METAPHORS IN JOE BIDEN'S VICTORY SPEECH AFTER THE 2020 U.S. ELECTION

THESIS

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ENGLISH LETTERS DEPARTMENT

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK

IBRAHIM MALANG

2021

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STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I declare that the thesis I wrote entitled **"Metaphors in Joe Biden's Victory Speech After the 2020 U.S. Election"** is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those ones that are cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is an objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

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ii

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iii

iii

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iv

iv

MOTTO

فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

When you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely

(upon Him). (QS. Ali Imran: 159)

DEDICATION

This thesis is lovingly dedicated to my beloved parents, Sulthoni Abadi

and Sulasiyah, whose unwavering support, prayers, and sacrifices have been the

foundation of every step I take.

To my precious sister, Fitiyati Muthia Ul Haq, and my dear wife,

Basithotul Ulum, whose presence, love, and encouragement have strengthened me

throughout this journey.

You are the pillars of my life, and your belief in me has been my greatest

source of strength.

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First and foremost, all praise and gratitude be to Allah SWT, the Lord of the universe, for His endless mercy and blessings throughout my life, especially during the process of writing and completing this thesis. Sholawat and salam are also devoted to the Prophet Muhammad SAW, who has guided us from the darkness into the light of Islam, a path of mercy and enlightenment for all creation.

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This journey would not have been possible without the endless support of my beloved parents and family. Thank you for always standing behind me, for trusting every step I take, and for supporting every dream I pursue. Your prayers,

trusting every step I take, and for supporting every dream I pursue. Your prayers, love, and sacrifices have been the most valuable strength in my life. I am also deeply grateful to my wife, who has been a constant companion and source of encouragement. Thank you for your presence, support, and patience throughout this journey.

Finally, I would like to thank all my friends in the English Letters Department, especially those in the linguistics major, for their friendship, collaboration, and the countless memories we created together during our academic years. Each of you made this journey more meaningful and joyful.

I am fully aware that this thesis may still contain imperfections. Therefore, I sincerely welcome constructive criticism and suggestions for improvement. I hope this work can be a helpful reference for future researchers who are interested in exploring a similar topic.

Malang, 3 July 2025

Ulul Albab

ABSTRACT

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Key Words: *Metaphor, Political Speech, Conceptual Metaphor, Joe Biden*

Metaphor is often seen as a stylistic feature in political speeches, yet in moments of political transition it serves a much deeper role in shaping collective understanding and emotional response. Within the broader academic discussions on language and politics, the use of metaphor has mostly been examined in campaign debates or formal inaugural addresses, leaving victory speeches as a rarely studied genre despite their symbolic and unifying function. This study specifically explores how metaphor operates as a cognitive and ideological resource in Joe Biden's presidential victory speech, focusing not only on how messages are delivered but on how national identity, moral responsibility, and social healing are discursively constructed. This writing draws on qualitative data collected through content analysis of the official speech transcript and its public delivery, analyzed interpretively using the conceptual metaphor framework of Lakoff and Johnson with particular attention to source-target conceptual mappings. The study reveals that metaphorical language does more than clarify complex ideas; it functions as a powerful strategy for emotionally engaging the public and reframing national challenges as shared moral journeys. The findings point to the need for further studies that examine metaphor across diverse political genres, contexts, and cultures in order to better understand how leaders use language not only to persuade, but to reshape how society envisions its future.

المُلَخَّصُ

الاسْتِعَارَاتُ فِي خِطَابِ النَّصْرِ لِجُو بَايْدِن بَعْدَ انْتِخَابَاتِ الْوِلَايَاتِ. عُلْبَاب، أُوْلُول. ٢٠٢١ بَحْثُ تَخَرُّجٍ. قِسْمُ اللُّغَةِ الْإِنْجِلِيزِيَّةِ وَآدَابِهَا، كُلِّيَّةُ الْعُلُومِ الْإِنْسَانِيَّةِ، جَامِعَةُ. الْمُتَّحِدَةِ لِسَنَةِ ٢٠٢٠ مَوْلَانَا مَالِك إِبْرَاهِيم الْإِسْلَامِيَّةُ الْحُكُومِيَّةُ مَالَنْغ. المُشْرِفُ: عَبْدُ الْعَزِيزِ، مَاجِسْتِيرُ فِي التَّرْبِيَةِ، دُكْتُورَاه.

الكَلِمَاتُ المِفْتَاحِيَّةُ: الِاسْتِعَارَةُ، الْخِطَابُ السِّيَاسِيُّ، الِاسْتِعَارَةُ الْمَفْهُومِيَّةُ، جُو بَايْدِن

تُعَدُّ الِاسْتِعَارَةُ فِي الْغَالِبِ وَسِيلَةً أُسْلُوبِيَّةً فِي الْخِطَابَاتِ السِّيَاسِيَّةِ، إِلَّا أَنَّهَا تُؤَدِّي دَوْرًا أَعْمَقَ بِكَثِيرٍ فِي أَزْمِنَةِ التَّحَوُّلِ السِّيَاسِيِّ، حَيْثُ تُسَاهِمُ فِي تَشْكِيلِ الْفَهْمِ الْجَمَاعِيِّ وَالِاسْتِجَابَةِ الْعَاطِفِيَّةِ لِلْجُمْهُورِ. وَفِي سِيَاقِ النِّقَاشِ الْأَكَادِيمِيِّ الْوَاسِعِ حَوْلَ اللُّغَةِ وَالسِّيَاسَةِ، تَمَّ تَحْلِيلُ الِاسْتِعَارَاتِ فِي خِطَابَاتِ الْحَمَلَاتِ الِانْتِخَابِيَّةِ أَوِ الْخُطَبِ الرَّسْمِيَّةِ، فِي حِينِ أَنَّ خِطَابَاتِ النَّصْرِ قَلَّمَا نَالَتْ حَظَّهَا فِي الدِّرَاسَاتِ، عَلَى الرَّغْمِ مِنْ طَبِيعَتِهَا الرَّمْزِيَّةِ وَدَوْرِهَا فِي تَعْزِيزِ الْوَحْدَةِ. تَهْدِفُ هَذِهِ الدِّرَاسَةُ إِلَى اسْتِكْشَافِ كَيْفِيَّةِ عَمَلِ الِاسْتِعَارَةِ كَأَدَاةٍ مَعْرِفِيَّةٍ وَإِيدِيُولُوجِيَّةٍ فِي خِطَابِ النَّصْرِ لِلرَّئِيسِ جُو بَايْدِن، مَعَ التَّرْكِيزِ عَلَى بِنَاءِ الْهُوِيَّةِ الْوَطَنِيَّةِ، وَالْمَسْؤُولِيَّةِ الْأَخْلَاقِيَّةِ، وَالتَّعَافِي الْمُجْتَمَعِيِّ مِنْ خِلَالِ الْخِطَابِ. تَسْتَنِدُ هَذِهِ الْكِتَابَةُ إِلَى بَيَانَاتٍ نَوْعِيَّةٍ جُمِعَتْ عَنْ طَرِيقِ تَحْلِيلِ الْمُحْتَوَى لِنَصِّ الْخِطَابِ الرَّسْمِيِّ وَأَدَائِهِ الْعَلَنِيِّ، وَقَدْ تَمَّ تَحْلِيلُهَا تَحْلِيلًا تَفْسِيرِيًّا بِاسْتِخْدَامِ إِطَارِ الِاسْتِعَارَةِ الْمَفْهُومِيَّةِ لَدَى لَاكُوف وَجُونْسُون، مَعَ التَّرْكِيزِ عَلَى عَلَاقَاتِ الِإِسْقَاطِ بَيْنَ مَجَالَيِ الْمَصْدَرِ وَالْهَدَفِ. تُظْهِرُ النَّتَائِجُ أَنَّ اللُّغَةَ الِاسْتِعَارِيَّةَ لَا تُوَضِّحُ فَقَطِ الْمَفَاهِيمَ الْمُعَقَّدَةَ، بَلْ تُسَاهِمُ فِي تَحْفِيزِ التَّفَاعُلِ الْعَاطِفِيِّ لَدَى الْجُمْهُورِ وَإِعَادَةِ تَصْوِيرِ التَّحَدِّيَاتِ الْوَطَنِيَّةِ كَرِحْلَةٍ أَخْلَاقِيَّةٍ مُشْتَرَكَةٍ. وَتُشِيرُ هَذِهِ النَّتَائِجُ إِلَى أَهَمِّيَّةِ الْقِيَامِ بِدِرَاسَاتٍ أُخْرَى تَتَنَاوَلُ الِاسْتِعَارَةَ فِي أَنْوَاعٍ وَسِيَاقَاتٍ وَثَقَافَاتٍ سِيَاسِيَّةٍ مُتَنَوِّعَةٍ، لِفَهْمٍ أَعْمَقَ لِكَيْفِيَّةِ اسْتِخْدَامِ الْقَادَةِ لِلُّغَةِ فِي تَشْكِيلِ رُؤْيَةِ الْمُجْتَمَعِ لِلْمُسْتَقْبَلِ.

ABSTRAK

Kata Kunci: Metafora, Pidato Politik, Metafora Konseptual, Joe Biden

Metafora sering dipandang sebagai fitur stilistika dalam pidato politik, namun dalam momen transisi politik, metafora memainkan peran yang jauh lebih mendalam dalam membentuk pemahaman kolektif dan respons emosional publik. Dalam diskusi akademik yang lebih luas mengenai bahasa dan politik, penggunaan metafora umumnya telah banyak dikaji dalam konteks debat kampanye atau pidato pelantikan resmi, sementara pidato kemenangan masih jarang dijadikan objek penelitian, meskipun memiliki fungsi simbolik dan penyatuan yang penting. Tulisan ini secara khusus mengeksplorasi bagaimana metafora berfungsi sebagai alat kognitif dan ideologis dalam pidato kemenangan presiden Joe Biden, dengan fokus tidak hanya pada cara penyampaian pesan, tetapi juga pada bagaimana identitas nasional, tanggung jawab moral, dan penyembuhan sosial dikonstruksi secara wacana. Tulisan ini bersandar pada data kualitatif yang dikumpulkan melalui analisis isi terhadap transkrip resmi pidato dan penyampaiannya di ruang publik, lalu dianalisis secara interpretatif dengan menggunakan kerangka metafora konseptual dari Lakoff dan Johnson, dengan perhatian khusus pada pemetaan konseptual antara domain sumber dan target. Studi ini mengungkap bahwa bahasa metaforis tidak hanya berfungsi untuk memperjelas gagasan kompleks, tetapi juga menjadi strategi yang kuat untuk membangkitkan keterlibatan emosional publik dan membingkai ulang tantangan nasional sebagai perjalanan moral bersama. Temuan ini menunjukkan pentingnya penelitian lanjutan yang mengkaji metafora dalam berbagai genre politik, konteks, dan budaya, guna memahami lebih dalam bagaimana para pemimpin menggunakan bahasa tidak hanya untuk membujuk, tetapi juga untuk membentuk cara pandang masyarakat terhadap masa depan.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

Language and speech are essential components of human communication, yet they represent distinct concepts. Although often used interchangeably in everyday conversation, in linguistic terms they refer to different dimensions of how humans express meaning, particularly within political contexts. According to Chomsky (1965), language can be defined as "a set of (finite or infinite) sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements," which emphasizes its cognitive and generative nature. Language exists in the mind and may be expressed through various modalities such as speech, writing, and sign language.

Building on this understanding, language functions not only as a tool for communication but also as a medium for expressing thoughts, influencing opinions, and constructing social realities. One of the most prominent uses of language is public speech, particularly within politics. A speech is a form of verbal communication delivered before an audience, often intended to inspire, motivate, or persuade listeners to adopt certain perspectives or take specific actions (Atkinson, 1984). As noted by Leech (1981), language extends beyond its informational function to serve expressive and persuasive purposes, enabling speakers to convey personal attitudes, emotions, and ideologies.

