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**COGNITIVE AND PRAGMATIC ASPECTS OF METAPHORS  
IN THE INAUGURATION SPEECH OF THE SPANISH *PRESIDENTE*  
*DEL GOBIERNO* ADOLFO SUÁREZ**

*This article aims at analysing the cognitive and pragmatic aspects of metaphors in the inauguration speech of the Spanish Presidente del Gobierno Adolfo Suárez, in Spain's first constitutional government. The paper will use a multi-disciplinary approach and relies on Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Charteris-Black's Critical Metaphor Analysis, Teun Van Dijk's context model theory, as well as on other pragmatic concepts that contribute to assessing the coherence and cohesion of the text. This qualitative approach intends to look for the presence of metaphors and conceptual metaphors in the speech, while attempting to identify the pragmatic strategies behind them.*

**Key words:** *pragmatics, inaugural speech, cognitive metaphor, context, political discourse, meaning*

### **Introduction**

The study and observation of metaphors has been taking place since the times of the Ancient Greece. Despite not being a novel interest for philosophers and scholars, the way how metaphors are seen has changed significantly throughout times. Metaphors are now much more than just a tool for poets, or a stylistic device used for aesthetic purposes. With the emergence and establishment of Cognitive Linguistics, metaphors have taken a central role in the way we understand more abstract concepts.

This article explores the use of conceptual metaphors in the inaugural speech of the *Presidente del Gobierno* “President of the Government” Adolfo Suárez, for the first legislature of Spain's rule-of-law. Additionally, I will use pragmatic concepts to establish the speech circumstances and to examine the strategies of knowledge management and persuasion used.

In the first section, I provide the theoretical framework of my analysis, which includes a brief overview of Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory, as well as the developments brought to the theory by other scholars, with special interest in Jonathan Charteris-Black. I will follow suite with Teun van Dijk's theoretical proposals on context, discourse and knowledge management.

I will then proceed with the explanation of the methodological approach used in this research article and with the presentation of the empirical analysis of the speech. In the last section, I render the conclusions of this assessment.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Metaphors have been the object of study of many scholars and philosophers, but it was Aristotle who first notably reflected on the definition, nature, usefulness and reach of this phenomenon.

Since those early days that much has changed, and nowadays, metaphors are seen as a mode of thought, a cognitive mechanism that humans use to better understand their experiences.

To this regard, although Conceptual Metaphor Theory (henceforth, CMT) initially did not focus on the possible effects of its ideas in political communication, metaphor analysis expanded its boundaries to such an extent that it has reached the realm of political discourse.

As the main tenets of CMT have resisted to the scientific scrutiny of many prominent cognitive linguists, this theory will serve as one of the pillars of my analysis.

The idea of conceptual metaphors as a mode of thought, and the genesis of CMT was first put forth by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their book *Metaphors We Live By* (1981).

In their work, Lakoff and Johnson assert that our “ordinary conceptual system is metaphorical in nature” (Lakoff & Johnson 1981: 4) adding that conceptual metaphors are pervasive in our everyday lives, not just in language, but in thoughts and actions.

Additionally, Lakoff and Johnson claim that understanding this metaphoric process is paramount for the understanding of a language (Lakoff & Johnson 1981: 3).

According to Lakoff and Johnson, a conceptual metaphor has two specific terms or domains: the Source domain from which we draw metaphorical expressions; and the Target domain, which is the conceptual domain that we try to understand due to its abstractness.

This cognitive process is described as a set of systematic correspondences across domains, the so-called metaphoric mappings (Lakoff & Johnson 2003: 246), which reflect the existence of a universal system of “primary metaphorical mappings that are learned around the world without any awareness” (Lakoff 2008: 26).

Lakoff and Johnson first categorised conceptual metaphors according to their cognitive role. They proposed three categories of conceptual metaphors: structural, ontological and orientational (Lakoff & Johnson 1981: 15 – 46).

The authors described structural metaphors as those metaphors that operate by metaphorically structuring one concept in terms of another (Lakoff & Johnson 1981: 14). Lakoff and Johnson illustrated this with the metaphors LIFE IS A JOURNEY and TIME IS MONEY, where the concept of the target domains (LIFE, TIME) is structured in terms of the concept of the source domains (JOURNEY, MONEY).

