

# Conceptual Metaphors as Legitimization Tools in the Inaugural Speech of President Rodrigo Duterte

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## Abstract

Drawing upon Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Cognitive Metaphor Theory (CMT), this study examined the use of metaphors as a legitimization strategy in President Rodrigo Duterte's inaugural speech. Specifically, Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) was employed to identify the metaphorical expressions in Duterte's speech and the conceptual metaphors that frame them. Furthermore, the rhetorical techniques associated with the metaphors were analyzed based on the legitimization strategies proposed by Reyes (2011). The analysis revealed that the conceptual metaphors used in the inaugural speech are SOCIAL PROBLEM IS A DISEASE, NATION IS A BODY, and CHANGE IS WAR. Through these metaphors, he justifies that the severe problems of the country need urgent, unorthodox solutions to move towards a better future, using legitimization strategies such as altruism, appeal to emotion, and hypothetical future. Despite the controversies during his term, Duterte's satisfaction ratings remained high, indicating public support for his policies. Hence, conceptual metaphors can be effective persuasion tools that help legitimize the policies advocated in political speeches.

## 1 Introduction

Language as a means of communication is a system that facilitates the conveyance of thought from one person to another. "The fundamental function of every language system is to link meaning and expression—to provide verbal expression for thought and feeling" (Finegan 2008, page 5). Particularly, language is used for persuasion of people to do something or to change their attitudes.

One venue where persuasion is widely used is in political discourse through which politicians

persuade their constituents that their claims are valid (Chimbarange, Takavarasha, and Kombe 2014). Moreover, political speeches may be used to regulate society and change people's attitudes and perceptions about national issues. For instance, the inaugural speech of a president is crucial since it legitimizes their position as the head of state (Xue, Mao, and Li 2013) and serves as a medium through which the newly elected president can inform a national audience about the policies of the new government, gain a favorable public opinion, call for collective action, and rally for support from the people.

Since the inaugural speech is the first speech a president delivers as head of state, it must leave an impact on the listeners. In addition, politics involves complicated issues that may not be easily understood by the masses. Thus, metaphor is often used in political discourse to make the message clearer to the audience by comparing complex political concepts with easier and understandable ones in the frame (Burkholder and Henry 2009, as cited in Penninck 2014).

Numerous studies have been conducted to investigate how metaphor is used in political discourse. For instance, Penninck (2014) analyzed the metaphor use of American and British political leaders during the financial crises of 1929 and 2008 and observed that they mostly employed simple metaphor themes such as battle, construction, journey, and illness for the public to easily understand the crises. Similarly, Xue, Mao, and Li (2013) examined the recurring conceptual metaphors in the American presidential inaugural addresses, namely: journey, human, war, building, family, light, illness. These metaphors arouse strong emotions since the source domains are pertinent to people's daily life and experience; hence, they help the audience understand the message and serve as persuasive tools. Likewise, Guitart

Escudero's (2011) analysis of Barack Obama's Inaugural Address illustrated that one reason for his success is the use of metaphors that mostly stem from American values and relate to the human body and natural phenomena, helping to concretize abstract concepts.

When it comes to political discourse of Philippine presidents, Navera (2012) investigated the conceptual metaphors in the speeches of post-dictatorship presidents, Corazon Aquino, Fidel Ramos, Joseph Estrada, and Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and showed that the speeches are framed with the path schema through a movement from a less favorable state to a more favorable one.

As for the speeches of Rodrigo Duterte, research mainly focuses on discourse analysis highlighting the linguistic features that reveal his ideologies. For instance, Rubic-Remorosa (2018) found that the use of various linguistic categories serves to underscore the recurring issues in his political speeches such as war on drugs, criminality, graft, and corruption and showed Duterte as a leader who would solve all the country's problems. In the same manner, a critical discourse analysis by Villanueva (2018) uncovered that Duterte used relational and material transitivity processes in his speeches to convey his identity, power, and ideologies, such as: fight against terrorism and insurgency, war on drugs, fight against corruption, strengthening of the police and military forces, and Davao as a model of change.

