

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Legitimizing and Delegitimizing: A Critical Metaphor Analysis of Selected Political Speeches

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ABSTRACT

The current study aims to examine how metaphors play a crucial role in political discourse and how they are used by politicians to legitimize their actions and delegitimize those of their opponents. In an effort to do so, two of Trump's speeches are examined, analyzed, and interpreted using a critical approach, namely critical metaphor analysis, developed by Charteris-Black (2005). Charteris-Black's theoretical framework is adapted to this study to detect the political ideologies that operate in the analyzed political speeches. The selected political speeches are examined through different types of metaphor suggested by Charteris-Black by analyzing the structures of each sentence that comprises the types of metaphor applied (which are nine in number) to show how Trump manages to legitimize his actions as well as delegitimize the actions of the Iranian's regime. The analysis proved that the selected speeches are loaded with ideological references and cues that are designed by the speaker to fathom out political ideology. Using various types of metaphors, Trump introduces and expands on Iran negatively, trying to gain the world's support in his conflict against it.

Keywords: Trump, Critical Metaphor, Legitimization, Delegitimization, Ideology.

مقالة بحثية

إضفاء الشرعية وانتزاعها: تحليل نقدي للاستعارة في خطابات سياسية مختارة

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الملخص:

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى تفصي الكيفية التي تلعب بها الاستعارات دورًا جوهريًا في الخطاب السياسي وكيف يستخدمها السياسيون لإضفاء الشرعية على أفعالهم وسلب الشرعية عن أفعال خصومهم. ولتحقيق ذلك، تم فحص وتحليل وتفسير خطابين لترامب باستخدام منهج نقدي، وهو تحليل الاستعارة النقدية الذي طوره تشارتريس-بلاك (2005). حيث يتم تكييف الإطار النظري لبلاك في هذه الدراسة للكشف عن الأيديولوجيات السياسية الكامنة في الخطابات السياسية المُحلَّلة. وتم فحص الخطابات السياسية المختارة من خلال أنواع مختلفة من الاستعارات التي اقترحها بلاك، وذلك بتحليل بنية كل جملة تتضمن أنواع الاستعارات المستخدمة (وهي تسعة أنواع)، لإظهار كيف يُبرز المتحدث أفعاله المتعلقة بإيران أو ينزع شرعية أفعال النظام الإيراني. وأثبت التحليل أن الخطابات المختارة مُحمَّلة بإشارات وتلميحات أيديولوجية صمَّمتها المتحدث لتمرير الأيديولوجية السياسية. يستخدم ترامب أنواعًا مختلفة من الاستعارات لتقديم إيران وتوسيع نطاق الحديث عنها بصورة سلبية، ساعيًا لكسب تأييد العالم في صراعه ضدها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ترامب، استعارة ، إضفاء الشرعية، انتزاع الشرعية، الأيديولوجيا.

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1. Introduction

Because it can take advantage of the associative power of language to elicit an emotional reaction from the hearer, metaphor plays a crucial rhetorical role in persuasive language. In the realm of politics, metaphors play an important role because they combine the expressive function of persuasion with the discourse function of expressing policy, both in terms of assessing policy and politicians' dependability and integrity. However, they are useful because they make it easier to explore potential political goals without committing the speaker to any of them and because they promote the kind of emotional engagement that effective political leaders are looking for. They, thereby, integrate the ideational and interpersonal aspects of language [4, p.13].

The politicians' persuasiveness primarily depends on how language is used in general and metaphor in particular. The necessity of metaphor for effective leadership can be explained by identifying its cognitive and emotive foundations. Additionally, it is suggested that metaphor is essential for developing the systems of persuasive belief and that it is systematically connected to other language techniques. There are many strategies used by politicians to convince their audience. Therefore, metaphor increases their persuasive power. This is particularly true when other rhetorical devices interact with metaphor, as political speeches work best when a variety of methods work together [1, p. 119].

