

# Conceptual Metaphors and Ideologies in the Inaugural Speeches of Selected Nigerian Presidents

**Tajudeen J. Adegoke**

Faculty of Arts, Department of English, Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo

doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/ejells.2013/vol13n31026>

Published August 18, 2025

---

**Citation:** Adegoke T.J. (2025) Conceptual Metaphors and Ideologies in the Inaugural Speeches of Selected Nigerian Presidents, *European Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, 13 (3), 10-26

---

**Abstract:** *Presidential inauguration speeches reflect political agendas and ideologies of newly elected leaders. Existing linguistic studies on presidential inaugural speeches in Nigeria largely focused on persuasive effect of metaphors from the stylistic and socio-linguistic perspectives. However, little attention was paid to conceptual metaphors and ideologies used. This study was designed to investigate language use in inaugural speeches of selected Nigerian presidents with a view to determining the source domain metaphors, conceptual metaphors and ideologies projected in them. The study was conducted by adopting George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory and Jonathan Charteris-Black's critical metaphor analysis as the theoretical framework, while the descriptive design was adopted. The two Nigerian presidents were purposively selected because one took over the reigns of government from the other on a different political platforms. The two Nigerian presidents were Goodluck Ebele Jonathan of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Muhammadu Buhari of the All Progressives Congress (APC). The study identifies three productive sources domain metaphors namely journey, building and family which were used to conceptualize socio-economic and political issues identified in the speeches in order to persuade the citizens. Some conceptual metaphors identified in the speeches were democracy as a path to development in Nigeria and Africa, democracy as a preferred path to development in Nigeria, Nigeria as a building, Nigeria as a building in progress, Nigeria as a family and African nations as members of Nigeria extended family and president Buhari as a property of all Nigerians. The ideologies underlying the speeches were: Democratic ideology concerned with entrenching democratic practices and principles, Reformist ideology concerned with improvement in governance and messianic ideology projected as a deliverer from bad governance.*

**Keywords:** conceptual metaphors, inaugural speeches of Nigerian presidents, source domain metaphors, persuasion and ideologies

---

## INTRODUCTION

It is a fact that language is a human attribute that plays crucial roles in the life of human beings. It is a phenomenon peculiar to man among other living creatures on earth. Therefore, language scholars have continually expressed their views about this phenomenon from time to time.

According to Iwara (2008:8) says language, as a human means of communication, is that comprises symbols that stand for things, with their meanings being mentally constructed and influenced by personal/individual personal experiences. Iwara's view as enunciated above implies that language as a human means of communication is symbolic in nature. It is therefore not in the category of other common phenomena of sign language which both humans and animals respond to.

Egbokhare (2004), views language as a phenomenon which permeates all aspects of human behaviour, it exists in socio-political, cultural and temporal milieu. According to Ogunsiji and Olaseinde (2018), language is described as a tool that is indispensable in human society and the validity of this view is underscored by the question on how the human society would look like if there is no language at all. In other words, human society without language can only be best imagined. From the descriptions of language, it can be seen as a very crucial property of man used to perform numerous functions in human community. Among the functions are; for interactions, expression of thoughts and wishes, dissemination and reception of information, description of abstract concepts, for persuasion particularly in politics, religious and marketing discourses.

Besides describing and explaining language and the numerous functions it performs, linguists/language scholars' regularly enquire into instances of the use of political language in political discourse with the aim of explaining the overt and covert meanings of the discourse(s). This study investigates how metaphors have been utilised for persuasion and to conceive the many ideas conveyed with the purpose of achieving their persuasive and rhetorical objectives by selected presidents of Nigeria in their inaugural addresses. Presidential inaugural speech in Nigeria is a speech delivered once in every four year tenure at the onset of an administration. It is nevertheless a very crucial speech as it becomes a subject of national discourse at public gatherings, in the electronic and print media shortly after it is delivered. As typical of political discourse, the president is expected to deploy some persuasive linguistic strategies or a combination of linguistic strategies while addressing the people.

## Conceptual Review

### *Rhetorical Devices*

Akinseye (2015) claims that a political speech is one which aims at converting or influencing the audience by means of using different linguistic and non-linguistic tools. The language tools are referred to as rhetorical devices or figures of speech. A rhetorical device is a language tool employed in a manner to convey meaning or to persuade. It can also be described as a technique employed to evoke emotions within the listener or readers. Several scholars have expressed their views on it. Osoba (1998) views rhetorical devices or figures of speech as a category of language tool used to convey meaning in a connotative manner. He notes that their employment extends the importance of what the speaker is saying. Also, Igwe (2009) describes figurative devices as the stylistic employment of language in a manner that reflects deviation from ordinary or literal denotative use to suggest or create additional meaning or effects. He explains the term further to mean a non-ordinary use of language crafted especially for laying emphasis; adding beauty or

emotional intensity; amplifying meaning; provoking thought, etc. From the descriptions of the scholars, it is deduced that rhetorical devices are important linguistic devices, public speakers, for instance, politicians, use to impress, influence and convert the audience. The rhetorical devices are numerous, but the one relevant to this study is mainly metaphor.

