES ARE LOCATIONS

(3) In this speech we have one example "That we are in the midst of crisis is now well understood. Our nation is at war, against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred."

(4) "Yet, every so often the oath is taken amidst gathering clouds and raging storms".

(4) He uses "in the midst of" and "Our nation is at war, against a far-reaching" but he means "crisis" and "network of violence and hatred". These words have given the addressee a general state of feeling that the crisis located at a specific position in Americans' mind. They feel that they are in the central of this danger circle; not far from the risky side. This is the so called intellectual "Spatial metaphor" as linguists had determined. Just words used specially to clarify the authentic threats from all directions towards American citizens "space". They are in a real confrontation with the danger and threats "crises" this is why they have had the feeling of fear or long-term threat of terrorists increasing violence day by day more and more hatred everywhere. He mentioned confrontations between terror and peace; anyhow, he didn't mention "terrorist organization" of "Al-Qaeda" clearly.

(4) He says "Amidst gathering clouds" and "Raging storm" but he means "The oaths" or "The presidential oath of American president". The unspoken meaning "Oath is taken amidst gathering

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clouds and raging storms” can be explained as ‘Amidst’ says without saying ‘In the middle of something, if you consider this is a cause of fear & suspect’. So, the ‘gathering clouds and the raging storms’ gives the addressee of tough emotion of grief, anxiety that the common people feel at recent time.

3. STATES IS A MOTION OVER A LANDSCAPE

(5) *“These are the indicators of the crisis, subject to data and statistics. Less measurable but no less profound is a sapping of confidence across our land – a nagging fear that America’s decline is inevitable, that the next generation must lower its sights.”*

(5) He speaks, saying “*Across our land*” but the hidden meaning “*A sapping confidence*”. From my reading to what Lakoff’s clarifications about what is called “conceptual metaphor”. The way of the movement is in the direction of the landscape. The forces related to the work, the forces which influence the movement. Progress is the distance or the distance from the target.

He says “*A sapping of confidence across our land*” has given the listener a portrait that self-trust treated as a solid thing, a touchable thing which can physically walk on. The man wants to tell us that the people of US are facing currently weakening fear; the self-trust in their special case has increased in the whole country. A strong fear, anxious about the unescapable failure of the economy of the US, they might lose their hegemony. His desire to prescribe the current situation & his maps to the solutions to overcome these difficulties is mentioned clearly.

4. POLITICS IS FIGHT/WAR

(6) *“Our nation is at war, against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred.”*

(7) *“To those leaders around the globe who seek to sow conflict, or blame their society’s ills on the West - know that your people will judge you on what you can build, not what you destroy. To those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent, know that you are on the wrong side of history; but that we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist.”*

(6) He says “*At war*,” “*against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred*” but he means “*our nation*” to speak about the current condition politically in the following utterance of “*fight or war*”. It is obvious that in fighting or in war you may win you may lose. He is attacking his opponents’ situation and he shields his position. It is possible that you will advance or drop on the ground. He is planning and using tactics. Facing indefensible position, he might relinquish, or move a little backwards and decide a new tactic for the next attack. All this and there is no real war physically no battlefield, no real soldiers, it is only a verbal battle. “Military strategists stress the importance of controlling the high ground”; political strategists stress the importance of controlling the metaphor as Thompson stated at p. 190.

We might find a vocabulary of "war or fight, e.g., attack a position, indefensible, strategy, new line of attack, win, and gain ground.

(7) He says *"To those leaders around the globe who seek to sow conflict", "destroy", but he means "foreign policy".* We can easily see the power of a phrase like this because of its simplicity and true meaning the real meaning of a symbol that everything you recognize and warn about foreign policy, attitude, behaviour and your reaction, while on the other hand, extends to the other side to work together in peace, if they are willing.

(5) ACTIONS ARE TRANSFERRED

(8) *"The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit; to choose our better history; to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea, passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness."*

(8) He says *"that precious gift, that noble idea"* but he wants to say *"to carry forward and "passed"*. The speaker is stating the time has come to highlight, focus on the American spirit to the new generations to work hard putting the values, philosophy to authenticity. He has mentioned that God's justice in creations makes all of us equal, free, have the same opportunity to have a better peaceful life.

