

Metaphorical Conceptualisations in the Religious Tweets of a Nigerian Politician

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Abstract

Communicating with the masses is the life-blood of politicians and it is vital that politicians are adept at using language to win the masses over to themselves. This study seeks to examine conceptual metaphors in the tweets of a Nigerian politician in order to unravel the discourse value of the linguistic metaphors contained in the selected tweets. The politician, Senator Dino Melaye, uses several metaphors in his tweets, which happen to be religious in nature. The objectives of the study are to identify the linguistic metaphors contained in the religious tweets and examine the underlying conceptual metaphors in the politician's tweets. Using Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and Metaphor Identification Procedure by Pragglejaz Group, the metaphoricity of his prayer points is analyzed to determine the underlying conceptual metaphors. The findings show that some domains have more linguistic expressions than others. WAR is the most frequently used source domain as it has the highest number of metaphorical expressions. Based on the analysed data, this study reveals that he employs these metaphors to evoke certain notions in his followers. The study further strengthens the literature that metaphor is a powerful tool for persuasion.

Keywords: Conceptual Metaphor, Religious, Tweets, Politician, Senator Dino Melaye

Introduction

Metaphor as viewed by Aristotle in the classical era was a tool to embellish language. It was seen as a part of speech used to liken two things that are not similar. However, Lakoff and Johnson (1980a) introduced a modern view of metaphor where, metaphors are not merely in the words we use but also in our thoughts. According to them, the locus of

metaphor is not in language, but in the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another; the 'conceptual metaphor' is used to refer to this particular perception of metaphor.

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980a), a conceptual metaphor enables us to understand one idea in terms of another. These metaphors are prevalent in communication that we do not just use them in language; we understand the world and act in accordance with the metaphors. Metaphors are so pervasive that they become the norm especially when we talk about abstractions or emotions (Howe & Howe, 2010). Lakoff and Johnson (1980a, p. 5) opine that "the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another". What is being understood is the target domain while the source domain is used to give meaning to it. The target domain is often abstract. The source domain, therefore, concretizes the target domain.

This study employs Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980a) in the analysis metaphors in the tweets of a Senator Dino Melaye. Previously, metaphors have been talked about as a rhetorical device only. Their seminal work on conceptual metaphors presented the linguistic world with a new dimension to analyze metaphors, which help humans to talk about abstract things. Charteris-Black (2005, p. 44) opines that metaphor enables us to view the world in a different way and allows new senses of meaning. He also states that, "metaphor can be manipulative but is more commonly persuasive". Lakoff and Johnson (1980b) and Kovesces (2010) talk about entailment in conceptual metaphors which are done by highlighting certain points and leaving out others that do not reflect the particular use of the conceptual metaphor in a specific context. According to Kovesces (2010), not all characteristics of a source domain are mapped onto the target domain. He opines thus, "[T]he answer is provided by the invariance principle, which says that only those portions of the source can be mapped that do not conflict with the schematic structure of the target" (p. 24). This theory therefore is apt for this study that seeks to examine the conceptual metaphors in the tweets. The objectives of the study are:

- To identify the linguistic metaphors contained in the religious tweets.
- To examine the underlying conceptual metaphors in the politician's tweets.

Importance Of The Problem

Metaphors pervade almost every domain of human life, including religion, economy, politics, and education. Since metaphor is a way of presenting our world view, it becomes a useful tool in politics, where, politicians are able to present to the masses what their opinions are. This is done through various means, with, social media being one of those means. Politicians make use of various social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, amongst others. This study focuses on how a Nigerian politician uses his Twitter account to communicate with the masses. The tweets were made during the period he was a serving Senator and in the periods leading to his re-election as a member of the National House of Assembly. The tweets were probably also made with the understanding that Nigerians are highly religious people (Apyewen, 2021).