### *Metaphor*

Metaphor plays a crucial role in political discourse. Metaphor is a language tool used for clarity and elegance. A metaphorical term implies a comparison between two things that are fundamentally distinct or unconnected. In other terms, it relates to a claim that one item is something else when it is not. "By far the finest thing to have is a grasp of metaphor," says Aristotle (c.335 BCE). This cannot be taught; it is a sign of genius, because effective metaphor necessitates a keen sense of resemblance. This view of metaphor by Aristotle has, however, been opposed by different scholars. Notable among the critics of Aristotle's view of metaphor are Lakoff and Johnson (1980) in their seminal work *Metaphors We Live By*. According to Kovecses (2010), Lakoff and Johnson suggest that metaphor is utilised readily in everyday life by regular people, not simply gifted individuals, as Aristotle asserts. Also, Opeibi (2009:187) describes metaphor as a major figurative expression which suggests the sense of implicit comparison between two referents, drawing similarities between two things that are similar. This concept is highlighted by the metaphor in John F. Kennedy's inaugural address in January 1961: "We shall light out our nation...serve it with the enthusiasm, faith, and devotion... we bring to this venture... brilliance from the fire can surely light the world." From this excerpt, J. F. Kennedy compares the people's faith and devotion to a burning fire in order to achieve a favourable emotional support from the audience. On the other hand, a mixed metaphor is one that evokes a sense of incongruity. It is observed when the metaphor used produces an incongruous or impossible image. Dying metaphors, as the name suggests, are those that have lost their evocative power because they have been overused, but they are still being used as phrases e.g. toe the line, play into the hands of, Achilles' heel, etc.

Metaphor studies date back to ancient times and have remained one major rhetorical device used by speakers/politicians in political discourses. However, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) have created a cognitive theory in which metaphor is now understood as conceptual issue. Throughout the last four decades, metaphors are understood as comprehension of one ideal or conceptual domain in terms of another. Metaphor has been described as a cognitive phenomenon by a number of different researchers. For instance, Langacker (1987), cited in Barcelona (2002:211), defines "metaphor as the cognitive mechanism which involves the mapping of one experiential domain onto another." The mapping is driven towards understanding the latter in terms of the former. The focus of this study will be on metaphor as a cognitive phenomenon.

## **Theoretical Review**

### *Cognitive Linguistics*

Cognitive linguistics is a branch of linguistics that emerged in the early 1970s in reaction to frustration with formal approaches to language. According to Kemmer (2010), cognitive linguistics has its roots in researchers' interests in interrogating the link between language and

mind, and doing so beyond the structural characteristics unique to language. Marc (1992) claims cognitive linguistics is the study of language in its cognitive function, where cognitive refers to the critical role of intermediate informational structures in our interactions with the environment. Adherence to three key positions is viewed as defining cognitive linguistics. The first is the contention that no independent language faculty is being contemplated. Second, it considers grammar in terms of conceptualisation, and third, it asserts that language knowledge is derived from language usage. We can deduce the following from what has been expressed above. To start with, the mind lacks a distinct and self-contained language acquisition module. While cognitive linguists acknowledge that some aspects of human language ability are intrinsic, they claim that they are not distinct from the rest of cognition.

Van Hoek (1999) expresses the view that Cognitive Linguistics is not a single theory, but is rather characterised as a paradigm within linguistics, subsuming a number of distinct theories and research programmes. It is distinguished by a focus on elucidating the close link between language and other cognitive functions.

#### *Cognitive View of Metaphor*

When a metaphor is critically examined in context, Charteris-Black (2004:25) emphasises that "we will see that the role of metaphor in discourse goes beyond what is stated above since it determines the type of value judgement that we make." Richard (1936) and Black (1962) cited in Charteris-Black (2004), also reject the conception of metaphors as linguistic ornaments. Arguing that a new knowledge of conceptual mapping emerges as a result of the interplay of thoughts from two domains of metaphor, they contend that metaphors are cognitive tools. Both the source and target domains are specified in conceptual mappings. The mapping of a source conceptual metaphor into a target conceptual domain is done, with the former being more concrete and the latter being more abstract. "Metaphor," according to Charteris-Black (2004), is a figure of speech that is commonly used in persuasion because it symbolises a novel way of interpreting the world that provides new insight. Metaphor is widely used discursively in rhetorical and argumentative discourse, such as political speeches, since it is persuasive.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### *Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)*

Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual metaphor theory is particularly pertinent to this research. They hold the view that metaphors are central to thought and not merely linguistic ornamental rhetorical devices but that metaphor is mainly conceptual in nature and not linguistic as our conceptual system is metaphorical and not simply literal. Lakoff and Johnson 1980 claim that two conceptual domains, a source and target, construct the conceptual metaphor. A conceptual metaphor is a conceptual structure realised in language through linguistic metaphors.