Although there have been studies analyzing metaphors in Philippine political discourse, there are only a few that center on Duterte's speeches. For example, Navera (2020) investigated how the war metaphor was employed in Philippine presidential speeches, especially those of Duterte, and concluded that with the use of a belligerent rhetoric framework, "... speeches are weaponized to silence critics and encourage supporters' disdain toward those who dissent and disagree with government policies" (page 77). On the other hand, Clemente (2019) explored the metaphors of sustainable development in the inaugural addresses of Ferdinand Marcos and Duterte, revealing that both presented themselves as visionary and missionary leaders through cognitive and conceptual metaphorical expressions that outline their visions for national development.

Considering that there is minimal research on the use of metaphors in the speeches of Duterte despite him being an impactful, albeit a controversial leader, there is a need for more studies that examine how the former president used conceptual metaphors to communicate and justify his policies to the Filipino people. Hence, this study attempted to analyze metaphors as legitimization tools in President Rodrigo Duterte's inaugural speech. Specifically, it sought to achieve the following objectives: to identify the metaphorical expressions in Duterte's inaugural speech, to determine the conceptual metaphors that frame these expressions, to distinguish the legitimization strategies associated with the metaphors, and to analyze how the conceptual metaphors contribute to the legitimization of his administration's policies.

## 2 Theoretical Framework

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an approach to analyzing written and spoken texts to reveal how language is used to represent power, dominance, and inequality (van Dijk 1997). Likewise, Fairclough (1997) defines CDA as discourse analysis that examines the relationships between discursive practices and social structures and how these practices are influenced by power relations. Discourse as a social practice implies that discursive events are shaped by social structures and vice versa (Wodak 1999). Moreover, the goals of CDA include investigating discourse practices that reflect or construct social problems, examining how ideologies can become frozen in language, and increasing awareness of how to apply these goals to instances of injustice, prejudice, and misuse of power (Bloor and Bloor, 2007).

Political speeches as discursive practices are laden with ideologies that a politician espouses. These ideologies are presented as valid through the persuasive technique of legitimization which Reyes (2011) defines as the process of justifying social actions, ideas, thoughts, or declarations with the use of strategies such as: emotions, a hypothetical future, rationality, voices of expertise, and altruism.

Political speeches also use metaphors to convey dramatic and impactful messages. Aristotle defines metaphor as a rhetorical device that gives "something a name that belongs to something

else” (Hellsten 2002, page 17). Here, metaphor is viewed as a persuasive device. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) proposed an analysis of metaphor based on target and source. The target domain and source domain consider the similarities and the interaction between the two domains, making it possible to map one domain onto another. This view suggests that metaphor is a cognitive process; thus, it “plays an important role in thought and is indispensable to both thought and language.” (Penninck 2014, page 23).

As embodied in the Cognitive Metaphor Theory (CMT), the target domain is usually an abstract concept such as LIFE, and the source domain is typically a concrete concept such as JOURNEY, hence, the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY. Conceptualizing LIFE as a JOURNEY enables one to map the various elements of a JOURNEY onto aspects of LIFE as shown here:

JOURNEY	LIFE
traveler	→ person leading the life
starting point	→ where the person was before reaching the goal
route	→ means
impediments	→ difficulty
guide	→ mentor
landmarks	→ progress
crossroads	→ chores or tasks
provisions	→ material resources
destination	→ goal

The correspondence between each aspect of life and journey allows one to understand life as traveling from one point to another while encountering impediments, landmarks, and crossroads with the help of a guide and surviving through provisions. In this manner, metaphors aid in mapping concepts against bodily experiences and help us make sense of the world (Sullivan 2013).

One method for examining metaphors is Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) which aims to “demonstrate how particular discursive practices reflect socio-political power structures” (Charteris-Black 2004, page 29) and analyze the implicit intention of the speaker and the context of the metaphor to reveal the hidden power relations within a socio-cultural context (Sudajit-apa 2017). In effect, if most people accept a particular metaphor, the power of the person who uses that metaphor will likewise be accepted and transformed into a social value (Hart 2016, as cited in Sudajit-apa 2017). Thus, CMA can

provide a “particular insight into why the rhetoric of political leaders is successful” (Charteris-Black 2005, page 197).