Within political settings, speech plays a vital role in shaping public perception and mobilizing collective support. Thomas et al. (2004) state that politics involves the power to make decisions, control resources, influence behavior, and often guide people's values. Consequently, political speech must be crafted carefully not only in terms of content but also delivery, encompassing elements such as gestures, attire, tone, and, most crucially, word choice. Political rhetoric is frequently rich in figurative language, with metaphor serving as a particularly influential device that frames complex political issues in accessible and emotionally resonant terms.

In this regard, metaphor serves as a key rhetorical strategy. Charteris-Black (2005) asserts that ideology, myth, and metaphor are central tools of persuasion in political discourse. Metaphor, in particular, enables the speaker to represent abstract or unfamiliar ideas by linking them to more familiar and concrete concepts. Lakoff and Johnson (2003) challenge the traditional view of metaphor as merely decorative or poetic. Instead, they argue that metaphor is fundamental to human cognition, claiming that "the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another." Accordingly, metaphor does not merely enhance language stylistically; it shapes the way individuals think, perceive, and act.

In the realm of political communication, metaphors go beyond clarifying abstract notions. They legitimize political actions, evoke shared identities, and frame ideological narratives. As observed by Musolff (2016), political leaders often rely on metaphor to communicate national challenges, values, and visions of the future in a way that resonates with the public. Conceptual metaphors such as "nation is a family"

or "government is a machine" serve to guide public interpretation of policies and political agendas (Lakoff, 2004).

A particularly compelling example of metaphor use in political discourse can be found in Joe Biden's victory speech following the 2020 United States presidential election. Delivered in Wilmington, Delaware, the speech emphasized themes of unity, healing, and democratic restoration. As White (2000) explains, politics is the process of articulating and distributing societal values, often through public discourse. In addressing a deeply divided nation, Biden presented a message of unification, stating, "I will be a president who seeks not to divide, but unify… who doesn't see red states and blue states, only sees the United States." The persuasive force of his speech lies in its use of metaphorical language to express complex sociopolitical realities in emotionally engaging and understandable terms.

This research, therefore, seeks to analyze the metaphorical expressions used in Joe Biden's 2020 victory speech through the lens of conceptual metaphor theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson. The study aims to identify the types and meanings of metaphors employed and to explain how these metaphors contribute to the speech's persuasive effect and ideological construction.

Several studies have investigated the use of conceptual metaphors in political discourse using the framework of Lakoff and Johnson (2003). While the current research adopts a similar theoretical foundation, it differs in its focus on the rhetorical function of metaphors in Joe Biden's 2020 victory speech, a moment of political transition that has not been thoroughly explored in previous works.

Sabu (2011) conducted an analysis of metaphorical expressions in Barack Obama's speech *A More Perfect Union*. The study employed a descriptive qualitative approach and identified four metaphorical patterns: general reifying, materializing abstract processes, and object or substance metaphors. These metaphors were used to express complex emotions, values, and social realities in persuasive and symbolic ways. However, the study focused on campaign discourse, leaving unexplored how metaphors function in post-election narratives aimed at national reconciliation.

Rohman (2020) examined metaphors in Mohamed ElBaradei's Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech using the same theoretical framework. The analysis revealed 14 instances of metaphorical expressions, consisting of nine structural metaphors, one orientational metaphor, and four ontological metaphors. The study highlighted how metaphors were used to frame global issues such as peace, justice, and nuclear disarmament. Despite its relevance, the international context and ceremonial tone of the speech differ significantly from the national and political tone of a U.S. presidential victory address.

Nirwana (2021) explored conceptual metaphors in the second and final presidential debate between Donald Trump and Joe Biden. A total of 26 metaphorical expressions were identified, including four structural, ten orientational, and twelve ontological metaphors. The study illustrated how both candidates used metaphor as a rhetorical strategy to attack, defend, and persuade during a competitive political setting. However, the confrontational nature of debate discourse stands in contrast to the

unifying and hopeful rhetoric found in a victory speech, which emphasizes collective healing rather than opposition.

Kuslambangningrum (2015) analyzed conceptual metaphors in the inaugural addresses of George W. Bush and Barack Obama. The study incorporated both Lakoff and Johnson's theory and Leech's (1981) theory of metaphor function, using a mapping process to explore the relationships between source and target domains. The researcher identified nine dominant conceptual metaphors and observed four out of five rhetorical functions outlined by Leech. While this research offered valuable insight into the function and structure of metaphors in formal political speech, it did not focus on victory speeches, which tend to be more emotionally charged and symbolic in tone.

These previous studies demonstrate the applicability of conceptual metaphor theory to political discourse but have largely focused on campaign rhetoric, debates, or inaugurations. The present research contributes a new perspective by examining metaphor use in Joe Biden's 2020 victory speech, a context marked by political division and democratic transition. This study offers a deeper understanding of how metaphors are employed to construct unity, convey hope, and articulate ideological values at a critical juncture in American political life.

1.2. Problems of Study

Based on the background above, this research aims to address the following questions:

1)   What types of metaphors are used by Joe Biden in his victory speech after winning the 2020 US election?

2)   What are the meanings of each metaphor used by Joe Biden in his victory speech after winning the 2020 US election?

1.3. Objectives of Study

The objectives of this study, in accordance with the research problems, are:

1)   To identify the types of metaphors used by Joe Biden in his victory speech after winning the 2020 US election.

2)   To analyze the meanings of each metaphor used by Joe Biden in his victory speech after winning the 2020 US election.

1.4. Significances of Study

This research is intended to enhance readers' understanding of metaphors from a semantic perspective, which is a branch of linguistic study. For the researcher, it provides deeper insight into the use of metaphor by applying conceptual metaphor theory as a tool to analyze the language used in Joe Biden's victory speech. It is expected that this research may serve as a useful reference for future researchers who are interested in similar topics. Furthermore, this study aims to contribute to the development of knowledge in the field of linguistics, particularly in semantics and political discourse analysis.

1.5. Theoretical Approach

As outlined in the background, this research employs the conceptual metaphor theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson in their book *Metaphors We Live By*. In the

book, Lakoff and Johnson (2003) state that "the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another." This suggests that a metaphor functions as a cognitive device that allows one concept to be understood through the lens of another. Lakoff and Johnson categorize metaphors into three types: structural metaphors, orientational metaphors, and ontological metaphors. These categories serve as the foundation for classifying and analyzing the metaphorical expressions identified in Joe Biden's victory speech.

1.6. Scope and Limitation

This study focuses on analyzing the use of metaphors in Joe Biden's victory speech delivered after winning the 2020 US presidential election. The speech is particularly significant as it contains several notable metaphors that illustrate how Biden framed and celebrated his electoral success before officially assuming office. The research is limited to exploring the symbolic and conceptual dimensions of the victory speech, rather than examining his broader campaign discourse. The analysis centers on identifying the forms and meanings of conceptual metaphors used in the speech, which are expected to provide meaningful insights into political communication and the rhetorical function of metaphor.

1.7. Methods of Study

This section explains the methodological framework used in this research. It consists of five main components, including research design, data sources, research

instrument, data collection procedures, and data analysis. Each component supports the goal of investigating the types and meanings of metaphors used in Joe Biden's 2020 victory speech.

1.7.1. Research design

This research applies a qualitative design. The qualitative approach is appropriate because the data involve non-numerical information in the form of words, phrases, and sentences that require interpretation rather than measurement. The aim is to explore the deeper meanings behind metaphorical expressions and how these metaphors contribute to the overall rhetorical impact of the speech. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research is a method used to explore and understand the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human issue. Since the object of this research is a written political text, a qualitative method allows for detailed analysis of the figurative language within a specific context.

This approach is suitable for analyzing metaphorical expressions based on Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory. The focus is not only on identifying metaphors but also on interpreting their cognitive and rhetorical functions within the speech.

1.7.2. Data Sources

The primary data source is the transcript of Joe Biden's victory speech delivered in Wilmington, Delaware, on November 7, 2020. The transcript was retrieved from the Rev website, which provides an official written version of the speech. Additional

reference is taken from the video recording of the speech, which is publicly accessible on YouTube. The combination of transcript and video allows the researcher to ensure the accuracy of the language used and provides context for understanding the delivery and emphasis of certain expressions.

The speech is selected because of its significance in the political moment following the 2020 United States presidential election. It serves as a meaningful source of metaphorical language intended to persuade, unify, and inspire the American public.

1.7.3. Research Instrument

The main instrument in this research is the researcher. As a human instrument, the researcher is responsible for selecting, identifying, classifying, and interpreting the metaphorical expressions found in the speech. No additional instruments such as software or coding tools are used in the data analysis process.

The role of the researcher includes applying theoretical knowledge of metaphor, understanding linguistic context, and making interpretative judgments based on Lakoff and Johnson's framework. This allows for a thorough and contextually grounded analysis of the metaphors identified in the speech.

1.7.4. Data collection

The data collection process is conducted through several stages. First, the researcher searched for Joe Biden's 2020 victory speech video on YouTube. After confirming the authenticity of the speech, the official transcript was accessed from the

Rev website. The researcher then read the transcript in full to gain a general understanding of the content and to locate metaphorical expressions related to the research questions.

Each metaphorical expression found in the speech was highlighted and documented. The expressions were then cross-checked with the video to ensure contextual accuracy and to observe emphasis, tone, and delivery. This step is crucial in understanding how certain metaphors are used persuasively within a spoken context.

1.7.5. Data Analysis

The data analysis process involves several key steps. The researcher first read the entire transcript thoroughly to identify any metaphorical expressions used throughout the speech. After initial identification, each metaphor was classified into one of the three categories outlined in Lakoff and Johnson's theory: structural, orientational, or ontological metaphor.

Once categorized, the researcher analyzed the meaning of each metaphor, focusing on how it contributes to the overall message and rhetorical effect of the speech. Attention was given to the relationship between the source domain and target domain in each metaphorical expression. Finally, the results of the analysis were organized and interpreted to draw conclusions about the types and functions of metaphor used in the speech.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Before proceeding to the analysis, it is important to first understand the theories that serve as the foundation of this research. This theoretical overview is intended to provide readers with a clear understanding of metaphor theory and the related concepts that support it. A solid grasp of the theoretical framework will help readers follow the analysis presented in the subsequent chapter more easily. The primary theory used in this study is the conceptual metaphor theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson, which is introduced in their influential book *Metaphors We Live By*.

2.1. Semantics

Language learning is essential for humans at any time, not only as a means of establishing communication with others but also as a way to understand different patterns of thought. In the process of studying language, one of the most important aspects to examine is meaning. The study of meaning in language is known as semantics. According to Reimer (2010), the term *semantics* originates from the Greek word *semantikos*, meaning 'relating to signs', which is derived from the noun *sēmeion*, meaning 'sign'. This etymology highlights the fundamental role of signs and symbols in conveying meaning.

Chaer (2012) defines semantics as a branch of linguistics concerned with the study of meaning at various levels, including lexical, grammatical, and contextual. Similarly, Suhardi (2015) describes semantics as the study of meaning and how the

meaning of words can change depending on their use within a sentence. In essence, semantics aims to understand how words carry meaning and how that meaning can shift depending on linguistic context. Griffiths (2006) adds that the purpose of semantics is not to catalog all human knowledge, but to describe the knowledge of meaning that language users possess simply by being speakers of the language. Therefore, the study of semantics is crucial for understanding human expression through language, including the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences.

2.2. Lexical meaning

Beaves (2010) posits that lexical meanings are not only constructed and represented linguistically, but are also shaped by their truth-conditional content, which contributes to their semantic structure. This perspective implies that comprehending a word's meaning requires both an understanding of its definitional properties and the specific conditions under which its use is considered true. Lexical meaning is intrinsically linked to vocabulary, and thus, acquiring lexical knowledge is fundamentally the process of learning words. The formation of meaningful lexical items entails grasping their literal interpretations, with truth-conditional semantics serving as a critical component in evaluating their contextual appropriateness and accuracy.