Metaphor serves to drive the understanding and experiencing of one kind of object in terms of another in constructing social realities (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003; Musolff, 2012). Conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) is one of the most important fields of cognitive linguistics study. The contribution of Lakoff and Johnson to the field is the declaration that linguistic expressions are the representation of conceptual

ideas in mind. Through the lens of CMT, Kovecses (2002:4) avers metaphor is cognitively defined as "knowing one conceptual domain (A) is conceptual domain (B). The fact that conceptual domain (A) gives metaphorical language to grasp the conceptual domain is referred to as the source domain (A). The domain (B) that is comprehended in this way is referred to as the target domain. According to Kovecses (2002) conceptual correspondence between the two domains is referred to as mapping.

Conceptual metaphor is realised linguistically in a variety of metaphorical phrases that employ various cross-domain mappings within the same fundamental model. Many linguists have made efforts to make clear how metaphors shape the conceptual system. Other language scholars in the field of cognitive linguistics who submit that metaphor is fundamental to cognition include: Richards (1936) and Reddy (1979). They assert that "thought is metaphoric and proceeds by comparison, and that metaphors of language derive therefore." Lakoff and Moreno (2008:42) recognises Reddy's submission when he says the core of metaphor lies in thought rather than in language. Metaphor plays an important and essential role in how we conceptualise the world, and our daily actions reflect this metaphorical understanding of experience.

However, it was Lakoff and Johnson that came up with a well-grounded cognitive theory of metaphor in (1980) in their work *Metaphors We Live By*. The seminal work challenged the classical semantic orientation and its roots as far back as the period of Aristotle. Metaphor according to cognitive metaphor theory perspective, metaphor means a conceptual phenomenon, a cross-domain *mapping* in our conceptual system that is realised on the surface level of language. The theory operates within the mapping features from the source domain to a target domain. "Mapping is the most fundamental notion of conceptual metaphor theory" (Grady, 2007:190); hence everything about CMT could be discussed from mapping.

#### *Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA)*

In this study, Critical Metaphor Analysis is used to interrogate the data as it suits its analytical purposes and consider the essence of conceptual metaphor theory as well. Charteris-Black asserts that metaphor with its cognitive effectiveness is essential for persuasion. Critical Metaphor Analysis explores how rhetoric is used to achieve legitimisation and persuasion and this involves three steps: identification of metaphor by close reading, interpretation and explanation. In order to examine how rhetoric can be persuasive, Charteris-Black (2011) relies on Aristotle's rhetoric proofs: pathos, logos and ethos. Also, the analysis of this study shall be done by using Charteris-Black's (2011:14) rhetoric means for persuasion in political discourse.

A politician can be 'right', and thus achieve persuasion by having the right intention, right-thinking, sounding right, and telling the right story and by that, persuade others,. If a speaker is to gain the audience's trust, he/she has to convince the audience that he/she has the 'right intention'. Politicians are deemed to have the right in intention if they express concern about social matters that will ultimately benefit the people. (Charteris-Black 2011). In addition, morality and integrity are crucial in persuading the audience that the speaker has right intention. They provide cues to the audience as to whether or not the politician is acting in the best interests of the people (Charteris-Black, 2011:13). 'Thinking right' entails using logic and reasoning while debating political issues. Sounding right is evoked by the emotional effect of a politician's speech, especially when it mirrors the state's social sentiments shared

among citizens. Sounding correct, according to Charteris-Black(2011) is about generating an appropriate emotional context for persuading. The last component in the figure, 'telling the right story,' could be achieved by creating "myth" which involves positively representing one party while negatively representing the other in order to legitimise argumentation.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out using Charteris-Black's (2004) three methodological steps in critical metaphor analysis which entails metaphor identification by means of manual search of the data based on incongruity or semantic tension either at linguistic, pragmatic or cognitive levels which results from a shift in domain use. The second step in CMA is metaphor interpretation and the third stage is metaphor explanation.

### Analysis of Data

From the analysis of the data gathered from the inaugural speeches of selected Nigerian presidents, three productive source domain metaphors were identified. They were journey, building and family metaphors. The conceptual analysis of the metaphors is done below.

### Journey Metaphors

Lakoff (1993) invented the motion-in-direction metaphor "journey" to characterise long-term, goal-oriented activities. Journey, a sort of movement, involves a change of place and sometimes direction. According to Charteris-Black (2004:93), the goals of politicians' actions are conceptualised as trip destinations in journey metaphors. He emphasises that journey metaphors often assess policies favourably since the goals are socially valued. As a result, travel metaphors allude to societal activities aimed at reaching good objectives. Hence, they have a strong positive orientation, regardless of when the metaphor emphasises the bad components of the journey, such as burdens to bear — the work required to achieve anything is seen valuable (Charteris-Black, 2004). Journey metaphors also underline the importance of patience, as reaching a destination will require time and effort. The employment of travel metaphors in the manners described is undeniably rhetorically effective. Their usage is meant to persuade the public that government initiatives would not provide instant results, and that in order to attain goals, individuals will have to make sacrifices or endure certain hardships in order to achieve goals.