So, in the current study, a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach is adapted to uncover the mechanisms by which ideologies and beliefs are constructed in political speeches through the types of metaphor suggested by Charteris-Black's Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) approach. The analysis endeavors to uncover how Trump tries to legitimize his actions against Iran and delegitimize the Iranian regime and as indicated in the use of metaphors in his selected political speeches. As such, the study adopts a **qualitative approach** to consider the selected political speeches in pursuit of the metaphors responsible for their ideological content. Finally,

critical and ideological perspectives are used to discuss and interpret the data.

2. Metaphor

A metaphor is a linguistic representation that emerges when a word or phrase is utilized in a context or domain that is not expected to occur, resulting in semantic tension. It may possess linguistic, pragmatic, and cognitive traits. This concept has a number of significant aspects. Firstly, although metaphors contain pragmatic and cognitive qualities, they are primarily language phenomena. Second, any word form can function as a metaphor if the situation calls for it because metaphor is a part of language use. There are two domains as a result of the shift, which suggests a change in usage: a source domain where the word is "normally" used and a target domain where it is not [2, p.21]. However, metaphors depend on our expectations, which are derived from our prior linguistic experiences, and because word meanings change at different rates due to different people's experiences with language, metaphor is not an absolute phenomenon, but rather a relative one. That is to say, what was originally literal may become metaphorical for speakers collectively, but it may also be more or less metaphorical for a single speaker at any given moment since judgments of what is typical rely on each speaker's unique linguistic experiences [10, p.55].

The core of metaphor is to comprehend and experience one type of item in relation to another. For instance, the speaker employs the terms "road" and "traveled" in metaphorical ways in "road less traveled." While this phrase is commonly referred to as "the metaphor," cognitive linguists focus more on the underlying mental pattern that gives the phrase its meaning. This conceptual dimension is emphasized in cognitive linguistics, which implies that metaphors are not only reflected through a verbal language, but they are also mental patterns that can be conveyed by nonverbal means like gestures and pictures. Cognitive linguistics is by no means the only field of study to take metaphor seriously [13, p.207].

2.1 Metaphor in Political Discourse

In the realm of political discourse, metaphors play a crucial role; sociolinguists and discourse analysts

study how politicians employ metaphorical ideas in everyday speech to characterize events and defend policy. These metaphors frequently turn into idioms and go unnoticed since they are frequently based on comparisons between concrete and abstract things. To capture a specific viewpoint and influence public policy, political speech frequently employs new or preexisting metaphors. These metaphors' vividness does not ensure their acceptance, and if they are contested, they could become problematic [17, p. 228].

Politicians often employ metaphors in their speeches to effectively convey complex ideas and emotions. This makes abstract ideas concrete and elicits strong emotional reactions from listeners [7, p. 37]. Metaphors can highlight the significance or urgency of a particular topic. For example, a politician may use the metaphor of a "ticking time bomb" to represent a national security concern, highlighting the need for quick action to avert a catastrophic occurrence [15, p.263].

In fact, metaphor is frequently employed in a text to both legitimize and delegitimize. For instance, [18, p.305] contrasts negative frames of Other representation, including instability, frailty, barbarism, and irrationality, with the West's positive self-representations as the center of civilization, power, stability, maturity, and rationality. An identical metaphor of a two-speed Europe can be positively assessed by the German press and adversely assessed by the British press. Such divergent assessments were also observed in news coverage of political matters. Similar to this, at the time of writing, Tony Blair was mocked in the House of Commons for reversing a prior decision regarding the necessity of holding a referendum on the proposed EU constitution. This is due to Blair's assertion that he "has no reverse gear" during his conference speech in September 2003. Metaphors can be used against their creators in this way, turning a legitimization approach into a delegitimization one [15, pp. 267-268].