2.2.1 Grammatical meaning

According to Pateda (2001), grammatical meaning refers to the set of structural

rules that govern the formation of clauses, phrases, and words within a given natural language. This suggests that grammatical meaning is fundamentally connected to the syntactic structure of a language, where meaning is shaped through specific patterns and arrangements. These patterns are not arbitrary but follow a system regulated by grammar, which determines how words function and relate to one another in a sentence.

Grammatical rules encompass various categories, including parts of speech such as verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and conjunctions. Another essential aspect of grammatical meaning is verb tense, which conveys the time of an action or state. In English, tenses are generally divided into present, past, future, and past future. Each tense plays a role in situating events or actions within a particular temporal framework, helping speakers and listeners understand when something occurs in relation to the present moment.

2.3. Non-Literal Meaning

Non-literal meaning refers to expressions whose meanings cannot be directly interpreted from the literal meanings of individual words. This category includes idioms, metaphors, and metonymy. An idiom is a fixed expression consisting of words, phrases, or sentences whose meanings are understood as a whole rather than from their individual parts. Idioms often carry specific cultural or contextual meanings. A metaphor is used to describe or compare two different concepts by implying that one concept is another, often to help explain abstract or complex ideas through more

familiar terms. Meanwhile, metonymy involves referring to one entity using another that is closely associated with it, such as using the word "crown" to represent a king or monarchy.

According to Hurford et al. (2007), non-literal meaning has sometimes been regarded as vague and less structured than literal meaning. However, recent linguistic studies have increasingly recognized the importance of non-literal expressions, particularly metaphors, due to their prevalence in everyday language. Semanticists now acknowledge that understanding non-literal meaning is essential for grasping how people communicate abstract thoughts, emotions, and cultural concepts in both spoken and written language.

2.4. Metaphor

In everyday life, people express their emotions through language in various forms, including conversations, written texts such as novels and poems, casual writings like diaries, as well as songs and public speeches. According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003), metaphor is pervasive in everyday life—not only in language but also in thought and action. Metaphors are commonly used as a means of expressing emotions, helping individuals convey complex or abstract experiences in a more comprehensible and relatable manner. This emphasizes the importance of understanding how metaphor operates both linguistically and cognitively.

Lakoff and Johnson (2003) define the essence of metaphor as understanding

and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another. This notion is further elaborated by Kövecses (2010), who explains that when people say *love is a journey*, they are engaging in a conceptual metaphor, where Conceptual Domain A (*love*) is understood in terms of Conceptual Domain B (*journey*). In other words, abstract concepts are interpreted through more concrete experiences. From this conceptual metaphor, expressions emerge in everyday language that reflect this mapping, which are referred to as metaphorical linguistic expressions.

According to Kövecses (2010), a conceptual metaphor involves two domains: the source domain and the target domain. The source domain is the conceptual domain from which metaphorical expressions are drawn, typically concrete or physical in nature. The target domain is the abstract concept that is understood through the source domain. Thus, in the metaphor *love is a journey*, *journey* serves as the source domain, while *love* is the target domain. Through this metaphorical mapping, people can comprehend the complexities of love using the more familiar concept of a journey.

In his book, Kövecses (2010) provides several examples of metaphorical linguistic expressions that emerge from the conceptual metaphor love is a journey. In the following examples, the conceptual metaphor will be written in bold, while the metaphorical linguistic expressions derived from it will be presented in *italics*.

Love Is A Journey
Look *how far* we've *come*.
We're *at a crossroads*.

We'll just have to *go our separate ways*.
We can't *turn back* now.
I don't think this relationship is *going anywhere*.
Where are we?
We're *stuck*.
It's been a *long, bumpy road*.
This relationship is a *dead-end street*.
We're just *spinning our wheels*.
Our marriage is *on the rocks*.
We've *gotten off the track*.
This relationship is *foundering*.

When people use the metaphorical linguistic expression, *we aren't going anywhere*, the phrase *go somewhere* typically denotes traveling toward a destination. However, in this particular context, it does not refer to a literal journey, but rather to a situation that lacks direction or purpose. The word *we* refer to the individuals involved in the statement, functioning as the metaphorical travelers. This expression contains three key elements of the conceptual metaphor *life is a journey*: the destination, the travelers, and the journey itself. When heard in an appropriate context, such as a romantic conversation, people will intuitively interpret this metaphor not in terms of physical travel, but in relation to a romantic relationship. In this case, the travelers are not literal travelers, but lovers; the journey refers to the events and experiences within the relationship; and the destination represents the goals or future aspirations of the couple (Kövecses, 2002).

From the example above, it becomes evident that in conceptual metaphors, the target domain usually involves abstract concepts, while the source domain draws from

more concrete or physical experiences. This mapping from the concrete to the abstract allows people to make sense of complex or intangible ideas through more familiar, tangible experiences.

In conclusion, metaphor serves as a cognitive tool that enables individuals to understand abstract concepts through more concrete and relatable frameworks. Learning about metaphor is not only essential for understanding specific expressions but also for grasping broader aspects of human thought and experience. According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003), conceptual metaphors are generally categorized into three types: structural metaphors, orientational metaphors, and ontological metaphors. These classifications help explain the various ways in which metaphor shapes our understanding of the world.

2.4.1. Structural Metaphor

According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003), a structural metaphor is formed when one concept is metaphorically structured in terms of another. One common example is the expression *time is money*. In order to understand the abstract concept of time, people often relate it to the more concrete and familiar concept of money. Since money is widely regarded as valuable and limited, this comparison helps convey the idea that time is also a valuable and limited resource. Structural metaphors often emerge from human experiences and serve as cognitive tools to make abstract concepts more accessible. Kövecses (2010) adds that in structural metaphors, the source domain

typically offers a relatively rich and organized structure of knowledge that can be applied to the target domain.

However, Lakoff and Johnson (2003) emphasize that when a concept is metaphorically structured, the mapping is only partial, not complete. If it were fully structured, then one concept would become identical to the other, rather than simply being understood through it. For example, time is not literally money. One cannot deposit time in a bank, nor withdraw it for later use. Therefore, the comparison serves only to highlight certain shared features. In conclusion, a structural metaphor is a type of metaphor in which selected characteristics of the source domain are projected onto the target domain, enabling easier comprehension of abstract or complex ideas.

2.4.2. Orientational Metaphor

Orientational metaphor is a metaphor that does not structue one concept in terms of another, but it organizes a whole system of concepts with respect to one another. Orientational metaphor is always related to spatial orientation, such as up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, and central-peripheral. These spatial emerges from the fact that human have body that regulating direction orientation in everyday life. For examples:

Happy Is Up; Sad Is Down
I'm feeling *up*.
That *boosted* my spirits.
My spirits *rose*.
You're in *high* spirits.

Thinking about her always gives me a *lift*.
I'm feeling *down*.
I'm *depressed*.
He's really *low* these days.
I *fell* into a depression.
My spirits *sank*.

As seen in daily life, it can be known the relation of orientational metaphor with one's physical condition, which if someone is sad and depressed he will droop, while when someone is excited he will stand up straight. (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003).

2.4.3. Ontological Metaphor

Ontology is a branch of phylosophy that study about the nature of existence. Ontological metaphor is a metaphor that conceptualize abstract things such experiences, thoughts, process, and other abstract things so it can be easier to understand. As cited in Kövecses (2010), ontology is a branch of phylosophy that has to do with the nature of exixtence. In addition, he believes that in ontological metaphor, the source domain provide less cognitive structuring for target domain than the structural metaphors does.

Humans knowledge about abstract things is very limited. To understand more about abstract things, ontological metaphors characterize abstract things so abstract things can be understood more easily. Not only to be more easily understood, characterize abstract things are also used to prove that abstract things exist. In order to understand about ontological metaphor easier, look at these example:

The Mind Is A Machine
We're still trying to *grind out* the solution to this equation.
My mind just isn't *operating* today.
Boy, the *wheels are turning* now!
I'm *a little rusty* today.
We've been working on this problem all day and now we're *running out of steam*.

The Mind Is A Brittle Object
Her ego is very *fragile*.
You have to *handle him with care* since his wife's death.
He *broke* under cross-examination.
She is *easily crushed*.
The experience *shattered* him.
I'm going to *pieces*.
His mind *snapped*.

After understanding the metaphors discussed previously, it becomes clear that the mind can be conceptualized in different ways through metaphorical expressions. In the metaphor *the mind is a machine*, the mind is understood as having properties such as an on-off state, levels of efficiency, productive capacity, internal mechanisms, and operational conditions. In contrast, the metaphor *the mind is a brittle object* allows people to conceptualize mental processes in terms of psychological fragility or strength (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003).

Human understanding of abstract concepts is undeniably limited. To address this, ontological metaphors are used to assign concrete attributes to abstract entities, making them more comprehensible. As cited in Kövecses (2010), the primary cognitive function of ontological metaphors is to give abstract concepts a new ontological status and to create new abstract entities that can be thought about and discussed more easily.

Furthermore, Lakoff and Johnson (2003) include personification within the category of ontological metaphor. Personification involves attributing human characteristics to non-human entities. For example, in the sentence *Inflation has attacked the foundation of our economy*, the abstract concept of inflation is described as if it were a human capable of launching an attack. This metaphorical framing helps people conceptualize inflation as an aggressive and harmful force, which in turn influences how they perceive and respond to economic issues.

2.5. Linguistic Features of Joe Biden's Speeches

Joseph Robinette Biden Jr., born on November 20, 1942, is the 46th President of the United States. He assumed office following his victory over incumbent president Donald J. Trump in the 2020 United States presidential election and was officially inaugurated on January 20, 2021. Prior to his presidency, Biden served as Vice President from 2009 to 2017 and as a United States Senator representing Delaware from 1973 to 2009. Throughout his political career, he has delivered numerous speeches, many of which exhibit distinct rhetorical and linguistic features that warrant scholarly analysis.

One prominent characteristic of Biden's speech style is his application of classical rhetorical appeals as proposed in Aristotelian rhetoric: ethos, pathos, and logos. As observed in an analysis conducted by Nurkhamidah (2021), Biden frequently relies on emotional appeal or pathos, followed by credibility (ethos) and logical

reasoning (logos) to persuade his audience. Within the domain of logos, he makes use of enthymemes and exemplification to build arguments. His ethos is conveyed through demonstrations of integrity, competence, and goodwill, while his pathos includes the strategic use of emotions such as optimism, solidarity, confidence, and admiration. Notably, he avoids invoking divisive emotions such as hatred or envy. These rhetorical choices reflect his intention to inspire unity and trust in leadership.

In addition to rhetorical strategies, Biden's speeches are characterized by a diverse range of language styles. According to Susatyo (2022), his victory speech in 2020 features stylistic devices such as repetition, metaphor, euphemism, persuasion, climax, antithesis, rhetorical questions, idiomatic expressions, literal and figurative meanings, and persuasive slogans. These stylistic elements contribute to the motivational and unifying tone of the speech and serve to enhance the clarity and impact of his message upon various segments of the audience.

Biden also utilizes a broad spectrum of linguistic features commonly found in political discourse. These include alliteration, where the initial consonant sound is repeated in successive words; assonance, the repetition of vowel sounds with differing consonants; and colloquial language, which reflects informal speech patterns. Furthermore, he incorporates dialogue to simulate interaction, hyperbole to emphasize points, and imagery to evoke vivid mental representations. Additional devices such as irony, monologue, oxymoron, personification, repetition, and simile are also evident in his public addresses.

Among the many linguistic features present in his speeches, metaphor stands out as one of the most salient. Metaphor plays a central role in structuring abstract political ideas through familiar conceptual frameworks. By using metaphor, Biden is able to frame complex societal and political issues in ways that are both accessible and emotionally resonant for his audience. The metaphorical language in his speech does not merely serve an aesthetic function but also carries ideological and persuasive significance.