Journey metaphorical terms are used by the selected presidents of Nigeria to portray different functions as interpreted thus: The journey metaphorical expressions in: *has begun, march, begins today, take off on the path of the journey, a new beginning; new direction, a new spirit*, extracted from the speech of President Jonathan are used to persuade the citizens that the movement or journey to achieving the social goals/changes has started with him as the President. Though the journey metaphors have positive orientation they nevertheless highlight the negative aspect considering the fact that these metaphors imply that for almost a decade of civil rule, nothing tangible has been achieved and thus legitimising his ascension as president who will bring something new for the citizens. The metaphors are deployed to reassure the Nigerians that their anticipation for social goals/changes will now be made to happen as the new leader. President Jonathan also employed the metaphor *lead* to depict Nigeria as the vanguard of democracy in

Africa. The metaphor terms *our journey*, *chosen route*, *getting into*, are used by President Buhari to describe the path to development as difficult but he reiterates that it is the path to take for development to take place. The mapping correspondences between the source domain (JOURNEY) and the target domain (socio-political goals) in the inaugural speech of the selected Nigerian Presidents are shown below.

Elements of the mapping	Source Domain <b>Journey</b>	Target Domain <b>Socio-political goals/politics</b>
A fresh start	has begun, begins today take-off on the path of	movement/steps towards achieving socio-political goals
A walk	march	trekking/moving to a destination/social goals
Championing a cause	lead	be in a vanguard or head a movement for democratic ideology
Path to development	our journey, chosen route	democracy

Similarly, Journey metaphors found in the inaugural speech of Buhari are used to illustrate the view that national development can only be attained through democracy. While the journey metaphorical terms/forms in: *our journey*, *chosen route*, *getting into*, found in the inaugural speech of President Buhari are used to illustrate the opinion that development can only be attained through a democratic process. Also, the idea of getting democracy firmly entrenched in Nigeria and in Africa is expressed in the metaphors.

These are evident in the following extracts:

1. Our decade of development **has begun**.
  2. The **march** is on.
  3. The day of transformation **begins today**.
  4. **We** are ready to **take-off on the path of** sustained growth an economic development...
  5. Nigeria, in partnership with African Union, **will lead** the process.
  6. Cynicism and skepticism will not help **our journey** to greatness.
  7. Join me now as **we begin the journey** of transforming Nigeria.
  8. See **a new beginning; a new direction; a new spirit**.
- Jonathan Inaugural Speech

9. **Our journey** has not been easy but...

10. There is now a national consensus that our **chosen route** to national development is democracy

11. My appeal for unity is predicated on the seriousness of the legacy we are **getting into**.

Buhari Inaugural Speech

The above extracts from the Nigerian Presidents' inaugural addresses illustrating the issues of social development as being thought of in terms of journeying or travelling can be seen in the excerpts (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), and (6). Also the idea of getting democracy firmly entrenched in Nigeria and in Africa by Presidents Jonathan and Buhari is seen in excerpts (4), (5), (10) and (11). Jonathan aligns Nigeria with democracy, pledging to get it firmly rooted not only in Nigeria but also in African continent. He is committed to leading the process that will make every other nation in the continent to embrace democracy. The journey metaphor in President Jonathan's inaugural speech reveals the use of episodic frame (an event oriented report) of the tragic story of those killed while playing their roles in Nigeria's democratic journey. President Jonathan used the episodic event to evoke emotion on the citizens in the democratic journey. President Jonathan use of the episodic frame 'sound right' as evident in the extract below.

The success of the 2011 elections... was due to uncommon patriotism and diligence exhibited by ... members of the Armed Forces, National Youth Service Corps (NYSC)... The brave men and women paid the ultimate giving for the sake of our country. They are our democracy's heroes.

Portraying the journey this way will evoke the emotion of the citizens and help Jonathan to 'sound right'. In excerpt (9), similarly, Buhari points at the pains/encumbrances faced in an effort to entrench democracy on the journey/destination. The path of the journey has obstacles, and difficult to complete but with determination, Nigerians can get to the end of the journey, Buhari assures his subjects. In excerpt (10), the metaphor entails that Nigerians who are travelling on this journey have a choice of routes to take. However, Buhari too aligns Nigeria with democracy as he observed that the route to national development is democracy which Nigerians have opted for among other routes or choices thereby "sounding right". Also, excerpt (11) a journey metaphor 'getting into' suggests a destination as in: a container metaphor in a vehicle enroute a destination. The destination is bequeathing democracy to Nigerians. The use of the possessive adjective *our* and *we* second and third position pronouns suggests collective efforts and as a consequence collective success.

Journey metaphor was used by President Buhari in his speech state that the journey has obstacle and is difficult to complete but with determination Nigeria can get to the end of the journey which is entrenching democracy. When President Buhari was talking about difficulty/encumbrances, he must be referring to various moves of anti-democratic forces to scuttle democracy. Buhari advocated for a sustained stable democracy. This is evident in extract (9) and (10) in:

'Our journey has not been easy but .....

'There is now a national consensus that our **chosen route** tonational development is democracy'.