Oriental metaphors are defined as metaphors that organise a whole system of concepts with respect to one another (Lakoff & Johnson 1981: 14). This

type of conceptual metaphor involves spatial relationships (such as UP-DOWN, IN-OUT, ON-OFF, and FRONT-BACK) and are based on our physical and cultural experience. Examples of this kind of metaphor are HEALTH AND LIFE ARE UP, SICKNESS AND DEATH ARE DOWN (Lakoff & Johnson 1981: 15).

Finally, ontological metaphors are outlined as those conceptual metaphors where something concrete is projected onto something abstract (Lakoff & Johnson 1981: 25). Experiences with concrete physical objects, and especially with our body, lay the basis to the conception of ontological metaphors.

Ontological metaphors are created either by reification or personification (Charteris-Black 2005: 15). By using reification, or the realisation of the abstract event, the actions and emotions become shaped entities or physical objects.

Lakoff and Johnson mention the conceptual metaphor INFLATION IS AN ENTITY (Lakoff & Johnson 1981: 26) as example of an ontological metaphor based on reification.

Personification is further considered to be the most common ontological metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson 1981: 33) and is very common in political discourse for it humanises political parties, institutions or certain events, making it easier for the recipients to receive positive or negative connotations through it.

As it becomes apparent by these examples, metaphors highlight certain features of the target domain in detriment of others.

Although the categorisation of conceptual metaphors first proposed by Lakoff and Johnson is very useful to understand how metaphors work, it is important to notice that this distinction was abandoned by the authors, as they understood that metaphors can simultaneously be ontological, structural and/or orientational.

As to the grounding of conceptual metaphors, in other words, the motivation or the root of conceptual metaphors, CMT asserts that metaphors are grounded in our bodily experience with the physical world, and that this same experience forms the basis of our conceptual system.

The second pillar of the theoretical framework that supports my analysis is pragmatics, particularly Teun van Dijk's context model theory and his ideas about context and knowledge management.

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that had as its main representatives J. L. Austin, John Searle and Paul Grice, just to name a few.

This discipline is interested in how context contributes to meaning, it studies the ways in which language is tied to the contexts of its use. The interest of Pragmatics in problems such as deixis and reference is, therefore, only natural.

Teun van Dijk argues that discourse is a socially oriented communicative event in which linguistic, cognitive, social and cultural elements intervene in each context. He defines context as a "set of relevant properties of the communicative situations of verbal interaction" (Van Dijk 2009: vii), which affect the way a discourse is produced in terms of its structures and levels of syntactic, morphological and semantic elaboration.

The author asserts that the relevance of the situations cannot be characterised as an objective element, as something external to the discursive subject, because the so-called relevance of those situations does not have a direct effect on the speech, without considering the speaker, since if this were to happen the speaker would only be a means of transmission of the context in the discourse.

On the contrary, the main role in the relationship between context and discourse lies in the speaker, since there is no direct relationship between the social properties of the context and the cognitive processes that comprise the elaboration of the discourse. In other words, the uniqueness and particularity of each discourse resides in the speaker.

Unlike many definitions of context by other scholars, Van Dijk refuses the absolute objectivity of the context, contending that it is the result of a subjective cognitive process. This means that those socially relevant situations depend on a consideration of “relevant” by the individual, this consideration being given through an individual cognitive process that can influence the process of discursive elaboration. This individual cognitive process that gives rise to the relevance of a specific social situation is called mental model.

Mental models are individual and subjective cognitive processes about an episode in which one is immersed. However, and although the individuality of mental models is remarkable, they have a social perspective as a result of coexistence with others, since this coexistence allows the generalisation of different beliefs and knowledge that affect the construction of personal mental models.

For van Dijk, the subjectivity of the context originates through the creation by the interlocutor of a mental model about those relevant situations, determining particularly which of those situations are relevant. He calls this type of mental models “Context Models” and contends that they are the reason why in the same social situation the various participants elaborate different discourses, since the cognitive process that takes part in their elaboration is affected in different ways by an individually elaborated context model.