Metaphors are employed in political discourse to impose moral or ethical ideals, convey ideas and

ideologies, and express political issues. It is a speech act that is essentially persuasive, enabling politicians to emphasize certain points while ignoring others. In media discourse, conceptual metaphors create cognitive models that structure behavior and thought. Politicians can, however, use metaphors to expose ridiculous imagery and make fun of their opponents. Essentially, politicians can use metaphors to assert particular political problems, defend their acts, disparage their opponents, and present themselves in a positive light. Power is a major issue in politics, and language has the ability to sway public opinion [21, p.235].

3. Critical Metaphor Analysis

Charteris-Black (2004, 2011) developed the method known as Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA), which was impacted by the pragmatics and cognitive linguistics of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), "this approach whose objective is to identify the intentions and ideologies underlying the language in use" [5, p. 45]. Additionally, the political discourse analysis's advanced movements that examine how language, power, and ideology interact in society were represented in this approach.

According to [3, p.9], a thorough comprehension of metaphor and its functions in language can be attained by examining its function in particular situations and corpora. As a result, linguistic, semantic, pragmatic, and cognitive criteria should not be separated from the metaphor; rather, they should all be integrated into its definition in a way that makes sense to us.

George Lakoff, one of the founders of cognitive semantics, demonstrated that metaphor is more than merely a language manifestation. In politics, for instance, political competition is typically conceptualized in war metaphors based on the conceptual metaphor of "ARGUMENT IS WAR". It is defined as "a transfer between two cognitive domains or between two cognitive entities and is understood as any mental experience, spatial relationships, or physical, cultural, and social experience" [12, p.4].

In contrast, the idea of ideology is a focus of CMA within political discourse. In theory, ideology refers to the collection of human attitudes, values, beliefs, and viewpoints on whether the world is good or bad [9, p.135]. However, in works that concentrate on political and social issues, it is understood through the metaphorical language that underlies ideological intents.

As a result, the three stages of the framework technique of CMA are determination, identification, and interpretation of the metaphorical application of cognitive semantics. This three-step method is used to analyze the metaphorical terms that clarify how the political enemy's image is constructed and their acts are already recognized in the political environment:

3.1 Determination

The goal of this step is to find lexical units or statements that create semantic tension in the current discourse and context. This refers to a change in the use of words or phrases from a domain where they are expected to appear to one where they are not. However, a careful study of the texts should precede the identification of such lexical units [4, p.41].

3.2 Interpretation

The second stage of metaphor analysis is interpretation. It explains the connection between

cognitive and pragmatic elements in the metaphorical expression and identifies the conceptual metaphor and conceptual key. The majority of the world's religious systems are aware of the metaphor "the enemy in politics is the enemy in religion". The relationship between the source and target domains has an experiential base, and that is why numerous conceptual metaphors are found in various languages worldwide [19, p. 89].

3.3 Explanation

The goal of this stage is to pinpoint the social agency that produces metaphorical phrases and their social function in persuasion. However, in political speech, metaphors solidify political leaders' position of authority across society and reflect their ideological stance. Thus, as one of the goals of the critical method, metaphor shows us the kind of effect they have over the words and sentences politicians choose [4, p.14].

According to this study, the kind of metaphorical expressions used by politicians stereotypically portrays their opponents as criminals through a cognitive process based on cultural and religious experiences. However, the three steps of CMA are shown in Figure 1:

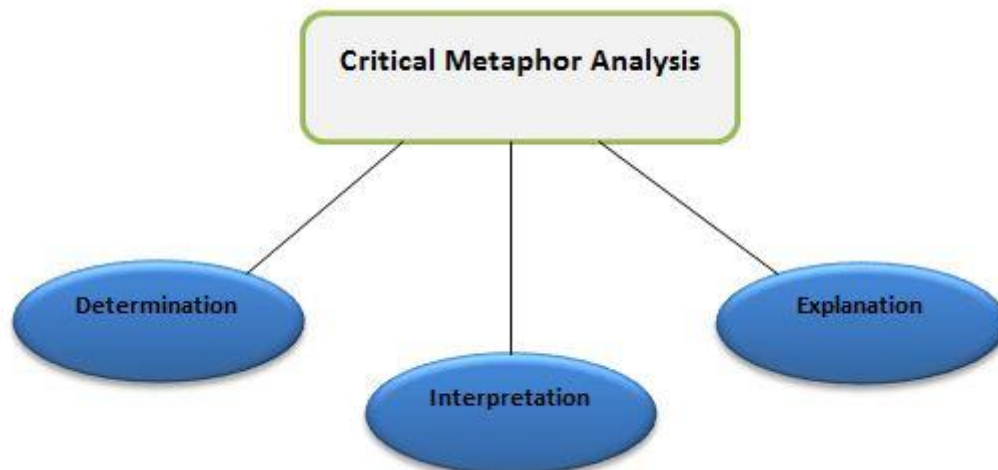


Figure 1. Critical Metaphor Analysis Approach.

4. Types of Political Metaphors

[4, p.38] offers an in-depth exploration of the various metaphors employed in political discourse:

4.1 Personification Metaphor

According to [8, p.38], personification is a figure of speech that gives inanimate objects human characteristics. The way the non-human items are depicted gives us the impression that they are capable of acting like people.

4.2 Metaphors of Light and Darkness

Light and dark metaphors are prevalent in many different languages and cultures, and they are particularly used in spiritual and religious discourse. Light is associated with life, happiness, prosperity, wisdom, purity, and spiritual advancement in many unrelated languages, while darkness is associated with death, gloom or grief, poverty, ignorance, impurity, and the underworld [20,p. 549].

4.3 Segregation Metaphor

The segregation metaphor is often used in political discourse. It occurs when the speaker uses language groups describing his own group with positive attributes and the other with negative ones [16, p.27].

4.4 Health Metaphor

This metaphor's source domain is the way the human body functions, and its target domain is the political or economic life of society. It should be noted that political and economic concerns seem to prioritize conceptualizing a range of current challenges in terms of illnesses, infirmities, and physical deficiencies rather than being physically fit and healthy [11 ,p. 25].

4.5 Metaphors of Life and Death

Like other opposing analogies, like light and dark, day and night, good and evil, and illness and health, the comparison between life and death offers a highly powerful positive or negative assessment of the human experience [4, p.107].

4.6 Master–Servant Metaphor

According to [4, p.110], the metaphor between a servant and a master is another type that is prevalent in political discourse. The fact that this metaphor makes use of social categories connected to social institutions is, of course, no accident. The upstairs–downstairs distinction between social classes is always used in this kind of metaphor.

4.7 Creation and Construction Metaphors

Reifications from the domain of creation and construction typically use terms associated with building and manufacturing to characterize mental processes as though they were material ones [3, p. 121].

4.8 Journey Metaphor

Journey metaphors represent a very effective means that serves as a metaphor for life, since the destination at the end of a journey highlights the objectives people wish to accomplish in life, and the verbs of motion in a journey highlight the motions and acts taken in life [14, 179].

5.9 Depersonification Metaphor

Depersonification Metaphor uses a word or phrase that, in other situations, alludes to something that is inanimate to describe something that is animate: For instance, when the term "collateral damage" is used to describe the inadvertent and innocent bombing victims [14, p.21].

However, all the aforementioned types of metaphors are outlined in the figure 2:

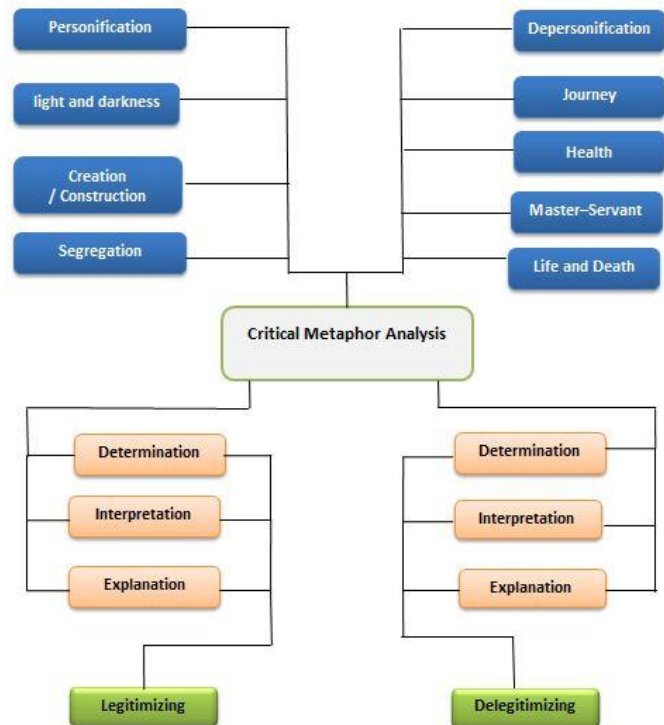


Figure (2): The Adapted Model of Analysis Based on Charteris-Black (2005)'s CMA.

5. Data Collection and Methodology

The official texts of Donald Trump's selected speeches about his conflict with Iran served as the study's main source of data. These specific speeches were chosen for study because they offer a great opportunity to examine how metaphors function in crisis response discourse and represent an important case where a politician attempts to present their

personal interest and the interest of their state as support for and solidarity with the people of the state with which they are at odds. Although Trump gave many speeches during his conflict with Iran; the selected speeches for the nomination were chosen because of their significance, breadth, and unique setting.

The corpus consists of the full texts of Trump's speeches retrieved from the websites

(<https://youtu.be/6kHjYHQDyXo?si=jyQsX3uaEjZA8>)

and

(<https://youtu.be/n1FNqolegss?si=4sMZ06CQ5EE>)

However, the process of analysis entails a number of methodical steps, starting with closely reading the transcripts numerous times. This is followed by the initial identification of possible metaphorical phrases and the creation of coding algorithms. Figure 3 shows the illustration:

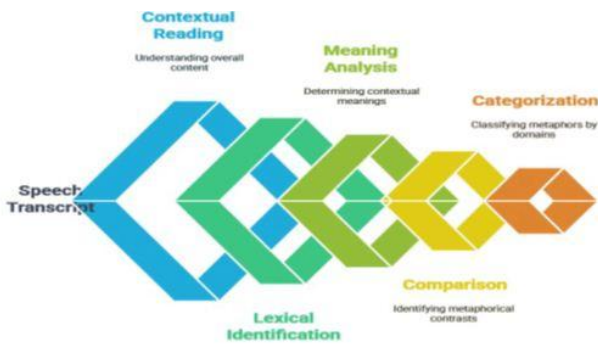


Figure 3 *Metaphor Analysis Process on Trump's Speeches.*

6. Data Analysis and Discussion

The following is a practical investigation of the selected Trump's political speeches on his conflict with Iran. The identified metaphors and scenarios are analyzed using CMA, taking into account their connections to particular policy ideas, ideological implications, potential persuasive impacts, and issue framing.

6.1 Personification Metaphor

Personification is used by Trump mostly to delegitimize the Iranian regime to rule the country, as in the following excerpt:

1. "The heart of the Iranian people cries out for freedom, but it is strangled by the first of their rulers".

In this statement, personification is employed by Trump emotionally. Words like "heart," "screaming," and "choking" are employed to diagnose the Iranian situation. This emotional personification reduces the complex conflict to a simple humanitarian issue, portraying the regime as an ailment alien to "the people." Consequently, this logic creates a moral justification for any future intervention, framing any hostile action not as war, but as a necessary "cure" to liberate the suffocating population.

In another use of personification, Trump attempts to instill fear in the Iranian people and the Iranian government by giving the word "message" the quality of an echo, which is a human quality:

2. "We sent a message that will echo through the halls of their regime: your era of blackmail is over".