According to Buhari, the decision to stick to democracy as the route to take among all others is

“right thinking”. The journey metaphors used by the two Presidents create persuasive effects. Besides the journey to the entrenching/strengthening of democracy which the two Nigerian Presidents align with, the attainment of socio-economic development is also regarded as a journey.

In excerpt (1), Jonathan implies that the bid to achieve socio-economic development in the last (10) years of Nigeria’s democratic journey will now begin with his administration. In excerpt (2) the socio-economic development efforts is regarded as a ‘march’ or ‘walk’ to a destination. From the interpretation of journey metaphors used by the two Nigerian leaders, it is noted that they both realise that the path to entrenching democracy in Nigeria is a laden with difficulties/encumbrances, but they are determined to surmount them. The speeches of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari project democratic ideology. The ideological pursuit argues for the entrenchment of democracy in Nigeria and in Africa. Journey metaphors are deployed in the speeches of the presidents to speak to the issue of democracy as the preferred ideology. This is evident in the extract below:

We will now fight for the democratisation. Nigeria, in partnership with African union, **will lead** the process for democracy and development in Africa.

Jonathan Inaugural Speech

There is now a national consensus that **our chosen route** to national development is democracy

Buhari Inaugural Speech

The journey metaphor **lead** in Jonathan’s inaugural speech in extract (5) implies heading the vanguard or movement for democratic ideology while **our chosen route**, a journey metaphorical expression in extract (10) means, the democratic system is the best choice among other systems of government. In other words, President Buhari also projects democratic path as the way to take for development to occur in Nigeria and Africa. The two selected presidents of Nigerian persuade Nigerian and African citizens to align ideologically towards democracy as it is by so doing, that Nigeria and Africa can develop.

The journey source domain metaphors in Jonathan inaugural speech suggest conceptual metaphors: DEMOCRACY AS A PATH TO DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA AND AFRICA. While the journey metaphor in Buhari’s inaugural speech suggests DEMOCRACY AS PREFERRED PATH TO DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA.

### Building Metaphors

Building metaphors, according to Charteris-Black (2004), are similar to travel metaphors in many ways. They may be paralleled in a number of aspects, including the fact that they are both activities in which progress is made in phases toward a common objective. Second, Charteris-Black points out that journey and building metaphors are similar in terms of topography since both require an increase in the amount of surface area covered, following a horizontal path (as in journeys) and a

vertical path (as building). As a result, in travel and building metaphor examples, fulfilling goals is fundamentally beneficial, implying a favourable assessment of political policy.

Building metaphorical term/tokens used by the selected Presidents of Nigeria are used to portray different functions as explicated below.

Building metaphorical expressions in Jonathan and Buhari's inaugural speeches in to build, laid the foundation, built, build are metaphorical terms/tokens used for the construction and provision of underlying base for Nigerian nation done by Nigeria's founding fathers. While the metaphors to transform, transformation, reform are tokens on changes that will be undertaken by the new leader. Whereas, building metaphorical expression in Buhari inaugural speech in: fix, upgrade, modernise, build, are terms on structural repairs to be effected on Nigeria's nation building process. Rebuild and reform are metaphor terms on positive changes that will be effected in the public service. While erect and maintain are terms on the re/construction of public institutions. The metaphors project some institutions as being non-existence owing to their ineffectiveness or lack of impact. Below are structures that reveal the mapping correspondences between the source domain (BUILDING) and the target domain (NIGERIA NATION) highlighted in Jonathan speech

<b>Mapping elements</b>	<b>Source Domain Building</b>	<b>Target Domain Nigerian nation</b>
Constructing a solid base	to build (x3), laid the foundation, → built, build (x3)	recognition of the initial efforts made in Nigerian nation-building process.
moves or steps to take for development/ progress	to transform, transformation, → reform	positive changes/policies

The conceptual correspondences between the source domain BUILDING and the target domain NIGERIA'S INFRASTRUCTURES and PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS in President Buhari's inaugural speech are shown/highlighted in the structure below.

<b>Mapping elements</b>	<b>Source Domain Building</b>	<b>Target Domain Nigeria's infrastructures and public institutions.</b>
to effect repairs/mend	fix, upgrade, modernize →	to put Nigeria's infrastructures and public institutions in good shape.
reconstruction	rebuild, reform →	to bring about positive changes
construction	erect and maintain →	build and make the institution functional

Let us consider examples of extracts of building metaphors from the Nigerian presidential speeches in

the following:

12. I specially thank all Nigerians for staying... **to build** a democratic nation...
  13. I also wish to pay tribute to our founding fathers... **laid the foundation** for the nation...
  14. The typical Nigerian spirit of resilience... encouraged us to gather ourselves **to build** a strong nation... We must demonstrate the leadership... **to transform** our nation...
  15. **The transformation** will be achieved in the entire critical sector...
  16. The Nigeria of our dreams must be **built** on hardwork...
  17. Let me salute the Nigeria workers who **build** our communities.... the power sector **reform** is at the heart of our industrialization strategy...
  18. Together, we will write our nation and **improve** the living standard of our people whether in the East or in the West. The day of **transformation** begins today.
- Jonathan's Inaugural Speech
19. We must not succumb to hopelessness and defeatism.
  20. We can **fix** our problems...
  21. What is required is **to build** on these legacies, to **modernise** and **uplift** Nigeria...
  22. We are going to **erect** and **maintain** an efficient, disciplined, well compensated security forces.
  23. The judicial system needs **reform**...
  24. We must renovate our deteriorating infrastructure. ...
  25. We shall **rebuild** and **reform** the public service to become effective and more serviceable.