Twitter, an American social networking application created in March 2006, allows its registered users to tweet, retweet and like posts. Initially, tweets were restricted to 140 characters but in November, 2017, the number was doubled to 280. According to Stoddart (2016, p. 2), social media platforms "have brought with them an apparent opportunity to transform the way citizens and politicians communicate with one another". Politicians are brought closer to the people by means of social media platforms like Twitter. Studies have shown how politicians have used Twitter not only as a political campaign tool to communicate

their political interests and goals, but also to share news in relation to their political activities as well as their personal musings (Bracciale & Martella, 2017). Since Twitter is not filtered by local or national media, in a lot of ways it serves as a useful channel for politicians to express their independent opinions concerning various topics. Various strategies have been utilized by politicians in their tweets to increase followers or to make their Twitter accounts more appealing to their audience. As pointed out by Freiret (2008), leaders should understand the kind of users who would be the main users of Twitters and tailor their messages in such a way that the style and content would be directed to them. A strategy that seems to be dominant in the twitter account of the Senator is the publication of prayers. While this can be seen as a technique to appeal to the followers, what is more significant is the prevalent use of metaphor in this kind of tweets. Given the prevalence of the use of metaphors in the religious tweets of the selected politician, this study seeks to find out the possible concepts that he emphasizes in the platform used to reach out to the public and what influence this has on his re-election bid.

Literature Review

There is a large volume of published studies describing the usage of conceptual metaphors in different domains of life. In the study of the speeches of Najib Razak, Malaysia's former Prime Minister, Nurul and Kasim (2014) conclude that conceptual metaphors such as ECONOMY IS A SPORT/GAME and ECONOMY IS A CHEMICAL SUBSTANCE are used the most by Najib in his political speeches on the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP). The prevalence of the former conceptual metaphor highlights the element of competitiveness in the domain of economy, while the latter seems to suggest the unstable nature of economy. This study enunciates the importance of metaphors as used by politicians in passing across information to the masses. Politicians, as studies have identified, find metaphors as a useful tool in communicating with the masses. Kamalu and Iniworikabo (2016) have carried out a study on metaphors in the political speeches of Nigerian Democratic Presidents. They found out that these presidents tended to employ similar source domains in their speeches. These domains which include CONFLICT, BUILDING, GAMES and SPORTS were used to talk about social, economic and political situations in Nigeria. In the same vein, Taiwo (2013) examines metaphorical usage in selected political discourses in Nigeria. He identifies three target domains as the NATION, POLITICIANS and POLITICS and the various ways in which they are conceptualized. He opines that the mapping of these metaphors reveals the persuasive and rhetorical goals of Nigerian politicians. Some studies on metaphors on social media have also been carried out.

A study by Awwad et al. (2020) examines rhetoric and metaphorical expressions in political speeches. The study analysed the speeches of King Abdullah II using Foucauldian discourse analysis. While highlighting the importance of these speeches in creating a Jordanian identity, the study concludes that metaphoric and rhetoric expressions were used deliberately to exert control over the state and the people. Using Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory, it was observed that traditional and modern ideas were used by the indigenes in their conceptualization of health and illness. They also used universal as well as culture-specific representations in communicating their thoughts about health and illness. Silvestre-Lopez (2020) investigated the role that metaphors play in meditation discourse. The study also used Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual metaphor Theory and adopted a bottom-up approach with the corpus. The analysed corpus of talks revealed that the target domains found include THOUGHT, THE PRESENT MOMENT and MEDITATOR. The study reveals that the use of metaphor is common and is used in various ways in religious and

secular meditations. Also, Imani (2021) investigated the meaning of war metaphors on Corona in Iranian political discourse. Using Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) by Pragglejaz Group, the study analysed 71 speeches made by the President of Iran. The study revealed that coronavirus was presented to the public as a war that they needed to cooperate and participate in.