6.2 Metaphors of Light and Darkness

This type of metaphor is always utilized by Trump to introduce himself as light and the Iranian regime as darkness in order to legitimize his actions against them:

3. "We hold the torch of freedom, and we will use it to light up the darkness in Iran. We stand with the Iranian people—their brave hearts are the regime's greatest fear".

In this example of light and darkness metaphor, Trump attempts to simplify the issue, portraying it as a war between light and darkness, good and evil, in order to convey a message to the world that it is self-evident that Iran is oppressing its people and plunging them into darkness, while Trump seeks to dispel this darkness and bring in the light, thus attempting to legitimize any action against them at any time. However, in another example of light darkness metaphor, Trump depicts Iranian regime as "a dark shadow" which a sponsor of terrorism, in an attempt of gaining legitimacy to end this regime:

4. "It provided cover a dark shadow under which the regime could nurture the poison seeds of terrorism and continue its deadly construction project. Now, a new dawn is possible".

6.3 Segregation Metaphor

This type of metaphor is often used by Trump to separate the Iranian people from their rulers:

5. "Tear down the walls that segregate you from your future. Choose non-violence, choose rebirth. To the mullahs in Tehran: your time is dying. Your foundations are cracking".

By using the Segregation Metaphor, Trump attempts to separate the Iranian people from their rulers in an effort to incite internal protests and deny legitimacy to the Iranian regime, portraying it as being against the people. At the same time, he is trying to legitimize his own intervention should the protesters be attacked.

6.4 Health Metaphor

In this kind of metaphor, Trump always describes the Iranian regime as a sickness that exhausts the Middle East in order to strip the ruling regime of its legitimacy:

6. "The Iranian regime's behavior is a sickness that infects the entire Middle East. It is a cancer of extremism, and we are the surgeons who will remove it. They spread their venom through proxy snakes in Yemen, Syria, and Lebanon".

Here, Health Metaphor occurs when Trump portrays the Iranian regime as a disease or cancer that crosses borders and infects the entire body of the Middle East, presenting himself as the healer to eradicate this disease. He promotes the idea of denying legitimacy to this regime while simultaneously granting himself the legitimacy to eradicate this malignant disease.

In other examples of health metaphor, Trump continues to present himself as a healer of that sickness and gives himself legitimacy to take actions in Iran:

7. "With the precision of a surgeon and the force of a hammer, we obliterated their key nuclear facility".

8. "America is roaring back, and under my leadership, we will ensure that the plague of Iranian aggression is buried, once and for all".

9. "They spread their venom through proxy snakes in Yemen, Syria, and Lebanon".

6.5 Metaphors of Life and Death

Using life and death metaphors, Trump portrays himself as a champion of life and peace; on the other hand, he introduces Iran as a proponent of death:

10. We offered a path to life, a road to a better future. But they chose the path of death. They poured their resources into death machines—ballistic missiles designed for one purpose only. So, we acted. With the precision of a surgeon and the force of a hammer, we obliterated their key nuclear facility. We extinguished that threat.

Here, Trump uses life and death metaphor as a strong rhetorical device. On one hand, he portrays his military actions as "a path to life" and peace, while, on the other hand, he labels Iran as death-seekers by talking about its nuclear weapons. This binary opposition (good/ evil), (life/death) aims to simplify the complex conflict and present a military strike not as an offensive political option but as legitimate and moral act of defense, thereby misleading public opinion and justifying aggression under noble slogans.

6.6 Master–Servant Metaphor

This metaphor is used by Trump to deceive the public in general and the American people in particular when he claims that Iran wants America to be its servant:

11. "We will not be their servants, endlessly negotiating while they laugh. America is the master of its own destiny".