Another important aspect that concerned van Dijk and that I will consider in my analysis is the role of knowledge in discourse. The linguist claims that for someone to speak or write in an appropriate way, language users must have beliefs or knowledge about how much the recipients of the speech know (Van Dijk 2008: 83). This means that the producer of the discourse should model both the social properties of the producers and other participants, while simultaneously considering what the receivers already know.

Van Dijk outlines a general strategy for what he coins of ‘personal knowledge management’ (Van Dijk 2008: 84-88) and presents 5 principles that should serve as guidelines to administrate knowledge:

- Assume that recipients know what I told them before.
- Assume that recipients do not know my personal knowledge that I have acquired since my last communication with them.

- Assume that recipients know what we (e.g., the newspaper) told them before.
- Assume that readers have the same sociocultural knowledge as I (we) have.
- Assume that recipients share the knowledge of all the more inclusive epistemic communities of which they are members.

In conclusion, Teun van Dijk contends that speakers employ simple strategies built on their own knowledge, specifically on what they have told the recipients before for specific knowledge, and on the shared general knowledge of their epistemic communities.

### **Methodology**

The objectives of this paper are to identify and examine the conceptual metaphors present (if any) and other pragmatic aspects that may help to explain the use of these metaphors in the speech of Spain's President of the Government Adolfo Suárez González for the inauguration of the I Legislature (Suárez 1979), the first government after the ratification of the Constitution and the official establishment of the rule-of-law. Furthermore, I will explore the meanings summoned by the mappings of any conceptual metaphors present in the speech.

Firstly, I will provide the general features in which the speech occurred by using the following context model schema proposed by Teun van Dijk (Van Dijk 2008: 76):

- ◆ Setting: Time/Period, Space/Place/Environment;
- ◆ Participants (self, others); communicative roles (participation structure);
- social role types, membership or identities;
- relations between participants (e.g. power, friendship);
- shared and social knowledge and beliefs;
- intentions and goals.

Secondly, I will examine the speech looking for the presence of any metaphors. To identify the metaphors in the text, I will be using part of the criteria set forth by Jonathan Charteris-Black in his book *Corpus Approaches to Critical Metaphor Analysis*.

Charteris-Black proposes a definition of metaphor that takes into consideration a linguistic, pragmatic and cognitive perspective (Charteris-Black 2004: 20). He defines metaphor as a linguistic representation that results from the shift in the use of a word or phrase from the context or domain in which it is expected to occur, to another context or domain where it is not expected to occur, thus causing semantic tension (Charteris-Black 2004: 21).

I will use the cognitive and linguistic criteria to identify the metaphors present in the speech under analysis. According to the cognitive criteria, a metaphor

is caused by (and may cause) a shift in the conceptual system and the basis for the conceptual shift is the relevance of the attributes of the referent of a linguistic expression in its original source context and those in its novel target context (Charteris-Black 2004: 21).

As for the linguistic criteria, a metaphor is a word or a phrase that may cause semantic tension by reification, personification or depersonification (Charteris-Black 2004: 21).

For the purposes of this article, a conceptual metaphor is a statement that resolves the semantic tension of a set of metaphors by showing them to be related, whereas a conceptual key is defined as a statement that resolves the semantic tension of a set of conceptual metaphors by showing them to be related (Charteris-Black 2004: 21).

In respect to other pragmatic aspects of the text of the speech, I will be looking for the presence of exophoric references and instances of deictic references, specifically person deixis.

By exophoric references it should be understood the words or expressions that refer to external entities of the text, while person deixis refers to the words whose meaning come from referring to some feature of the context in which they are spoken (Charteris-Black 2013: 64). Thus, person deixis normally takes place through mean of the pronoun system determining the identity of the participants by pointing to individuals, through the perspective of the speaker, who is the deictic centre.

Finally, I will provide examples of knowledge management present in the speech of Adolfo Suárez and explain the intentions behind this.

The approach in this study is qualitative since the study is only concerned with the cognitive meanings in the selected data.

## **Empirical Analysis**

As stated in the previous section, I will start my empirical analysis by presenting a brief overview of the context in which the speech took place. I will do so by following the theory of concept model put forth by Teun Van Dijk.