The present study hinges on the preponderance of metaphors in the religious tweets of the politician in question and how he has relied on their persuasive potential to influence the minds of his teeming followers. The politician's recourse to prayers and sermonizing on his tweeter handle in a country that is generally perceived to be religious invites a linguistic investigation. More specifically, the objectives of the study are to identify the linguistic metaphors contained in the religious tweets and examine the underlying conceptual metaphors.

Methodology

Research Design

This research used a simple qualitative and descriptive method of metaphor analysis. The tweets analysed were taken from a Twitter account of Senator Dino Melaye, a Nigerian politician published between the 12th of December, 2012 and the 5th of January, 2020. The researchers observed that the politician has a number of tweets on his Twitter handle. However, there were a large number of these tweets that appeared to be prayers, and most of these prayers had metaphorical expressions in them. These tweets were identified as prayers because the politician's followers responded with "Amen" to the tweets, which is a way that Christians respond to prayers.

Analytical Procedure

In order to identify the metaphorical tweets, the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) by Pragglejaz Group (2017) has been used in this study. According to Pragglejaz Group (2007), the procedure to ensure that the words are metaphorical should include the following:

1. Read the entire text to establish a general understanding of the meaning.
2. Determine the lexical units in the text
3. For each lexical unit:
 - a. Establish its meaning in context, by taking into account words before and after the lexical unit.
 - b. Determine if the lexical unit has a more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts.
 - c. If the lexical unit has a more basic current–contemporary meaning in other contexts, decide if the contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning.
4. If yes, mark the lexical unit as metaphorical.

Table 1 below illustrates an example from the tweets where the clause, 'The harvest of your planting shall never elude you' is analysed using MIP.

Table 1

Identification of metaphorical expression using MIP

Word	Meaning	Description
The	Contextual meaning	"The" in this context is an article that precedes harvest
	Basic meaning	The determiner, "the" is used to denote one or more things.
	Contextual versus basic meaning	There is no contrast between the contextual meaning and the basic meaning.
	Metaphorically used	No
Harvest	Contextual meaning	In this context, "harvest" refers to the results of a person's effort.
	Basic meaning	The noun "harvest" the process of period of gathering in crops.
	Contextual versus basic meaning	There is a contrast between the contextual meaning and the basic meaning.
	Metaphorically used	Yes
Of	Contextual meaning	In this context, "of" shows the relationship between "harvest" and "your planting".
	Basic meaning	"Of" is a preposition that expresses the relationship between persons or things.
	Contextual versus basic meaning	There is no contrast between the contextual meaning and the basic meaning.
	Metaphorically used	No
Your	Contextual meaning	"Your" refers to the possession of a person, in this case, the plantings.
	Basic meaning	The determiner, "your" shows that a thing belongs to or is associated with a person
	Contextual versus basic meaning	There is no contrast between the contextual meaning and the basic meaning.
	Metaphorically used	No
Planting	Contextual meaning	In this context, "planting" means a person's effort.
	Basic meaning	"Planting" means putting a seed or plant in the ground so that it can grow
	Contextual versus basic meaning	There is a contrast between the contextual meaning and the basic meaning.
	Metaphorically used	Yes
Shall	Contextual meaning	In this context, "shall" expresses an action that is certain to happen
	Basic meaning	The verb "shall" expresses the future tense.
	Contextual versus basic meaning	There is no contrast between the contextual meaning and the basic meaning.
	Metaphorically used	No
Never	Contextual meaning	In this context, "never" describes not being taken away.
	Basic meaning	

	Contextual versus basic meaning	The adverb, “never” means not at all or not at any time.
	Metaphorically used	There is no contrast between the contextual meaning and the basic meaning. No
Elude	Contextual meaning	“Elude”, in this context, refers to the result of a person’s effort not escaping from that person.
	Basic meaning	The noun, “elude” means to escape from or avoid.
	Contextual versus basic meaning	There is no contrast between the contextual meaning and basic meaning
	Metaphorically used	No
You	Contextual meaning	The pronoun, “you” refers to the politician’s followers or anyone person who reads the tweet.
	Basic meaning	“You” is used to refer to a person or people that the speaker is addressing.
	Contextual versus basic meaning	There is no contrast between the contextual meaning and basic meaning
	Metaphorically used	No

A total of 246 metaphorical expressions have been identified in this study. In examining the underlying conceptual metaphors, the researchers have referred to a compilation of metaphors by Lakoff, Espenson and Schwartz (1991), Harrison (2007), Al-Ubaidy (2012), and Kibbey (2017) to identify pertinent source and target domains. This is to ensure greater systematicity in the identification of the metaphorical domains.