Given the richness and frequency of metaphorical expressions in Biden's speech, this study focuses specifically on the use of metaphor as a key area of analysis. The investigation is conducted using the conceptual metaphor theory developed by Lakoff and Johnson, which posits that metaphor is fundamental to human thought and not merely a decorative element of language. Through this theoretical lens, the present research seeks to examine the types and meanings of conceptual metaphors used in Joe Biden's 2020 victory speech, with particular attention to how such metaphors contribute to the construction of persuasive and ideologically charged political discourse.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of the research and offers an in-depth discussion of the metaphorical expressions identified in Joe Biden's 2020 victory speech. The analysis follows the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory as proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (2003), which classifies metaphors into three primary categories: structural, orientational, and ontological. Each metaphor is examined in terms of its linguistic construction, conceptual mapping, and rhetorical significance within the broader political message. The aim of this chapter is to uncover how metaphor functions not only as a linguistic feature but also as a cognitive and persuasive tool. Attention is given to how Biden's metaphorical language reflects ideological positioning, evokes emotional resonance, and contributes to shaping public perception during a pivotal moment in American political life.

3.1. Findings

This chapter presents an analysis of the metaphors identified in Joe Biden's speech delivered in Delaware. The collected data are categorized according to the types of metaphor as outlined by Lakoff and Johnson (2003). Specifically, the analysis focuses on three primary types of metaphor: structural, orientational, and ontological metaphors. The researcher has identified instances of all three metaphor types within the speech, demonstrating their presence and function in Biden's rhetorical strategy.

In this chapter, the researcher provides an analysis of the meanings of the metaphors identified in Joe Biden's victory speech in Delaware. To enhance the reader's understanding, the researcher aims to explain each metaphor in as much detail as possible, offering a comprehensive interpretation of their use and significance within the speech. By analyzing these metaphors, the study seeks to uncover how language shapes public perception and conveys complex political messages. Furthermore, this analysis highlights the rhetorical strategies employed by Biden to connect with his audience on both emotional and cognitive levels. The use of metaphor in political discourse not only enhances the persuasive power of a speech but also frames key issues in ways that align with the speaker's ideological stance. Therefore, understanding these metaphors provides valuable insight into the communicative techniques used in political rhetoric.

3.2. Types and Meaning of Metaphor

3.2.1. Structural Metaphor

In this research, the researcher found seven data of structural metaphor in Joe Biden speech. The analysis of structural metaphor that found in Joe Biden in his victory speech after winning the 2020 US election are belows:

Datum 1

Joe biden (Paragraph 6, Line 1)

*I sought this office **to restore the soul of America***

From a linguistic standpoint, this sentence contains a metaphor that operates at both lexical and conceptual levels. The expression "*the soul of America*" cannot be interpreted literally, as the noun *America* refers to a geopolitical entity, not an animate being capable of possessing a soul. Therefore, a literal interpretation would yield semantic incongruity. This necessitates a metaphorical reading, consistent with Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory, in which abstract domains are understood in terms of more concrete, embodied experiences.

Lexically, the verb *restore* implies a return to a previous or idealized state, while the noun *soul*, defined as the spiritual or essential part of a person, is metaphorically projected onto the nation-state. The phrase thus constructs a metaphor in which the *nation* is conceptualized as a person—an ontological metaphor that enables discourse about the nation's moral core. More specifically, this is a structural metaphor, in which the *soul* (source domain) structures our understanding of the essence or moral foundation of *America* (target domain). The metaphor draws upon culturally entrenched notions of the soul as the seat of identity, virtue, and humanity.

In the socio-political context of Biden's speech, "*the soul of America*" is not merely a rhetorical flourish but a strategic metaphor invoking themes of racial justice, unity, and moral restoration. It signals a commitment to re-establishing foundational values, particularly in light of recent social unrest and political division. By using this metaphor, Biden reframes the act of governance as a redemptive mission aimed at

reanimating the nation's ethical center. Thus, the metaphor serves both a cognitive and persuasive function, allowing complex political ideals to be conceptualized and communicated through a familiar embodied schema.

Furthermore, the metaphor aligns with the broader discourse of nation-as-person, a conceptual metaphor frequently employed in political rhetoric. This metaphor allows speakers to attribute human qualities—such as having a soul, values, or emotions—to a collective political entity. In doing so, abstract concepts like democracy, justice, or national identity become more tangible and emotionally resonant for the audience. By invoking the idea of restoring a damaged or lost "*soul*," Biden implicitly constructs a narrative of national trauma and moral decline, followed by the promise of renewal. This rhetorical strategy is particularly effective in persuasive discourse, as it mobilizes shared cultural frames and appeals to collective memory and identity. From a cognitive linguistic perspective, such metaphors are not merely stylistic devices but fundamental tools for shaping how people reason about social and political realities.

Datum 2

Joe biden (Paragraph 6, Line 2)

***To rebuild the backbone of this nation**, **the middle class**, and to make America respected around the world again and to unite us here at home*.

Lexically, the phrase opens with *to*, an infinitive marker used to introduce the base verb rebuild, which is defined as "to put something together again or make it strong once more" (Hornby, 2000). The noun backbone refers literally to "the row of small bones connected down the middle of the back" (Hornby, 2000), and nation is defined as "a country considered as a group of people with the same language, culture, and history, who live in a particular area under one government" (Hornby, 2000). When interpreted literally, the phrase "*rebuild the backbone of this nation*" would suggest a reconstruction of an anatomical structure within a country, which is semantically illogical. This incongruity calls for a metaphorical interpretation, which is common in political rhetoric where abstract societal structures are often framed in terms of bodily or physical domains (Charteris-Black, 2011).

The metaphor "*backbone of this nation*" exemplifies what Lakoff and Johnson (1980) classify as a structural metaphor, wherein a source domain (*the backbone*, associated with physical strength and essential bodily support) structures our understanding of a target domain (*the middle class*, conceptualized as the foundational support of the nation). The metaphor draws on embodied cognition, using physical experience—our understanding of the human body—to help make sense of complex political and social concepts (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). In this conceptual mapping, the backbone represents strength, stability, and uprightness; thus, by equating the middle class with the nation's backbone, Biden asserts that the health of the nation is fundamentally dependent on the vitality of this group.

Furthermore, this metaphor is ideologically loaded. It appeals to widely shared American cultural narratives in which the middle class is framed as the moral and economic core of the country. By proposing to "*rebuild*" this backbone, Biden implies that it has been weakened or neglected—likely alluding to economic inequality, job loss, and systemic disempowerment faced by working Americans. This choice of metaphor not only conveys urgency and purpose but also evokes a sense of collective responsibility and solidarity. As Musolff (2016) argues, metaphors in political discourse are powerful tools for framing reality and guiding public interpretation, often shaping not only how issues are perceived but also what solutions are considered legitimate.

Datum 3

Joe biden (Paragraph 14, Line 3)

*It's time to put away the harsh rhetoric, **lower the temperature**, see each other again, listen to each other again.*

Lexically, the verb *lower* is defined as "to reduce something or to cause it to become less in value, quality, or intensity" (Hornby, 2000). The definite article the is used to indicate something already known or previously mentioned (Hornby, 2000), while *temperature* refers literally to "the measurement of degrees indicating how hot or cold something is" (Hornby, 2000). Taken literally, the phrase "*lower the*

temperature" would imply a physical change in heat, which in the context of a political speech about national unity, becomes semantically incongruous. Therefore, a literal interpretation fails to account for the intended communicative meaning, prompting a metaphorical reading.

In this instance, "*lower the temperature*" functions as a structural metaphor, in line with Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) theory of conceptual metaphor. Here, the source domain is temperature, and the target domain is emotion or social tension. The metaphor maps the physiological experience of heat or cold onto emotional states, where high temperature correlates with anger, hostility, or agitation, and low temperature corresponds to calmness and emotional moderation. This conceptual mapping is grounded in embodied cognition, as humans often describe emotional intensity in thermodynamic terms—for example, saying someone is "heated," "cool-headed," or "burning with rage."

Biden's use of the metaphor "*lower the temperature*" is both deliberate and strategic. It is meant to signal a need for national de-escalation following a period of heightened political polarization, particularly between supporters of Donald Trump and those of Biden himself. By calling on Americans to "lower the temperature," Biden advocates for the reduction of emotional hostility and encourages a return to civil discourse and mutual recognition. This metaphor thus frames political reconciliation as a process of emotional regulation—a move from "*hot*" division toward "*cooler,"* more reasoned engagement.

Moreover, as Charteris-Black (2011) notes, political metaphors often operate persuasively by grounding abstract social ideals in familiar, sensory experiences. In this case, the metaphor invites the audience to visualize national unity not through abstract political ideologies, but through a shared emotional temperature that must be brought down for the collective good. It positions Biden as a mediator and restorer of balance, reinforcing his campaign theme of healing and unity.

From a cognitive linguistic perspective, the metaphor "lower the temperature" is an example of emotion conceptualization through embodied experience, where internal emotional states are externalized and structured via sensorimotor schemas. According to Kövecses (2000), such mappings are not arbitrary but grounded in universal human experiences—anger and conflict are often felt physically as increased bodily heat, such as flushed skin or elevated heart rate, leading to metaphors like "*hot with rage*" or "*heated argument.*" Biden's metaphor taps into this physiological-emotional correlation, leveraging it to make abstract sociopolitical conflict cognitively accessible and emotionally resonant. On a discourse-pragmatic level, this metaphor functions as a face-saving strategy (Brown & Levinson, 1987), softening the tension between opposing factions without overt blame. Rather than accusing any one group of extremism, the metaphor allows Biden to promote reconciliation through a neutral, depersonalized framing. This subtle discursive move positions the emotional climate—not the individuals—as the problem to be addressed, which is a powerful rhetorical technique for mitigating defensiveness and encouraging collective cooperation.

Datum 4

Joe biden (Paragraph 17, Line 2)

*And give everybody **in this country a fair shot.** That's all they're asking for: a fair shot.*

At the surface level, the verb give is defined as "*to hand something to someone so that they can use, examine, or possess it*" (Hornby, 2000), and everybody refers to "*every person; all people*" (Hornby, 2000). The noun shot, in its literal sense, is defined as "*the act of firing a gun*" (Hornby, 2000). Interpreted literally, the phrase "give everybody in this country a fair shot" would imply offering each citizen a chance to discharge a weapon, a reading that is not only semantically incoherent in the political context but also socially inappropriate. This incongruity indicates that the phrase is not meant to be interpreted literally, but metaphorically.

The phrase "*a fair shot*" is a structural metaphor, wherein the source domain is shot—originally associated with the controlled act of firing a weapon—and the target domain is equal opportunity or fair treatment. Within the cultural context of American English, this metaphor has become conventionalized and is frequently used to represent the notion of equitable access to opportunity, especially in socio-political discourse. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), structural metaphors allow one domain of

experience to structure another, and in this case, the competitive act of taking a shot is mapped onto the concept of striving for success in society.

Biden's use of "*a fair shot*" functions as a rhetorical appeal to justice, equality, and democratic values. It implies that every American, regardless of race, class, or background, deserves an equal chance to succeed. Given the historical and ongoing presence of systemic racism and inequality in the United States, this metaphor also serves to challenge those structures by advocating for institutional fairness. The shot metaphor also draws upon notions of meritocracy, where success is imagined as the result of seizing one's chance under fair conditions—suggesting that social and economic systems should be configured to allow such chances for all.

Furthermore, the metaphor carries pragmatic force. It encapsulates a promise of inclusive governance and social mobility, values that resonate deeply in American political culture. By employing a metaphor rooted in both competitive and democratic ideals, Biden frames his leadership vision as one that empowers individuals by removing systemic barriers—thus transforming the abstract ideal of fairness into a tangible, relatable concept through metaphorical grounding.

The metaphor "*a fair shot*" reveals how deeply entrenched competitive and militaristic schemas are within American conceptualizations of justice and opportunity. it leverages a source frame rooted in combative or game-like scenarios, where a "*shot*" signifies both risk and agency—one's moment to act under uncertain but rule-governed conditions (FrameNet; Fillmore & Petruck, 2003). This underlying conceptual frame

reflects what Fauconnier and Turner (2002) describe as conceptual blending: the construction of meaning through the integration of multiple mental spaces. In this blend, the notion of firing a shot (source space) merges with the idea of pursuing one's goals in society (target space), yielding an emergent meaning—an opportunity to compete fairly in life's arena. Importantly, the metaphor is not merely expressive but ideologically generative: it presupposes a world in which access to success is contingent upon individual merit and equal access to "*the shot*," subtly reinforcing the American Dream narrative. Thus, Biden's invocation of this metaphor is not accidental but strategically loaded with culturally resonant meaning, cognitively efficient processing, and political potency.