### 3 Methodology

This qualitative study utilized CMA, a combination of CMT and CDA and the legitimization strategies suggested by Reyes (2011). The linguistic source is the inaugural speech of President Duterte, the transcript of which was taken from the Presidential Communications Office website.

Metaphorical expressions were first identified employing the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) (Steen, et al. 2010). First, the text was read to understand the general meaning after which the lexical units were identified. The lexical meanings were lifted from Meriam-Webster Online Dictionary. Next, the contextual and contemporary meanings of each lexical unit were determined. In case a lexical unit had a contemporary meaning that was different from the contextual meaning but could still be understood when compared, it was marked as metaphorical. The metaphorical expressions were then analyzed to determine the conceptual metaphors that frame them based on CMT by identifying the target domain (abstract concept) and the source domain (concrete concept).

Finally, the relationships between the lexical meanings and conceptual metaphors were analyzed to distinguish which legitimization strategies were used - emotions, a hypothetical future, rationality, voices of expertise, or altruism. Further analysis of these strategies would show how they were used to justify Duterte’s declarations and policies.

### 4 Results and Discussion

The following excerpts from President Duterte’s inaugural speech contain metaphorical expressions which are written in boldface.

- (1) *For I see these **ills as mere symptoms of a virulent social disease that creeps and cuts into the moral fiber of Philippine society.***
- (2) *I have seen how **corruption bled the government of funds, which were allocated for the use in uplifting the poor from the mire that they are in.***
- (3) *These were **battle cries** articulated by me in behalf of the people hungry for genuine and meaningful change. Love of country, subordination of personal interests to the*

*common good, concern and care for the helpless and the impoverished – these are among the lost and faded values that we seek to recover and revitalize as we commence our journey towards a better Philippines.*

An examination of the statements reveals that the conceptual metaphors framing the president’s speech are: SOCIAL PROBLEM IS A DISEASE, NATION IS A BODY, and CHANGE IS WAR.

One of the first issues discussed by the president in his speech is the condition of the country. He uses the conceptual metaphor SOCIAL PROBLEM IS A DISEASE. Such relationship is mapped as follows:

DISEASE		SOCIAL PROBLEMS
cause	→	lost and faded values
symptoms	→	corruption, criminality, illegal drugs, breakdown of law and order
effect	→	erosion of faith and trust in the government
treatment	→	government policies

Duterte claims that because the people have “*lost and faded values*” the country is suffering from a “*virulent social disease*.” The use of the adjective “virulent,” which means harmful or destructive, to describe “*social disease*” emphasizes the gravity of the problem. This disease manifests itself in several “symptoms.” A symptom is defined as “subjective evidence of disease or physical disturbance.” Duterte enumerates the evidence of the country’s disease as “*corruption, criminality, illegal drugs, breakdown of law and order*.” However, according to him, the root of the problem is that people have lost the values of “*love of country, subordination of personal interests to the common good, concern and care for the helpless and the impoverished*.” In other words, the country is suffering because people lack nationalism, selflessness, and compassion. Moreover, because of these so-called symptoms, the people experience “*erosion of faith and trust in the government*.” Thus, the problems of the country were caused by the past administration’s inability to provide for the needs of the people. He reinforces this claim by saying:

*(4) I see the erosion of the people’s trust in our country’s leaders; the erosion of faith in our judicial system; the erosion of confidence in the capacity of our public servants to make the people’s lives better, safer and healthier.*

According to Duterte, these problems “*need to be addressed with urgency*.” Hence, to cure this disease, he says that it is essential to “*recover and revitalize*” the “*lost values and faded values*.” To “recover” means “to regain or to get back to normal position or condition” while “revitalize” means “to give new life or vigor to.” In a sense, the president wants the country to return to a state where people possessed the lost values of nationalism, sacrifice, and compassion. On the other hand, considering the context of SOCIAL PROBLEM IS A DISEASE, to “recover” takes on the meaning of regaining health and to “revitalize” means to give new life to a country that is suffering from a disease. Once cured, the country can move “*towards a better Philippines*.” Here, the word “better” can be related to “get better” which is synonymous to recover, signifying the improvement of the country’s condition. To do this, he calls on department secretaries and heads of agencies to “*reduce requirements and the processing time of all applications*,” “*refrain from changing and bending the rules government contracts, transactions and projects*,” and “*advocate transparency in all government contracts, projects and business transactions*.” Moreover, he enjoins the “*Congress and the Commission on Human Rights and all others who are similarly situated to allow us a level of governance that is consistent to our mandate*.” After portraying the nation as suffering from a serious illness that urgently needs to be cured, the president proposes solutions that will improve the country’s condition. The series of imperatives suggests that the country will get better only if government agencies cooperate and implement the policies of the new administration.