Results

Based on the analysis of the metaphorical domains, fourteen conceptual metaphors have been identified. Table 2 illustrates the identified metaphors and their frequency of occurrence.

Table 2

List of Conceptual Metaphors

Conceptual Metaphors	Frequency of occurrence
LIFE IS WAR	93
LIFE IS A JOURNEY	44
GOD IS A WARRIOR	39
LIFE IS A PLANT	22
ACHIEVING HUMAN PURPOSE IS DEVOURING FOOD/DRINK	9
SUCCESS IN LIFE IS LIGHT	8
LIFE IS TRADING/BANKING	8
GOD IS A BUILDER	7
LIFE IS A BOOK	6
GOD IS A PLANTER	4
GOD IS A WRITER	2
HUMANS ARE ANIMALS	2
HUMANS ARE LIGHT	1
GOD IS A BUILDING	1
Total	246

The conceptual metaphor LIFE IS WAR has the highest occurrence with 93 metaphorical linguistic expressions. This is followed by LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor with 44 metaphorical linguistic expressions and GOD IS A WARRIOR with 39 metaphorical linguistic expressions. The fourth highest is the conceptual metaphor, LIFE IS A PLANT, with 22 metaphorical linguistic expressions, followed by ACHIEVING HUMAN PURPOSE IS DEVOURING FOOD/DRINK metaphor (9). The top five predominant conceptual metaphors found in the tweets will be discussed below.

Discussion

Life is War

In this conceptual metaphor, life is conceptualized in terms of battle. Below are some of the examples of metaphorical expressions for this conceptual metaphor as observed in the tweets.

1. With joy, blessings, prosperity, you will always be ahead of your *enemies*. The Lord shall grant you the heart of a lion to be a *conqueror* and a *victor* over every *battle* in your life In Jesus Name Those who think you can't survive without them will be surprise at your progress. (Sept 8, 2019)
2. You will *triumph* over all challenges & troubles, you will become unstoppable as God Almighty releases an excellent spirit to succeed in all ur endeavors. (Aug 4, 2019)
3. Today and always, everything that the Lord created will work in your favour. He will give you victory over every seen and unseen *battle* of your life. You will experience the Divine lifting of the Lord. The favour of God upon your life will surprise your detractors Mar 3, 2019.
4. God will connect you to your divine helper and will enjoy a stress less *victory*. As we are stepping into 2019, your song shall be *victory*. Amen Dec 9, 2018.

The expressions above conceptualize life as war, humans as warriors and a final goal which is to gain victory. This is similar to Charteris-Black (2005), who opines that the entailments contained in the war metaphor are an enemy, a territory that is being guided and the main goal which is victory. The concept of war helps to evoke emotions and motivate people to act (Flusberg, Matlock & Thibodeau, 2018). In this case, the politician is motivating his followers to get into action when facing any life problems. The politician conceives problems in life and evil forces as enemies. Therefore, there is the need to wage war against them so as to gain victory. Words such as 'challenges', 'battle', 'conquer', victory, triumph, amongst others suggest that human life is a daily warfare. It is worth noting that the identified metaphorical expressions highlight different aspects of war. Examples 1, 2 and 4 highlight the notion of winning, while example 3 focuses on the notion of battle. The warfare as presented in example 3 is linked to the idea of fighting against both tangible and less tangible enemies; the unseen enemies are spiritual forces that are believed to be at war with humans. In Christianity, it is believed that wars are fought on two levels: the physical and the spiritual. Thus, the battle of life implies the need to physically defeat the enemies through one's actions in the real world as well as to increase one's spiritual strength through prayers.