### **Context**

The *discurso de investidura* “inauguration speech” of Adolfo Suárez took place at the Spanish parliament, Congreso de los Diputados, on the 30th of March of 1979 (Suárez 1979), in front of the elected political forces.

The first of the investitures did not include a debate prior to the vote, which would become the rule afterwards, giving Suárez an opportunity to once again lay bare the principles and values that he and his parliamentary group represent. The result was 183 in favour and 149 against and Adolfo Suárez was invested *Presidente del Gobierno*.



To better understand the dynamic situation that was in place, one should refer to the political context of the time, the Spanish transition.

The term Spanish transition refers to the period and the process in the contemporary history of Spain of leaving behind the dictatorial regime of General Francisco Franco and becoming a rule-of-law state governed by a constitution that implemented democracy.

The beginning of this transition started with the death of General Franco, on the 20th of November of 1975 when the so-called Regency Council temporarily assumed the functions of the Head of State. However, on the 22nd of November, Juan Carlos I de Borbón, who had been designated six years earlier by Franco as his successor, was proclaimed king before the Cortes and the Council of the Kingdom.

The king confirmed the president of the Government of Franco's regime, Carlos Arias Navarro in his position. However, the difficulty of carrying out political reforms under Navarro's government would soon become apparent, increasing the distance between Arias Navarro and Juan Carlos I. The king would eventually demand Navarro's resignation on the 1st of July 1976 and the former President of Franco's regime resigned from his position. He was replaced by Adolfo Suárez, who would oversee the negotiations with the leaders of the different political parties of the democratic opposition and social forces to establish a democratic regime in Spain.

The decision was to develop a new Fundamental Law, the eighth, the Law for Political Reform, which was finally approved by the Francoist Cortes and submitted to a referendum on the 15th of December of 1976. Because of its approval by the Spanish people, this law was promulgated on the 4th of January 1977. This norm contained, in only five articles, the tacit repeal of Franco's political system and a call for democratic elections.

The elections were finally held on the 15th of June 1977. These were the first free elections since 1936. The *Unión de Centro Democrático* (UCD, Democratic Centre Union) coalition, which Suárez had put together, was composed by several reformist groups (Sánchez-Cuenca: 2020). Among UCD's main political adversaries were Manuel Fraga's recently created *Alianza Popular* (AP, Popular Alliance), a right-wing party that included elements who opposed to the most progressive features of the new democracy.

On the left side of the political spectrum, the main party was not the *Partido Comunista Español* (PCE, Spanish Communist Party) despite of its involvement in the anti-Francoist struggle, but the more fresh and appealing *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE, Spanish Socialist and Labour Party).

In these first free elections, the UCD was the most-voted candidate although it did not reach an absolute majority.

The process of building democracy in Spain and the drafting of a new constitution was ongoing. On the 6th of December of 1978, the Spanish Constitution was ratified in a popular referendum with 87.78 per cent of votes in favour and partici-

pation of 58.97 per cent of the electoral roll. The Spanish Constitution would come into force on the 29th of December 1978.

The democratisation process in Spain was already a reality and the results of the following elections, the first in a constitutional Spain, would keep the same balance of power. The UCD once again obtained the majority of the votes, reaching 35.02%, with 168 seats, followed by the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) with 30.49% of the votes and with 121 seats, the Partido Comunista Español (PCE) increased in the number of seats to 23 and 10.80% of the votes.

The fact of becoming a direct protagonist of the transition process would give Suárez the opportunity of being the first to perform a series of democratic rituals that still take place, and which had an added importance because it was the first time that the Executive rendered a statement of intentions through parliament to the rest of society.

Having established a context, I will continue with the presentation of the result of my examination of the speech. For the sake of clarity, I will introduce my findings by dividing them into those pertaining to the categories of personification or reification and those pertaining to the source domains used in the metaphorical expressions.

### **Personification and Reification**

Political discourse has been using metaphorical expressions that take form through means of personification for a long time, thus it is not surprising that this feature is pervasive in the speech rendered by Adolfo Suárez.

The pervasiveness of personifications in political discourse is mainly due to its usefulness, as it depicts abstract entities with human characteristics, making simpler the understanding of these concepts.