It is evident that using the conceptual metaphor SOCIAL PROBLEM IS A DISEASE acts as a cohesive device framing Duterte’s message that change can only be achieved if the problems of the country are solved through the cooperation of the government and the people. This message is fortified by the conceptual metaphor through the legitimization strategy of “altruism.” According to Reyes (2011) politicians “portray themselves...as serving their voters, and therefore they legitimize proposals as a common good that will improve the conditions of a particular community” (page 787). This is exactly what Duterte tries to achieve in comparing the nation’s social problems to a disease, making it easier for the audience to

understand the many complex problems that the country is facing.

Related to SOCIAL PROBLEM IS A DISEASE is the conceptual metaphor NATION IS A BODY. The concept map is shown below:

BODY		NATION
can get sick	→	has social problems
can bleed	→	funds are sucked by corruption
can get hurt	→	beset by criminality
can get well	→	achieve progress

Just like a body, the nation can get sick and bleed, as discussed in the previous metaphor and as seen in excerpt (1). Here, the nation is presented as a body afflicted with a serious illness. Aside from the use of “*virulent*” to emphasize the gravity of the situation, the use of “*creeps and cuts*” strengthens this claim. “Creep” means “to enter or advance gradually so as to be almost unnoticed,” and “cut” means “to penetrate with or as if with an edged instrument.” The image portrayed by the combination of the two words is an assailant attacking someone from behind, implying that this serious problem is hurting the country unaware. Moreover, this attack affects “*the moral fiber of Philippine society*.” “Moral” means “of or relating to principles of right and wrong in behavior,” and “fiber” refers to “the essential structure or character.” Thus, the disease that attacks the body also affects the person’s capacity to distinguish right from wrong. Additionally, these social problems place the country in a bad condition and its people in low morale. To illustrate the seriousness of the problem, Duterte relates: “*I have seen how corruption bled the government of funds, which were allocated for the use in uplifting the poor from the mire that they are in.*” Here, the nation is compared to a body that can bleed because of one symptom - corruption. Blood is equated to government funds which are supposed to save people from the “mire” they are in. “Mire” is defined as “heavy often deep mud or slush,” or it can also be “a troublesome or intractable situation.” In this case, the mire that impedes the people is poverty.

The conceptual metaphor NATION IS A BODY is used in the speech to highlight the nation’s problem as well as to bring it closer to human experience. The image of a person sick, bleeding, and stuck in the mud of poverty sends a powerful message to which many Filipinos can relate. Hence, it becomes a strong justification for the

policies proposed by Duterte. In this case, the strategy of legitimization used is “appeal to emotion” with emotive effects such as pity, pain, fear, and hardship. Reyes (2011) posits that the appeal to emotion enables social actors to influence the opinion of their audience through linguistic structures and rhetorical devices. Here, the usage of metaphor corroborates the findings of Xue, Mao, and Li (682) that metaphors evoke strong emotions since the source domains are relevant to people’s daily life and experience; therefore, they help the audience understand the message and serve as persuasive tools.