6- POLITICS IS A JOURNEY

(9) *"This is the journey we continue today. We remain the most prosperous, powerful nation on Earth."*

(10) *"Our journey has never been one of shortcuts or settling for less". "It has not been the Path for the faint-hearted "*

"For those who prefer leisure over work, or seek only the pleasures of riches and fame. Rather, it has been the risk-takers, the doers, the makers of things"

"Some celebrated but more often men and women obscure in their labour, which have carried us up the long, rugged path towards prosperity and freedom."

(11) *"For us, they packed up their few worldly possessions and travelled across oceans in search of a new life"*

(12) *"Let it be said by our children's children that when we were tested we refused to let this journey end, ", "that we did not turn back nor did we falter; and with eyes fixed on the horizon and God's grace upon us, we carried forth that great gift of freedom and delivered it safely to future generations. "*

9) He says *"This is the journey we continue today"* but he wants to point to American in the world of Politics. He says *"This is the journey we continue today"* makes the addressee understand that the American people are the travellers, having a journey to a certain destination.

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(10) He says “Our journey has never been one of shortcuts or settling for less. It has not been the path for the faint-hearted” but he also refers to the political life of Americans.

(11) He says "travelled across oceans", but he means the American people. The early people of America have their own journey, and they struggled the difficulties in the journey of life to build America, "holding & packing up their few worldly possessions and travelled across oceans searching for a new life".

(12) President Obama mentioned the very common conventional metaphor as I mentioned before. We sometimes did not notice that even this is a metaphor or not, he told us that “ *We remain young nation* ”, he considers the history of this young nation is like an endless journey where this journey has a leader and this leader is of course America, which will carry forward the precious gifts, the noble idea generation to generation, the journey of knowledge as they remain the most prosperous, powerful nation on Earth. This is a very common conventional metaphor, we can see it in many advertising slogans: "*Life is a journey, travel it well. United Airlines*" "*Life is a journey. Enjoy the Ride. Nissan,*" "*Life is a journey. Enjoy the ride with a GM reward card. General Motors*" "*Life's a journey travel light Hugo Boss Perfume*".

(7) MORE IS UP; LESS IS DOWN

In general there is one metaphorical data in Barack Obama's inaugural speech which shows the pattern of CHANGE ARE MOVEMENT:

(13) *Our economy is **badly weakened**, a consequence of greed and irresponsibility on the part of some, but also our collective failure to make hard choices and prepare the nation for a new age. Homes **have been lost**; jobs shed; businesses **shuttered**.*

(13) He says “*badly weakened*”, “*have been lost*”, and “*shuttered*” but he means “*economy, homes, jobs, and business.*” when US president says “Our economy is badly weakened, and homes have been lost; jobs shed; businesses shuttered”. He wants to specify the recent condition from an economic point of view, when a decrease in production happens, the country is actually badly affected and a lot of their homes will be lost, no new jobs more difficulties in all aspects of life.

A decrease in production *makes economy standard falls down*. An increase in production the *standard rises up*.

The illustration given in the contemporary theory is that the MORE IS UP metaphor is grounded in experience—in the common experiences of pouring more fluid into a container and seeing the level go up, or adding more things to a pile and seeing the pile get higher. These are thoroughly pervasive experiences; we experience them every day of our lives. They are experienced with a structure—a correspondence between the conceptual domain of quantity and the conceptual domain of verticality: MORE corresponds in such experiences to UP and LESS corresponds to DOWN.

Clarification is included in the contemporary theory that more is UP metaphor on experience in common, pouring more of the liquid in the pot you will see the standard increases, or add more things on the stack so the stack on top. This is a common experience exactly. We experience it every day of our lives.

5.0 CONCLUSION

President Obama has used metaphorical expressions effectively and creatively trying to make his people convinced about his forthcoming strategies. His distinguished speech arguing his people about tactics, strategies & future plans which will help him overcoming the enormous economic difficulties faced by the US government, the Americans common feeling of the loss of national self-confidence. The people are seriously questioning all these economic difficulties, problems. He has used "Movement" in explaining "Change", "Location" over "States", "Motion Over a Landscape" in explaining "States", "War/Fight" had been used to describe "Politics", "Transfer" in explaining "Actions", "Journey" in describing "Politics" .

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