Buhari's Inaugural Speech

The above excerpts are instances of conceptualization of BUILDING metaphors in the inaugural speeches of the selected presidents of Nigeria. Excerpts (12-25) are taken from the inaugural

speeches of Jonathan and Buhari. Excerpt (12), taken from Jonathan suggests appreciation of Nigerians for demonstrating commitment to democratic culture and principles. Excerpts (13), implies the recognition of contributions of the founding fathers to put democracy as a system of government in place. Excerpt (14), suggests that the continued demonstration of the spirit of resilience among Nigerians, in the face of odds, to build a strong nation. Excerpts (14-15) are connected to excerpts (12) and (13). They imply instituting changes that will bring about positive changes to every sector in the country. Excerpts (16-18) imply that the President rallies other presidential candidates to work together with him to bring about positive changes in all sectors.

In the inaugural speech of Buhari, the socio-political problems of Nigeria in terms of poor infrastructure, inefficient public service, insecurity, poor economy, inefficient state institution, corruption are conceptualised as a building that is structurally defective. Therefore, the defects need to be corrected to make the building strong and safe for habitation. Excerpts (20), the metaphor **fix** suggests correction/repair to be done by a person who possess the skill. Similarly, the use of metaphoric expressions *to build, to modernise, uplift, rebuild, reform, erect* and *maintain* in excerpts (21), (22) and (23) also suggest that physical infrastructure, public service, the judicial system and the armed forces are in a crumbling state, and therefore need to be rebuilt for efficiency. Also the metaphor 'reform' in excerpt (25), suggests that the policies that will have positive effects on the public service will be initiated. Like Jonathan, Buhari too rallies the citizens of Nigeria to join him so that all the socio-political issues confronting the nation could be solved together.

As seen in excerpts 12-18 above, President Jonathan deploys the metaphor 'to build' to conceptualise Nigeria in terms of a building in progress. The act of building or putting up a building involves many people as it cannot be done by one individual alone. So, Jonathan salutes Nigerians for (i) their commitment to democratic culture and principles and (ii) their demonstration of the spirit of resilience in the face of odds, which President Jonathan considers the essential materials needed for nation-building effort. Further, 'laid the foundation' is also a metaphor derived from building. Jonathan employs this metaphor in recognition of the crucial contribution of Nigeria's founding fathers to nation-building.

Furthermore, the lexicons 'to transform' and 'transformation' as used by Jonathan, mean to institute or bring about significant changes in the country. The President positively evaluates Nigerians as quality people who have the capacity, capability, and vision to bring about positive changes in the nation. Going forward, the President pledges to ensure positive changes in all critical sectors. As the President-elect, he rallies all Nigerians, including all other Presidential candidates who contested the elections with him, to work together to bring about good changes in every sector. From the use of linguistic items of building metaphors in **improve, transformation, rebuild** and **reform** in excerpts (18) and (25), Presidents Jonathan and Buhari project reformist ideology.

Messianic ideology refers to ideas that project a leader as a deliverer. Messianic ideology is demonstrated by issues that relate to transformation, and efficiency against inefficiency of past leaders. This is illustrated in the excerpts (15) and (18).

“The **transformation** will be achieved in the entire critical sectors”.

“Join hands with me as we begin the **transformation** of our country”.

The underlying conceptual metaphor evoked from President Jonathan’s inaugural speech is NIGERIA IS A BUILDING IN PROGRESS, while the conceptual metaphor instantiated in the data from President Buhari’s speech is NIGERIA IS A BUILDING STRUCTURALLY DEFECTIVE.

### The Family Frame

Another productive metaphor identified in Jonathan and Buhari’s inaugural speeches is the family metaphor. According to Charteris-Black (2011:29), using metaphors from the family realm helps to convey a sense of security and the goal of this family, the country. Charteris-Black (2011) claims to investigate the extent to which metaphors derived from the family and other sorts of relationships, such as being a "friend" or "partner," were used to express the moral and political concerns driving Britain's decision to leave the EU. This metaphor is divided into two frames by Charteris-Black: "nation - as –person frame" and "nation as a family frame." He says that defining a country as a person implies a relationship with other countries. This relationship may be compared to a personal one (marriage between people). As a result, if certain moral underpinnings are taken into account, an alliance with another country might be symbolically conceived of as a "marriage." The country as a person frame argues that two nations might figuratively become a family through a symbolic bond established through their royal families. The framework allows for international connections with people from different countries who want to start a family together. The nation is framed like a family in the second frame, "nation as a family." This metaphor differs from the previous in that it says that the best way to find a common feeling of belonging is to think of the nation as a family. The ‘Nation as a family’ frame is associated with words such as “fatherland,” “brothers,” and “sisters,” for the reason that they are from the same nation and share common history. The metaphor discourages division among a group of people and is inward-looking and tribal in nature, and is based on the moral foundation of loyalty towards family members.