Still another conceptual metaphor utilized in the speech is CHANGE IS WAR. Duterte emphasizes in his speech that to achieve change, a battle must be fought against the problems of society. The map that follows illustrates this comparison:

WAR		CHANGE
Participants	→	government and people versus criminals
Parts	→	problems of the country versus progress
Planning strategy	→	recovery and revitalization of lost and faded values; government policies
Initial condition	→	corruption, criminality, illegal drugs, breakdown of law and order; country is beset with problems and cannot progress
Middle condition	→	government policies
End	→	eradication of country’s problems
Final state	→	peace, order, and progress
Purpose: victory	→	change

The metaphor CHANGE IS WAR is anchored on the initial condition that the country has a severe problem with the following symptoms: “*corruption, criminality, illegal drugs, and break down of law and order.*” Duterte justifies this war by saying: “*There are many amongst us who advance the assessment that the problems that bedevil our country today which need to be addressed with urgency.*” He starts his statement with “*there are many amongst us,*” which implies that he is not alone in thinking that the country is in peril. The use of the inclusive “*us*” involves the audience as participants in the consensus that the country’s problems must be solved immediately. Moreover, the use of the word “*bedevil*” underscores the urgency of the situation. “*Bedevil*” means “to cause distress,”

and of course, a natural reaction to anything that causes distress is to eradicate it.

Since these problems conflict with the interest of the nation, which is progress, they are urgent concerns that must be addressed; therefore, war is necessary. This war involves the president, the government, and the people against the perpetrators of crime. Duterte's strategy is to "recover and revitalize lost and faded values" through the implementation of new policies and the cooperation of government agencies. He pleads his case through the statement: "In this fight, I ask Congress and the Commission on Human Rights and all others who are similarly situated to allow us a level of governance that is consistent to our mandate." The plea is introduced by "in this fight," referring to eradicating the problems of society. Evidently, the president views the solution to these problems as a war that must be fought. He asks "Congress and the Commission on Human Rights and all others who are similarly situated" to join him in battle. However, upon closer inspection, they are not drafted to be soldiers to fight in the field, but "to allow us [his government] a level of governance that is consistent to our mandate." This request asks those mentioned to let Duterte govern according to the authority vested in him. It is understandable that he calls on Congress for cooperation since it is a law-making body that can help in implementing the new policies. However, he specifically mentions the Commission on Human Rights for another reason. Duterte admits: "I know that there are those who do not approve of my methods of fighting criminality, the sale and use of illegal drugs and corruption." It can be surmised that "those who do not approve of my methods" refers to the Commission on Human Rights since "they say" his "methods of fighting criminality, the sale and use of illegal drugs and corruption... are unorthodox and verge on the illegal." This pronouncement at the onset of Duterte's term as president is not only a plea for cooperation but also a warning to those who might try to stop him.

He further contends that "criminality, the sale and use of illegal drugs and corruption" are enemies that should be fought through methods that are "unorthodox and verge on the illegal" if necessary. He justifies these methods in excerpt (2) and the following excerpts:

(5) *I have seen how illegal drugs destroyed individuals and ruined family relationships.*

(6) *I have seen how criminality, by means all foul, snatched from the innocent and the unsuspecting, the years and years of accumulated savings. Years of toil and then, suddenly, they are back to where they started.*

Excerpt (2) indicates that corruption has a detrimental effect, especially on the poor people, as discussed in the section dealing with NATION IS A BODY. Excerpt (5) suggests that illegal drugs are harmful not only to individuals but also to families. The use of the words "destroyed" and "ruined" highlights the gravity of their effects. "Destroy" means "to ruin or to put out of existence." Using two synonymous words that pertain to destruction in one sentence when referring to a person and family relationships presents a dramatic image to the audience.

Moreover, excerpt (6) presents "criminality" as victimizing the innocent and the hardworking. "Criminality" in whatever method is described as "offensive to the senses" or "loathsome." It is even more loathsome when it "snatched from the innocent and unsuspecting." "Snatch" means "to seize or take suddenly without permission," "innocent" means "free from guilt or sin especially through lack of knowledge of evil," and "unsuspecting" means "unaware of any danger or threat." This phrase portrays people who do not deserve to be victimized by heinous crimes since they are pure, especially when they lose "the years and years of accumulated savings." The use of "years and years" to describe the accumulated savings emphasizes the amount of hard work that people put in just to save money only to be victimized by criminals. These statements are reasons enough for the president to wage war. And if these do not convince the audience, he adds: "Look at this from that perspective and tell me that I am wrong." This statement is clearly a call for the audience to agree with the president based on the previous premises as well as a plea for the audience to show empathy for the victims of crimes.