Datum 5

Joe biden (Paragraph 27 Line 1)

Tonight, the whole world is watching America, and I believe, at our best, **America is a beacon for the globe.** *We will lead not only by the example of our power, but by the power of our example.*

At the literal level, the term beacon refers to "a light or fire placed in a high position as a signal or guide, often to warn of danger" (Hornby, 2000). When paired with the proper noun America—a nation-state—this produces a semantically incongruent reading if interpreted literally: a country cannot physically emit light as a

guiding flame. Therefore, a literal interpretation is insufficient, and a metaphorical reading is required. As such, "America is a beacon for the globe" is best understood as a structural metaphor, wherein a concrete and perceptible source domain (beacon) is mapped onto an abstract target domain (global leadership or moral guidance).

In this metaphor, the source domain is beacon—a physical object that illuminates and provides direction, especially in moments of uncertainty or danger. The target domain is America as a moral and political leader on the world stage. The conceptual mapping here aligns with Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) theory of structural metaphor, in which systematic correspondences are drawn between the source and target domains. The beacon, as an instrument of navigation, symbolizes clarity, safety, and trustworthiness—qualities that Biden seeks to attribute to America's role in global affairs. His statement implies that at its best, the United States functions as a moral compass or exemplar for other nations, especially in the realms of democratic governance, diplomacy, and human rights.

Moreover, Biden's extension of the metaphor—"we will lead not only by the example of our power, but by the power of our example"—reinforces the notion that American influence should be derived not merely from military or economic strength (hard power), but from principled leadership and democratic integrity (soft power). This contrast between power as force and power as example evokes Joseph Nye's (2004) theory of soft power, wherein influence is generated through attraction rather

than coercion. The beacon metaphor thus encodes a normative framework for American exceptionalism, not as dominance, but as ethical guidance.

The metaphor "America is a beacon for the globe" also operates within a deeply entrenched American political mythos. It activates a national identity narrative rooted in civil religious discourse, wherein America is often portrayed as a "city upon a hill"—a metaphor with Puritan origins, repurposed in modern political rhetoric to imply moral superiority and providential mission (Bellah, 1967). Through conceptual blending (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002), the beacon integrates visual imagery of light and elevation with ideological notions of leadership, moral clarity, and exceptionalism. This blend creates a powerful rhetorical effect: it naturalizes the idea that America's global role is both necessary and virtuous. From a socio-cognitive standpoint, such metaphors do more than communicate—they shape the way citizens reason about national identity and international responsibility, embedding complex political values in intuitive, embodied terms.

Datum 6

Joe biden (Paragraph 32, Line 3)

***Now together on eagle's wings**, we embark on the work that God and history have called upon us to do.*

Taken literally, the phrase "on eagle's wings" suggests a physical scenario in which individuals are transported on the wings of a bird of prey—an interpretation that, of course, defies logical or physical plausibility. The word eagle is defined as "a large bird of prey with a sharp curved beak and exceptional eyesight" (Hornby, 2000). However, in the American sociocultural and political context, the eagle holds potent symbolic value: it represents national identity, power, authority, freedom, and divine favor. This symbolic reading transforms the phrase into a structural metaphor, where a concrete source domain (eagle) is used to structure and frame a more abstract target domain—namely, the American nation and its collective mission or destiny.

Within the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), the source domain is the eagle—a majestic, sovereign creature capable of soaring to great heights—and the target domain is the nation's renewal and moral elevation. The metaphor suggests that the people of the United States, unified ("together"), are being lifted or carried toward a higher purpose or divine mission. The image evokes both physical elevation and moral transcendence. Furthermore, the use of the phrase "on eagle's wings" taps into Biblical intertextuality, most notably referencing Exodus 19:4 ("I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself"), which imbues the phrase with spiritual authority and a sense of providential destiny. This blend of national and religious symbolism strengthens the rhetorical impact, positioning America as divinely guided and historically mandated.

This metaphor operates within a blended space (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002), where elements from the conceptual domains of spirituality, national identity, and mythic heroism are integrated. The eagle, already an emblem of the United States, is not merely a national symbol—it becomes an agent of elevation, transcendence, and renewal. This metaphor thus activates a high-order moral frame that casts the political agenda as a sacred calling rather than a partisan plan. Additionally, by invoking both God and history, Biden's utterance draws on the rhetorical structure of what Bellah (1967) terms American civil religion, wherein political authority is legitimated through sacred narratives and moral grandeur. This metaphor doesn't just describe a course of action—it sacralizes it, framing the post-election transition as not merely political, but spiritually and historically ordained. The metaphor "*on eagle's wings*" is therefore cognitively rich, culturally loaded, and strategically deployed for national unification and aspirational mobilization.

Datum 7

Joe biden (Paragraph 32, Line 2)

*And **make you just shine** like the sun.*

Literally, the verb *shine* denotes the emission or reflection of light, typically associated with luminous bodies such as the sun (Hornby, 2000:1406). A literal reading of the phrase "*make you just shine like the sun*" would suggest that Biden is referring

to people physically emitting light—an interpretation that clearly defies real-world logic. Therefore, a metaphorical understanding is essential. In this context, *shine* symbolizes visibility, radiance, and enlightenment—qualities frequently linked to wisdom, virtue, or moral clarity.

According to Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory, this is a structural metaphor, where the source domain is *physical light* and the target domain is personal or collective wisdom. Light, in human cognition and cultural narratives, is a common metaphorical vehicle for understanding clarity, truth, and intellectual or spiritual insight. *The sun*, as the ultimate source of light, reinforces this symbolism with connotations of power, warmth, and universal illumination. Thus, when Biden tells the American people they will "*shine like the sun*," he is not only invoking a metaphor of greatness and dignity but also implying moral leadership and intellectual awakening guided by divine or higher values.

This metaphor serves a dual function: it elevates the people through poetic language while also reinforcing his broader political vision of national unity and moral recovery. The phrase suggests that under collective guidance—possibly divine ("God and history")—the American people can illuminate the path forward, metaphorically dispelling the darkness of division and ignorance.

The metaphor "shine like the sun" activates the "*light is good / knowledge is light*" conceptual mapping, a deeply entrenched metaphorical schema that transcends linguistic boundaries and appears across cultures (Kövecses, 2010). In this metaphor,

Biden is not merely praising the people of America—he is positioning them as agents of moral illumination in a context clouded by recent national tension and darkness. The metaphor thus serves both an emotive and didactic function: it uplifts the audience while simultaneously prescribing a path toward collective ethical clarity. The metaphor leverages embodied cognition, as human beings physically associate vision and orientation with light and use this perceptual grounding to comprehend abstract phenomena such as truth, hope, and direction (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999).

Moreover, the metaphor functions as an ideological tool within Biden's broader rhetorical strategy of national moral restoration. By invoking the sun—a symbol of centrality, energy, and life—he links the American people to a source of regeneration. In essence, he implies that post-election unity and virtue do not emerge from the government alone but from the people's own inner moral light. This frames the American public not as passive recipients of policy, but as active participants in the nation's reawakening. The performative power of this metaphor lies in its affective resonance—it galvanizes a shared image of enlightenment, dignity, and civic responsibility, while subtly reinforcing a liberal-democratic ideology grounded in individual and collective virtue.

3.2.2. Orientational Metaphor

In this research, the researcher found only one orientational metaphor in Joe Biden speech. The analysis of orientational metaphor is as follows:

Datum 8

Joe biden (Paragraph 16, Line 6)

*The battle to achieve racial justice and **root out systemic racism** in this country.*

Literally, the noun *root* refers to the underground part of a plant that absorbs water and anchors the organism in soil (Hornby, 2000). The verb phrase *root out*, therefore, would suggest physically removing roots from the ground. When this is applied to an abstract noun like *systemic racism*, the literal interpretation becomes nonsensical, as *racism* has no tangible or biological "*roots*." Hence, this phrase requires metaphorical interpretation.

The expression root out is an example of an orientational metaphor, which Lakoff and Johnson (1980) define as a metaphor grounded in spatial orientation—such as in–out, up–down, or near–far. In this case, the metaphor is structured by the in–out schema: systemic racism is conceptualized as something undesirable that is inside the societal structure and must be removed or expelled from within. The use of out implies purification, resolution, or cleansing—positioning racism as an internal contaminant within the metaphorical "*body*" of the nation.

This metaphor draws on a culturally shared understanding of problems as things that reside within a system (i.e., as embedded or deeply entrenched) and solutions as actions that involve removing or extracting them. By saying "*root out systemic*

racism," Biden frames racism not merely as a problem of behavior but as an invasive, structural entity embedded in the nation's foundations. Thus, rooting it out implies systemic reform—pulling up injustice from its origin and eradicating it entirely.

Moreover, orientational metaphors like this one subtly guide public reasoning and policy priorities. If racism is imagined spatially as something "*within*" the country, then its removal becomes not just a moral imperative but a spatial and structural necessity. It also reinforces the narrative of cleansing and healing—often invoked in post-crisis political rhetoric to suggest moral progress and national rebirth.

The phrase "*root out systemic racism*" not only operates within an orientational metaphorical schema (*in–out*), but also intersects with what Lakoff (2002) calls "moral accounting metaphors", where evil or injustice is conceived as something that has penetrated a moral container and must be purged. In this case, racism is conceptualized as a contaminant or invasive substance embedded within the socio-political body of the nation. Removing it requires a metaphorical act of excavation—digging deep, exposing hidden origins, and ultimately extracting them to restore systemic health. "*The root*" therefore, indexes the entrenched and invisible dimensions of systemic injustice, which makes the metaphor particularly effective for communicating structural critique without needing academic jargon.

This metaphor also has important discursive implications. By invoking the verb "*root out*", Biden positions his political agenda as not merely reformist but

transformational—implying a readiness to challenge foundational systems rather than superficially address symptoms. This metaphor, therefore, functions as a frame-resetting mechanism (Lakoff, 2004), inviting listeners to reconceptualize racism not as isolated acts of prejudice, but as deeply embedded power relations requiring structural intervention. The metaphor helps legitimize future political actions by aligning them with the logic of moral hygiene and national healing. In this way, Biden's choice of metaphor is not only linguistically elegant, but strategically potent.

3.2.3 Ontological Metaphor

In this research, the researcher found seven data of ontological metaphor in Joe Biden's speech. The analysis of ontological metaphor are as follows:

Datum 9

Joe biden (Paragraph 3, Line 3)

They've delivered us a clear victory*, a convincing victory, a victory for we the people.*

At a literal level, the verb deliver denotes the physical act of transporting and handing over an object (Hornby, 2000:118). When combined with the noun *victory*, which refers to abstract success—particularly in elections, battles, or competitions— the sentence presents an incongruous image if interpreted non-metaphorically. Abstract concepts like victory do not have tangible properties and cannot be physically

transported, handed over, or received. Thus, this phrase exemplifies an ontological metaphor, where an abstract entity (*victory*) is metaphorically treated as a discrete, manipulable object—something that can be *delivered*.

This metaphor reflects the Container Schema, a foundational conceptual structure whereby we treat abstract experiences as bounded entities (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). By treating *victory* as a package that can be handed over, Biden activates a culturally familiar source domain: the transfer of goods. The target domain, in this case, is political success and democratic legitimacy. This ontological mapping enhances communicative clarity by framing the democratic process as a transaction, wherein voters become the active agents who *deliver* outcomes through ballots. This rhetorical framing subtly underscores the agency of the electorate—highlighting democracy as a process led by "we the people." The metaphor not only communicates success but honors the collective effort and legitimacy behind it.