In Jonathan’s inaugural speech, metaphors drawn from the source domain of the family are terms deriving from relationship as in: ‘Brother’, ‘our founding fathers’ and ‘our fatherland’. While the family metaphors identified in Buhari’s inaugural speech are: ‘our African brethren’, ‘our founding fathers’ and ‘heirs’.

The metaphorical terms are used by the Presidents to cement the relationship among the diverse nationalities in Nigeria. They are used to persuade Nigerians to see themselves as members of the same family, ostensibly to unite Nigerians. This is what is intended for Africans too by the use of the terms ‘Brothers’, ‘our African brethren’.

The following are mapping correspondences found in family related lexicons between the source domain (FAMILY) and the target domain (NIGERIA and AFRICA) in Jonathans inaugural speech.

Elements of the Mapping	Source Domain	Target Domain
	<b>Family</b>	<b>Nigeria and Africa</b>
Relationship	Brothers, and founding, fathers, our fatherland	→ evoke positive feelings of brotherhood among Africans and promoting unity among Nigerians.

While the conceptual mappings between the source domain FAMILY and the target domain AFRICAN BROTHERHOOD and UNITY OF NIGERIANS identified in Buhari's speech are in the following terms:

Elements of the Mapping	Source Domain	Target Domain
	<b>Family</b>	<b>African brotherhood and unity among Nigerians</b>
Relationship	our African brethren, our founding father, of unity heirs, we as Nigerians	→ brotherliness of Africans and to evoke feelings among
Property/possession	belong	→ President Buhari is a possession of all Nigerians. President Buhari is not a possession of any cabal or ethnic group.

The following excerpts reveal how the metaphorical terms/lexicons are used to project family metaphors in Presidents Jonathan and Buhari inaugural speeches.

26. I want to express my gratitude to our **Brother** Heads of State and Government for being here with us today....

27. Additionally, I would like to honor our **founding fathers** for their unwavering sacrifices and unwavering belief in the strength and unity of our nation. ...

28. We have great pride in the contributions they have made. It is incumbent upon our generation to take **our fatherland** to new heights of glory.

Jonathan's Inaugural Speech

29. ...**we as Nigerians** must remind ourselves that we are **heirs** to great civilization.

30. I intend to keep my oath and serve as **President to all Nigerians**.

31. **I belong to everybody and I belong to nobody.**

32. Our neighbours in the sub-region and our African **brethren** should rest assured that Nigeria ...

33. **Our founding fathers**, Mr. Herbert Macauley, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello...

#### Buhari's Inaugural Speech

Excerpts (26) and (33), Jonathan and Buhari speak of other African leaders as *Brother and brethrens* to evoke positive emotional feelings of brotherhood and care when we think of our own family. Excerpts (27), (28), (29), (30), (31) and (33) evoke emotions of unity in the citizens of Nigeria. The two Presidents conceptualise the nation Nigeria in terms of family. Nigeria is a heterogeneous country with over 400 languages. This accounts for the disunity among Nigerians especially among the three (3) major ethnic groups in Nigeria. As leaders, the Presidents utterances need to promote the unity and continued existence of the country. Excerpt (31) *I belong to everybody and I belong to nobody* is a metaphorical expression that stems from 'the socio-cultural context that produces it. Though excerpt (31) is a metaphor derived from the source domain of possession as evident in the use of the word 'belong' which means to possess a thing, property, or an idea. It therefore implies that if the president is possessed by a group, (a cabal or ethnic group) he would be amenable to such group. Just as a possessor of a thing or property has power over his property, it is in that same way that the cabal or group will control and manipulate such president. But President Buhari wanted to disabuse this view. In Nigeria, the citizens are of the view that occupier of political office such as the President in particular, or governor of a state or minister holds public office on behalf of his/her geo-political zone or tribe. The President is therefore expected to use the power of the office to further mainly the interest of his ethnic group, some individuals or cabal at the detriment of other ethnic groups. The President attempts to douse the fears of other Nigerians by assuring them that he would not pander to any ethnic or group interest. The President use this metaphor to evoke the feelings of unity among Nigerian. Since the metaphor is explained as seeking to seek to promote the unity/oneness of Nigeria, it is therefore lumped with the family metaphor.

Family metaphorical terms and expressions were used by Presidents Jonathan and Buhari in their inaugural speeches. The Nigerians political leaders are aware of the apparent divisions among the citizens caused by multi-farious factors. Nigerian leaders continually speak on the issue of disunity among Nigerians with the aim of promoting the unity and cohesion of the Nigerian populace. Presidents Jonathan and Buhari 'sound right' by evoking feelings of brotherhood, unity and togetherness among Nigerian citizens and in fellow Africans.