One good example of this is the personification of the ideas of country, nation and society. Suárez humanises the concept of country by characterising it as *un país viejo* “an old country” (Suárez 1979) and describes the idea of nation as *una Nación que se vertebrata* “a nation that is structured” (Suárez 1979), with the word *vertebrata* ‘backbone’ taking us to another domain of experience, the human body.

On the same note, the notion of state is also presented with resource to human features, as shown in the expressions *el fortalecimiento del Estado* “the strengthening of the state” or *que fortalezca y vitalice el Estado de Derecho* “that strengthens and vitalizes the rule-of-law” (Suárez 1979).

The utility of the personification of these concepts is that they help listeners and readers to better understand and identify with the idea of Spain as a nation, as a country and as a state, making the issues that these entities go through more vivid and comprehensible to the listeners.

### **Building metaphors**

BUILDING metaphors are also very prominent in political speeches as they convey the idea of progress towards long-term social goals, containing a strong



positive connotation, and cry out for patience and cooperation from the electorate (Charteris-Black 2004: 71).

However, this interpretation is dependent on social and cultural factors and can also be used to set up a politician's ethos as someone likeable and relatable, who shares the same hopes and dreams as the voter.

The speech of Adolfo Suárez makes use of the conceptual metaphor SOCIETY IS A BUILDING as the expressions *la construcción de una sociedad de hombres realmente libres* "the construction of a society of truly free men" and *la construcción de un orden social dinámico* "the construction of a dynamic social order" (Suárez 1979) make apparent. These expressions intend to highlight the need for a collective effort to achieve long-term social goals.

Similarly, the conceptual metaphor STATE IS A BUILDING, which is reflected in the expressions *hemos modernizado la institución estatal al instaurar un Estado de Derecho* "we have modernized the state institution by establishing a rule-of-law" and *la estructura territorial del Estado* "the territorial structure of the state" (Suárez 1979) appear to intend the same thing: to depict the state as an entity that needs attention, constant maintenance and preservation, otherwise it will become redundant.

This appears to be also the goal of the use of the conceptual metaphor DEMOCRACY IS A BUILDING, seen in the expressions *consolidar una democracia* "consolidate a democracy" and *el fundamento efectivo de una democracia estable y justa* "the effective foundation of a stable and fair democracy" (Suárez 1979). Once again, Suárez alerts for the need for good foundations and for consolidation of the edifice of democracy, which was at the time in the beginning of its construction.

Within the bracket of building metaphors, I also identified the conceptual metaphor WORTHWHILE ACTIVITY IS BUILDING, illustrated by the expression *contribuir a la construcción de un mundo más libre* "contribute to the construction of a freer world" (Suárez 1979). Also here, the intention is to warn for the necessity of a joint effort to achieve the common goal of a freer world.

### **Other Conceptual Metaphors**

The speech rendered by Adolfo Suárez makes use of other conceptual metaphors to make his argument more perceptible. The conceptual metaphor POLITICS IS WAR is another recurrent metaphor within political discourse in general. This conceptual structure is a widespread cognitive framework in politics because of our cultural knowledge and experience of physical conflict helps the understanding of abstract political actions.

Moreover, war metaphors serve to elicit the ideas of struggle and effort to motivate listeners to the actions necessary to bring about the desired results, as the expression *el Gobierno se propone luchar por abolir el elitismo* "the Government intends to fight to abolish elitism" (Suárez 1979) indicates.

Conceptual metaphors that make use of the domain of experience JOURNEYS are another classic in political speeches. Charteris-Black (2004: 95) observes that, just like BUILDING metaphors, JOURNEY metaphors are formulated because they are ‘activities in which progress takes place in stages towards a predetermined goal’.

The conceptual metaphor PURPOSEFUL SOCIAL ACTIVITY IS TRAVELING ALONG A PATH TOWARDS A DESTINATION is a good example of this, as the expression *en la Constitución hemos marcado el punto de partida de un largo camino y hemos trazado un esquema viable dentro del cual habremos de movernos* “in the Constitution we have marked the starting point of a long road and we have outlined a viable scheme within which we will have to move” (Suárez 1979) shows.