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), ontological metaphors function by giving abstract concepts or events a more concrete status. This metaphor allows speakers to treat *victory* as a substance that can be possessed, transferred, or even gifted. In Biden's utterance, the victory is not just described—it is reified, framed as a symbolic object delivered by the electorate to the speaker and his team. This objectification facilitates comprehension, as it allows the audience to conceptualize complex sociopolitical outcomes in physical terms—much like receiving a letter or package.

Moreover, the repetition of "*a clear victory, a convincing victory*" amplifies the metaphor's epistemic and emotional force. The delivered *victory* becomes not just any package—it is described as *clear* and *convincing*, adjectives that imply transparency, certainty, and undeniable legitimacy. This rhetorical reinforcement anticipates and preempts challenges to the election's outcome by embedding clarity and justification within the metaphor itself. Politically, this is a strategic move: Biden's language uses ontological metaphor to convert abstract democratic validation into something that feels concrete, tangible, and unassailable. It signals not just triumph, but closure and finality—a critical gesture in a moment of political uncertainty. This metaphor, therefore, operates on cognitive, emotional, and ideological levels simultaneously, allowing abstract legitimacy to be *grasped* as though it were a physical object firmly in hand.

Datum 10

Joe biden (Paragraph 4, Line 1)

*Tonight, we've seen all over this nation, all cities in all parts of the country, indeed across the world, an outpouring of joy, of hope, renewed faith, and **tomorrow bring a better day.***

Literally, *tomorrow* refers to the day following the present one, or more broadly, to the future (Hornby, 2000). The verb *bring*, on the other hand, refers to the

action of transporting or delivering something, typically performed by an animate agent (Hornby, 2000). Taken literally, the phrase "*tomorrow bring a better day*" suggests that a temporal concept (*tomorrow*) possesses the human capacity to act—that is, to carry or deliver change. This creates a semantic incongruity, as time is not a sentient or physical entity capable of intentional action.

Personification allows abstract domains—such as time, fate, or justice—to be understood through the more tangible domain of human agency. This reflects the underlying experiential basis of metaphor, in which embodied experience (e.g., humans acting upon objects) is used to structure conceptualizations of non-physical entities (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). In this metaphor, the source domain is an intentional human being who has the ability to bring change, while the target domain is *tomorrow*, representing the abstract and uncertain terrain of the future. The metaphor makes the future seem not only accessible but also benevolent, thereby creating emotional resonance. It fosters optimism by implying that time itself is working in favor of the people.

The key to understanding this phrase lies in its metaphorical structure. In conceptual terms, Biden's phrase embodies a personification, a subtype of ontological metaphor as defined by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Here, the abstract concept *tomorrow* is conceptualized as a human agent—an entity with the power to act, to bring about transformation. This metaphor maps human intentionality onto an inanimate and abstract entity (i.e., the future), thereby allowing speakers and listeners to reason about

the future in concrete, accessible terms. By granting *tomorrow* agentive force, the metaphor makes the abstract idea of hope and change feel imminent and actionable.

Rhetorically, this metaphor serves a powerful emotive and political function. In moments of national transition, political leaders often invoke temporal metaphors to bridge present uncertainty with future hope. Biden's use of personification in "*tomorrow bring a better day*" is a classic instance of what Charteris-Black (2005) identifies as "legitimating metaphors"—discursive tools that construct the speaker's vision as morally justified and historically inevitable. By framing tomorrow as a helper or redeemer, Biden symbolically aligns himself with the flow of progress, casting his leadership not as a disruption, but as a fulfillment of democratic and moral destiny. This is both affectively reassuring and ideologically effective, as it positions his presidency within a broader narrative of national healing and forward movement.

In simpler terms, Joe Biden uses the phrase "*tomorrow bring a better day*" to give people hope about the future. Even though tomorrow is not a person and cannot actually bring anything, the sentence makes it feel like the future has the power to make things better. This kind of expression is called personification, where something that isn't human is described as if it can act like a person. By doing this, Biden helps the audience imagine a future that is positive and full of possibility. It's a powerful way to make people feel that better days are not just possible. They are already on their way.

Datum 11

Joe biden (Paragraph 25, Line 1)

***We have an opportunity to defeat despair**, to build a nation of prosperity and purpose.*

In this statement, the verb *defeat* is applied to *despair*, an abstract emotional state. Literally, defeat refers to overcoming an opponent in battle, competition, or conflict (Hornby, 2000). Despair, however, is a non-physical concept—the emotional state of total hopelessness (Hornby, 2000). Understood literally, it would be illogical to claim that one can physically defeat *despair*, since it has no form or agency. However, this apparent incongruity is resolved when interpreted through the lens of conceptual metaphor theory. Specifically, Biden's sentence exemplifies an ontological metaphor—a metaphor that gives abstract experiences or emotions a concrete, entity-like status.

From a cognitive linguistic perspective, this metaphor engages a deeply familiar *war* schema, in which problems and challenges are construed as enemies to be defeated. The source domain—military or competitive conflict—is projected onto the target domain of emotional hardship (*despair*), allowing listeners to reason about abstract suffering in terms of concrete actions: fight, win, overcome. This process not only simplifies complex emotional or national challenges, but also boosts morale by suggesting that these challenges are surmountable. It reflects a heroic frame wherein

the nation—and by extension, the American people—are cast as resilient fighters emerging from a period of darkness into a renewed era of prosperity and purpose.

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), personification is a type of ontological metaphor that allows us to understand intangible concepts by attributing human-like characteristics to them. In this case, despair is metaphorically constructed as an adversary in *battle*—a force that can be challenged, fought, and ultimately overcome. This metaphor is particularly powerful in political rhetoric, as it frames emotional and national recovery not just as a passive experience, but as an active, collective struggle. By constructing despair as something defeatable, Biden empowers his audience to see themselves as participants in that struggle—a rhetorical move that fosters unity, agency, and hope.

Politically, the metaphor functions as a form of strategic emotional framing. Biden implicitly connects the post-election period to a national rebirth—a chance not merely to recover, but to rebuild from a place of strength. The parallel structure of the sentence—"*to defeat despair, to build a nation…*"—establishes a clear causal relationship: once despair is defeated, prosperity and purpose can follow. This aligns with a classic restoration narrative, often used in political discourse to communicate a return to foundational values or greatness after a period of crisis (Charteris-Black, 2005). In this metaphorical construction, Biden becomes not only a leader, but a symbolic agent of collective healing—a shepherd guiding the nation from pain to purpose through shared effort and renewed vision.

In simple terms, when Joe Biden says "*we have an opportunity to defeat despair*," he's using a metaphor to make people feel hopeful. Even though despair is just a feeling—not a person or an enemy—he talks about it as something we can fight and win against. This helps people imagine that the sadness and fear many have felt can actually be overcome. It's a powerful way to make the future feel more hopeful and to encourage everyone to work together toward a better, more positive America.

Datum 12

Joe biden (Paragraph 26, Line 2)

*Our nation is **shaped by the constant battle between our better angels and our darkest impulses.***

At face value, this phrase might appear fantastical if interpreted literally. The concepts of "*better angels*" and "darkest impulses" are not physical beings, and battles are typically understood as violent encounters between armies. However, Joe Biden's use of metaphor here is steeped in conceptual metaphor theory, where abstract human qualities—such as moral judgment and emotional drives—are personified and cast as combatants in an internal struggle. In this construction, the nation is not merely a geopolitical entity, but a dynamic, moral organism that is constantly molded by the tension between virtue and vice.

This metaphor resonates with the conceptual schema of moral dualism, where good and evil are mapped as opposing forces. The phrase "*battle between better angels and darkest impulses*" draws from a long tradition in political discourse that represents human nature as a site of internal conflict. This construction activates the metaphor *morality is a struggle*, wherein ethical behavior requires resisting or overcoming temptation. Biden's metaphor relies on deeply entrenched cognitive mappings—such as *up = good* (angels) and *down = bad* (dark impulses)—to reinforce that the future of the nation depends on which internal force prevails. These kinds of metaphors help simplify complex moral decision-making for the public, offering clarity in times of uncertainty.

Following Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) typology, this metaphor falls under the category of ontological metaphor, where intangible aspects of human experience are given substance and agency. Here, "better angels" represent the aspirational, ethical, and altruistic components of human nature, while "*darkest impulses*" symbolize primal, selfish, or destructive tendencies. These metaphorical entities are not just symbolic; they are actors in a conceptual drama of moral tension that defines national identity. Biden's framing allows the audience to visualize abstract ethical dynamics as a literal battle shaping the soul of the country.

Biden's use of "better angels" is also a deliberate intertextual allusion to Abraham Lincoln's inaugural address (1861), where Lincoln called upon "*the better angels of our nature*" to preserve the Union. This reference places Biden's speech

within a continuum of American political rhetoric, where appeals to shared morality and national unity are often framed in spiritual or quasi-religious terms. The metaphor functions not only cognitively, but also rhetorically, evoking a collective memory of past leadership during crises. It reinforces Biden's ethos as a restorer of unity and a moral compass, suggesting that like Lincoln, he seeks to heal the divisions that have shaped American history.

Put simply, when Joe Biden talks about "*the battle between our better angels and our darkest impulses*," he means that people often struggle between doing the right thing and doing the wrong thing. He says this struggle shapes who we are as a nation. Instead of just saying we have good and bad sides, he describes them like two people fighting—*a good angel and a dark impulse*. This makes it easier for people to picture the idea, and to feel like choosing good actions can help shape a better America.

Datum 13

Joe biden (Paragraph 29, Line 4)

*To ahead to **an America that cures diseases** like cancer and Alzheimer's.*

In this phrase, the noun "*America*" is metaphorically treated as an agent capable of performing human actions—in this case, the act of curing. Literally, to cure refers to making someone healthy again after illness (Hornby, 2000), and diseases such as cancer and Alzheimer's are biological conditions affecting individuals. However, it is illogical to interpret America as a living entity capable of practicing medicine. Instead,

this sentence uses ontological metaphor, where an abstract entity—in this case, the nation—is granted human qualities through personification.

Framing the nation as an agent capable of curing disease taps into a broader metaphorical schema: *nation as a person*. This conceptual mapping allows the abstract structure of America to be imagined as a conscious, goal-oriented being—one that "heals," "*fights*," or "*protects*." In doing so, Biden invites citizens to see themselves as integral parts of a living, responsive organism. The metaphor functions rhetorically to transform collective scientific and policy achievements into a shared national character. America does not simply fund or support medical innovation—it cures diseases. This simplification is cognitively persuasive, as it collapses institutional complexity into an emotionally resonant image of national compassion and strength.

As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) explain, ontological metaphors help people conceptualize abstract or complex systems (like a nation) as unified, embodied entities that can act with purpose and intention. By framing America as a healer or physician, Biden invokes a powerful national image: the country not merely as a place, but as an active force working toward scientific progress, public health, and collective well-being. This metaphor strengthens the rhetorical appeal of national unity and progress by placing medical advancement within the nation's moral and social identity.

Moreover, this metaphor taps into a deeply emotional and ethical domain. By positioning America as a curative force, Biden aligns national identity with the values of care, healing, and hope. Diseases like cancer and Alzheimer's are highly personal

and emotionally charged issues for many families; invoking them in this way personalizes policy goals and anchors them in the emotional experiences of the electorate. The personification of America as a healer also indirectly constructs the government's role as ethical and humanitarian—more than just politically administrative. This reinforces Biden's overall narrative of rebuilding not just political systems, but the moral core of the nation.

In simple terms, when Biden says "*an America that cures diseases,*" he's using a metaphor to show that the country should play an active role in fighting illness. Of course, America isn't a doctor and can't literally cure people—but he wants people to think of the nation as a caring, healing force. It's a powerful way to say that under his leadership, the country will invest in science, healthcare, and solutions that really matter to people. It helps make the idea of medical progress feel like a national mission.