The selected Nigeria Presidents, Jonathan and Buhari, use family metaphors to make their argument for a United Nigeria to be more persuasive. Family metaphors are capable of evoking feelings of unity. The uses of family metaphor is desirable in Nigeria owing to a lot of factors that are preventing the needed unity. Among such factors is the multi-ethnic nature of the country. It has over five hundred languages. Besides that, it had engaged in a 3- year civil war in which one of the three major ethnic groups, i.e. South-East Nigeria decided to secede. The Nigerian civil war and the activities of political actors in government at various times and after the civil war caused mistrust, disunity among Nigerians. Successive government now deploy family metaphors in a bid to unify the country.

The selected Nigerian Presidents, Jonathan and Buhari use family metaphors to evoke feelings of oneness, togetherness and unity among Nigerians in metaphorical terms such as ‘founding fathers’, ‘brothers’, ‘heirs’, we as Nigerians, to suggest Nigerians are members of the same family. The selected presidents attempt to persuade their listeners and the Nigeria public by ‘sounding right’.

The conceptual metaphors instantiated from the metaphoric expressions are NIGERIA AS A FAMILY, AFRICAN NATIONS AS MEMBERS OF NIGERIA EXTENDED FAMILY and PRESIDENT BUHARI AS A PROPERTY OF ALL NIGERIANS

## CONCLUSION

Inaugural speeches by selected presidents of Nigeria are considered for this study. The political leaders used the metaphors to describe the socio-political realities prevalent in these countries. The selected presidents of Nigeria deploy metaphor as a linguistic, cognitive and ideological tools to inspire, assure, motivate and persuade their subjects. As linguistic tools, metaphor served as linguistic output of the cognitive processes used in meaning constructions as far as the socio-political issues are concerned; as cognitive tools embedded with pragmatics, the conceptual metaphors identified assist in the comprehension of the abstract issues in terms of concrete experiences. The metaphors also function as ideological tools to propagate some ideologies to influence the Nigerians citizens to change their views about the socio-political issues.

## REFERENCES

- Akinseye, T.A. 2015. “*I belong to everybody and I belong to nobody*”. An interpersonal Investigation of President Muhammadu Buhari’s Inaugural Speech of 29th May, 2015. Ibadan Journal of English Studies. Volume II, 2015.
- Aristotle. (C.335 BCE). *Poetics*. Retrieved from <https://classic.mit/aristotle/poetics.3.3.html>.
- Barcelona, A. 2002. Metaphor and metonymy at the crossroads (pp. 79-92) Bernin: Deru
- Black, M. 1962. Metaphor, *Models and Metaphor*. Itacha 15:25-47
- Charteris-Black, J. 2004. *Corpus approach to critical metaphor analysis*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Charteris-Black, J. 2011. *Politicians and rhetoric: The persuasive power of metaphor*. 2<sup>nd</sup>ed, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Egbokhare, F. 2004. Language and Politics in Nigeria. *Forms and functions of English and indigenous languages in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Ibadan Group Publishers.
- Grady, J. 2007, Metaphor. The Oxford handbook of cognitive linguistics. De Geeraerts and H. Cuyckens. Eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 187-213.
- Igwe, S.C. 2009. *Concepts in Language of Literature: Prose, Drama and Poetry*. Port Harcourt: Ano Publications Company.
- Iwara, A. 2008. *The Linguistic situation in Nigeria and it implication for sustainable development*. Inaugural Lecture, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.
- Kemmer, S. 2010. *About cognitive linguistics historical background* available from <https://www.cognitivelinguistics.org/cl.shtml>

- Kovecses, Z. 2002. Cognitive-linguistic comments of metaphor identification. *Language and Literature*:11-74.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2010. *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*. 2nd Ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lakoff, G. (1993). The contemporary theory of metaphor. In A. Orthon Ed., *Metaphor and Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M. 1980. *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M. 2003. *Metaphors we live by*. London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Langacker, R.W. 1987. *Foundations of cognitive grammar theoretical Perspective*. vol. 12. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Musolff, A. 2012. The study of metaphor as a part of critical discourse analysis. *Critical Discourse Studies* 9.3:301-310.
- Ogunsiji, Y. and Olaseinde, J.A. 2018. Role and Practical Utilities of Languages in the South-western part of Nigeria. *Discourse-stylistic, Socio-linguistics and Society: A feshchrift for Ayo Ogunsiji*. Ibadan: Stirling-Horen Publishers: 345-360.
- Opeibi, B.O. 2009. *Discourse, Politics and 1993 Presidential Campaign in Nigeria: A re-invention of June 12 Legacy*. Ibadan: Straight Gate publishers.
- Osoba, G. A. (1998). "Poetry as Linguistics and Social Events, a study of Niyi Osundare's Poetry, a Ph.D Thesis, Department of English, University of Lagos.
- Reddy, K. J. 1979. The conduit metaphor. *Metaphor and Thought*. A. Ortony. Ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 164-201.
- Richards, I. A. 1936. *The philosophy of rhetoric*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- van Hoek, K. 1999. Cognitive linguistics. *The MIT Encyclopedia of the cognitive sciences*. A.W. Robber and C.K. Frank. Eds. Cambridge: MIT Press, 134-135.