Trump skillfully employs the master-servant metaphor to portray himself as a defender of American sovereignty, untainted by conventional political maneuvering. He presents himself as the "master," in control of his destiny and capable of making decisive decisions, while portraying Iran as a rebellious "slave" power seeking hegemony. This is evident when he asserts that America is "master of its own destiny" and cannot become a servant to Iran. At the same time, Trump feigns a willingness to negotiate, stating that Iranian leaders "called to negotiate," but he ties any negotiations to his precondition: an end to the "indiscriminate killing of protesters." This reinforces his image as a tolerant yet resolute master.

6.7 Creation and Construction Metaphors

Creation and Construction Metaphors are often employed by Trump in his selected speeches as an attempt to make the Iranian people revolt against their regime and change it:

12. "The old, crumbling structures of appeasement are gone. We are in the business of demolition and rebuilding. We have already begun to drain the swamp of their terror financing".

Using Creation and Construction Metaphors, Trump attempts to use a policy of "demolition and reconstruction" as a reference to regime change in Iran, while expressing support for the pro-democracy protesters, hoping to help him build a new system more aligned with his interests. He employs the metaphor of a swamp to describe Iran as a breeding ground for terrorism financing, then portrays himself as the one draining that swamp by imposing harsh sanctions targeting the banking and money-laundering networks that support the regime.

6.8 Journey Metaphor

Trump's employment of Journey Metaphor often refers to the journey of the Iranian regime must end, as in the following excerpt:

13. "For decades, we have been on a long, misguided journey, sending our wealth overseas while enemies plotted our downfall. That journey ends now. I look at Iran, and I do not just see a country. I see a regime. A cruel, oppressive regime that fears its own people more than any bomb".

In his statement, using a journey metaphor, Trump employs a "saint and devil" dichotomy: he portrays him/itself (Trump/America) as a benevolent, innocent victim of others' machinations, while simultaneously delegitimizing its adversary (Iran) by depicting it as a repressive regime alien to the will of its people. This deliberate emotional polarization aims to justify hostile policies by constructing a simplistic narrative that ignores geopolitical complexities and historical realities, presenting inaccuracies as established facts. The ultimate goal is to create a unified enemy to mobilize domestic support and justify foreign domination. However, using the same type of metaphor, Trump urges the Iranian people to continue protesting for freedom:

14. "To the people: your journey toward freedom is a steep climb, but we see your light".

6.9 Depersonification Metaphor

Depersonification is employed by Trump to construct Iran as non-human and dangerous so that its destruction is necessary in order to maintain the 'health' of the USA and the rest of the 'civilized world':

15. "They spread their venom through proxy snakes in Yemen, Syria, and Lebanon. They are not leaders; they are keepers of a terrorist zoo, unleashing these animals upon the world".

Using depersonification, Trump uses the metaphor of venomous snakes to portray Iran not as a sovereign state but as a malevolent existential threat. He points to its deployment of proxy "snakes" in Yemen, Syria, and Lebanon to depict it as a deeply entrenched source of evil spreading throughout the world. Portraying the regime as "guardians of a terror garden" delegitimizes it and presents it as a barbaric, irrational force the is intent solely on spreading poison. This metaphorical characterization reduces the political conflict to a simplistic moral narrative that justifies confrontation.

7. Conclusion

Based on Charteris-Black's critical metaphor analysis (CMA), first, the practical analysis of this research identified and investigated the use of different types of metaphors suggested by Charteris-Black's in two selected political speeches of Trump on his current conflict with Iran. Second, the researcher draws the conclusion that through the practical application in this study, Trump's use of different types of metaphors aims to legitimize his current and any future actions against Iran by depicting it as a savage and evil power in the Middle East. Further, in his use of metaphor, he attempts to delegitimize the Iranian regime's rule of the country. Finally, the study concludes that the aforementioned types of metaphors are of great help to organize and reveal the interpretation of the meanings and foundations of the meanings underlying such excerpts, as well as illustrate the current conflict between America and Iran in a way that makes comprehension easier.

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