Datum 14

Joe biden (Paragraph 29, Line 5)

*Ahead to an **America that never leaves anyone behind.***

At face value, the phrase "*America that never leaves anyone behind*" appears illogical if interpreted literally. A nation, being an abstract geopolitical entity, does not possess physical mobility or the cognitive agency to "leave" or "take" individuals anywhere. However, as George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) explain in their

foundational work Metaphors We Live By, metaphors allow individuals to conceptualize abstract domains (like nations or policies) in more concrete, embodied terms. Here, America is personified—imbued with human agency—allowing it to be understood as a guiding figure or leader who actively chooses inclusion over abandonment.

The metaphor also functions pragmatically as a form of political rebranding. By stating that America "*never leaves anyone behind*," Biden subtly reclaims and repurposes a phrase traditionally associated with military ethics—where the phrase denotes solidarity and commitment to comrades. Transposed into a civic context, this metaphor elevates the president's duty to every citizen, regardless of background, race, political affiliation, or socioeconomic status. It transforms governance from a bureaucratic institution into a moral and personal responsibility. In cognitive linguistics, this is known as moral projection—where values from familiar domains (family, team, or military loyalty) are mapped onto complex political institutions to build trust and alignment.

This metaphor falls under the category of ontological metaphor, where abstract entities are conceived as discrete beings or agents. By assigning America the human capacity to "*leave someone behind*," Biden leverages the *nation as person* conceptual metaphor. The target domain—America as a national collective—is understood through the source domain of a human guide or protector who walks forward, ensuring that no one is excluded. This metaphor draws on strong emotional and moral schemas:

abandonment is inherently negative, while inclusion is virtuous. Thus, Biden positions his leadership as morally superior, evoking unity, empathy, and national solidarity in contrast to previous political division.

Furthermore, this metaphor carries socio-cognitive weight in shaping national identity. The idea of "*not leaving anyone behind*" constructs America as an inclusive space—a bounded container whose value lies in maintaining the integrity of all its members. This aligns with the *container* schema discussed in image schema theory (Johnson, 1987), where inclusion implies safety, and exclusion implies danger. The phrase thus becomes a linguistic tool that invites listeners to project their own hopes for protection, recognition, and belonging onto the speaker's vision of America. It is not merely descriptive—it is constructive, shaping public perception of what America ought to be.

When Biden says "*an America that never leaves anyone behind*," he's not talking about a country literally walking away from people. Instead, he's using metaphor to say that his vision of America includes everyone—no matter who they voted for, where they come from, or what they believe. He wants to send a message that under his leadership, no one will be forgotten or excluded. It's a powerful way to make people feel safe, valued, and united as one nation.

Datum 15

Joe biden (Paragraph 33, Line 1)

*With full hearts and steady hands, with faith in America and in each other, with love of country, **a thirst for justice**, let us be the nation that we know we can be, a nation united.*

The phrase "*a thirst for justice*" exemplifies an ontological metaphor, specifically one grounded in personification. Within the framework proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), ontological metaphors allow abstract entities—such as justice, freedom, or hope—to be treated as concrete objects or beings with physical attributes. In this case, justice is metaphorically conceptualized as a consumable substance akin to water, and *thirst* is used to represent an intense, visceral longing. This formulation makes the abstract concept of justice tangible, embodied, and emotionally resonant, especially in a political context where appeals to moral sensibility are crucial.

From the perspective of embodied cognition, this metaphor leverages physiological experience (*thirst*) to make a normative claim about the sociopolitical state of the nation. Thirst is not simply discomfort—it is a survival signal. Therefore, by saying the nation has a "*thirst for justice*," Biden constructs justice as something necessary for the nation's existential wellbeing. In political rhetoric, this is a powerful move: it reframes justice not as a luxury or an abstract legal ideal, but as a psychosocial imperative, much like oxygen or water. This transformation of abstraction into biological necessity is what gives the phrase its rhetorical and affective potency.

By mapping the source domain of physical thirst (a biological, urgent human need) onto the target domain of justice (a sociopolitical value), Biden aligns moral

obligation with survival instinct. This creates a sense of moral urgency—suggesting that the desire for justice is not merely a philosophical stance but a fundamental, human necessity. In cognitive metaphor theory, this evokes the *need is hunger/thirst* schema, a subset of experiential metaphors rooted in bodily experience. The metaphor not only makes justice feel urgent and essential but also emotionally aligns the audience toward collective action.

This metaphor also plays a crucial role in shaping national identity. Biden's use of "*a thirst for justice*" positions the American people as inherently moral agents, collectively yearning for fairness and equity. Through this metaphor, justice is not merely something to be debated in courts—it is something to be craved, nurtured, and ultimately fulfilled. In terms of discourse analysis, this helps establish a shared value system and moral high ground for Biden's political coalition. It also invites listeners to project themselves as part of a nation actively moving toward moral completeness— "*a nation united*." Thus, this metaphorical structure doesn't just reflect thought—it shapes collective intention.

When Joe Biden says "*a thirst for justice*," he doesn't mean that justice is a drink. He's using a metaphor to say that Americans really want and need fairness in their society—just like thirsty people need water. It's a powerful way of showing how badly the country wants to fix unfairness and inequality. He's reminding everyone that justice isn't just something nice to have—it's something we can't live without.

3.3. Discussion

     This study was conducted to explore the types and meanings of metaphorical expressions used in Joe Biden's victory speech delivered on November 7, 2020. Using the theoretical lens of Conceptual Metaphor Theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (2003), the researcher identified fifteen metaphorical expressions, which fall into three main categories: seven structural metaphors, one orientational metaphor, and seven ontological metaphors. These expressions were drawn from the official transcript of the speech and analyzed in relation to their linguistic features, conceptual mappings, and rhetorical purposes. The findings show that metaphors function as more than stylistic devices. They serve as essential tools that help the audience conceptualize abstract political ideas in more concrete and emotionally resonant terms. Expressions such as *restore the soul of America*, *lower the temperature*, and *a thirst for justice* reveal Biden's strategic use of language to promote national unity, instill hope, and frame his leadership within a broader moral and ideological narrative.

     The presence of these metaphors can be understood through the cognitive and persuasive advantages they offer within political discourse. Metaphors provide a bridge between abstract ideas and the lived experiences of an audience, enabling more meaningful engagement. For example, in *Datum 1*, the phrase *restores the soul of America* presents a structural metaphor that imagines the nation as a living being with a soul. This metaphor allows Biden to express the idea of national renewal in terms of moral restoration, thereby encouraging listeners to connect emotionally with a shared

sense of ethical responsibility. In *Datum 2*, the expression *rebuilds the backbone of this nation* employs the human body as a source domain, framing the middle class as the core structural support of the country. *Datum 3* introduces the metaphor *lower the temperature*, which draws on physical sensation to suggest a need for emotional calm after a period of political conflict. These metaphors help explain why figurative language is so prominent in Biden's speech. They offer a way to ease emotional tension while advancing ideals such as unity, justice, and recovery, making these goals feel immediate and attainable.

Beyond their cognitive function, the metaphors used in the speech also carry deep symbolic and ideological meaning. The findings suggest that Biden's metaphors contribute to the construction of collective identity and a sense of national purpose. In *Datum 6*, the phrase *on eagle's wings* combines national symbolism with a religious reference, strengthening the image of America as a nation with a divine mission. *Datum 12* presents the metaphor *the battle between our better angels and our darkest impulses*, which frames internal national division as a moral and spiritual conflict within the conscience of the American people. Such expressions are not merely decorative language; they function as instruments of ideological framing. Through metaphors of battle, healing, and elevation, Biden invites the audience to emotionally invest in his vision for the future. These metaphorical choices align with a broader liberal-democratic perspective that portrays the nation as a moral agent capable of growth, inclusiveness, and justice. Taken together, the findings indicate that the metaphors in

this speech do not only describe the nation but also shape the way people are encouraged to see and aspire to it.

When compared to previous research, the results of this study both confirm and expand upon earlier findings. Studies such as those by Sabu (2011), Rohman (2020), Nirwana (2021), and Kuslambangningrum (2015) have shown that conceptual metaphors are widely used in political speeches to simplify complex issues, enhance persuasion, and articulate ideological positions. However, most of these prior studies focused on campaign discourse, debates, or inaugural addresses, each of which tends to foreground conflict, opposition, or political agenda-setting. This research differs in its focus on a *victory speech*, a genre that is less adversarial and more conciliatory. In this context, metaphors are used to promote reconciliation, celebrate shared values, and foster collective healing. For example, in *Datum 14*, Biden's use of the metaphor *"an America that never leaves anyone behind"* invokes military language of loyalty and care, but recontextualizes it in a civil, inclusive narrative. This highlights the capacity of metaphor to adapt to different communicative needs and political moments. Therefore, this study confirms the relevance of previous scholarship while offering a distinct contribution by analyzing how metaphor functions specifically in post-election rhetoric that aims to unify rather than polarize.

The implications of this study are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, the findings reinforce the claims of Lakoff and Johnson (2003) that metaphor is a central feature of human cognition and not merely a literary ornament. The presence of

structural, orientational, and ontological metaphors in Biden's speech demonstrates how political language is shaped by deeply rooted conceptual frameworks that organize thought and guide interpretation. Methodologically, this research demonstrates the utility of a qualitative, text-based approach to discourse analysis for uncovering the persuasive and ideological functions of language. Practically, the study offers valuable insight for political speechwriters, communication strategists, educators, and students of linguistics. Understanding how metaphor functions in political texts can enhance critical literacy and empower citizens to engage more thoughtfully with political messaging. Additionally, language instructors may incorporate metaphor analysis into curricula as a way of deepening students' understanding of meaning, structure, and rhetorical effect. Future researchers may build upon this work by analyzing metaphor in multilingual political contexts, in digital media campaigns, or by comparing metaphors across cultures to reveal how different societies conceptualize leadership, conflict, and unity.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

4.1. Conclusion

It turns out that metaphors in political speeches are not just used to make the language sound emotional or poetic. This study has shown that in Joe Biden's 2020 victory speech, metaphorical expressions carry much deeper meaning. While people often assume that a victory speech is only about celebration and formality, the findings reveal something different. The metaphors in the speech play a key role in shaping how the audience understands the identity of the nation, the challenges it faces, and the hopes for the future. Phrases such as *"restore the soul of America"* and *"rebuild the backbone of this nation"* present the country as a living being that needs healing, strength, and moral direction. These metaphors do not simply deliver political ideas; they help the audience feel connected to those ideas. The language invites listeners to think about justice, unity, and national progress in more personal and emotional ways. This shows that metaphor is not just a decoration in speech. It is a meaningful tool that helps turn abstract values into powerful and relatable messages. During moments of change and uncertainty, metaphor becomes a way for leaders to guide public emotion and imagination.

This research makes a valuable contribution to the field of linguistics, especially in areas related to semantics and political discourse. The findings support the view that metaphor is not only found in literature or creative writing, but also plays an important part in everyday communication, including in serious political

moments. The use of conceptual metaphor theory from Lakoff and Johnson has helped explain how people understand complex ideas through comparisons with familiar physical experiences. While previous studies have explored metaphors in campaign debates or inaugural speeches, this research has focused on a different type of political communication, which is the victory speech. This kind of speech focuses less on argument and more on healing and inspiration, which gives the metaphors in it a unique symbolic and emotional function. The results of this study are useful for students, educators, and anyone interested in how language works in society. Understanding the role of metaphor helps us become more aware of how leaders use words to shape meaning, connect with audiences, and communicate values. Future research may explore metaphor use in speeches from different countries, languages, or cultural contexts to gain a deeper understanding of how metaphor influences thought across the world.

4.2. Suggestion

This study focused only on a single political speech, namely Joe Biden's 2020 victory speech, which limits the scope of analysis in terms of sample size and variety of data. The metaphors examined were taken from one speech delivered during a specific political moment, without comparison to other speeches by the same speaker or by other political figures across different time periods. As a result, the findings may not fully represent the broader patterns of metaphor use in political discourse, especially in other genres such as debates, campaign speeches, or policy addresses. In addition, this study applied a purely qualitative approach, which

provided in-depth interpretations but did not allow for generalization or statistical comparison. The analysis also focused only on one cultural and linguistic context, which is the American political setting, and did not take into account how metaphor might vary across different cultural or linguistic backgrounds.