Having justified that his methods are necessary in this war against criminality, Duterte goes on to say that: "The fight will be relentless and it will be sustained." "Relentless" means "showing or promising no abatement of severity, intensity, strength, or pace" and "sustained" means

“prolonged.” Again, he puts two words with almost the same meaning in a series to warn the criminals that the government is indeed at war and will not stop the “fight” until the country’s problems are eradicated. To cushion the effect of this strong statement, the president professes: *“As a lawyer and a former prosecutor, I know the limits of the power and authority of the president. I know what is legal and what is not.”* By reminding the audience of his previous professions, a lawyer whose job is “to advise as to legal rights and obligations in other matters” and a prosecutor whose work is “to bring legal action against for redress or punishment of a crime or violation of law,” Duterte assures the audience that he will not go beyond what the law mandates him as president.

The perceived end of this war is the eradication of the country’s problems which will lead to peace, order, and progress. The ultimate sign of victory is change. For this reason, Duterte further justifies the war on criminality by saying:

(7) *These were battle cries articulated by me in behalf of the people hungry for genuine and meaningful change. But the change, if it is to be permanent and significant, must start with us and in us. To borrow the language of F. Sionil Jose, we have become our own worst enemies. And we must have the courage and the will to change ourselves.*

Duterte brings the metaphor CHANGE IS WAR closer to the audience by labeling his pronouncements as “battle cries.” A “battle cry” is “a cry used by a body of fighters in war.” However, it could also mean “a slogan used especially to rally people to a cause.” The president claims that he articulates the battle cries “in behalf of the people,” implying that these are not his sentiments alone but also the people’s. Furthermore, these people are “hungry for genuine and meaningful change.” The use of the word “hungry” suggests that the people have been clamoring for change. Duterte describes this change as “genuine and meaningful.” This usage signifies that if ever there was change in the past it was not sincerely experienced by the people and, therefore, insignificant. He goes on to say that change must start “with us and in us.” The use of “us” communicates to the audience that they are included in the battle for change.

Of course, in a war, there are enemies; however, this time, Duterte does not refer to the country’s problems but the people themselves. To be one’s

own enemy means the people must struggle within themselves to achieve change, but according to Duterte, this can only be achieved with courage and will. “Courage” is defined as the “mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty.” The people need it, especially in a war where the leader is determined to eradicate the enemy through unorthodox methods. On the other hand, “will” means “the collective desire of a group or a disposition to act according to principles or ends.” Having justified that the nation is at war, Duterte calls for collective action from the people to fight with him to achieve real change.

The conceptual metaphor CHANGE IS WAR is employed in the president’s address not only to remind the audience of the current state of the nation, but also to convince them that the war against the country’s problems is a necessity, and drastic measures are imperative to achieve victory, which is equated with change. While he asks for cooperation from government agencies and the people, he also warns those who may try to hinder his plans. This strategy is resonant of Navera’s (2020) findings that speeches may be used not only to encourage supporters to agree with the speaker but also to silence critics of the proposed policies. Furthermore, he paints a grim picture of society and relates this to people’s experience by emphasizing how the innocent are usually the victims. Moreover, his use of the pronoun “us” implies that he is one with the people in the fight against the nation’s problems.

As with NATION IS A BODY, he uses CHANGE IS WAR to “appeal to emotion.” Reyes (2011) points out that in using emotion as a legitimization strategy, speakers use linguistic and rhetorical sources “to create two sides of a given story/event, in which speaker and audience are in the ‘us-group’ and the social actors depicted negatively constitute the ‘them-group’” (page 785). In this case, the ‘us-group’ includes Duterte and the people while the ‘them-group’ involves those who perpetrate crimes and corruption.

Additionally, he uses “hypothetical future” to legitimize his policies by claiming that the war on criminality will bring about change – a progressive future for the country. Reyes (2011) explains that this strategy is used to exert power by promising a positive future outcome.

According to [Guitart Escudero \(2005\)](#) POLITICAL ACTIVITY IS A WAR is a commonly used metaphor during election time which can usually become war zones where words are weapons and rivals are enemies. However, even in inaugural speeches, “war” lexicon may still be present as in Obama’s: “...each day brings further evidence that the ways we use energy strengthen our adversaries and threaten our planet” ([Guitart Escudero 2011, page 48](#)).