Life is a Journey

The conceptualization of life as a journey represents an expected progression of events that take place in one's life. The mapping implies the progression of humans in pursuit of their goals/desires in life. This shows that humans are constantly on a journey and this journey is aimed at arriving at a destination which corresponds with achieving a particular purpose in life. This conceptual mapping, according to Young (2019, p. 2), "encourages feelings of

personal growth". Martin (2013, p. 950), when talking about journey in religious discourse, opines thus, "[A]s far as the voyage presumes a transformative trip of consciousness, it can be navigated by conceptual metaphor, where the imagination gives figurative 'symbolic' expression to an ontological state". The journey in life is explained in terms of God as a guide to man and in other cases, man himself is shown to have the ability to guide himself through this journey. The linguistic manifestations of this conceptual metaphor are shown below.

5. GOD almighty will come to you this 8th month, take you from your long-standing *bus stop into the palace* of your breakthrough, in Jesus name Aug 13, 2017
6. As you wake up this morning, I pray that the enemy will never distract you from God's will in Jesus Name Amen. I pray that the lord will direct the *vehicle of your destiny to the route* of abundance and prosperity in Jesus Name Jul 9, 2018
7. Thank God for this marvelous Sunday in this month of *marching forward*. God will kick off all walls of limitations around your life Mar 12, 2017
8. May Almighty Lord keep your feet from falling and *sinking*. May you not *skip a step on the ladder* of blessing. Every striving of tongues against your glory will cease. (Dec 9, 2013)

According to Kovecses (2010), LIFE IS A JOURNEY conceptual metaphor has a cultural meaning of people having a purpose in life. The conceptual structure of life as a journey helps to express humans as "going somewhere, as following a path, as encountering obstacles on that path, as walking down that path with co-travelers, and so forth" (Knepper 2019, p. 3). The above examples highlight different aspects of journey including the stopping point (example 5), the transportation (example 6), as well as the nature of the journey (example 7 and 8). The 'bus stop' (example 5) suggests a temporary pause in the progression of life before one moves on to a much more desirable or the ultimate destination i.e. 'the palace'. The notion of progressing forward with certainty is evoked in 'marching forward' (example 6) while 'sinking' (example 8) suggests the inability to move ahead or failures in life (which hinders one from achieving the targets in life).

GOD Is A Warrior

The politician employs metaphors of war to talk about God in his prayer points. It has been noted by Klingbeil (1999) that the Christian Bible in different places depicts God as a warrior. This metaphor is linked to the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS WAR. In Nigerian Christianity, a number of things are viewed as enemies of man. These enemies include seen and unseen beings, worries, anxieties, troubles, sicknesses and even pains. God is therefore seen as the savior who delivers the victims (humans) from the enemies holding them captive. This conceptualization can be seen in the expressions below.

9. God shall *avenge* all that the devil has oppressed you with. (Jan 22, 2017)
10. May our Father in heaven, arise with *his weapons of war* and overthrow the chariots, horses and riders militating against your destiny. (Mar 12, 2017)
11. This week God will *fight* all your *battles*. (Apr 1, 2018)

By the use of the metaphorical conceptualization GOD IS A WARRIOR, humans are seen as victims of war who look to God to fight on their behalf. This fight is usually against enemies that are beyond the control of humans. These enemies are presented as more powerful than man. Therefore, God becomes the one who has the power to fight against people and things that man is unable to fight against.