The intention behind the use of this metaphor is to convey the idea of progress of a country towards its future goal, simultaneously alerting to the difficulties that lie ahead and showing confidence in the plan that has been put in place to achieve the desired results.

Another conceptual metaphor underlying the speech of Adolfo Suárez is TERRORISM IS A DISEASE. The expression *erradicar esta lacra que se cierne sobre muchos países democráticos* “eradicate this scourge that hangs over many democratic countries” (Suárez 1979) refers to terrorism as a scourge, a plague, equating terrorism to an ideological disease that needs to be fought with great resilience.

The use of such an aggressive conceptual metaphor for this topic is not unexpected at all, especially when considering the history of Spain, with independentist groups such as ETA carrying out terrorist attacks.

The objective behind the use of this conceptual metaphor is the interpretation that disease is something one cannot reason with, in particular if the disease is madness. This entails that it would not be possible to try any other diplomatic approaches as there is no point in trying to reason with those who lack the ability for rational thought.

### **Deixis, Reference and Knowledge Management**

In respect to other pragmatic aspects of the speech, the use of deictic forms also shows some of the intentions of Suárez.

For instance, when talking about difficulties or requesting for action, he uses 1st person of plural form: *Nos enfrentamos con una situación nueva* “We are facing a new situation”; *Hemos de saber encerrarnos en esta identidad* “We must know how to enclose ourselves in this identity”; *la etapa que aparece ante nosotros no ofrece treguas ni ocasiones* “the stage that appears before us offers no respite or opportunities” (Suárez 1979).

The use of the plural form is a strategy that Suárez uses to convey the values of union and resilience, projecting himself as just another citizen that will go through the problems ahead.

Also, the period of transition that the country was undergoing, with a society that was very polarised, called for the need of consensus. Although Suárez was a young leader, which normally would advise for the use of the 1st person of the singular form, in order to project an ethos of leadership and confidence, the politician understood the social and political context of the time and instead opted to build bridges with different quadrants of the Spanish society.

Pertaining to the knowledge management strategies embedded in the speech of the first democratic Spanish President, the use of the exophoric reference indicates a clear strategy. This is the case of the reference of the expression *El cambio político realizado en nuestro país* “The political change made in our country” (Suárez 1979). Here, Suárez refers to the change of regime and the ongoing transition period in Spain, showing that he is aware of the knowledge of the epistemic communities he is addressing.

Another instance in which it can be seen the knowledge management exercised by Adolfo Suárez in this speech is the way how he presents opinions as facts, without making this too obvious.

In the sentences *El cambio político realizado en nuestro país ha sido profundo y sincero* “The political change made in our country has been deep and sincere” and *El cambio político se verificó en torno a un eje de sensatez consistente* “The political change took place around an axis of common sense” (Suárez 1979), Suárez presents opinions as facts, as it is arguable if the political change was sincere or if it indeed carried out with common sense. With this strategy, the opinions have a better probability of being received by the listeners as facts, at least at a reflexive level of thought.

## Conclusion

In the first inauguration speech of Spain’s rule-of-law democracy, Adolfo Suárez delivered a technically sound speech and referred to problems such as the economic crisis at the time and the need for unity and statesmanship for the construction of a democratic Spain.

Suárez utilised pragmatic and linguistic strategies to project a message of consensus, something that became his personal brand in politics. In his speech, Suárez clearly presents himself and his party as representatives of the political centre, as being an interclassist party with popular roots, thus projecting this idea of politics of consensus.

The way how deictic forms are used in the speech falls in line with Suárez claims, conveying a sense of unity and compromise, being complemented by conceptual metaphors that elicit the same kind of understandings.

Additionally, he states that his government would not carry out *una política revolucionaria* “a revolutionary policy”, although he promised *reformas profundas y rigurosas que modificarán seriamente las estructuras* “deep and rigorous reforms that will seriously modify the structures” (Suárez 1979) of the country.

It is important to mention that Adolfo Suárez was a former director of RTVE, the Spanish national public television, an experience that gave him great understanding of public relations and the knowhow to effectively communicate a message. Suárez's charismatic leadership and effective knowledge management comes across in the speech and resonates in his moderate figure, who despite having been a member of the Falangist Movement was not seen as representing the strongest factions of Franco's ideology.

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