In summary, the conceptual metaphors present in Duterte’s inaugural speech such as SOCIAL PROBLEM IS A DISEASE, NATION IS A BODY, and CHANGE IS WAR help to frame his policies as urgent, unorthodox solutions to dire problems of the country. These conceptual metaphors function to legitimize the rhetorical mechanisms in his speeches that spell out his ideology and justification for such policies. Furthermore, Duterte’s rhetorical choices, through the legitimization strategies of altruism, appeal to emotion, and hypothetical future, reinforce his identity as a leader with powerful solutions for the critical issues facing the country and help in gaining public support for his policies. This type of rhetoric is evident not only in Duterte’s inaugural speech but also in his other political speeches. As [Rubic-Remorosa \(2018\)](#) and [Villanueva’s \(2018\)](#) findings demonstrate, the president’s speeches make use of linguistic strategies in underscoring his policies addressing the war on drugs, corruption, and criminality and depicting himself as a strong and credible leader that the people can rely on to deliver the country from its many problems.

## 5 Conclusion

President Duterte’s inaugural speech utilizes the conceptual metaphors SOCIAL PROBLEM IS A DISEASE, NATION IS A BODY, and CHANGE IS WAR. These metaphors are used to frame his message to the Filipino people that the country is in a deplorable condition because the people have lost the values of nationalism, sacrifice and compassion. Having lost these values, the problems of the society such as criminality, illegal drugs, corruption, and breakdown of law and order emerged to make the people suffer. Furthermore, these problems are so severe that they need to be addressed with utmost urgency. The only solution is to implement policies that may be unorthodox but

can help the country move forward to a brighter future.

The conceptual metaphors used in Duterte’s speech facilitate the audience’s understanding of the message by relating the complex issues to everyday experiences of ordinary people. He does this by using legitimization strategies such as altruism, appeal to emotion, and a hypothetical future. To convey that all the policies of the new government are made for the betterment of the country justifies even the unconventional methods that the president is known for. Moreover, using metaphors that pertain to sickness, pain, fear, hardship, and hope for a better life evoke emotions that help legitimize the government’s new policies.

Duterte’s use of conceptual metaphors coupled with legitimization strategies has been effective in persuading the people to support him and his policies. This is evidenced by the fact that despite the extra-judicial killings, the unfulfilled promises, the declaration of martial law in Mindanao, and other unorthodox behavior and occurrences, the president’s satisfaction rating remained “very good” ([Orellana 2018](#)). The survey results showed that many people still believed that the president’s policies were justified given the country’s situation. Moreover, despite his declining satisfaction rating starting 2018 due to the bloodiness of his declared war on illegal drugs and his mishandling of the COVID19 pandemic, Duterte maintained a higher rating up to the end of his term compared to those of past presidents. ([Ducanes, Rood, and Tigno 2023](#)). Indeed, his popularity among the masses had a great impact on the 2022 Presidential and Vice Presidential Elections which placed Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. and Sara Duterte in power. Their landslide victory is an indication that majority of the Filipinos preferred a government that would continue Duterte’s policies ([Arguelles 2022](#)).

Evidently, conceptual metaphors are effective tools of persuasion because they enable speakers to translate abstract concepts into relatable human experiences that are easily understood by the audience. They can also be used as legitimization devices that can help convince people to believe in what the speaker espouses even if it were something that they would not agree to in normal circumstances.



Based on the conclusion of this study, it is recommended that further research be done to include the other speeches of the president to find out if the conceptual metaphors present in his inaugural speech recur in his other speeches and explore how these metaphors aided in the legitimization of Duterte's government policies.

## Acknowledgements

The completion of this paper would not have been possible without the invaluable guidance of my Rhetorical Theory professor, Aileen O. Salonga, from the Department of English and Comparative Literature at the University of the Philippines. Her expertise, patience, and insightful guidance greatly contributed to the development of this research. I also wish to extend my gratitude to my home institution, Far Eastern University, for supporting my PhD studies. Lastly, I would like to thank my family for continuing to inspire me in all my endeavors.

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