Life is a Plant

Through the use of plant as the source domain, the politician presents human life as a process of growth. Humans are the plants and the growth of the plant is being viewed in terms of progress or success in life. Words from the domain of planting such as 'sow', 'reap' and 'seed' (examples 12, 15 and 14) are conceptual frames that show the politician's desire for growth in the life of his followers. The tweets also mentions the stages in planting and the things that affect a plant's growth. This mapping shows the inevitability of growth in life. Below are some of the examples of metaphorical conceptualizations of this conceptual metaphor.

12. You will never *sow your seeds* for birds to eat, and it shall be well with you and your household. (Mar 3, 2019)
13. You shall be like a *tree planted* by the river side that brings forth its *fruit* in its season. God will grant unto you whatever your heart desires. (Jul 23, 2017)
14. I decree every *seed of poverty* in your life and family, die, in the mighty name of Jesus. (Jun 11, 2017)
15. By His grace, you'll always dig & find water. You'll *plant & reap* plenty. (Apr 2, 2017)

The above linguistic metaphors conceptualize human life as a seed that requires growth. The seed can be either good or bad; for instance, the 'seed of poverty' (example 14) is detrimental to growth, so it needs to be uprooted for the other seeds to grow and flourish. The planting of the seed represents the human effort to succeed where the notion of plant and root are mapped onto the concept of human life.

This conceptual metaphor is embedded in the experience of humans especially because planting activities can be said to be well understood by human beings. Therefore, as opined by Rosinska (2016), viewing human beings in terms of plants enables one to describe more aspects of daily life experiences since this metaphor is "well-grounded in people's everyday experience" (p. 15). The author notes that the conceptual metaphor PEOPLE ARE PLANTS has entailments such as DISPOSING OF UNWANTED HUMAN BEINGS IS WEEDING, DEVELOPING IS BLOSSOMING, and DEVELOPING IS RIPENING. In religious discourse, Basson (2006) notes that agriculture was an important activity in ancient Israel and this importance can be seen in "the multiple references to plants in the Hebrew Bible" (p. 573), while Bassi (2019) opines that the conceptual metaphor PEOPLE ARE PLANTS is common in both English and Croatian contexts.

Achieving Human Purpose is Devouring Food/drink

This conceptual metaphor conceptualizes the notion of achieving purpose as devouring food or drink. This particular conceptual metaphor has also been identified by Lakoff and Johnson (1980a) in their seminal work. As seen in the tweets, the politician views the process of achieving purposes in life as the process of eating or drinking. Examples of the metaphorical expressions for this conceptual metaphor can be found below.

16. As bees produce honey and yet are deadly to intruders. So shall your life be full of *sweetness* and greatness and be a danger zone to your enemy. Amen. (Sept 8, 2019)
17. May your labour attract *sweet*, bountiful and amazing rewards and may you flourish, enlarge and prosper immeasurably in IJN. (Jul 28, 2019)

In the above examples, the politician conceptualizes human effort as having the ability to produce "sweet" results. He implies that one's effort can produce either profitable or non-profitable results. Food and drink can be something that tastes nice and give pleasure and thus, the experience of devouring them can be linked to a pleasant experience i.e. sweet, or

unpleasant i.e. sour. For the politician's followers, he wishes that their effort produces results that will put smiles on their faces, just like 'sweet' food does.

This conceptual metaphor is structured along the same line as LIFE IS FOOD metaphor as identified by Khan and Ahmad (2017) in their study on conceptual metaphors in Pashto. This ontological metaphor highlights the qualities of life that can be viewed in terms of being sweet, bitter, sour and it also highlights the actions that take place when food is being eaten. Scholars such as Lakoff and Johnson (1980a), Berrada (2007), ICSI (2014), and Tseng (2017), have identified the pervasiveness of food metaphors in conceptual metaphors like IDEAS ARE FOOD, THOUGHT IS FOOD, COGNIZING IS EATING, TEMPERAMENT IS FOOD, KNOWLEDGE IS FOOD, ACQUIRING IDEAS IS EATING, amongst others. Considering the importance of food in human life, the use of conceptual metaphor ACHIEVING HUMAN PURPOSE IS DEVOURING FOOD/DRINK to describe an aspect of human experience can be assumed to be a relatable and useful cognitive mechanism.