In line with these limitations, future research is encouraged to examine a wider range of political speeches across different time frames, genres, or political contexts. For example, further studies could compare Biden's metaphors in campaign speeches, inaugural addresses, and policy announcements to see whether similar patterns of metaphor usage appear. It would also be valuable to conduct comparative studies involving speeches by leaders from other countries to explore how cultural context shapes metaphorical framing. In addition, future researchers may consider using mixed methods, combining qualitative analysis with quantitative techniques such as corpus linguistics or frequency analysis, in order to identify patterns more systematically and broaden the applicability of the findings. By addressing these gaps, future research can offer a more comprehensive understanding of how metaphor functions in political language across time, cultures, and rhetorical situations.

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APENDICES

Joe Biden Speech Transcript

1.   Joe Biden: (12:14)

Hello, my fellow Americans and the people who brought me to dance, Delawareans. I see my buddy Senator Tom Carper down there and I think Senator Coons is there and I think the governor's around. Is that Ruth Ann?

2.   Audience: (12:38)

Yes, it is!

3.   Joe Biden: (12:39)

And now former governor Ruth Ann Minner. Most importantly, my sisters-in-law and my sister Valerie. Anyway, folks, the people of this nation have spoken. They've delivered us a clear victory, a convincing victory, a victory for we the people. We've won with the most votes ever cast for a presidential ticket in the history of the nation, 74 million.

4.   Joe Biden: (13:19)

Well, I must admit it surprised me. Tonight, we've seen all over this nation, all cities in all parts of the country, indeed across the world, an outpouring of joy, of hope, renewed faith, and tomorrow bring a better day. I'm humbled by the trust and confidence you've placed in me.

5.   Joe Biden: (13:45)

I pledge to be a president who seeks not to divide but unify, who doesn't see red states and blue states, only sees the United States, and work with all my heart, with the confidence of the whole people, to win the confidence of all of you. For that is what America, I believe, is about. It's about people. And that's what our administration will be all about.

6.   Joe Biden: (14:19)

I sought this office to restore the soul of America, to rebuild the backbone of this nation, the middle class, and to make America respected around the world again and to unite us here at home. It's the honor of my lifetime that so many millions of Americans have voted for that vision. Now the work of making that vision is real. It's a task, the task, of our time.

7.   Joe Biden: (14:52)

Folks, as I said many times before, I'm Jill's husband, and I would not be here without her love and tireless support of Jill, and my son Hunter and Ashley, my daughter, and all our grandchildren and their spouses and all our family. They're in my heart.

8.   Joe Biden: (15:19)

Jill's a mom, a military mom, an educator. She's dedicated her life to education. But teaching isn't just what she does. It's who she is. For American educators, this is a great day for you all. You're going to have one of your own in the White House. Jill's going to make a great First Lady. I'm so proud of her.

9.   Joe Biden: (15:50)

I'll have the honor of serving with a fantastic vice president. You just heard from Kamala Harris, who makes history as the first woman, first Black woman, the first woman from South Asian descent, the first daughter of immigrants ever elected in this country.

10.   Joe Biden: (16:11)

Don't tell me it's not possible in the United States. It's long overdue. We're reminded tonight of those who fought so hard for so many years to make this happen. But once again, America's bent the arc of the moral universe, more toward justice. Kamala, Doug, like it or not, you're family. You've become an honorary Biden. There's no way out.

11.   Joe Biden: (16:42)

To all those of you who volunteered and worked the polls in the middle of this pandemic, local elected officials, you deserve a special thanks from the entire nation. To my campaign team and all the volunteers, and all who gave so much of themselves to make this moment possible, I owe you. I owe you. I owe you everything.

12.   Joe Biden: (17:13)

All those who supported us, I'm proud of the campaign we built and ran. I'm proud of the coalition we put together, the broadest and most diverse coalition in history. Democrats, Republicans, independents, progressives, moderates, conservatives, young, old, urban, suburban, rural, gay, straight, transgender, white, Latino, Asian, Native American. I mean it, especially in those moments and especially for those

moments when this campaign was at its lowest ebb, the African American community stood up again for me. You've always had my back, and I'll have yours.

13.   Joe Biden: (18:00)

I said at the outset I wanted this campaign to represent and look like America. We've done that. Now that's what I want the administration to look like and act like.

14.   Joe Biden: (18:10)

For all those of you who voted for President Trump, I understand the disappointment tonight. I've lost a couple of times myself. But now let's give each other a chance. It's time to put away the harsh rhetoric, lower the temperature, see each other again, listen to each other again. To make progress, we have to stop treating our opponents as our enemies. They are not our enemies. They're Americans. They're Americans.

15.   Joe Biden: (18:49)

The Bible tells us to everything, there's a season, a time to build, a time to reap and a time to sow, and a time to heal. This is the time to heal in America.

16.   Joe Biden: (19:08)

Now this campaign is over, what is the will of people? What is our mandate? I believe it's this: American have called upon us to marshal the forces of decency, the forces of fairness, to marshal the forces of science and the forces of hope in the great battles of our time, the battle to control the virus, the battle to build prosperity, the battle to secure your family's healthcare, the battle to achieve racial justice and root out systemic racism in this country.

17.   Joe Biden: (19:45)

And the battle to save our planet by getting climate under control. The battle to restore decency, defend democracy, and give everybody in this country a fair shot. That's all they're asking for: a fair shot.

18.   Joe Biden: (20:07)

Folks, our work begins with getting COVID under control. We cannot repair the economy, restore our vitality, or relish life's most precious moments, hugging our grandchildren, our children on our birthdays, weddings, graduations, all the moments that matter most to us until we get it under control.

19.   Joe Biden: (20:28)

On Monday, I will name a group of leading scientists and experts as transition advisors, to help take the Biden-Harris COVID plan and convert it into an action blueprint that will start on January the 20th, 2021. That plan will be built on bedrock science. It will be constructed out of compassion, empathy, and concern. I will spare no effort, none, or any commitment to turn around this pandemic.

20.   Joe Biden: (21:08)

Folks, I'm a proud Democrat, but I will govern as an American president. I'll work as hard for those who didn't vote for me as those who did. Let this grim era of demonization in America begin to end here and now.

21.   Joe Biden: (21:36)

The refusal of Democrats and Republicans to cooperate with one another is not some mysterious force beyond our control, it's a decision, a choice we make. If we can decide not to cooperate, then we can decide to cooperate.

22.   Joe Biden: (21:58)

I believe that this is part of the mandate given to us from the American people. They want us to cooperate in their interests, and that's the choice I'll make. I'll call on Congress, Democrats and Republicans alike, to make that choice with me.

23.   Joe Biden: (22:18)

The American story is about slow yet steadily widening the opportunities in America. Make no mistake, too many dreams have been deferred for too long. We must make the promise of the country real for everybody, no matter their race, their ethnicity, their faith, their identity, or their disability.

24.   Joe Biden: (22:43)

Folks, America has always been shaped by inflection points by moments in time where we've made hard decisions about who we are and what we want to be: Lincoln in 1860 coming to save the union, FDR in 1932 promising a beleaguered country a new deal, JFK in 1960 pledging a new frontier, and 12 years ago when Barack Obama made history and told us, yes, we can.

25.   Joe Biden: (23:19)

Well, folks, we stand at an inflection point. We have an opportunity to defeat despair, to build a nation of prosperity and purpose. We can do it. I know we can.

26.   Joe Biden: (23:36)

I've long talked about the battle for the soul of America. We must restore the soul of America. Our nation is shaped by the constant battle between our better angels and our darkest impulses, and what presidents say in this battle matters. It's time for our better angels to prevail.

27.   Joe Biden: (24:01)

Tonight, the whole world is watching America, and I believe, at our best, America is a beacon for the globe. We will lead not only by the example of our power, but by the power of our example.

28.   Joe Biden: (24:21)

I know I've always believed, and many of you heard me say it, I've always believed we can define America in one word: possibilities. That in America everyone should be given an opportunity to go as far as their dreams and God-given ability will take them.

29.   Joe Biden: (24:40)

You see, I believe in the possibilities of this country. We're always looking ahead, ahead to an America that's freer and more just, ahead to an America that creates jobs with dignity and respect, ahead to an America that cures diseases like cancer and Alzheimer's, ahead to an America that never leaves anyone behind, ahead to an America that never gives up, never gives in.

30.   Joe Biden: (25:10)

This is a great nation. It's always been a bad bet to bet against America. We're good people. This is the United States of America. There's never been anything, never been anything, we've been not able to do when we've done it together.

31.   Joe Biden: (25:28)

Folks, in the last days of the campaign, I began thinking about a hymn that means a lot to me and my family, particularly my deceased son, Beau. It captures the faith

that sustains me and which I believe sustains America. I hope, and I hope, we can provide some comfort and solace to the 230,000 Americans who've lost a loved one due to this terrible virus this year. My heart goes out to each and every one of you. Hopefully this hymn gives you solace as well.

32.   Joe Biden: (26:02)

It goes like this. "And he will raise you up on eagle's wings, bear you on the breath of dawn, and make you just shine like the sun, and hold you in the palm of His hand." Now together on eagle's wings, we embark on the work that God and history have called upon us to do.

33.   Joe Biden: (26:23)

With full hearts and steady hands, with faith in America and in each other, with love of country, a thirst for justice, let us be the nation that we know we can be, a nation united, a nation strengthened, a nation healed, the United States of America.

34.   Joe Biden: (26:42)

Ladies and gentlemen, there's never, never, been anything we've tried we've not been able to do. Remember, as my grandpappy said when I walked out of his home, when I was a kid up in Scranton, he said, "Joey, keep the faith." And our grandmother, when she was alive, she yelled, "No, Joey. Spread it."

35.   Joe Biden: (27:02)

Spread the faith. God love you all. May God bless America and may God protect our troops. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Lists of data

No	Structural Metaphor
1	I sought this office **to restore the soul of America (Paragraph 6, Line 1)**
2	**To rebuild the backbone of this nation**, the middle class, and to make America respected around the world again and to unite us here at home. **(Paragraph 6, Line 2)**
3	It's time to put away the harsh rhetoric**, lower the temperature**, see each other again, listen to each other again. **(Paragraph 14, Line 3)**
4	And **give everybody in this country a fair shot**. That's all they're asking for: a fair shot. **(Paragraph 17, Line 2)**
5	Tonight, the whole world is watching America, and I believe, at our best, **America is a beacon for the globe**. We will lead not only by the example of our power, but by the power of our example. **(Paragraph 27 Line 1)**
6	**Now together on eagle's wings**, we embark on the work that God and history have called upon us to do. **(Paragraph 32, Line 3)**

| 7 | And **make you just shine** like the sun. **(Paragraph 32, Line 2)** |

No	Orientational Metaphor
1.	The battle to achieve racial justice and **root out systemic racism in this country**. (**Paragraph 16, Line 6**)

No	Ontological Metaphor
1	**They've delivered us a clear victory**, a convincing victory, a victory for we the people. **(Paragraph 3, Line 3)**
2	Tonight, we've seen all over this nation, all cities in all parts of the country, indeed across the world, an outpouring of joy, of hope, renewed faith, and **tomorrow bring a better day**. **(Paragraph 4, Line 1)**
3	We have an **opportunity to defeat despair**, to build a nation of prosperity and purpose. **(Paragraph 25, Line 1)**

4	Our nation is **shaped by the constant battle between our better angels and our darkest impulses**. **(Paragraph 26, Line 2)**
5	To ahead to an **America that cures diseases** like cancer and Alzheimer's. **(Paragraph 29, Line 4)**
6	Ahead to an **America that never leaves anyone behind**. **(Paragraph 29, Line 5)**
7	With full hearts and steady hands, with faith in America and in each other, with love of country, **a thirst for justice**, let us be the nation that we know we can be, a nation united. **(Paragraph 33, Line 1)**