Success in Life is Light

Light is a depiction of hope, joy, or good things in general. In this conceptual metaphor, being successful in life is explained in terms of light. Below are some of the examples of metaphorical expressions for this conceptual metaphor.

18. May your lamp of glory *burn brighter*, your ocean of joy flow ceaselessly, Your rainbow appears more colourful & consistently. (Aug 4, 2019)
19. The *light of your season* will come and you shall *rise and shine* afresh again, You shall have a new beginning, new spiritual experience, new encounter with God, new vision, new mission, new dream, new ideas, new open doors and you shall ascend to new heights. (Jun 9, 2019)
20. Your glory shall never grow *dim*. (Jun 9, 2017)

In the examples above, if the glory of a person "burns brighter" it equates to being successful in life. Therefore, the more the brighter the glory burns, the more the success. Light that "illuminates" a person's life will bring about greatness, breakthrough and blessings and all these amount to success in life. In the same vein, a person who is launched into "global limelight" is perceived to have become successful. In example 20, the politician prays thus, "Your glory shall never grow dim". This linguistic expression shows the importance of the conceptual metaphor of light in the life of humans. Anything that grows "dim" will lead to darkness or "less light" and this is equated to not being successful. Invariably, failure will be depicted as darkness. Light is esteemed to be favourable to man in his journey through life while darkness is not. The concreteness of light makes it possible to explain success in life.

This conceptual mapping signifies the importance of light in life. The metaphor has entailments such as SUCCESS IS GOOD and GOOD IS LIGHT (Forceville & Renckens, 2013). Therefore, success in life is projected as desirable. According to Forceville and Renckens (2013), light and dark metaphors are utilized in the various conceptualizations of characters and events. Light is a common term in religious discourse (Ellis-Jones, 2015), and this is often used in relation to goodness, God and the divine. GOOD IS LIGHT happens to be a common mapping in religious discourse as noted by scholars like Tracy (1978) and Nyssonen (2017). The concreteness of light makes it possible to explain success in life in terms of light.

Although various metaphors can be used to concretize concepts related to religion, a careful assessment show that the WAR, JOURNEY and PLANT metaphors are the most preponderant metaphors used in the tweets. Similar observations have also been made by Harrison (2017), Basson (2006), Baab (2015), Shokr (2006) and Knepper (2019) who have also examined metaphors in religious discourse. On the one hand, the use of the conceptual

metaphors in the tweets serves as a reminder to the followers on the potential threat in the society and the need to be united in order to overcome the 'enemies' i.e. the WAR metaphors. On the other hand, the conceptual metaphors evoke the sense of hope among the followers and convey more optimism, i.e. metaphors related to life, god and success in life.

The religious tweets as used by the politician is a way of making his Christian followers believe in his leadership and evoke understanding about themselves in a particular way. Christians would generally conceive a "prayerful Christian" as having a good relationship with God. This will endear the politician to the followers and make them work towards his re-election into the National House of Assembly. Given the persuasive nature of conceptual metaphors, it therefore becomes vivid that the politician's use of metaphorical expressions in his religious tweets provide some insights into how this cognitive mechanism is used to shape the perception of his followers (Alkhaldeh, 2021). His followers will not only see themselves as possessing all the positive things in the tweets that relates to their religion, they will also see the politician as a good person for the job since he possesses the qualities of a person that identifies with their religious beliefs. This study is significant as it reveals the discourse value of the tweets and the cognitive-linguistic mechanism that underlies the politician's perception of politics and religion. Future research may focus on the diachronic aspect of metaphors usage with a closer scrutiny on the metaphors used by the politician may change or evolve throughout the duration of his career. An observation on certain patterns of usage may also lead to more insights on one's political agenda or on issues that would be relevant in the changing contexts of the related society.

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